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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

We are glad to see that various controversies are blazing merrily away in our correspondence columns. Readers are invited to add fuel to existing fires or start new ones of their own. We also welcome more peaceful illuminations.

THE EDITORS

GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA

University Address, Durban, 13th August, 1959.

by E. H. BROOKES

For many years now a prize of £50 has been offered in the University of Natal for an Essay on some aspect of the life of Louis Botha, first Prime Minister of the Union. The Essay is expected to embody some original research, but this requirement has not been interpreted in an exacting way. The results have been very disappointing. The largest number of entrants that I can remember was three. Sometimes there have been none, sometimes only one. Apart from the speculation that £50 does not mean so much to the wealthy student of today, as it did to his poverty-stricken predecessors, the only explanation of this frustating lack of interest must surely be that Louis Botha does not seem a very living figure to the young people of Natal. It is because of this possibility that I am venturing to address you today.

I do not set out to give you a biography of Botha. My object is rather to share a few thoughts about this great man and his political significance. Great he certainly was, a man of simplicity and nobility of character, a man of vision and hope, above all a man of almost invincible magnanimity. And so I pass over all the years between his birth in 1862 — in Natal, as a matter of fact, near Greytown — and the signature of the so-called Treaty of Vereeniging in a house in Jacob Maré Street, Pretoria, a quarter of an hour before midnight on the 31st May, 1902.

When Louis Botha walked out into the fresh night air under the stars he was a man who had just signed away the independence of his country. For two and a half years he had fought like a man, with a courage respected by friend and enemy alike, in defence of a régime of which he felt critical and of policies with which he did not wholly agree, but in defence also of land and people, loved traditions and cherished hopes. In all this he reminds one very deeply of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House, with Lord Kitchener cast for the rôle of General Grant. Lee too was a soldier without fear and without reproach, who made peace as resolutely as he made war, and who possessed like Botha a magnanimity to be marvelled at. Such men are not only heroes of their own country: they belong to the saga of humanity.

The man left without a country was also a man without a home.

The British had destroyed his homestead at Waterval in the Vryheid District on the 28th August, 1901. He had to begin life anew, without a profession, without a fortune, without public office, but not without faith and hope.

It is remarkable how these virtues flowered on the very morrow of defeat. When he said farewell to his Staff at Skaapkoppie, near Vryheid, he said, according to the account of Louis Esselen who was one of them: 'Many thanks for your faithful services. It oppresses me that I can do nothing else for any of you, and that I can give you no more than thanks. One consolation remains to all of you: you can now go and rest a little. As for me, *my real work only begins at this hour*. The day when rest will be mine will be the day when they lower me into the grave. The sacrifices we had to make have been terrific; but we are now going to see a *Greater South Africa*.' When he said good-bye to the Wakkerstroom Commando, on a cold evening in an atmosphere of deep depression, Mr G. P. Jooste asked him: 'General, had I to be in the field with you for three years solely in order to have to witness all this misery ?' The answer was, 'No, my boy, *tomorrow begins our great task of building a South African nation*.'

This was in June, 1902. On November 1st of the same year Botha, in an article in the *Contemporary Review*, made a sober and most effective appeal to the British public to understand, help and respect the people of the Transvaal who were now 'British subjects'. In December he put the case of his people to Joseph Chamberlain soberly, without aggressiveness and without servility. On the 2nd July, 1903, he resumed political activity in a speech at Heidelberg. On May 23rd, 1904, he presided at a Congress which established a party, 'Het Volk', which represented mainly the vanquished Afrikaners, and at this Congress Botha had the courage to advise his hearers to forgive the 'National Scouts' and to hold out to his English-speaking countrymen the hand of fellowship. On the 4th March, 1907, he took the oath of office of Prime Minister of a self-governing Transvaal under the Union Jack.

The 'National Scouts' were those Boers who had accepted pardon and pay from the British to fight against their own countrymen. For a time they became a race apart. When Joseph Chamberlain, for example, visited South Africa he had in some places to hold special meetings with the National Scouts, since other Afrikaners would not meet with them. A parallel might be drawn, not altogether unfairly, between the National Scouts and the collaborationists in France in the Second World War. Could we imagine the organisation within three or four years of the end of a war of meetings where the collaborationists and the *résistance* met together ? But Botha did it.

That he was not alone in his attitude is shown in the true story of Jozua Joubert. Commandant Joubert, a veteran of the First War of Independence, had fought at Dundee and Colenso. Near Amersfoort his arm was shot off by a neighbour, a fellow-Afrikaner

who had become a National Scout. After peace he returned to his farm. One Sunday afternoon the man who had shot him saw a one-armed rider come awkwardly up to his homestead. Petrified with terror and shame, he could not summon up the strength to move away before Jozua Joubert had come up the steps and was holding out his left hand. 'Friend,' said the old man, 'I have only one arm left, but I want to shake hands with it, for we are neighbours and I want us to live together as neighbours should.'

Those among the Afrikaans-speaking community who criticise Botha today find it difficult, perhaps, to enter into the spirit of those years immediately after the Boer War. The wheel has since come full circle, the judgment of 1902 has been reversed: the situation today is very much what it might have been had the Republics and not Queen Victoria won the war. In 1902, even in 1910, everything British was in the ascendant, and seemed likely to remain so. England enjoyed a power and prestige which must be almost unbelievable to those who were not born before 1914. Moreover there were facts about South Africa which render the comparison with France under the German heel which I made when discussing the National Scouts not really a good one. English South African and Afrikaner had never been completely separated. Since 1795 the Englishman had been in the land. For half a century the Cape had enjoyed parliamentary institutions in which Rhodes and Hofmeyr, Schreiner and Faure, Rose Innes and Merriman and Sauer, had worked together. Men of English speech had fought on the Boer side — of President Steyn's officials who remained faithful to the bitter end, more than half had English or Scots names. When Botha formed his first Government in the Transvaal, men like H. C. Hull and Sir Richard Solomon were among his supporters. The lines were never so clearly drawn as theorists sought to draw them and have drawn them since. In such circumstances Botha could preach conciliation without any loss of self-respect. It was really a question of a broad South Africanism against a narrow if understandable sectionalism.

When, therefore, Botha is represented — and he too often is today — as a Quisling who sold his country and his people, a mean-spirited truckler to the British, all these things should be borne in mind. Not all the things he did were wise. Perhaps it was a little too generous to present the Cullinan diamond to King Edward VII. Perhaps it was not necessary for Botha to put his stalwart calves into the black silk stockings of English court dress. But these at worst were only detailed errors of judgment, forming part of an intelligible and defensible policy.

Most of us present here today probably feel that Botha's policy of a broad inclusive South Africanism was worth trying, may still be worth trying in spite of the successful propaganda for the separation of the white races, languages and cultures during recent decades. But if there is anyone now listening to me who is a whole-hearted Afrikaner Nationalist, I would suggest to him that it is due to Botha

more than to anybody else that the Afrikaner was able to raise his head in self-respect and hope from the very nadir of his fortunes. Botha and those who stood with him made it possible for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to give self-government to the Transvaal in 1906. Had the men of the early 1900's taken up the standpoint of the Nationalists of today, it is arguable that the grant of self-government would have been deferred, British immigration stepped up and an anglicised South Africa brought into being. Quite undoubtedly, had the leaders of modern Nationalism been at the head of their people instead of Botha, Union would never have come about. Natal would certainly not have come into it, and the Cape might also have remained separate. Botha's success in 1919 in getting the Peace Treaty of Versailles signed separately by the Dominions as separate member-states of the League of Nations may have been limited; but it was the first step towards the sovereign independence of later years. I would rate Botha high as one of the architects of the Union of South Africa, as a worker for South African greatness and autonomy.

But arguments of a different kind may be raised by some English-speaking Natalians. Since all this is true, did not Botha, it may be asked, lead English-speaking South Africa up a garden-path of false hopes ? The more he taught South Africans of British descent to identify themselves with their Afrikaner fellow-citizens, the more he brought about the disintegration of purely British political organisations. English-speaking South Africans were absorbed into Botha's South African Party, as later into the United Party, and so were unable to speak for themselves. When the one-stream policy of Botha and Smuts came to grief, the two streams were not Afrikaner and British. There was one stream of purified renascent republican Afrikanerdom and one stream of co-operative Afrikaners and 'mak Engelse' combined — no British stream.

This is largely true, but is Botha to blame for it ? Who shall say that his one-stream policy was wrong ? His enemies after many years were able to destroy it, but who could foresee that ? Who could foresee the decline in the prestige and power of Great Britain in our day ? Botha in good faith put forward a policy which may still be regarded by many as a valid ideal, which seemed supremely sound and good in the early 1900's. British South Africans should remember with undying gratitude the way he stood by his undertakings in 1914 and 1915, at a cost not to be measured by men who deal in the debased currencies of ordinary politics. When Britain declared war against Germany in 1914, South Africa, according to the accepted constitutional doctrines of those days, was automatically at war; but she did not have to do anything active unless she wished to. Botha — only twelve years after the Treaty of Vereeniging — went all out to help Britain, and launched, at her request, a campaign against what was then called German South-West Africa. In doing so he honoured to the full the pledges he had made to Great Britain and to his many English-speaking supporters. The

result was the rebellion in which he had to take the field against his old comrades, notably against General Christiaan de Wet. 'The Rebellion,' writes Dr F. V. Engelenberg, 'was a military episode occupying barely six weeks; in Botha's life these counted for years.' 'It was clear to Botha,' says Lord Buxton in his *General Botha,* 'that he himself should take command, first against Beyers, then against de Wet . . . As he said to a friend: "It is my duty and it is the only thing for me to do. Beyers and de Wet are strong men and have a big following in the country. There is no one else I can put in my place just now, so I must go myself." Further he felt that he could with greater force appeal to his fellow Commandants and Burghers to undertake the painful duty imposed upon them if he did not shrink from the task himself.' His instructions were that the rebels should be scattered and captured — let them fire first.

Was Botha right in the decisions of 1914 ? I do not doubt it myself, but there are other points of view. What I would say is that, whatever our political opinions, we should reverence and cherish honour and magnanimity where we find them in history, whether in Regulus, Louis Botha or Robert E. Lee. For consider what the extent of Louis Botha's obligations were. He had chosen in 1902 the way of negotiation rather than the way of unconditional military surrender, and the Peace Treaty had made at least three important concessions to the Boer leaders. He had accepted self-government in the Transvaal and the office of Prime Minister. He had repeatedly taken the oath of allegiance. He had shaken hands with the King and a handshake meant something to Louis Botha. At a banquet which he gave in London 1909 to the British Ministers, he proposed two silent toasts (there were no speeches). They were 'The King' and 'To the memory of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman'. He had been selected as first Prime Minister of the Union by the British Governor-General, and that in preference to the English-speaking John X. Merriman. He had agreed to a Union under the Crown into which the two British Colonies came as willing members, largely as a result of their confidence in him and those like him. On the outbreak of war he had suggested to the British Government that they withdraw such Imperial regiments as remained in the Union, promising that he and his Government would be responsible for the defence of South Africa. What was he to do, then, when the rebellion broke out ? Could he abdicate his high office, remain neutral and pass the tragic responsibilities of the situation on to others ? Could he forswear himself and join the rebels, on the basis that 'England's difficulty is South Africa's opportunity' ? To ask these questions is to answer them, given Louis Botha's character. The only thing that a man of honour could do was what he did—to suppress the rebellion with as little bloodshed as possible, to punish the rebels with as little hardship or vindictiveness as possible, to remain true to his honourable obligations and to pursue the War. These are decisions for which any nation must be grateful, this is a man of whom any nation can be proud. It is

not given to many men to forsee the future, but almost any man can, if he will, see his duty and do it resolutely. For Botha to do this meant intense pain, and he must have known that he would leave a wounded reputation behind him among his people. Has not the time now come when even triumphant Nationalism can estimate the greatness and honour of this noble soldier and merciful statesman at their true value as part of the treasure of South African history?

Nationalism may forgive him, but will Liberalism, which finds it at times so hard to remember that the 1910's were not so enlightened as the 1950's, that in those days a man might more easily than now fall into the error of thinking that the real struggle in South Africa was the struggle between Boer and Briton rather than the struggle between white and black. For it must be confessed that Botha saw South Africa in that way, that he belonged to the old school, that nothing would have induced him to extend the Cape franchise to the old Republics. Let it be remembered, however, that it apparently never even occurred to him to break the compact of Union which preserved the Cape franchise within its own Province, and that, if he belonged to the old school, he belonged to the old school at its best. Against him may be set the Natives' Land Act of 1913, but it may be pleaded in mitigation, first, that its principle had been recommended by the Inter-Colonial Commission of 1903-5, appointed by Lord Milner of all people; and, second, that he accepted an amendment which made the Act practically nugatory in the Cape Province.

In 1884 civil war was waged in Zululand between Dinuzulu, the legitimate head of the Zulus and Usibepu. Louis Botha was one of the group of farmers who helped Dinuzulu in this conflict and received in return a vast tract of territory, including the modern districts of Vryheid and Utrecht. These were formed into the New Republic, which three years later was incorporated into the Transvaal. I do not go into the rights and wrongs of this struggle, nor into the disputed question of what Dinuzulu really promised the farmers who helped him. But what I do want to bring to your notice is this: Dinuzulu had fallen on evil days, and as a result of his complicity in the Bambata rebellion had been imprisoned in 1909. Within less than a month of his becoming Prime Minister of the Union, Botha released him. This loyalty to his ally of 1884 was in keeping with his character and should be counted to him for righteousness among lovers of the Zulus.

Lord Buxton, himself a hereditary friend of the Africans, said of him: 'In General Botha the Native population had a very real friend; and, as I know from many conversations with him as well as from his own actions, he always took a broad and sympathetic view of questions affecting them. The Natives themselves are quick to realise such an attitude and to value such sympathy; and their grief at the General's death was universal and sincere.'

