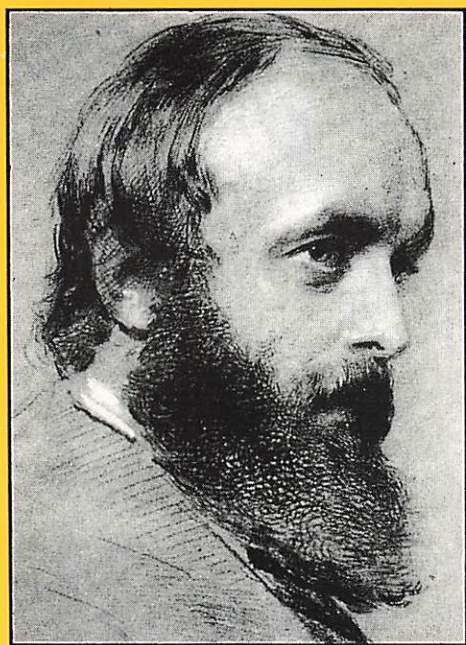


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The Salisbury Review

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The Third Marquess of Salisbury
1830 - 1903

Architecture and the Prince

Mira Bar-Hillel

Organophosphates

Margaret Mar

Green Conservatism

Ralph Clitheroe

Blair's Britain

Hal Colebatch

Tribal Identities

Aidan Rankin

Euthanasia

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Conservative Journal *Svobodné Rozhledy*

The Czech republic has enjoyed uninterrupted government by a self-styled 'conservative' coalition, ever since it broke away from the former Czechoslovakia in 1992. But, as the world now knows, the experiment has ended in disillusion and anxiety; the 'free economy' has turned out to be an economy in which only the crooks are free, while the 'conservative' reforms have done nothing to restore to the Czechs the national identity and national pride of which their culture constantly reminds them. The need has arisen to understand the conservative message, and adapt it to the new conditions. *Svobodné Rozhledy* (Free Perspectives) is one attempt to do this. Founded by a group of young people in Prague, and edited by a team under Ladislav Možný, the journal is 'a space for liberal-conservative discussion'. Its purpose is to revive the tradition of classical liberal thinking within a conservative framework, whose greatest spokesmen in our time have been central Europeans — Hayek, Polanyi, Voegelin and Masaryk. The main purpose is to rescue liberalism from the libertarians, and conservatism from the reactionaries. A true liberal economy, the journal maintains, is not a free-for-all, but an exercise in legal order; and a true conservative social policy is not a

bellicose nationalism, but an attempt to produce an educated and open society, with a common respect for public law-abidingness and private virtue.

The third issue, for spring of this year, includes an important article by Michal Tošovský, a minister for economic reform in Klaus's last government, warning against the end of the free economy. The tendency has arisen, he argues, to look for guarantees of security which cannot be provided without once again nationalising the economy, and will not be provided even then, since the state will not be able to afford them. People seek legal remedies for *moral* failings: it is not the law, or the state-controlled economy, which will restore public spirit and charity to the Czech people, but only their own moral sense — something that they can be led to acquire only when their lives are their own responsibility.

Other articles cover economic and political analysis, with translations from foreign sources on the major intellectual inputs into the liberal-conservative position.

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The Salisbury Review

Editor Roger Scruton
Literary Editor Ian Crowther
Managing Editor Merrie Cave

Editorial address and Subscriptions
33, Canonbury Park South,
London, N1 2JW
tel: 0171 226 7791; fax: 0171 354 0383
E-mail: salisbury-review@easynet.co.uk
Web site: <http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~salisbury-review>

In this issue we carry several articles on the environment — the problem to which all politicians pay lip-service, and about which no politician ever does a thing. In the last decade we have seen the virtual destruction of our fisheries, the continuing erosion of the rain forests, the seemingly unstoppable expansion of air-travel, road transport, and the global economy, and the transformation of much of the English countryside into the kind of lifeless wilderness that stretches from Aachen to the woods of Bavaria. The Labour Party is politically correct on the environment — it makes the right noises, while retaining old and comfortable policies. But the deep thinking that the issue requires has made no contact with government policy. In 1981 Marion Shoard published *The Theft of the Countryside*, arguing that the countryside was being destroyed by subsidies which favour production over residence, and monoculture over biodiversity. Seventeen years later Graham Harvey published *The Killing of the Countryside*, making exactly the same complaint. When it comes to agribusiness, it is the vandals who call the shots. Not in a single particular have their activities been curtailed — not even in the massive use of dangerous pesticides, such as the organophosphates described in this issue by the Countess of Mar. What steps are being taken to ensure that the new Food Standards Agency will reflect the interests of ordinary people, of farm animals, wild life and the countryside, rather than the interests of the absentee owners who are churning and drenching the land? The Labour Party stands side by side with the supermarket lobby and the subsidiariat, in the attempt to stamp out the small producer. It remains hostile to hunting, and the localised and unpasteurised economy of the traditional countryside — although it is such things alone that have protected us from the ecological disaster that laid waste the plains of Northern Germany.

Should we, in response to this, follow Lord Clitheroe's advice, and cultivate our garden, while making sure that the garden includes as much as possible of the surrounding countryside? Or should we, as Aidan Rankin suggests, rediscover our true identity, as indigenous people, with a claim on the land that precedes the claim of politics? Maybe our fears are exaggerated, or at any rate misdirected, as Sev

Sternhell believes? Certainly, we should beware of the bias which leads us constantly to conserve tracts of country, and never to ask what or whom this conservation is for. The threat to our countryside does not come from the culture of subsidies only; nor is it merely a matter of climate change, communications, or any other global force. The threat comes first and foremost from the collapse of inner cities, and the reluctance of people to live in places which have been destroyed by misguided social policy and belligerent modernist planning. As Mira Bar-Hillel argues, the Prince of Wales spoke up in this matter for the people of Britain, defending them against the established profiteers who are erasing our urban inheritance. Will he speak again? Or must we tolerate, under New Labour, the modernist and post-modernist children who are dancing on our grave?

Nature is one of the few areas in which a policy of conservation is universally favoured. In this it differs markedly from culture. Nature must be conserved, but culture changed: such is the message of left-wing thinking. The conservative response is to conserve both nature and culture, and to argue that nature is most likely to be conserved when people conserve their culture too. For what is culture, if not the long-term view of things, which sets the present generation at a distance from its own desires? It is culture that teaches us to respect the past, and therefore to conserve the past for our descendants. And each nation has its own cultural inheritance, which not only attaches it to a place and a time, but also creates its distinctive character. As Robert Grant shows, English literature provides an illuminating guide to our national character — one far more useful than the sound-bites of the media. Grant's wise observations take us back to Leavis, who made the study of literature into the foundation of social thought. We commemorate the great man — surely one of our deepest conservative thinkers — with an article from Patrick Miles, in which an interesting parallel is drawn with a writer who, unlike Leavis, has found an enthusiastic following on the Left: Mikhail Bakhtin.

What such discussions would mean to our new cultural masters it is hard to say. If Hal Colebatch is to be believed, we are entering the greatest cultural revolution of our century — a revolution against culture itself.

Organophosphates

Margaret Mar asks whether we know what our children are eating

My husband and I have 140 acres in Worcestershire with a flock of about 120 mule ewes: commercial farm sheep. We were compelled, like everybody else, to dip twice a year in MAFF approved dips. There was a list of some 20 dips, all but three of which were organophosphate based. The pyrethroid based ones were very much more expensive than organophosphate dips and therefore, like most farmers, we used OPs.

When OP dips were first introduced into the UK we were told that they were very much safer than the organochlorine ones which they replaced, though we were not told in which way they were safer.

About 10 or 15 years ago it was discovered that eagles were not breeding properly. Their eggs were either soft-shelled or infertile. This failure was attributed to organochlorines. We were using dieldrin dips at this stage.

The instructions which accompanied the OP dips recommended a minimum of protective clothing; a rubber apron or leggings, rubber boots and rubber gloves. Included in the pack was a phenolic disinfectant, but nobody told us that phenol rots rubber very quickly. We did notice that the gloves were about a foot long by the time we had finished dipping! We did not associate that with the fact that this also made the rubber items permeable, so our boots and aprons gently rotted away whilst we were in the process of dipping.

In 1989 we had a particularly stropky sheep which was reluctant to go into the dip. My husband hurled it in with great vigour and created a tidal wave, causing some of the dip to go into my Wellington boot. I did not realise that,

at that stage, I should have rushed into the house, removed my clothes, had a shower and thrown my boots away. I went on working through the morning session until we had finished. When we stopped for lunch I began to feel unwell. I had a runny nose, a tight chest, a headache and felt generally 'fluish. I can remember sitting on a log while my neighbour's sheep were being dipped in the afternoon and really feeling awful. The next day I felt fine and thought no more of it.