The release of Dinuzulu was an outward and visible sign that

South Africa was one country and that a man of convictions and of moral courage was at the head of it. What was Botha's real part in bringing Union about? Did he build a good foundation for a united South Africa during the seven years of his premiership?

As a Transvaler, born in Natal and growing to manhood in the Orange Free State, as a Boer General who sincerely believed in a spirit of conciliation towards the British, he had obvious and great natural advantages. The political outlook is expressed very well in an all-too-seldom quoted poem of Jan Celliers:

'Hier's my hart en hier my hand,
neef Brit,
Die hand wil ek in joue lê,
Maar darby net 'n woordjie sê —
dis dit.

'Baas nòg kneg is jy of ek,
ou maat;
En, sal ons handjie soos't behoort,
dan moet dit blyk uit elke woord
en daad.

. . . . . .

'En eer in my wat hoogste staat
by jou,
Want so alleen word, vas en trots
ons suider-tuis op eendrags rots
gebou.

'As harde kop by harde kop
sig paar
in naasteliefdes juk en werk,
dan is ons twee die wêreld te sterk,
so waar!'

This was the 'Convention Spirit,' very prevalent in 1909 and 1910, and it was fortified by Botha's own natural gift of friendship, courtesy and open-heartedness. If he was not 'the man with the oilcan' at the National Convention—that epithet was reserved for the Chairman, Lord de Villiers—he did much to make acceptable the proposals which his great lieutenant, General Smuts, and his corps of other young advisers had drawn up. We can see now, or many of us can, the fundamental error of modelling the Union on the flexible Constitution of Great Britain with its sovereign Parliament. We can see now that federation with a rigid constitution would have been far better for us. But is it right to judge historical characters by the standard of the wisdom which comes out of fifty years of disillusionment and disappointment? At the time Botha

was not to know that his policy would largely fail. In the hope of its success, was he not justified in working for legislative union under a flexible constitution? We English-speaking South Africans may feel at times today that we want to express our own emotions and deep convictions as trenchantly as our Afrikaans-speaking fellow-citizens are able to do through the Nationalist Party, and may feel frustrated by the inhibitions arising out of our commitment to a 'one-stream policy' which does not seem to work. Yet there are elements in it which even under the vastly different conditions of today are attractive and necessary, and perhaps many of us are in turn ready to hold out our hands in the day of *our* weakness, only saying:

'Baas nòg kneg is jy of ek,
Ou maat.'

Was it a good thing that Louis Botha became the first Prime Minister of the Union? In answering this question we must ask another question—one always most salutory and useful—what was the alternative? The only real alternative was John X. Merriman, for, though Botha and Merriman were both prepared to serve under President Steyn, he with his health permanently broken by the sufferings of the War years, 1899—1902, was neither able nor willing to assume the premiership. Merriman was English-speaking, the son of an Anglican Bishop. He had been Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, with its long and fine parliamentary tradition. But he was irascible as Dr. Johnson, with as fine a selection of assorted hates as the great lexicographer had. He hated Transvalers and Natalians—had he not once described Natal as 'a forwarding station with a kaffir location attached'?—civil servants and all spenders of money, women—at any rate women in politics—mine magnates and imperialists, socialists and the Unionist Party. As an English-speaking leader of a mixed party he would probably have leant a little towards support of the Afrikaner, just as Botha leant a little towards support of the English-speaking South African. He would probably have avoided irritating Hertzog, but would he thereby have prevented the rise of Afrikaner nationalism?

No doubt Botha was chosen by Lord Gladstone partly to demonstrate to the world the spectacular triumph of British liberalism—a Boer General, Prime Minister of the Union eight years to the day since the signature of the Treaty of Vereeniging. But he was also the best man available. Merriman, for example, could not have obtained the support from Natal which was given to Botha. And it must be remembered that the Botha ministry was really a Botha-Smuts ministry. In a Merriman cabinet, Smuts could hardly have played the same outstanding rôle. Some may not feel this to be an argument for Botha's premiership; others, like myself, will feel it to be a very cogent argument, feeling that we are not disposed to be one of the crowd of small birds pecking at the dying eagle.

Botha, we know, quarrelled with Hertzog. Could this have been avoided? It is hard to say. Botha had his weaknesses. He was stung by any criticism which impugned his real love for his people. He was irritable at times. Like Smuts, he never understood all the emotional strength behind the language movement, and was lukewarm in his pressing of bilingualism on a South Africa which had as yet not wholly accepted it. Hertzog on his part was not an easy colleague and most certainly not a loyal one. Though he was a man of immense integrity, it was yet integrity in blinkers. His views were intense but narrow. He was a man of books and theories, while Botha was a man of friendships and the open air, and as much an empiricist as any British politician could be. The two men were temperamentally unfitted to be colleagues. Their parting was of the nature of true tragedy; each had some right on his side. Speaking here to an audience of students of the University of Natal, I might point out that had Botha given in to Hertzog, he would have lost the almost solid support of Natal, and in so doing the co-operation between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans which it was his life's work to build up.

It was his, and South Africa's, misfortune that War came as early as 1914. Both then and in 1939 events outside the Union destroyed most valiant and at least partially successful efforts to co-operate within the Union. British South Africans, on the whole, thought with their hearts in 1914, and could not stand aside while the 'old country' was in mortal danger. Can they be blamed? Many Afrikaners could not bring themselves to fight for the country which had conquered them twelve years before. Can they be blamed? Too often neither side would see reason. British South Africans blamed Botha for punishing the rebels too leniently; many Afrikaners blamed him for punishing them at all; and both were wrong.

At the Peace Conference of Versailles Botha was an outstanding and noble figure. More practical than Wilson, more honest than Lloyd George, more merciful than Clemenceau (though this, of course, was not difficult!), he stood out among the representatives of smaller powers as a giant in spirit. On his Agenda paper of the 28th June, 1919—the day when the Peace Treaty was signed—he wrote in Hollands these words which I give in their English translation:

> 'God's justice will be meted out to every nation in His righteousness, under the new Sun. We shall persist in prayer in order that it may be done unto mankind in peace and Christian charity.
>
> 'Today the 31st May 1902 comes back to me.'

Mr. George Barnes, the British Labour leader, in his *Reminiscences* writes:

> 'One meeting at the rooms of Mr. Balfour lingers in my mind, because of the intervention of General Botha. General

> Botha was a great man. Never made any long speeches, but his presence in any gathering could be felt. What little he had to say was always to the point; and always on the side of a long and generous view of things. Botha sat next to Lord Milner and put in a plea for clemency.'

'Botha sat next to Lord Milner.' Have you taken that in? From the South African point of view, Botha came back to his country with the Mandate for South-West Africa and also with the new status of South Africa and the other Dominions as separate signatories of the Peace Treaties and separate members of the League of Nations. He received a great welcome on his return, at Cape Town late in July 1919, at Pretoria on the 8th August. On the early morning of the 27st August he was dead. He had lived only fifty-seven years, but how he had lived them!

How are we to sum up his life?

The United Party, which regards him as its Patron Saint, can hardly expect to criticise him. Its temptation is rather different—the temptation to follow his policies a little uncritically even where the passing of time has made them obsolete. But every other political party in South Africa will be critical of him.

The Nationalists accuse him of having been untrue to his own people, too ready to truckle to the English, unaware of the need to protect the Afrikaans language and culture from the dangers of fraternisation. The Federalists blame him for having pushed for the unification of South Africa in an impossible 'one-stream' policy, and thus sold the rights of the English-speaking minority. The Liberals blame him for having treated the problems of South Africa as existing between the two white groups only and having given no deep thought to the needs of the non-Europeans. Are these criticisms justified? Is it ever fair to judge a man in the light of after events, some of which at least he could not have foreseen?

Moreover, even if his policies have failed, does that make all of them wrong? Is there not something to be said for his 'one-stream' policy, and, if there is, for unification rather than federation as the best way of achieving it?

But deeper than all these considerations is the point that history throws up every now and again a character such as Botha's which is in itself the character of a great man and surely it should be honoured as such irrespective of success or failure. In assessing Robert E. Lee, must we be bound by the fact that he was the vanquished rather than the victor at Appomattox Court House? Must we even be bound by the fact that the cause for which he expended a genius in strategy and tactics, a courage beyond reproach and a character of utter integrity, was wrong? Or must we not be grateful that in the troubled annals of humanity there was a Robert E. Lee, and nearly a century later, a Louis Botha?

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF FIFTH CENTURY ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY

by C. WEBB

In the long controversy about the merits of Athens' fifth century system of direct democracy, two questions still remain highly contentious. The first is the question whether the democracy was parasitic in its dependence on slave labour; the second is the question whether the functioning of the democracy was dependent on the tribute of the Delian League. Both are questions which need further consideration.

So far as the first is concerned, the critics of the democracy have argued that for the Athenians to have been able to participate directly in government, they must have been a leisured class that depended on the institution of slavery. The slaves, according to these critics, did the work while the Athenians spent their days lounging in the market place discussing politics and philosophy, or else serving as magistrates, councillors or jurors.

In recent years, however, this view of the part played by slavery in fifth century Athens has been subjected to scrutiny and a revisionist school of thought has appeared, which denies that the functioning of the Athenian democracy depended on the exploitation of slave labour. Very largely the revisionists' case has hinged on producing more accurate determinations of the composition of the Athenian population in terms of citizens, metics and slaves. Professor Gomme, for example, denied that all the Athenians could have been men of leisure[1], and produced *probable* population figures[2], which other scholars have used, with nice finesse, to show that even when slaves were most numerous in Athens there could hardly have been more than half a slave per person. Since it is known that there were large concentrations of slaves in certain branches of the Athenian economy, this would mean that large numbers of Athenian citizens must have possessed no slaves at all, and must have contrived to attend to public affairs while working for their livings[3]—a view confirmed directly by Pericles, indirectly by Plato.

In the present decade, the revisionist view has been carried still further by Professor A. H. M. Jones, who, by critical re-examination of the evidence, has attempted to provide a more complete

and therefore fairer appraisal of the democracy of Athens in all its many aspects.[4]

The tentative population figures used by Professor Jones are significant, because they are of such an order as to reduce the proportion of slaves to citizens below Professor Gomme's estimates, thus making it even less likely that the Athenians as a whole were a parasitic leisured class whose work was done for them by slaves.[5]

However, the strength of Professor Jones' position rests on the fact that he has largely avoided argument based on unreliable population estimates, and has argued rather from evidence about the distribution of slaves in the various branches of the Athenian economy. He has shown that it was in the state-owned mines that there was the biggest concentration of slave labour.[6] In agriculture and in other occupations which might have relieved the ordinary Athenian of the burden of working for his living, the number of slaves employed was comparatively small.[7] Industry employed slaves on a larger scale, but there is evidence that very few Greeks owned industries big enough to make them men of leisure; on the contrary, much of the industry of Athens was in the hands of small craftsmen who were poor and had to work, even if they had the assistance of slaves[8]. Thus, simply in terms of the distribution of labour, there is scant evidence to support the view that the Athenians were a leisured class who could afford the luxury of a system of direct democracy because they had slaves to do their work for them.

However, the fact that this particular criticism has been invalidated does not invalidate the more general criticism that the democracy of fifth century Athens was dependent on slave labour. The defenders of the democracy, in concentrating on the question of leisure, have taken too narrow a view of the part which slavery played in the Athenian economy, and have failed to determine the essential conditions which are necessary for a system of direct democracy to function properly. They have, in fact, been aiming their shafts at the wrong target. A leisured citizen body is not the essential requirement for direct democracy to function. Other conditions are the essential ones. One is that the citizens should be men in independent employment, and thus able to dispose of their time as they please, choosing whether to work or whether to participate in public affairs. Another is that the general conditions of prosperity should be such that the citizens need not devote all their energies to subsistence labour, but can afford time, at least occasionally when important issues are at stake, to participate in public affairs.

Thus, if it is to be determined whether fifth century Athenian democracy was parasitic on slave labour or not, there are two questions which must be considered; the first is whether the absence of slavery would have deprived large numbers of inde-

pendent Athenian labourers and craftsmen of the freedom to dispose of their working time as they chose; the second is whether the absence of slavery would have impaired the general prosperity of Athens and reduced large numbers of the citizens to near-subsistence living.

These are questions which it is impossible to answer accurately, for slavery was never abolished in Athens, and consequently one cannot say precisely how its absence would have affected life in the polis. Nevertheless, it is possible to make certain broad deductions from the evidence.

In the first place, if slavery had not existed to provide a labour force for the mines and for industry, it is highly unlikely that prosperity in Athens could have been maintained at the level at which it was in the mid-fifth century when the system of direct democracy functioned most effectively. Professor Jones himself has shown that the general prosperity of Athens depended very largely on her ability to import essential commodities, including corn, and that while part of the bill for these imports was paid in olive oil and high-grade manufactured articles, a large part was also paid in cash provided by the labour of the slaves in the silver mines.[9]

It could, of course, be argued that if slavery had not existed, an alternative labour system might have been developed to maintain productivity in industry and the mines. In such an event, however, it is difficult to see how the system of direct democracy could have survived except as a patent sham, for large numbers of Athenian citizens would have lost their cherished independence and become employees without the liberty to take time off for public affairs. They would, in short, have been unable to exercise their citizen rights even if they had wanted to. Nor would the metics necessarily have provided a way out of the problem, for the metics appear to have cherished independence too, and one cannot assume that they would have come to Athens in large numbers to labour in the mines and industry.

Thus, if slavery had not existed in fifth century Athens, one of two results would probably have followed: either the society would have been less prosperous than it in fact was, or alternatively large numbers of citizens would have lost their independence. In either case, the system of direct democracy would have been impaired.