The instructions on the dip label say: "If you feel unwell go to see your doctor." As far as a farmer is concerned, feeling unwell means being off your feet for several days and not being able to do anything. If you are better in 24 hours you do not bother to go to see your GP. What I now know is that what was euphemistically called 'dipping flu' was, in fact, the acute effect of organophosphate poisoning. I think that nearly every sheep farmer I know has suffered from the acute effects of organophosphate poisoning at some stage or another.

I have said that I felt fine 24 hours later. About three weeks after the incident, I got up one morning, had my shower, and came back upstairs to my husband. I told him that I was feeling so tired I would have to go back to bed. This dreadful tiredness continued for about 18 months. I went to see my GP who said I was depressed: "Have some antidepressants." I was offered Ativan, which I knew was addictive, so I rejected it. I then started to show all sorts of strange symptoms, like hot flushes, nightmares and waking up in a pool of sweat at night, so I went back to my GP. This time it was: "It's your age, my

dear. Have some hormone replacement therapy." This did not work and I began to get strange sensations in my muscles, particularly across my shoulders and in the long muscles in my arms, back and thighs. It was almost like being stung by stinging nettles. Others have described it as being like maggots under the skin. Further reference to my GP resulted in a diagnosis of shingles. "Have some cream!" Then the major muscle aches really started. They were excruciatingly painful. I can remember weeping when I had to get dressed or undressed and I had to wear clothes which buttoned down the front because I could not move my arms sufficiently to pull them off otherwise. That was a postural problem: "Go to a physiotherapist." My physiotherapist could see that I was getting greyer and greyer each time she saw me and that there was a deterioration in my condition, so she sent me back to the GP. In between, the GP had conducted tests for things like anaemia, thyroid function and for enzootic diseases such as brucellosis. She had cottoned on to those, but she never once asked me about any chemicals to which I might have been exposed. All the tests proved negative. In the end she said, "I think you had better go to see a psychologist". At that stage I wanted to know what was wrong with me so I agreed to go. With the psychologist's appointment came an eight page form. The first page asked what I thought was wrong with me, so I wrote across it: "I don't know. That is what I am going to see you for." I got further into the form. I was asked to list all my liaisons with names. When you get to my age, you don't remember them all!

Then: "How many abortions have you had?" At this stage I felt that this was not relevant to what I was feeling, so I wrote to the psychologist and said: "If you cannot obtain this sort of information in the first five minutes of an interview with me, then I do not think you are worth your salt." I abandoned that one. I returned to my GP and informed her that I had lost confidence in her so I moved to another practice.

My new GP realised that I was in fact suffering a real physical illness. He tried a number of drugs, and other regimes which did not work. He finally suggested — and this was the best piece of advice I have ever had — that I try complementary medicine. I was extraordinarily fortunate in that I found the right practitioner the first time. Complementary practitioners are not allowed to diagnose illness. She used kinesiology (muscle testing) and told me that she thought my liver had been poisoned. We went through all the things to which I had been exposed. I had no idea that organophosphates were poisonous for I knew nothing about OPs at that stage. She treated me with mineral and vitamin supplements. At that stage my brain was like porridge. What came out of my mouth was not what I thought. (To my horror, this happened to me once in a debate.) My body was in such a state that sometimes it was hard for me to move. My spirits were either up in the air or down in my boots. I have stood with a shotgun under my chin on several occasions. One of the things we now know is that victims of OP poisoning, a large number of them, have impulsive suicide feelings. I must have a guardian angel up there who looks after me!

It was two years after I was poisoned that I was helped. In 1992, I read a tiny article about dippers' flu. I telephoned my practitioner, and asked whether she thought this could be the cause of my problems. She suggested I bring her a small sample of the dip and she would test me. The sample was soon outside her back door, she considered it too poisonous to have around. We then looked back. My GP had found it hard to understand why it was that I was always more ill in the summer

than in the winter, on the assumption that I was suffering some kind of rheumatoid disease. Of course, when we looked at it, it was every time we dipped that I was ill; every time our tenant sprayed his crops, I was ill; every time I came in contact with a Vapona fly strip, which is impregnated with an OP, I was ill. It all immediately fell into place, but we still did not know what to do.