Similar arguments may be used against the revisionists' claim that the fifth century democracy was not parasitic on the tribute of empire. Their arguments have very largely depended on being able to show that the pay which Athenians received for their Public duties was not derived from the tribute of Athens' allies and subject-states in the Delian League, but was adequately covered by the internal revenues of the state.[10] Professor Jones, for example, admits that Athens profited from her empire, but says that these profits were not necessary to keep the democracy working.[11] Once again, the revisionists seem to be taking too

narrow a view of what was necessary to prevent the democracy becoming a sham in which only the wealthier citizens could afford to participate. What they are not giving adequate consideration to is the importance of those general conditions of prosperity, the absence of which would have reduced numbers of citizens to near-subsistence living and forced them much more than was the case in fact to be their own smiths and cobblers and wheelwrights, with little time for participation in civic affairs. In admitting, as Professor Jones does[12], that the empire enabled Athens to maintain a far larger population at high standards of living, the revisionists are in my view making a concession to the very thing which they are setting out to deny; they are admitting that the democracy was partly at least parasitic on empire.

What must be constantly remembered is the difference between the democracy as it was in the mid-fifth century, and as it was in the first half of the fourth century. In the first half of the fourth century it was still technically a direct democracy, but in practice large numbers of citizens seem to have taken very little active part in the affairs of government, and the institutions had become corrupted.[13] What is important is that by the fourth century Athens had also lost her empire, while her prosperity had declined, and her labour force of slaves had been reduced, probably by about half.[14] Only if it is certain that there was no connection between these various developments of the fourth century can it be argued that democracy in the fifth century was not parasitic on slavery and empire.

NOTES

[1] A. W. Gomme, *The Athenian Democracy* (*History*, xxxvi).
[2] *Idem.*, *The Greeks* in *European Civilisation* (ed. E. Eyre), I, 644.
[3] Kitto, *The Greeks*.
[4] A. H. M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy*.
[5] Ib. 76ff & 161ff.
[6] Ib. 14-17.
[7] Ib. 12-14.
[8] Ib. 15-16.
[9] Ib. 93-94.
[10] Ib. 5-8.
[11] Ib. 6.
[12] Ib. 6.
[13] Ib. 23ff; Gomme, *The Greeks*, 721; G. Glotz, *The Greek City*, Part III; etc.
[14] Jones, op. cit., 180; Gomme, op. cit. 721; Glotz, op. cit., Part III.

GEORGE ORWELL

". . . . a bit of a nagger . . . ."

(E. M. Forster on George Orwell)

by J. E. SPENCE

Interest in George Orwell's work has increased considerably since his death in 1948. In a sense he has become what has been described as a 'culture-hero' for a generation of young English men and women somewhat disillusioned by the events of the 'cold war' and by what appeared to be the exhaustion of the British Labour Party. *1984* seemed an acute prophecy for those who saw the world rapidly splitting into two dangerously-armed camps. There was little to choose between the values underlying both systems: the 1952 Republican election slogan, 'twenty years of treason' and the McCarthy hearings indicated some resemblance to the purging of undesirable elements in the Soviet Union.

George Orwell, the man, is at times difficult to separate from the books he wrote, in a way which is not true of many writers on political issues. We are usually content to evaluate most writers solely on the merits of the arguments their texts present. This must obviously apply to Orwell as well, but with the difference that he is a writer who speaks to us with an intensely *personal* voice, revealing a man vitally committed to the political and social issues of his day.

Orwell is without doubt a 'committed' writer. 'Committed', or its more fashionable equivalent, 'engagé', is a word to use reservedly, particularly in view of the recent discussion overseas on the writer's role in society. I suspect that Mr. Kenneth Tynan, the *Observer* dramatic critic, and one of the participants in this discussion, reserves his highest praise for those playwrights whose works directly reflect the political and social problems of the time; but it is nonsense to expect a writer to take a stand in his work on these problems on the ground that he has a duty to society. Clearly, in an aesthetic sense, a writer has no such duty. I would say that his only compelling duty is to produce the best possible work in terms of his own particular experience. If this condition is not observed, the artist's work may degenerate into propaganda, telling the reader very little about human experience, but a good deal about the political cause he has espoused. The

Social Realist movement in modern Russian painting and some of the English poetry of the 1930's are examples of this corrupting tendency.

Orwell's approach to political and social problems was based on a profound respect for the individual. He resented the theoretical formulations of his more orthodox Socialist contemporaries, their constant preoccupation with the 'sacred sisters, thesis, antithesis, synthesis'. Even in the 1930's when he was writing for the Left Wing Book Club and the *New Statesman and Nation,* his Socialist beliefs were highly individual and often in conflict with those of people who wrote and spoke in abstract terms about the class war and the 'exploitation of the proletariat'. And this may explain why at times he turned to the novel as a medium for expressing his concern at the fate of the underprivileged both in England and abroad. The early novels—*Keep the Aspidistra Flying* and *Burmese Days*—illustrate his intense preoccupation with this problem. These works are in many respects unsatisfactory, chiefly because in each one Orwell is using the medium of the novel as a platform for his own political convictions.

Perhaps the best way of illustrating this weakness is by comparing *Burmese Days* with E. M. Forster's *Passage to India.* Written eleven years earlier, the latter has become a classic despite the fact that the environment which inspired it—British rule in India—has passed way. Orwell's book, on the other hand, tends to date. Burma, too, is an independent country, its former rulers departed, some into bewildered and resentful retirement in Cheltenham and South Kensington. Despite the ending of the old Imperial connection, Forster's book continues to be read with pleasure, but *Burmese Days* by contrast has little more than a certain documentary and perhaps biographical interest for the reader today. The reason for the disparity between the two works is fairly clear: Forster's primary concern is with human relations, more specifically, the difficulties men face in their efforts to understand and, ultimately, to love one another. This is difficult enough for those who have much in common and who share the same culture. It is immeasurably more difficult when there is a clash of cultures and the relationship is between those who rule and those who are ruled. The relationship between Fielding, the College Principal, and Dr. Aziz, the Indian doctor, exemplifies this theme in *Passage to India* and Forster illustrates it with a wealth of sensitive detail, the incident about the collar-stud being a notable example. But Forster never overstresses the Imperial theme; British rule in India forms a backcloth to the actions of the chief protagonists. It is the relationships which are seen as vital, and the politics of the situation are never allowed to intrude, but they are there by implication and as a subtly complicating factor. Much more could be said about Forster's book —the wealth of symbol, the selection of significant detail to

illustrate a general theme, the penetrating yet sympathetic analysis of a wide range of character. In other words, Forster is interpreting human experience in an imaginative way as only an artist of his calibre can do.

This, however, is not true of Orwell's writing in *Burmese Days*. Although he, too, discusses human relationships, he does so on a very different level. Orwell's early years in Burma had a profound effect on his thinking about political issues, and in *Burmese Days* his concern is with the individual as a representative of Imperial rule. His primary aim in this work was to attack the evil, as he saw it, of Imperial rule over a subject people. He saw power of this kind tending to corrupt both ruler and ruled, and the novel as a whole is a bitter attack on the narrow, self-centred outlook of a certain type of Englishman placed in a position of authority. Orwell himself had returned to England because, in his own words: 'I hated the imperialism I was serving with a bitterness I cannot make clear.'

In contrast to Forster, Orwell uses the novel as a medium for expressing his discontent with a particular situation, and this is perhaps why the book fails to convince. Each character seems to represent one or other particular aspect of the system he was attacking: Ellis, despising and hating the native population for whom he felt brute force was the only technique of good government; the Cavalry officer who 'despised the entire non-ruling population of India, a few famous polo-players excepted. He despised the entire Army as well, except the cavalry . . . . Horsemanship and physical fitness were the only gods he knew.'; U Po Kyin, the crafty local politician who wanted the prestige of belonging to the European Club and was prepared to use any means to get there; Elizabeth, the young English girl, disgusted by native ritual—whose mother wanted her to marry an 'Honourable'. The most interesting character is the hero, Flory, who resents the philistines at the Club, makes friends with the local inhabitants and attempts to come to terms with the strange exotic life of the East. He fails, more often than not, succumbing to alcohol and sexual promiscuity, the result of his loneliness and the unsympathetic atmosphere at the Club.

But the characterization, with the possible exception of Flory, is superficial; the characters remain static, showing no sign of internal development as the novel proceeds. Throughout, we are too conscious of Orwell's own personality dominating the narrative and distracting our attention from the story he is trying to tell. Perhaps Mr. Forster has a point when he says that good literature very often induces a 'temporary forgetfulness' in the reader with regard to the author's personality. This may help to explain why Orwell's autobiographical work and essays seem superior to his novels, with the admitted exception of *Animal Farm*. On the other hand, Orwell sketches Flory's character with a degree of perception that conveys the oppressive loneliness of

the sensitive man in an alien environment. Orwell's chief indictment against the imperial system is the 'loneliness' it entailed, *for all men,* sensitive and insensitive alike—and the success with which Orwell makes this point is one of the merits of the book.

When the political aspects of the book are analysed it is evident that Orwell realised that even if the British left Burma, the 'good life' would by no means be assured for the vast majority of the indigenous people. Moreover his version of Imperial rule cannot be accepted uncritically. Certainly life under these conditions did at times have corruptive effects on those who were in power, but, as Mr Christopher Hollis has pointed out, it is an exaggeration to say that 'no Englishman ever dared to speak his mind to another' on the ill-effects of the system on the individual. Orwell's criticism ignores completely the many Imperial civil servants dedicated to the work of modernising countries like India. He does, however, grudgingly admit this aspect of Imperialism in his essay on Kipling when he says: 'It may be that all they did was evil, but they changed the face of the earth (it is instructive to look at a map of Asia and compare the railway system with that of the surrounding countries), whereas they could have achieved nothing, could not have maintained themselves in power for a single week, if the normal Anglo-Indian outlook had been that of, say E. M. Forster.' Even this admission contains an element of exaggeration that is perhaps unfair both to the Anglo-Indian and to E. M. Forster. Philistine in outlook many of them may have been, but it is partly due to their efforts that independent India has persevered in her attempt to industrialise, and at the same time maintain the democratic institution of government based on the Western pattern. Orwell himself overstressed the purely economic motive for Imperialism, as his essay on Kipling makes clear. He does not quote evidence for his assertion that 'an empire is a money-making concern'. He says: 'You turn a Gatling gun on a mob of unarmed "natives", and then you establish "the Law", which includes roads, railways and a court-house.' This is forceful writing in the style of the pamphleteer, and cannot be taken as a reasoned analysis. The cautious reader would be well-advised to consult a more substantial work: Mr. Philip Woodruff's two volumes, *The Guardians* and *The Men who Ruled India.*

Imperialism is a concept loaded with emotive connotations, and it is difficult, and perhaps impossible, at this stage in history to draw up an accurate balance-sheet of its relative merits and demerits. It depends largely on one's view both of the past, and of the values to which Imperialists like Milner and Lord Cromer, and countless lesser men, subscribed. These values today are regarded in some circles as cunning rationalisations of economic self-interest, and in others as a pernicious ideology. But generalisations of this kind are dangerous without conclusive evidence and it can be argued that other more intangible factors

have to be taken into consideration. For in discussing the concept of Imperialism, the historian finds himself in the realm of ideas as well as economic realities. Consequently his judgment of the past involves substantially more than a detailed examination of the profits of the British East India Company, important as this aspect is. A nice assessment of Imperialism is correspondingly made more difficult.

This may help to explain why a contemporary reader returns again and again to *Passage to India* rather than to Orwell's work. The situation and the people involved in *Passage to India* are presented sympathetically. No easy clear-cut distinction is made between right and wrong. We are led to feel that the problems confronting Forster's characters are of universal significance, in that men are always faced with the problem of living together harmoniously in a world which seems both too crowded and too impersonal for comfort.

Mr Christopher Hollis in his recent study of Orwell's writings quotes a significant conversation with Orwell in Rangoon in 1925. Orwell, he says, 'was at pains to be the imperial policeman explaining that these theories of no punishment and no beating were all very well at public schools but that they did not work with the Burmese . . .' This conversation is interesting in Mr Hollis's view because he felt that Orwell was still in two minds about the problem of Imperialism. This division in his thinking is strikingly evident in his essay *Shooting an Elephant*. Here Orwell is writing from personal experience and being scathingly honest with himself, a quality which emerges in all his autobiographical writing. The essay opens with a frank confession of his feelings at that time:

'All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum,* upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts.'

The encounter with the elephant is best described in his own words:

'Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd—seemingly the leading actor in the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life trying to impress the "natives", and so in every crisis he has got to do what the "natives" expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the

rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing—no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

. . . . It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behaviour. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing.'

This is Orwell at his most perceptive and here the reader feels disposed to believe him, if only because the description of the crowd scene, his own embarrassing situation and the admixture of motives for killing the elephant is so mercilessly accurate. His fellow Europeans disagree about the rights and wrongs of Orwell's behaviour: '. . . . the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie.' But would these young men have acted any differently in Orwell's place? I suspect not. And this is why Orwell's analysis of this particular aspect of Imperialism seems valid.

Homage to Catalonia amply illustrates Orwell's concern with the experience of the individual. The Spanish struggle has to some extent been dwarfed by World War II, though to many who endured both conflicts, the issues involved were the same: the spread of Fascism and the need to assert the traditional Western values of freedom and justice. The politics of the Civil War are incredibly complicated and a large part of Orwell's book is devoted to analysing them in detail. But the chief merit of the book lies in the account Orwell gives of his personal experiences. He was fully committed to the Republican cause for, as he puts it: '. . . . Since 1930 the Fascists had won all the victories, it was time they got a beating, it hardly mattered from whom.' For Orwell the Spanish War was part of a much larger conflict and he saw in the possible defeat of Franco a positive step towards the ultimate defeat of the other European totalitarian regimes.

The one truth that does emerge clearly from this book is the squalor and dreariness of trench warfare in the twentieth century. In this respect it bears comparison with Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Twenty years later, Jimmy Porter in John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*, thinks back nostalgically to the 1930's when there were 'causes' to which young men and women were fully committed. Jimmy is perhaps guilty of romanticising the past, however much we may sympathise with his predicament in the 1950's. Orwell's narrative is a salutary corrective. Two quotations will illustrate this point.

'Here we are, soldiers of a revolutionary army, defending Democracy against Fascism, fighting a war which is *about* something, and the detail of our lives is just as sordid and degrading as it could be in prison, let alone in a bourgeois army . . . , the boredom and animal hunger of trench life, the squalid intrigues over scraps of food, the mean, nagging quarrels which people exhausted by lack of sleep indulge in.

'In trench warfare five things are important: firewood, food, tobacco, candles *and* the enemy . . . The real preoccupation of both armies was trying to keep warm . . . . Like everyone about me I was chiefly conscious of boredom, heat, cold, dirt, lice, privation and occasional danger.'

Incidents are described with a degree of understatement that nevertheless accurately conveys both the pathos and the essential dignity of ordinary men in appalling circumstances. The following two quotations illustrate his passion for honest and scrupulous self-analysis. The first is from his essay *Looking Back on the Spanish War* and the second is from *Homage to Catalonia.*

'At this moment a man . . . . jumped out of the trench and ran along the top of the parapet in full view. He was half-dressed and was holding up his trousers with both hands as he ran. I refrained from shooting at him. It is true that I am a poor shot and unlikely to hit a running man at a hundred yards, and also that I was thinking chiefly about getting back to our trench while the Fascists had their attention fixed on the aeroplanes. Still, I did not shoot partly because of that detail about the trousers. I had come here to shoot at "Fascists"; but a man who is holding up his trousers isn't a "Fascist", he is visibly a fellow-creature, similar to yourself, and you don't feel like shooting at him.'

'There must have been about two minutes during which I assumed that I was killed . . . . My first thought, conventionally enough, was for my wife. My second was a violent resentment at having to leave this world which . . . . suits me so well . . . . I thought too of the man who had shot me—wondered what he was like, whether he was a Spaniard or a foreigner, whether he knew he had got me, and so forth. I could not feel any resentment against him. I reflected that as he was a Fascist I would have killed him if I could, but that if he had been taken prisoner and brought before me at this moment I would merely have congratulated him on his good shooting. It may be, though, that if you were really dying your thoughts would be quite different.'

In the first passage he candidly admits that his motives for not pulling the trigger were varied; in the last sentence of the second passage he qualifies his account of the incident with characteristic honesty, and it is because of this that we respect Orwell's attempt to present the facts of the situation.

The Civil War was a turning-point in Orwell's attitude to political issues. When he first arrived in Barcelona and during his early days at the front, he had been deeply impressed by the

egalitarian atmosphere of comradeship pervading the Republican movement, despite the adversity and hardship of the circumstances. This impression was a false one, as he later admits, but at the same time he felt that Socialism was at last being put effectively into practice. He was speedily disillusioned on his return to Barcelona some months later. By this time the anti-Franco forces had split; the Communist group began suppressing the Anarchist and Trotskyite elements in the common front, and Orwell and his wife only just escaped summary arrest and imprisonment. Many of his friends were not so fortunate.

The arguments put forward by apologists on both sides need not concern us here. What matters is the effect that these events had on Orwell. Six years later he wrote in his essay *Looking Back on the Spanish War:*

'I saw great battles reported where there had been no fighting and complete silence where hundreds of men had been killed. I saw troops who had been fighting bravely denounced as cowards and traitors and others who had never seen a shot fired hailed as the heroes of imaginary victories.'

He saw individual liberty smothered by those who had once pretended to be its champions. As Mr Hollis points out: 'What was to Orwell intolerable was not what the Communists advocated but the way in which they advocated it — their ceaseless stream of lies and libels, their unhesitating denunciation as traitors of brave men who were risking their lives . . . the total falsification of history.'

Orwell perceived the truth, often ignored, that highmindedness and power politics are frequently in uneasy alliance. The men who make revolutions do so very often for the highest motives, but the attraction of power can divert man's moral energies into a vicious struggle for the 'spoils' it offers. If this is true for the 17th and late 18th centuries, it is even more so for the 20th century, with its technological means of mass persuasion, where truth can suffer a subtle distortion through propaganda. If men believe they are right and are prepared to use any means to achieve their object, then it would seem that ideological wars are more savage and brutal than wars fought purely for economic and territorial gain. Orwell's dilemma, which is also that of any liberal, was that he hated Fascism as much as any Communist in Barcelona, but felt compelled to reject the means his more ruthless allies used.

He still maintained his belief in the 'common man' whom he saw typified in that Italian soldier in Barcelona with his 'shabby uniform and fierce pathetic face'. The essay ends with a passionate denunciation of those 'who lecture the working class socialist for his materialism' and who deny him the ordinary mundane comforts of life which they themselves visibly enjoy. 'How right they are to realise that the belly comes before the soul, not in the scale of values but in point of time !' The essay is partly an impassioned plea for an improvement in the material conditions of life of the

working classes all over the world, and partly a savage attack on totalitarianism with its attendant horrors of labour camps and secret police. This theme he was to develop with bitter skill in *Animal Farm* and *1984*.

Orwell reveals his capacity for thinking about large groups in terms of the individuals that constitute them, unlike those Social Scientists and politicians who think in abstract terms about 'the group' or 'the people.' Orwell's attitude was a combination of feeling and intellect, which sometimes led him into a false analysis of society; his contention that 'the real secret of class distinction in the West' was based on the assumption that 'the lower classes smell' is a crude and exaggerated observation — but, at least, much of his argument is based on his personal 'field work' in the slums of Paris and London where he came face to face with individual misery. Compare his attitude with that expressed in the speech made by Neville Chamberlain during the Munich crisis:

> "How horrible, fantastic, incredible, it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing ! . . . . . ."

Admittedly Orwell was not an economist or a sociologist; admittedly he may sometimes have sentimentalised the 'common man' and over-simplified the issues of confronting men in the 1930's, and indeed, today. This is illustrated, perhaps, by a comparison between Spain in 1936 and Hungary twenty years later, for in both crises a case could be made for non-intervention on the part of the Great Powers. But what cannot be denied is the fact that Orwell cared, and cared profoundly, about the fate of thousands of individual men and women who suffered in a world dominated by power-politics, however inevitable the latter condition may be. It is because he cared that we still read Orwell on the Spanish Civil War today; it is because, as that perceptive student of Lionel Trilling's remarked: 'he was a virtuous man.' *(Introduction to "Homage to Catalonia", Beacon Press, 1952).*

Before attempting any final generalisation about Orwell's social and political beliefs, it might be instructive to compare the ideas expressed in *The Road to Wigan Pier* with his Spanish writings. The fact that he was actually sensitive to the living conditions of his fellow-countrymen in the Welsh and Northern Industrial areas is evident from the following quotation taken from the first part of *The Road to Wigan Pier:*

'This is where industrialism led — to labyrinthine slums and dark back kitchens with sickly, aging people creeping round and round them like blackbeetles. It is a kind of duty to see and smell such places now and again, especially smell them, lest you should forget they exist.'

This is not the language either of the propagandist or the objective sociologist dealing with abstract concepts of unemployment or

malnutrition; it is the voice of one who had seen for himself, and is concerned to pass on his experience to others. Several critics have remarked on Orwell's sharp sense of smell; this sensitivity is often reflected in his detailed descriptions of the squalor and poverty of conditions in the so-called 'depressed areas'.

In *The Road to Wigan Pier* Orwell takes issue with Messrs. Gollancz, Laski and Strachey, the organisers of the Left Wing Book Club. In his opinion they represented a mistaken view of the aims and methods of Socialism. What he particularly disliked about the middle-class Socialist intellectuals was their apparent emphasis on the need for a master-plan to solve the ills of Society. Socialists like the Webbs and George Bernard Shaw were, to him, examples of this tendency to put order and precision above the personal liberty of the ordinary citizen. Orwell, on the contrary, saw Socialism as a spontaneous movement of individual men and women from all classes of society, united in their desire for a state based on justice and liberty. He said: 'All that is needed is to hammer two facts home into the public consciousness. One that the interests of all exploited people are the same: the other, that Socialism is compatible with common decency.' He stressed the folly of trying to break down class barriers which, he was perceptive enough to realise, are deeply ingrained in most of us, and which require more than just a planned redistribution of income to overcome. As Mr Hollis puts it: 'The classless society was not to him, as to some Socialists, a thing to be easily established by a few legislative changes. It was rather the place at infinity at which parallel straight lines would meet . . . the will-o'-the-wisp of all man's strivings.'

One major theme seems to dominate both Orwell's Spanish writings and *The Road to Wigan Pier*. He is concerned with the task of substantially improving the material lot of the working-class, whether English or Spanish. He believed that given the technical means available, this was possible. He is also concerned with the problem of government in a mass industrial society. Orwell's Spanish experiences and his pronounced antipathy to the Socialist planning elite led him to fear more than anything else the possible exchange of one kind of tyranny for another — the Capitalist ruling class for the totalitarian order of the Fascist and Communist ruling clique.

'*Pace* the economists, it is quite easy to imagine a world society, economically collectivist — that is, with the profit principle eliminated — but with all political, military and educational power in the hands of a small caste of rulers and their bravos. That or something like it is the objective of Fascism.'

He argued that, ideally, liberty and equality were only possible in an agricultural society where property could be distributed in such a way that no one man, or group of men, had substantially more than the other. (Whether, in fact, this has ever been the case is open to considerable argument.) But he was realistic enough

to admit that this was not possible in a mass industrial society, where the real power could very easily fall into the hands of an elite ruling class because they had all the resources of the modern technological state behind them. (This situation he, in fact, portrays in *1984*).

Thus, the basic problem facing Orwell as a Socialist was the need to somehow reconcile liberty and justice for the individual with a high material standard of living for the vast majority. His orthodox fellow-Socialists very often saw liberty and justice in economic terms. They discounted Orwell's problem since for them the replacement of a capitalist economy by a Socialist state ensured that the majority would decide on the allocation of resources within the state. The result would mean a fairer distribution of wealth and consequently a greater degree of liberty and justice for the individuals who constituted that majority.

Orwell never really succeeded in finding a satisfactory answer to the problem. Mr. Gollancz correctly points out in his somewhat pained reply to Orwell's criticism that an appeal based on the vague platform of liberty and justice is simply not enough by itself. Some kind of detailed programme is vital if any political movement is to make an impact on the electorate. Such a programme has to put forward specific policies for specific problems. This applies to any political party irrespective of its ideological outlook. Orwell's view that in accepting industrialism we must do so 'rather as one accepts a drug' is really no answer to the problem at all. To say that 'economic injustice will stop the moment we want it to stop and no sooner, and if we genuinely want it to stop the method adopted hardly matters' is, as Mr Hollis points out, not sufficient. The method is vital and certainly since 1945 political discussion in Britain has very largely centered on the question of method.

Orwell was reluctant to discuss the principle of nationalization as a means of altering the distribution of economic and political power within the State, and on the whole showed little interest in the detailed application of political principles. But to expect it is to expect too much of Orwell. He was at least conscious that a dilemma existed and it is as a critic of society rather than as a policy-maker that we read Orwell on these issues. He was, as Mr V. S. Pritchett has said, 'the conscience of his generation'. The British Left has cause to be grateful to him.

It is true that in Western Europe poverty and unemployment are no longer the major issues they were in Orwell's time. Nevertheless Orwell can still be read with profit in the light of what has happened since then. In the Far East and Africa newly-independent governments are desperately trying to emulate the high living standards enjoyed by the majority of Western European states. Their methods vary; the Indian experiment is an attempt to combine Western institutions of government with large-scale social and economic planning, China has followed the Soviet model

on the assumption that a large measure of individual liberty is incompatible with rapid industrialisation and its attendant benefits. The success or failure of either attempt may determine to a large extent the policies followed by other underdeveloped lands that have yet to gain their independence.

In the West economic and political units are increasing in size, irrespective of the party in power: the corporation, the trade union, the government department — all have consolidated their power with varying effects on the liberty and welfare of the individual. There is widespread criticism of the apparent rigidity of the party system in Britain. The keenest debates are often on non-political issues like homosexuality, capital punishment and obscene literature. The Suez Crisis is perhaps the major exception to this generalisation in the field of foreign policy. The power of mass communications, and the 'hidden persuaders' of Madison Avenue present new problems to the practice of democratic government in the United States. There are no easy short-cut solutions, but at least we are becoming increasingly aware that problems exist. It is to Orwell's credit that he wrote about these things when it was probably unfashionable to do so; he is still eminently worth reading. Here was one man who tried to keep his head in a world which appeared to be disintegrating around him, a man who tried to think honestly and independently and inspire others to do the same.

CHAUCER'S *KNIGHT'S TALE*

by T. G. WHITTOCK

John Dryden wrote of Chaucer's Tales, 'I prefer far above his other stories, the noble poem of *Palamon and Arcite,* which is of the Epique kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the Ilias and the Aeneis.' This is high praise indeed. Yet, in my opinion, it is praise that is amply warranted. Indeed, in English, perhaps the nearest thing to this tale is one of the great tragedies or one of the last 'romances' of Shakespeare. Certainly *The Knight's Tale* requires of the reader the same kind of attention that he would give to a Shakespeare play: by this I mean the kind of attention that appreciates, in every detail of the poetic structure, the confident intent of the creative intelligence.

What sort of a tale is it that Chaucer is making his Knight tell? It is of the epic kind, said Dryden. The opening lines set the tone of heroic grandeur. Notice too how in the first lines of the poem Chaucer makes use of the device, frequently used throughout the tale, of reminding the reader what else there is he could tell about had he the time or space to do so.

> And certes, if it nere to long to heere,
> I wolde have toold yow fully the manere
> How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
> By Theseus and by his chivalrye;
> And of the grete bataille for the nones
> Bitwixen Atthenes and Amazones;
> And how asseged was Ypolita,
> The faire, hardy queene of Scythia;
> And of the feste that was at hir weddynge,
> And of the tempest at hir hoom-comynge;
> But al that thyng I moot as now forbere.
> I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
> And wayke been the oxen in my plough.
> The remenant of the tale is long enough. (875-88)

The effect of this device is to suggest the tale's large realm of discourse in which the events of the story are to be seen. Every tale, novel, or play has (what I have called) a *realm of discourse.* By this I mean that the work of art defines within itself the range of experiences it will treat of and the structure of values that are to guide the reader's judgments. Let me briefly illustrate what I mean: in *Macbeth* it is roughly true to say that the action takes

place within the framework of the medieval (Christian) world order: salvation and damnation are presented as part of the central issue, and the reader is required explicitly to consider the issues of the play in such terms. *Romeo and Juliet,* on the other hand, has quite a different realm of action: the action takes place in the secular Renaissance world (despite the priest): the main conflict is between death and accidental disasters, and life fulfilled and flourishing. In the lines quoted above we can see that the realm of discourse of *The Knight's Tale* will be the world of chivalry and 'romance'. It will be the world of courteous and courageous actions, of love and war waged with ritualistic formality. Indeed even from the opening we can guess that the story will treat of love and war—the most basic of all human themes. Furthermore, love and war will be described in bold and extravagant colours, and the verse will ring with grandeur and ceremony.

> He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
> That whilom was ycleped Scithia,
> And weddede the queene Ypolita,
> And broughte hire hoom with hym in his contree
> With muchel glorie and greet solempnytee,
> And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.
> And thus with victorie and with melodye . . . (866-72)

The brief account of Theseus' deed of retribution upon Thebes and the 'tiraunt,' Creon, that forms a prelude to the tale of Palamon and Arcite, has an important function. Not only does it tell us something about the character of Theseus which is to be important later—that he is a true knight, chivalrous and good, and somewhat easily moved by pity—the prelude also introduces the important theme of 'Fortune.'

> 'Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,
> Upon us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.
> For, certes, lord, ther is noon of us alle,
> That she ne hath been a duchesse or a queene.
> Now be we caytyves, as it is wel seene,
> Thanked be Fortune and hire false wheel,
> That noon estaat assureth to be weel.' (920-26)

Fortune is the disruptive force in this ideal world of chivalric order and simplicity. No matter how good a man may be, how noble his motives, how secure his position, how great his degree, he is still a thrall to the fickle goddess. In a moment the spin of her wheel may turn his feasting and joy to pain and anguish. Life, for all its ceremony and honour, is precariously held.

Of course, reading the opening pages of the tale one doesn't consciously set out for oneself the 'romantic' framework as I have done here, one just without awareness comes to accept it. But for some modern readers this chivalric world may seem unreal, artificial and naïve, and may lead to their thinking this tale of Chaucer's has no significant bearing on their own lives. Indeed,

one of the fundamental questions to be asked in criticism is, 'What meaning has this work of art for me, living today?' I have deliberately sketched the conventions of this tale because I wanted the reader to consider this question, and because I wanted to remind him how a poet may make use of a framework to say things of universal significance. For literary conventions are essentially a means of controlling the reader's responses, and of directing his attention towards the artistic significance of the work.

After the somewhat grand opening dealing with Theseus the tale proper begins. Though at first the story of Palamon and Arcite may seem small in comparison to the grand sweep of poetry that has preceded it, it soon begins to grow in power and complexity. For the moment we are introduced to Palamon and Arcite on the battlefield, 'liggynge by and by, Both in oon armes,' their similarity and sworn brotherhood are stressed. They are both knights, of royal blood, in the bloom and vigour of young manhood. On the whole Chaucer does not give them much character beyond this. This is part of his design. If he gave each a different individuality we might, depending on our own natures and prejudices, be inclined to sympathise more with one character than the other, and Chaucer wants our sympathies to be equally balanced between the two young men. Similarly with Emelye Chaucer merely wants us to see her as the archetype of feminine grace and innocence.

> Emelye, that fairer was to sene
> Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene,
> And fressher than the May with floures newe—
> For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe,
> I noot which was the fyner of hem two —. (1035-39)

Not only do these lines have a freshness and natural vigour, the description relates Emelye to the traditional lady of courtly love. The idea of the lady's beauty striking a lover suddenly like the thrust of a weapon is also one of the traditional images of courtly love poetry, and is related to the modern convention of 'love at first sight.' That the poetry works within a convention, however, should not blind us to its beauty and force.

> 'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
> Of hire that rometh in the yonder place,
> And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
> That I may seen hire atte leeste weye,
> I nam but deed; ther nis namoore to seye.' (1118-22)

In the 'fresshe beautee' we feel concentrated both the bountiful life of spring and the startling charm of feminity—and these associations gain power by the contrast with the prison in which Palamon and Arcite are confined. As sunlight can dazzle, so sights experienced with awe and passion can be almost painful to behold. The word 'rometh' subtly associates the lady with natural creatures that wander freely with graceful spontaneity and 'in the yonder place' suggests how far removed from her Arcite feels himself to

be. 'Hir mercy and hir grace' joins feelings of spiritual love and worship to the already established sensations of physical ecstasy. All this Chaucer presents with astonishing lyrical tact. In this kind of poetry simplicity and elegance merge and become one.

This passage I said was completely *in* the convention of courtly love, and it exploits the convention perfectly. But the poetry isn't always in a convention: sometimes the poetry is partly inside and partly outside a convention, and sometimes it breaks completely away. When Palamon and Arcite begin to argue about each's right to love Emelye exclusively, the poetry overflows the bounds of the convention.

'Thow shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals than I;
And thou art fals, I telle thee outrely,
For paramour I loved hire first er thow.
What wiltow seyn? Thou wistest nat yet now
Wheither she be a womman or goddesse!
Thyn is affeccioun of hoolynesse,
And myn is love, as to a creature;
For which I tolde thee myn aventure
As to my cosyn and my brother sworn.
I pose that thow lovedest hire biforn;
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That "who shal yeve a lovere any law?"
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,
Than may be yeve to any erthely man;
And therfore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broken al day for love in each degree.
A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.
He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed,
Al be she mayde, or wydwe, or elles wyf.' (1153-71)

The humour here gently derides the way lovers rationalize their feelings and elaborately justify their actions, and provides a note of 'realism' which is played off against the convention. But there is more to the passage than this. One of the most serious and important themes of the tale begins to emerge here. Man is the torn victim of conflicting passions and duties. The drive of love rends sworn amities and separates blood kinships. Love itself is split by the rival claims of Agape and Eros, spiritual love and physical love.

Thyn is the affeccioun of hoolynesse,
And myn is love, as to a creature.

Codes of conduct demand one thing of man, the laws of his passionate nature demand another. Between what he desires and what he gets, between what he imagines and what falls, between his comings and goings man is stretched and racked.

'Allas, why pleynen folk so commune
On purveiaunce of God, or of Fortune,
That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse

Wel bettre than they kan hemself devyse?
Som man desireth for to han richesse,
That cause is of mordre or greet siknesse;
And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,
That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.
Infinite harmes been in this mateere.
We witen nat what things we preyen heere:
We faren as he that dronk is as a mous.
A dronke man woot wel he hath an hous,
But he noot which the righte wey is thider,
And to a dronke man the wey is slider.' (1251-64)

This complaint is made by Arcite when he is given his freedom, and is exiled from Emelye. We are amused by Arcite's lamentings because they seem a bit excessive for his situation, yet we are also touched by the serious resonances of this passage. The image of the drunk man staggering in search of his home is a distinctively Chaucerian image in its compassionate humour and humanity. It makes us recognise how the same terrible pattern can be felt even in the most minute, and ridiculous, particulars of life.

Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?
That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prison he moot dwelle alway:
That oother wher hym list may ride or go,
But seen his lady shal he nevere mo. (1348-52)

The tale of Palamon and Arcite, as it proceeds, is emblematic of man's conflict and frustration. But the tale is told in such a way that, tragic and terrible as the theme may be, we are never depressed or down-cast by it. On the contrary, Chaucer holds us with intrigued delight by his narration, and consistently astonishes us by the ease with which his lyrical simplicity can catch the very essence of human experience. What other poets, even such rich poets as Keats, Wordsworth and Shakespeare, we feel have had to strive for Chaucer seems to pour out as spontaneous benison.

The bisy larke, messager of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray,
And firy Phebus riseth up so bright
That al the orient laugheth at the light,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver dropes hangynge on the leves. (1491-96)

The abounding plenty of Chaucer's poetry and the implications inherent in the theme he is treating of reach their fullest expression in the final sections of the tale—in the description of the powers of Mars, Venus, Diane, and Saturn, in the account of the battle, the death of Arcite and the grief and celebrations that follow. The conflicts in man's nature between his various passions and aspirations are given body and substance in the fable by the way Palamon, Arcite and Emelye appeal to the gods to answer their desires, by the wrangling of the gods and Saturn's grim (yet just)

compromise. Arcite's aggressive desire to win his love by defeating his opponent, Palamon's surrender to the charities of love, Emelye's yearning to retain the independence of chastity are presented as comedy, through the way each unknown to the others appeals to a god; but it is comedy that shows the terrible irreconcilabilities inherent in life, and sets these particular people and their differences in a perspective which takes in almost the whole range of human experience. The magnitude of the poetic vision can be seen particularly in the renowned description of the temple of Mars.

> Ther saugh I first the derke ymaginyng
> Of Felonye, and al the compassyng;
> The crueel Ire, reed as any gleede;
> The pykepurs, and eek the pale Drede;
> The smylere with the knyf under the cloke;
> The shepne brennynge with the blake smoke;
> The tresoun of the mordrynge in the bedde;
> The open werre, with woundes al bibledde;
> Contek, with blody knyf and sharp manace.
> Al ful of chirkynge was that sory place.
> .....
> Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;
> The hunte strangled with the wilde beres;
> The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
> The cook yscalded, for al his longe ladel . . . (1995-2020)

By the sudden change to first person narration, and by vivid and concentrated imagery Chaucer makes us feel that we ourselves as we read are eyewitnesses to these very deeds: the very sound of 'chirkyng' seems to ring in our ears, and we are as appalled as if we have for the first time experienced the vicious horrors in life. There is an incredible centrality to the images: — 'the smylere with the knyf under the cloke' catches the essence of hypocritical treachery. The image of the sow eating a child in the cradle gives the horror of all life's meaningless accidents, while the following image of the cook being scalded extends a similar horror to even trivial and comic incidents.

It is the mark of Chaucer's greatness that he cannot only write passages of such immediacy and power, but that he can also hold them firmly in place in a tale whose overall tone is one of chivalric magnanimity. Indeed, the artistic discipline of the poetry is the guarantee of its greatness. The story is focussed upon the actions of three people, but by his variety of tones and through his chivalric and Olympian framework Chaucer makes us feel the universality and magnitude of his subject. From Palamon, Arcite and Emelye our imaginations are led on to contemplate the passions of Mars, Venus and Diana, and how these passions work themselves out in mankind generally. Our vision is further extended by the presentation of the awe-full justice of Saturn (or Jupiter), supreme of gods, who rules all human destiny. As punisher and

destroyer Saturn is inexorable in his power:

> 'Myn is the ruyne of the hye halles,
> The fallynge of the toures and of the walles
> Upon the mynour or the carpenter.
> I slow Sampsoun, shakynge the piler;
> And myn be the maladyes colde,
> The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
> My lookyng is the fader of pestilence. (2463-69)

But Saturn/Jupiter is also the god of justice—to him falls the task of reconciling the rival claims of Venus and Mars, and of apportioning each man's desert. And, as the end of the tale asserts, he is also the source of universal necessity and recreation. Chaucer shows us in his working out of the tale of Palamon and Arcite the secret justice of Saturn, and makes us feel, through what happens to them, the essential justice and harmony of life. Indeed, the ordered and rich variety of the poetry in the tale is a reflection of the order and variety we find in life; and our sense of aesthetic harmony and justice within the tale is one with our sense of universal harmony and justice outside the tale.

The tournament between Palamon and Arcite for the possession of Emelye is presented with all the pageantry and colourful formality of a medieval painting. But basically it is the sexual struggle to win a mate that is being presented in the ritualistic splendour of the tableau. The primitive and instinctive drives of the human race are felt behind all the elaborate and civilised trappings of the courtesy. Even though the knights have been forbidden to fight to the death by the gentle-hearted Duke, Chaucer makes us feel that this battle is emblematic of all human strife. The archetypal nature of the battle is created partly by the ritual (even today we can still feel in cowboy films the duel as the inevitable expression and outcome of conflict; also consider the function of the duels at the end of *Hamlet* or *Lear*), and partly by Chaucer's deliberately pitching his description in terms that bring to mind the whole alliterative tradition of heroic battle poetry.

> Ther is namoore to seyn, but west and est
> In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest;
> In gooth the sharpe spore into the syde.
> Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde;
> Ther shyveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke;
> He feeleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
> Up spryngen speres twenty foot on highte;
> Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte;
> The helmes they tohewen and toshrede;
> Out brest the blood with stierne stremes rede;
> With mighty maces the bones they tobreste. (2601-11)

Though there is zest and delight in the description, we are also made to feel the fundamental savagery of war here.

As might be expected Arcite, who appealed to the god of war, wins the tournament. But in his moment of triumph, through the machinations of Saturn, he is mortally injured. In his dying moments we are made to feel that this end is the common lot all men must share. Arcite's painful last words whisper a universal lamentation.

'Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare o point of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love moost;
But I biquethe the servyce of my goost
To yow aboven every creature,
Syn that my lyf may no lenger dure.
Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departynge of our compaignye!
Allas, myn hertes queene! allas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, withouten any compaingnye . . . ' (2765-79)

Life is seen as dwelling amid 'compaignye'—knowing mirth, and solace, and security—death is seen as utter negation and loneliness. Yet what makes Arcite's death all the more pitiful is the realisation, present in the poetry, that 'compaignye' is never fully achieved. No man can make any one else understand more than 'o point of alle his sorwes smerte'. In life there is an anguish as keen as the pains of death itself: the anguish of frustrated desires and unanswered aspirations. The pains of his death and the woes of his love for Emelye are merged in one pathetic lamentation in the dying Arcite. And even what love *is* won, is won only to be snatched away: 'Now with his love, now in his colde grave.' This, alas, is the human condition. Yet in his poetry Chaucer makes us feel that the search to love and be loved is the very breath of life.

Arcite dies like a true knight, with magnanimity and the unselfish desire to have the friends he loves know the happiness he must forsake. In death the courtly spirit is victorious. The poetry is all the more moving because of the grim and unsentimental way Chaucer presents to us the physical process of death.

And with that word his speche faille gan,
For from his feet up to his brest was come
The coold of deeth, that hadde hym overcome,
And yet mooreover, for in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost al ago.
Oonly the intellect, withouten moore,
That dwelled in his herte syk and soore,
Gan faillen whan the herte felte deeth.
Dusked his eyen two, and failled breeth,

But on his lady yet caste he his eye;
His laste word was, 'Mercy, Emelye!'
His spirit chaunged hous and wente ther,
As I cam nevere, I kan nat tellen wher.
Therfore I stunte, I nam no divinistre;
Of soules fynde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
Of hem, though that they were writen wher they dwelle.

(2797-2814)

Even the last six lines, with their unexpected humour, add to the pathetic grimness of the scene. Chaucer, through the mouth of the Knight, eschewing speculation and superstitution, reminds us how ignorant we are and holds our view firmly to this world which is the only world we know.

Grief and lamentation follow Arcite's death. Chaucer, with another touch of humour, shows how even into the most serious and genuine experiences dubious (and absurd) elements enter.

Allas, the pitee that was ther,
Cracchynge of chekes, rentynge eek of heer.
'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen crye,
'And haddest gold ynough, and Emelye?' (2833-36)

But these women, despite their comic obtuseness in seeing life's fulfilment as made up of no more than the enjoyment of gold or sex, have worded the fundamental question: why should men die thus? Theseus' father, the old Egeus, in the disillusionment of age, and speaking with senile sententiousness, offers only despair of life for comfort.

'Right as ther dyed nevere man,' quod he,
'That he ne lyvede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther lyvede never man,' he seyde,
'In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we been pilgrymes, passyng to and fro.
Deeth is an ende of every worldly soore.' (2843-49)

Through Egeus, Chaucer gives expression to a mood we genuinely feel when the thought of death troubles us, but by giving expression to it makes us see that such a mood is onesided and inadequate.

A fuller and more balanced attitude to death is given expression by Chaucer in his description of the funeral pyre. This passage is a remarkable *tour de force* in which Chaucer writes one sentence over forty lines long: the verb is mentioned once near the beginning and then held back till right at the end it is repeated once. The effect is to bind the whole passage in to one enormous vision of ritualistic grief and tribute.

But how the fyr was maked upon highte,
Ne eek the names that the trees highte,
As ook, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popler,
Wylugh, elm, plane, assh, box, chasteyn, lynde, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, bech, hasel, ew, whippeltree, —
How they weren feld, shal nat be toold for me;
Ne hou the goddes ronnen up and doun,
Disherited of hire habitacioun,
In whiche they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphes, fawnes and amadrides;
Ne hou die beestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And thanne with drye stikkes cloven a thre,
And thanne with grene wode and spicerye,
And thanne with clooth of gold and with perrye,
And gerlandes, hangynge with ful many a flour;
The mirre, th'encens, with al so greet odour;
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desir;
Ne what jeweles men in the fyre caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
Ne how somme caste hir sheeld, and somme hir spere,
And of hire vestimentz, whiche that they were,
And coppes fulle of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes, with an huge route,
Thries riden al the fyr aboute
Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutynge,
And thries with hir speres clateryngе;
And thries how the ladyes gonne crye;
Ne how that lad was homward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that lyche-wake was yholde
Al thilke nyght; ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;
Who wrastleth best naked with oille enoynt,
Ne who that baar hym best, in no disjoynt.

Through the grandeur of this description of the obsequies Chaucer expresses the preciousness and dignity of human life: the variety of trees cut down, the woods laid bare, the jewels and other precious things cast into the fire, all these are a courtesy toward

the dead, a gesture that shows how much we value human life. Thus the funeral rites are an affirmation of life and values, and grief is mingled with rejoicing:

> Ne how that lad homward was Emelye;
> Ne how Arcite is brent to ashen colde;
> Ne how that lyche-wake was yholde
> Al thilke nyght; ne how the Grekes pleye
> The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye.

As the woes of disaster and the anguish of grief heal, men come to see life whole again. What is necessary must be accepted, and the goodness of the universe rejoiced in. This, as I understand it, is the affirmation to which the whole of the Knight's Tale moves; and it is given explicit expression in the final speech of Duke Theseus.

> That thilke Moevere stable is and eterne.
> Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
> That every part dirryveth from his hool. (3004-6)

In his speech Theseus presents the disasters and pains of man's life in terms of the natural patterns of growth and decay.

> Loo the ook, that hath so long a norisshynge
> From tyme that it first bgynneth to sprynge,
> And hath so long a life, as we may see,
> Yet at the last wasted is the tree.
> Considereth eek how that the harde stoon
> Under oure feet, on which we trede and goon,
> Yet wasteth it as it lyth by the weye.
> The brode ryver somtyme wexeth dreye;
> The grete tounes se we wane and wende.
> Thanne may ye se that al this thyng hath ende.
>
> Of man and womman seen we wel also . . . (3017-27)

Though individual things droop and end, the source from which they came and which receives them again is unfinished, inexhaustible and everlasting.

> What maketh this but Juppiter, the kyng,
> The which is prince and cause of alle thyng,
> Convertynge al unto his propre well
> From which it is dirryved, sooth to telle? (3035-38)

Though what Theseus says is but age-old traditional thought, Chaucer's poetry clothes it with such decorum, and gives it such richness of implication, that the speech becomes a fitting summation of the tale.

After having faced up to the inevitability of disaster and suffering in life, the tale ends by placing all its emphasis on the fulfilment of happiness and the celebration of joy.

'What may I conclude of this longe serye,
But after wo I rede us to be merye,
And thanken Juppiter of al his grace?
And er that we departen from this place
I rede that we make of sorwes two
O parfit joye, lastynge everemo.' (3067-72)

The union of Palamon and Emelye concludes the tale; in their happiness all the themes of the tale are reconciled, and we are shown how joy can exist despite, and perhaps because of, anguish and suffering.

And thus with alle blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon ywedded Emelye.
And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
Sende hym his love that hath it deere aboght. (3097-3100)

(The line references are all to Robinson's edition, *The Complete Works of Chaucer.* O.U.P.)

THOU SHALT NOT MIX!

by H. MEIDNER

It may be held that questions of political morality should be dealt with by persons trained in moral philosophy. However, we are all confronted with certain political issues to which not only economic but also moral principles should be applied.

Because of a progressive and insidious encroachment by 'the State' on the rights of the individual, many people fear the state, and see always a conflict between the rights of the individual on the one hand and the obligations placed on the individual by the state on the other. I wish to try to show that an over-emphasis on this view of the state is both historically unsound, and detrimental to public morality.

Present-day South African society is based on a well-developed industrial economy, and the machinery of state has become something of a mixture of fascism (no abuse implied here) and socialism (no abuse either). The original nineteenth century capitalist economy has developed and has incorporated on the one hand, 'workers' compounds', 'reference books', 'work permits', 'passport privileges', etc.; and on the other hand such social services as old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, as well as state-operated concerns, which were originally privately owned, like the railways. These developments represent an undeniable increase in the influence of the state upon the lives and affairs of individuals.

To be sure, one may deplore this increase in state control, and the disappearance of some of the liberties of the individual. One may also deplore unemployment insurance and old-age pensions, both unknown before 1880 in Germany and before 1910 in Great Britain. But society has developed since then and by deploring these developments political progress cannot be made. It is necessary to decide what particular developments can be countenanced, and in doing so cognisance must be taken both of political developments and moral principles, because it is a feature of healthy political attitudes that they can unite these two in harmony.

Now, those who place the highest value on individual liberty will probably not countenance proposals that seem to limit it. However, from a moral point of view it seems to me not permissible to place the *highest* value on individual liberty. There must be a balance which will preserve the maximum amount of individual liberty compatible with the fulfilment by the individual of his

obligations to society. To think otherwise is to wish for anarchy. While some aspects of individual liberty are absolute and unchanging, individual liberty as a whole is neither limitless nor an absolute concept; it is constantly changing and requires periodic definition. Examples of absolute and unchanging aspects of individual liberty are the freedoms of thought, speech, movement and association, the freedom to choose one's wife, the type of work one wishes to perform and with what lawful pursuit one occupies one's leisure time. (It might be said in passing that in South Africa none of these freedoms are guaranteed for the Africans and several of them are not guaranteed for the Europeans either.)

Men have at all times adjusted their accustomed degree of individual liberty to the evolving demands of society, provided these were morally justified. Thus, for instance, man agreed to abide by laws, he surrendered his right to have several wives and to own slaves, he submitted to having his children vaccinated, he surrendered his right to keep his children illiterate, and the right to employ children for personal gain. This willingness to surrender some aspects of individual liberty is not surprising, because the most fundamental and all-embracing moral principle is just that which regulates the individual's conduct in relation to his fellows. This moral principle is contained in those of the Ten Commandments which deal with man and his neighbours:

> 'But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.
> Honour thy father and thy mother.
> Thou shalt not kill.
> Thou shalt not commit adultery.
> Thou shalt not steal.
> Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
> Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.'

This moral principle in its entirety has been formulated again in:

> 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with thy mind, *and thy neighbour as thyself.*'

Kant's categorical imperative states this principle once more:

> 'Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law.'

There can be no doubt that man must place the *highest* value on this moral principle and injunction, and *not* on individual liberty. As society became more complex so the degree of limitation of individual liberty increased. What was once considered a right

of the individual, may become a forbidden practice; for instance, slave-owning came to be seen as immoral, and was made illegal.

The agencies by which such changes became established have commonly been religious and political. In all cases where a moral principle was involved, the change was eventually accepted by a majority, and—what is very important—voluntarily so. A time of discussion, a time of argument, a time of propagation of the new views, a time of the emergence of leaders with overwhelming moral force, usually preceded the acceptance and establishment of such changes. However, it is certain that a recalcitrant minority always remained, which accepted the new outlook only because it was compelled to do so by a law based on the moral judgement of the majority. This moral judgement of the majority determined in particular instances that the demands of society were superior to the rights of the individual, and legislated accordingly. The prohibition of child labour is a fairly recent and telling example; in our time the prohibition of race discrimination is likely to afford a new example.

It is of the utmost importance that the morality of the proposed legislation is challenged, especially by those who dissent from this judgement of the majority. The test for the morality of this judgement can be no other or better than that fundamental injunction or imperative cited above. One test question must therefore be:—

> 'Will the proposed limitation of individual liberty, hitherto enjoyed by a few, enlarge the sum total of individual liberty enjoyed by the people as a whole ?'

(Although it is crude to assess individual liberty quantitatively, I believe it to be necessary.)

As mentioned earlier, some aspects of individual liberty have as fundamental a moral validity as the categorical imperative itself; but not all. One could define: those freedoms can claim to be truly personal and of absolute validity, which for their enjoyment need not interfere with other people's personal freedom. The taking away of such truly personal freedoms is always immoral and tyrannical, because there can be no moral justification for depriving anybody of a freedom the practice of which does not interfere with another person's freedom. In contrast to these truly personal freedoms there are those which directly or indirectly involve for their enjoyment the curtailment of other people's personal freedom. To take away such individual liberties or privileges can be a moral act in every respect.

Before proceeding to an issue taken from present day South African politics, I wish to emphasise that I recognise as absolute and eternally valid the categorical imperative as well as the existence of clearly definable personal freedoms; these two do not conflict and together they are the foundation of human society. (I am aware of the opinion that there are no absolute unchanging moral values, no free will, etc., but it is not my opinion.)

It is my purpose now to take the thoughts outlined above and to apply them to an issue of our everyday life in South Africa, namely the colour bar, and to its compulsory abolition. The colour bar is the foundation of South African society and its economic structure. The removal of the colour bar will touch the very basis on which South African society, both black and white, is built. The consequences of such a step will be far-reaching indeed. If chaos is to be avoided in South Africa the abolition of the colour bar (when the time arrives) will have to be carried out with planning, discipline and speed; that there will be a time for the abolition of the colour bar, there can be no doubt.

Traditionally established in many fields, though not in all, the colour bar was probably not morally and politically abhorrent to the majority, who were not conscious of a moral wrong associated with it. Today we witness a change. The colour bar is *not* accepted by the majority any longer, but seen to be morally unjustifiable. It is true, this majority is mainly black, although one would probably find that a majority of whites, if put to the test, would agree that the colour bar is *morally* unjustifiable, however much it may be politically desirable from their point of view. The removal of the colour bar must bring with it the removal of many white privileges. The question arises therefore, whether a policy for the removal of the colour bar by law can be a morally valid one.

The compulsory removal of the colour bar would forbid racial segregation in all fields by law. Taking education as an important example, it would mean that all schools would be open to all children who possess the *educational* qualifications required for any particular school. Schools receiving public money would be prevented *by law* from practising racial discrimination, which morally as well as politically is unacceptable. It is unacceptable because it is a wrong to take public funds to which all have, directly or indirectly, contributed and to use them unequally between two sections of the population. Even if the intention were to provide adequate schools for both sections of the population, but to keep these schools racially segregated, it would be wrong because it has been established beyond any doubt that 'separate' means 'not equal'.

Two arguments are usually put up in discussions of such a policy, the first: 'If the practice of segregation were forbidden by law, it would also mean the end of religious schools'.

This question suggestes a parallel between religious exclusiveness and racial discrimination. There is, however, no parallel here; the religious school requires only that children sent to it shall receive its particular religious instruction (and many do not insist on that). These schools do not necessarily exclude a child because it or its parents do not belong to a particular church. The right of admission is not determined by a birth-given, unalterable circumstance, such as race; admission depends on a decision of the intellect as to whether or not one wants one's child to receive

a certain type of religious education. From the moral point of view religious schools should be the first to abolish race discrimination.

The second argument suggests that compulsory non-segregation is as tyrannical and immoral as compulsory segregation, because it too limits individual liberty. This suggestion is based on confusion. There is a fundamental moral distinction between compulsory segregation and compulsory non-segregation. Segregation arises from the injunction: 'Thou shalt not mix', it is based on disapproval of one's fellow men and on an unjustifiable generalisation which condemns a whole race as inferior, in perpetuity — a thoroughly immoral attitude. On the other hand non-segregation forbids this immoral judgement and is based on the most fundamental of moral demands made on men: '. . . . Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Further, whilst it is true that both policies are compulsory, it would be as absurd to equate them therefore, as it would be to equate compulsory infestation of houses with bugs and compulsory fumigation of infested houses.

Furthermore, it must be noted that compulsory non-segregation does not limit any of the *truly* personal freedoms. It would deprive some people of the privilege of segregated schooling, because that privilege has only been enjoyed at the expense of other people's personal freedom. If we apply the test question formulated earlier it will be seen that this limitation of a privilege, hitherto enjoyed by some, is morally justified. The judgement of the majority today which demands non-segregation is a moral judgement and of superior value to the wishes of a recalcitrant minority who refuse to accept the view on race discrimination held by the world of today.

In addition non-segregation would give to the vast majority what I believe to be additional truly personal freedom: — equal educational opportunity—, so that the sum total of individual freedom among men would be increased.

It would seem then, that from the moral point of view there cannot be any objection to a policy which would open all schools to all children on an equal basis or to the enforcement of such a policy by law.

CORRESPONDENCE

LANGUAGE AND THE WORLD VIEW

The Editors,
THEORIA.

Dear Sirs,

I am grateful to Mr Jones for the interest he has shown through this correspondence column *(Theoria 11)* in my article *(Theoria 9)*. I chose to write on the subject of *Language and the World View*, thinking that it would have a far wider appeal with readers of *Theoria* than an article on some aspect of descriptive linguistics in general or of Bantu Grammar in particular, but Mr Jones and other readers will look in vain for firm foundations and the systematic rigour required of a science in the speculations surrounding the *Weltanschauung*. The techniques of descriptive linguistics are as rigorous as those of any other science *(vide* Harris's *Methods in Strucural Linguistics)*, but the subject of metalinguistics lies only partly within the province of linguistics: it abuts upon the boundaries of anthropology and psychology. Consequently it has been neglected by all three disciplines. Linguists have made deductions from what is now known as the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis', that thought is conditioned by language and the world view which is itself conditioned by language, but no psychologist to my knowledge has subjected his hypothesis to experimental test. And yet it seems to me that the implications of this hypothesis are fundamental to psychology, not only in the study of perception and cognition but also in the carrying out of tests by means of the technique of verbal stimulus and verbal response, especially where the verbal stimulus is in one language translated into another and the verbal response to that translated stimulus has to be translated back again into the original language ! However, it is not altogether the fault of the psychologist, for the linguist must first lead the way. Mr Jones asks me what procedures I would advocate, and I will try to comply with his request later on; but first let me briefly reply to his minor queries.

Mr Jones writes, 'The number of words used to distinguish species within a genus cannot be assumed to be in direct proportion to the importance attached to the genus'. There is no assumption here; the truth of this assertion is obvious from the facts. No anthropologist is surprised at the wealth of words for 'cow' in

Zulu, for the distinguishing feature of the culture is its 'cattle complex'. Nor should we be surprised at the concentration of vocabulary round the horse in English hunting circles. To many an Englishman a horse is a horse; its sex does not concern him and its colour is either black or white or brown. But in these circles a horse is never a horse; it is a 'mount' of some description: stallion, mare, gelding, as to its sex; black, grey (i.e. white), bay (i.e. dark brown), chestnut (i.e. light brown), roan, piebald, skewbald, as to its colours; every detail of its body has a name, and every variety of its gait. There can be no doubt that all this is in direct proportion to the importance attached to the horse in English 'county' culture !

Let me try to explain what I mean when I say that those aspects of grammatical structure that are still living semantically, i.e. that have a correlation with the external world, are of greater significance to this study of metalinguistics than those that are not. The category of gender in French is virtually a meaningless survival. It is true that a male is treated in the masculine and a female in the feminine gender, and referred to as 'il' and 'elle' respectively, but seeing that all things are either masculine or feminine regardless of any real difference between them, we cannot say that there is much meaning in gender or much significance for metalinguistics in this item of grammatical structure. On the other hand, although the inflectional category of gender is not to be found in English, sex distinctions are made in the language. A male is referred to as 'he' and a female as 'she', and all things are referred to as 'it'. This item of grammatical structure is correlated with the sex distinctions to be observed in the external world, and because of this meaningful correlation, it is significant when we refer regardless of sex to dogs as 'he' and cats as 'she', and when we refer to a sexless thing like a ship or the moon as 'she'. A Frenchman also refers to the moon as 'elle', but it cannot have the same significance when house, sword, intelligence, leg (arm is masculine), hand (foot is masculine), bravery (courage is masculine), la nuit (le jour), la chaise (le table), etc., are also identified as 'elle'. To the Englishman French is deficient in omitting to indicate the sex of the person or persons involved in such a statement as 'Sa mere lui a donné de l'argent', which may mean 'Her mother has given her some money', 'His mother has given him some money', 'Her mother has given him some money', 'His mother has given her some money'. Presumably the Frenchman thinks that English runs to superfluity here, but this is simply another aspect of the same difference between the two languages.

In both French and English the grammatical category of number still retains its semantic correlation, and we see the difference between 'one thing' and 'many things'. If we were Hottentots we would see the difference between 'one thing', 'two things', and 'many things', for that language makes a triple distinction in number. Therefore I would regard as significant the fact that the

collective noun 'pease' (c.f. wheat, maize, rice, etc.) has come to be treated grammatically as 'peas', the plural of 'pea'. I suggest that when the word was 'pease', the object was eaten as wheat is eaten, as bread or porridge, in a mass collectively, but that when it came to be eaten individually the word became 'peas' on analogy with 'beans'. The new word 'pea' now refers to a single seed — on analogy with 'bean' which refers to a single pod, for here we eat the pods and not the seeds. Mr Jones may know whether my deductions do in fact reflect a change in English feeding habits.

I cannot agree with Mr Jones that 'The Englishman refuses to recognise a common state of being in himself and in his fellow men' because he says 'I am' and 'he is', whereas the Afrikaner says 'Ek is' and 'hy is'. In French the verb 'to be' has a different form for each person singular and plural. The Englishman simplifies this by using the form 'are' for all three persons plural, and dropping the second person singular, 'thou art', altogether. He retains 'I am' and 'he is'. The Afrikaner has simplified further by using the form 'is' for all persons singular and plural. The fact that 'am' and 'is' are parts of the same verb 'to be' is proved by the fact that both forms are replaced by the one form 'was' in the past tense, by 'be' in the present subjunctive ('May I/he be . . .', 'Let me/him be . . .'), and by 'were' in the past subjunctive ('If I/he were . . .'). The fact that the Englishman says 'I am' and 'he is' is therefore of no metalinguistic significance at all. On the other hand, the fact that Portuguese has two verbs 'to be', 'ser' and 'estar', is of the utmost significance, as Mr Jones point out. It both determines and reflects an important aspect of the world view, and surely influences Portuguese thinking. We can perceive the difference between 'ser' and 'estar', but our language does not condition us to see it as a distinction worthy of everyday observance. Similarly the Zulu can see the difference between blue and green, but his language does not predispose him to argue as to whether the sea is blue or green, for these are shades of the same colour.

Towards a Science of Metalinguistics. Metalinguistics, or the study of the relationship between language and the culture of which it is a part, between language-in-culture and the world view, and between language and thought, is a study that has barely begun. It requires the coöperation of the linguist, the anthropologist, and, with regard to the language-and-thought problem, especially the psychologist, but the linguist must first gather together a large body of facts from which to deduce postulates and hypotheses, before the psychologist can take over and apply the test of scientific experiment. Here, in response to Mr Jones's request, I want to outline the procedures I would advocate.

The first step is to determine the total linguistic structure of many languages of different types. The total linguistic structure includes both vocabulary (e.g. the concentrations surrounding objects of cultural value) and grammar (e.g. gender, number, and other grammatical categories), with meaning at both levels, lexical

meaning (the reference of words) and grammatical meaning (the significance of the forms—morphology—and arrangements—syntax—of grammar).

At the lexical level the German linguists seem to be making the most fruitful investigations. Since the days of the great philologists of the nineteenth century who devoted themselves almost entirely to the comparative study of the Indo-European languages, there has been a recession in Germany until recently, with the revival of interest in semantics. These modern linguists are known as the Neo-Humboldtians, after Von Humboldt who first postulated the significance of language for the *Weltanschauung*. He emphasised the fact that language is something much more than a means of communication; it is a creative power in itself. Taking their inspiration from the writings of Von Humboldt, these linguists have elaborated the theory of the Linguistic Field *(Sprachliche Feld)*, which is a group of words forming an organically articulated unit *(Wortfeld)* and covering a specific area of meaning *(Begriffsfeld)*. The vocabulary of a language is made up of such linguistic fields. This is structuralism, the latest trend in linguistics, as applied to semantics; structuralism, where single elements are seen as components of higher units from which they derive their significance. Here we have the concept of the inner universe as the reflection of the outer universe of reality filtering through the window of language, a window of leaded lights, each light being a linguistic field leaded into the total system by means of grammar. But this window is also a stained-glass window which gives only a distorted or 'conditioned' reflection of the light of the external world. Here we have the concept of language as the *Zwischenwelt* between reality and its conceptualization, and this has tremendous implications to psychology in the sphere of perception and cognition and also to philosophy in the sphere of epistemology. The American metalinguist, Whorf, has contributed many flashes of inspiration to this study, but it is the German Neo-Humboldtian linguists who are building up the theory that is necessary.

At the grammatical level the lead has been taken by the American linguists. Here the concern is simply to give an accurate description of grammatical structure, and there is no orientation towards metalinguistics as with the Neo-Humboldtians. Structural analysis is carried out without recourse to meaning. The founder of the structural school was Bloomfield, who wrote in 1930, 'To accept definitions of meaning (as the criterion for grammatical analysis) in place of identication in formal terms is to depart from scientific discourse'. It is only when grammatical structure has been analyzed in formal terms that correlations between form and meaning may be made, from which metalinguistic inferences may be drawn.

What goes by the name of 'Grammar' in the world of education has very little to do with grammatical structure. If this seems a sweeping statement, I refer Mr Jones and other readers to *'The*

Structure of English' by Charles Fries (1952), for it is indeed a revelation to see the structure of English for the first time. By far the most important device for indicating grammatical relationship in English is word order. In Latin it is inflection; to treat English as a sort of Latin that has lost most of its inflections is not only unsatisfactory but fundamentally false. To use Fries's terminology, 'The grammar of a language consists of the devices that signal structural meanings', and these devices in English consist primarily of patterns of arrangement of classes of words which we call form-classes or parts of words, and these patterns may be set out in tables (declensions and conjugations). Grammatical form is paradigmatic in Latin and syntagmatic in English. Fries therefore approaches and analyzes English on the level of syntax. He uses the technique of substitution with test sentences ('frames') to determine what words fit into each position, and thus arrives at four classes of words corresponding to nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, but he warns us not to make this identification with the traditional parts of speech. He applies further frames to subdivide these form-classes, e.g. Class 2 words (verbs) are subdivided into transitive and intransitive, and a small group identified by this frame:

The — (s) *are/were* good.
The — *is/was* good.

Such words are be, become, seem, feel, look, sound, taste, smell, a special group in English. Fries then proceeds to investigate the formal features that identify and characterize each of these four form-classes on the level of morphology, e.g. Class 2 words are characterized by regular patterns of contrast of form with words of Class 1 : friend/*be*friend; bark/*em*bark, train/*en*train; dark/dark*er*, light/light*en*/*en*lighten, life/*en*liven; sympathy/sympath*ize*, beauty/beaut*ify*; the 'past tense' dental suffix, -ed, -d or -t; other contrasts having the same 'past tense' correlation: sing/sang, ride/rode, etc. (strong verbs); and so on.

In addition he sets up fifteen groups of function words, which have no general identifying formal features but which are 'special items', very few in number compared with the form words, but very frequent in use, e.g. when, why, where, who, how, etc.; because, although, since, etc.; and, or, not, nor, but, which can only stand between words of the same form-class (both the concerts *and* the lectures, neither interesting *nor* profitable); yes and no; please; etc. The function words also serve to identify the form-classes, e.g. the, all, both, that, those, each, etc., identify Class 1 words; can, could, must, etc., identify Class 2 words. These function words have little or no lexical meaning apart from the structural meanings they signal with form words. The lexical meanings of the form words in a sentence are unnecessary for the signalling of the structural meaning of that sentence, but with function words one must know that *this* word *in itself* in *this* position signals a structural meaning.

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gymble in the wabe.

This piece of nonsense has no lexical meaning, and its structural meaning could be conveyed just as well like this:

Twas brillig, and the - - (s)
Did - and - in the - .

As English speakers we know that only nouns follow the function word 'the', and only a qualifying word may intervene; that only verbs follow the function word 'did'; that the function word 'and' only joins words of the same form class. The only inflection in this sentence is 's', the plural inflection.

The role of intonation is an interesting aspect of grammatical structure, as Fries shows. A certain group of function words (when, where, why, etc) can constitute sentences by themselves, and this single word with rising intonation seeks repetition and with falling intonation additional information, e.g. She is leaving today. — How ? (falling intonation) — By bus. Note also the difference in intonation between 'Will he be surprised ?' and 'Will he be surprised !', where the pitch of the voice is raised on 'he' and maintained to the end of the sentence.

Fries goes on to deal with cases of 'structural ambiguity', which the complex efficiency of the language makes surprisingly rare. A few Class 4 words (adverbs) can use the suffixes -er and -est ('degrees of comparison'). If these words are also Class 3 words (adjectives), where these suffixes are regularly used (in complementary distribution with 'more' and 'most'), there is structural ambiguity, as in this sentence, 'The dog looked longer than the cat'. Is 'longer' an adjective modifiying the noun or an adverb modifying the verb ? It could be either. Such words are fast, slow, hard, late, long, straight. However, I must leave readers to look at this fascinating analysis for themselves—I hope I have given a sufficiently appetizing taste to make them want to do so.

Correlations may now be made between form and meaning. Gender may be correlated with the external distinctions that the language under analysis chooses to notice : male and female, personal and impersonal, animate and inanimate, concrete and abstract, etc. Number may be correlated with one, two, three, and many. Tense is correlated with time in amazingly diverse ways from language to language.

At this stage I would advocate the comparative technique. We have gathered together detailed descriptions of the total linguistic structures, lexical and grammatical, forms and meanings, of many languages of different types. It remains for us to compare them, for it is only by so doing that the significant distinctions between languages become apparent. As regards gender, English has a threefold system, syntactically identified by 'he', 'she', 'it', which can be directly correlated with the sex distinctions that exist in the

world. French has a twofold system, morphologically identified by concordial agreement and syntactically identified by 'il' and 'elle', which cannot be correlated, or only to a very limited extent. English has another gender also, identified in possessive constructions : animate (the man's hat, the dog's tail) and inanimate (the pages of the book, the light of the moon). French also has another gender, identified in relative constructions : personal ('qui' after a preposition) and impersonal 'lequel' and 'laquelle' after a preposition). Bantu languages have a complicated system of gender operating morphologically by means of concord prefixes, but semantic correlations are very vague. Sex distinctions are completely overlooked grammatically. In Zulu, however, there is a personal-impersonal gender identified in various ways at the syntactical level. As regards number, European languages make a twofold distinction, the semantic correlation being 'one' and 'more than one'. Bantu languages make the same distinction with the same correlation, but many objects treated as singular in English are treated as plural in Zulu, and vice versa : 'water' is singular in English and plural in Zulu; 'amasi' is plural in Zulu but 'maas' (sour milk) is treated as singular in English — why is 'curds' plural and 'whey' singular ?; 'rain' is singular in both languages, but plural forms are found; the plural form 'waters' has a special use, but 'amanzi' has no singular form.

As regards tense, different languages treat time in many different ways. And here we come to the real subject of our study: seeing that this is so, surely we can deduce that these different treatments are reflections of different world views ? And surely we can deduce the corollary that these different treatments condition or determine different world views ? The next deductive step leads directly to the relationship between language and thought.

Not only tense, but other grammatical categories must be correlated and compared in this way; and not only grammatical categories, but also 'the ways of reporting experience that have become fixed in the language' (Whorf's 'fashions of speech') and the ways of expressing such concepts as causality, quantity, quality, space and time. Here the comparative technique is essential, for we may suppose our own concepts to be the ultimate reality until we see that other languages make completely different interpretations. Einstein tells us that our traditional concept of time as enshrined in the European languages is not reality at all, and we are surprised to find that the American Indians' concept of space-time is much nearer the mark. Korzybski in his *Science and Sanity* warns us that the European constructions of the verb 'to be' so basic to the formal logic of Aristotle are in conflict with the fact that no two events in nature are identical : that the European concepts of body and mind, space and time, distort the natural entities of body-mind and space-time; and that the structure of Indo-European is at odds with the principles of relativity as expounded by Einstein. Our concepts of space, time, causality, etc., are not reality but

linguistic interpretations of reality. 'A map is not a territory' Korzybski says.

The comparative technique is illuminating not only in the ways of expressing these concepts, but also in the 'fashions of speech'. The significance for the world view of the passive construction in English (He was arrested today. The book was sold yesterday.) only becomes apparent in comparison with French, where it is avoided as far as possible by impersonal and reflexive constructions (On l'a arrêté aujourd'hui. Le livre s'est vendu hier.) and by comparison with Zulu, where it is used far more frequently than in English in an attempt to make the person affected by the action the subject of the sentence, e.g. Washenelwa yilanga (He was set upon by the sun), Wafelwa nguyise nyakenye (He was died for by his father last year). The significance for the world view of such expressions in English as 'I am going to have/get my hair cut' only becomes apparent in comparison with French 'Je vais me faire couper les cheveaux' (I am going to have/get/make myself cut (as to) the hairs), Zulu 'Ngizokugundwa izinwele' (I am going to be cut (as to) the hairs), and other languages.

These correlations and comparisons must first be well made before inferences as to the relationship between language and the world view can be drawn. If we are trying to build up a scientific study, we must proceed step by step; leaps and bounds must be stopped, and those flashes of insight that seem so illuminating must be carefully controlled. Here the coöperation of the anthropologist is required to corroborate the deductions drawn by the linguist, for the world view is reflected not only in verbal behaviour but in all cultural behaviour. Most anthropologists living amongst 'exotic' peoples have noticed 'exotic' attitudes towards time reflected in behaviour. Here then the linguist works hand in hand with the anthropologist, each one assisting the other by his own observations relating respectively to linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of cultural behaviour.

At this stage, with the linguist and the anthropologist working together, it ought to be possible to draw up a set of postulates for the relationship between language and culture and between language-in-culture and the world view. With the assistance of the psychologist, hypotheses could then be made as to the relationship between language and thought. This is where the psychologist takes over to test the validity of these hypotheses by means of the experimental tests he has at his disposal. Here I can elucidate Mr Jones no further, but I feel sure that the results of these tests will prove that thought is to a surprisingly large extent conditioned by language. This must surely arouse the interest of the philosopher, startled to find that for centuries he has been making statements not about reality but about the structure of Indo-European !

Mr Jones is quite right in saying that 'The case for a science of metalinguistics does not seem to have been made'. The time must come when we can present a set of postulates for the science of

metalinguistics on analogy with Bloomfield's *A Set of Postulates for the Science of Linguistics* (1926), but that time is yet a long way off.

A. T. COPE.

NIETZSCHEAN ETHICS AND BIOLOGY

The Editors,
THEORIA.

Dear Sirs:

Dr Yourgrau, in his article *The Cognitive Value of Nietsche's Philosophy (Theoria 10),* makes a number of interesting and exciting points concerning Nietzsche's philosophy. In particular one of his remarks concerning Nietzsche's ethics raised certain questions to my mind which I wish to elucidate. My remarks of criticism do not apply specifically to Dr Yourgrau's article but rather use it as a point of reference.

Dr Yourgrau remarks: 'It has been maintained that Nietzsche's philosophy of life is in a deeper sense an effort at translating biological principles into cultural and ethical doctrines. "Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something in the body". In this view there is only one criterion for moral evaluations: whether they foster or curb life and living'. (p. 4). On another occasion, he tells us that virtue, for Nietzsche, is not Christian uprightness and chastity, but the fulfillment of physiological functions.

Dr Yourgrau is certainly correct here. Nietzsche's citerion for a revaluation of values is what he calls 'loyalty to life' and 'remaining true to the earth'. The old ideals, including the Christian, negate life, for they look upon nature as evil and man as depraved. In adopting 'life' as his standard, Nietzsche intends to exclude any supernatural ethic. Supernatural ethics are nihilistic. They deny life.

However, Nietzsche does not mean that all of life is to be his standard—only a certain kind of life which he calls 'healthy' instead of decadent. Life which has the will to power is his standard. The problem is specifying what Nietzsche means by the will to power. Many American students and teachers interpret the will to power to mean physical force and violence. However, the German word 'macht' or 'kraft' can mean several things. It can mean physical force and violence. It can mean vitality and strength. It can mean political or social mastery. In English the word 'power' generally means brute force or social domination. This fact perhaps accounts for the interpretations of Nietzsche as being an apostle of violence for its own sake. However it seems clear that in speaking of 'power', Nietzsche gives preëminence to vital mental or intellectual energies

or abilities. Even in describing the notorious 'blond beasts' Nietzsche stresses something other than brute force. He remarks that 'at the beginning the noble caste was always the barbarian caste: their superiority lay, not in physical force, primarily, but in force of soul — they were more complete men . . .' On another occasion he remarks that 'he who is spiritually rich and independent is also the most powerful in any case . . .' Again he states: 'I have found power where people do not look for it, in simple, gentle, and obliging men without the least inclination to domineer — and conversely, the inclination to domineer has often appeared to me an inner sign of weakness . . .'

Thus though Dr Yourgrau is correct that Nietzsche's standard for revaluation of morals is 'loyalty to life', it is important to specify what sort of 'life' is the standard.

My second point concerns the relationship between Nietzsche's ethics and biology. Dr Yourgrau remarks that Nietzsche's philosophy of life is an effort at translating biological principles into cultural and ethical doctrines. To some extent this is true, but it is important to specify the extent to which it is true. The importance of this specification can be seen by noticing a remark that a prominent contemporary biologist makes about the ethics of Nietzsche.

Alfred E. Emerson, in his article, *Dynamic Homeostasis: A Unifying Principle in Organic, Social, and Ethical Evolution (Scientific Monthly,* vol. 78, 1954, pp. 67-85), states that 'Nietzsche built an ethics upon his belief in an evolutionary trend toward increased power, a trend that modern biology refutes'. Emerson's implication is that modern biology has refuted the ethics of Nietzsche. This conclusion would follow, however, only if Nietzsche were a value reductionist and grounded his ethics simply and solely on biological data. If Nietzsche were a value reductionist, then moral judgments would be factual judgments, and factual data (like that which the science of biology provides) could show that Nietzsche's views were false. However, it is not clear that Nietzsche is a value reductionist at all. It does not appear to be the case that Nietzsche's view that an act is right if it enchances the will to power is based simply on the factual belief that the evolutionary trend is toward increased power. Furthermore, Nietzsche could surely maintain that certain kinds of acts ought to be performed, namely, those that increase the will to power, even if the evolutionary trend does not lean toward increased power. (Needless to say, our earlier remarks on what Nietzsche meant by 'power' would be relevant here.) In any case, the need seems clear to specify one's remarks in detail when commenting, as does Dr Yourgrau, that Nietzsche's philosophy of life is an effort at translating biological principles into cultural and ethical doctrines. The rather complicated issue of value reductionism is involved.

WILLIAM T. BLACKSTONE, Ph. D.

THE GREAT ILLUSION

The Editors,
THEORIA.

Dear Sirs,

In *Theoria 12* you published a letter from Dr Hans Meidner, attacking my article *The Great Illusion,* which had appeared in the previous issue of your journal. I would be grateful for space to reply.

Dr Meidner describes *The Great Illusion* as 'a warning issued to all those who make political plans and blue-prints not to think that such plans are a guarantee for founding the millenium'. This, he implies, is an unnecessary warning since reputable political thinkers do not suffer from the illusion that their plans will solve society's problems. I would agree that it is an unnecessary warning if I could be convinced that all who are involved in South African politics are reputable political thinkers. Unfortunately, I lack that conviction. My attempts to make a 'realistic assessment' of the political situation in this country have persuaded me that South Africa possesses a dangerously large number of politicians who, though they may not believe it themselves, are nevertheless persuading some of their followers to believe, that the plans which they have formulated will provide some sort of lasting solution to the country's problems. From personal experience I have also been led to the conclusion that there are large numbers of people who wait comfortably for some chosen programme of reorganisation to solve the country's problems, and do very little in their own lives to increase racial understanding and harmony. It was to these various elements, not to 'all those who make political plans' that my warning was addressed.

Dr Meidner has interpreted in a determinate sense, statements which I, of necessity, left indeterminate, because of the impossibility of referring precisely to all the various individuals and groups who may, to varying degrees, suffer from various kinds of illusion about the efficacy of planning. Not once in the article did I use the word *all* with reference to planners or their blue-prints. Once he has introduced the word, Dr Meidner's task is, of course, a lot easier, for one exception to anything I have said is enough to prove me wrong.

The rest of Dr Meidner's letter consists of succession of similar subtleties.

I spoke of liberals (with a small 'l'), and did so deliberately to make it clear that I had individuals in mind. Dr. Meidner, however, applies my remarks specifically to the Liberal Party. He is consequently in the convenient position of being able to accuse me of ignorant misrepresentation of the position of that party.

I made remarks which indicated some of the more extreme

illusions which I believe people may suffer from. Dr. Meidner represents me as assuming that 'planners generally' entertain those extreme illusions. He is thus able to accuse me of making unsubstantiated assumptions about planners and is in a comfortable position again, for he can cite examples of planners who have not entertained such extreme illusions.

I suggested that with large-scale or Utopian planning there often goes the illusion that 'the present welfare of men is of less importance than the building of a great future'. Dr Meidner represents me as saying that the aim or object of planning is to sacrifice present good for what is believed will be future good. He is consequently able to accuse me of having completely misunderstood the purpose of planning.

I gave examples of plans that have failed because of the adverse reactions of the individuals affected, and said that 'history will run a course largely independent of men-made plans but dependent on human relations'. Dr Meidner represents me as saying that men-made schemes have little influence on the course of human affairs. He is thus in a position to charge me with holding a strange and irrational view of history.

These are understandable techniques of attack. But Dr Meidner does more. He isolates phrases from the contexts in which I used them, quotes inaccurately, and with the aid of his own italics, introduces nuances which I never intended.

As Dr Meidner's letter has fogged many of the issues, may I be permitted to restate my case ? Briefly, it was this:

Judging from cases in the past, blue-prints and plans for the reordering of society rarely work out exactly as intended, and often fail — even the well-intentioned ones. It is, therefore, unrealistic and dangerous for South Africans to place too much trust in large-scale plans for the re-ordering of society. Above all, it is dangerous for men to become so seduced by political planning that they, as individuals, neglect present opportunities, however small, for practical action to relieve distress and improve race relations. Far more certain than the effects of planning, are the effects which the relations at present being maintained between individuals of the various races will have on the future of the race problem.

If Dr Meidner is prepared to discuss these ideas, it might be fruitful to continue the debate. I can, however, see little value in the continuation of a discussion which has so far hinged on skill in word-play.

C. WEBB.

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