I keep goats and sell milk and make cheese from goats' milk, and I occasionally show my goats. In the summer of 1993 I had taken some animals to a local show at Tenbury. About 30 metres from the goat lines were the sheep. At that time all show sheep were required to be dipped in an OP dip. It was a nice sunny day with a pleasant breeze. I knew that I must keep away from the sheep, but on the breeze were the OPs. By 4 o'clock in the afternoon I was feeling very unwell. I went home, went to bed and suffered all the acute symptoms again. I had nightmares, my legs were jumping and I developed very painful colic. I saw my GP on the following Monday morning. He took a blood test but sent the sample to the wrong laboratory — an extremely common occurrence. As a result we had no proper cholinesterase assessment. By the end of that week, my health had deteriorated so much that my GP concluded that I should see a consultant who knew what he was doing. I was referred to Dr Jamal in Glasgow — a wonderful man, who has stood by farmers and Gulf Veterans despite enormous criticism from the establishment. I cannot speak too highly of him, for he has the greatest integrity I have ever encountered in the medical profession. He found that I had significant peripheral nerve damage associated with my history of exposure to OPs.

I had started to ask questions in the House of Lords in June of 1992. Firstly I asked how many adverse reaction reports to sheep dips there had been. At that stage there were about 160. At least I knew I was not on my own and there were others suffering as I was. I recognised how difficult it was to get a diagnosis and that there were others likely to be in the same boat.

I contacted a number of organisations — Elizabeth Sigmund's OP Information Network, Vera Chaney's Green Network, Emphys Chapman's PEGS. As my name became known, a lot of individuals started to write to me. The one thing that keeps me going when I am not very well myself is the thought of those people out there who have no voice. Nobody would listen to them as individuals. At least I understand at first hand their suffering and what they are going through. I recognise that often their suffering is much greater than mine. My family is still intact but many others have lost their livelihoods and their families. If you don't know the cause, the mood swings are extremely difficult to live with and some relatives simply cannot cope.

When I first started asking questions my colleagues openly admit that they thought I was 'bats'. They think differently now. When I asked about the effects from chronic OP poisoning I was told there were none — OP sheep dips were perfectly safe. The acute effects can be dealt with. You go to hospital and are injected with atropine and diazepam but there are no chronic effects.

Then the tune changed slightly. If there were chronic effects, it was the farmer's fault for not wearing the recommended protective clothing: boots, gloves, apron or leggings. What about your head and your arms? You are working in hot weather. You are likely to be in a T-shirt. What about the fact that dipping is extremely arduous and stressful? Was the protective clothing adequate? Anyone who knows about sheep dipping now knows that you are supposed to wear a complete suit and a hat, with vinyl boots and gloves, so that tune has changed. Some research done in Edinburgh in 1990/91 showed that, whether or not they were wearing protective clothing, metabolites of the OPs appeared in the urine of the dippers in the experiments. It was then the engineering controls for dipping which were at fault. In other words, farmers are expected to spend £30,000 or £40,000 building a dip so that they can dip safely for perhaps two days a year. Profits from sheep sales are simply not

enough to justify this expenditure and I do not believe all farmers should be blamed for their methods.

I repeatedly nagged the Government about the failure of GPs to recognise the signs and symptoms of OP poisoning. They do not recognise the mild acute signs, let alone the chronic ones. The Chief Medical Officer sent out ineffectively worded newsletters which barely touched on the subject. He did not tell GPs what to do, who to go to or how to treat the patients. They were told that this group of patients is difficult to treat and that they should be treated symptomatically. Few seem to understand that, because our bodies have been poisoned, putting more chemicals into them in the form of drugs can exacerbate the condition.

After four years of asking we finally persuaded the Government to ask the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Psychiatrists to form a Working Party to look into the clinical diagnosis and treatments of people suffering from OP sheep dip poisoning. They were due to report in June 1998. This I am looking forward to with great interest because, when I was told who was on the Working Party, I found it was weighted with people who had been telling the Government that OPs are perfectly safe provided the right protective clothing is worn. I was extremely angry at first and refused to give evidence before them. Then I decided that I wanted them to be honest and straightforward with me. I told them of my reservations in a forthright manner and I hope my message has gone home.

The Government is gradually changing its stance. It is funding an epidemiological study at the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh in conjunction with Dr Jamal's group in Glasgow. Their report is due to be published next year and the results should be interesting.

There was a report produced by the Institute of Occupational Health in Birmingham. They looked at 142 sheep farmers and 149 quarry workers. All the research subjects were ostensibly healthy. Anyone with symptoms or a history of, for example, head injury

was eliminated. The results showed that the farmers had subtle neurological and psychoneurological symptoms when compared with the quarry workers. What did the Health and Safety Executive, who had funded the research with taxpayers' money, do? They 'rubbished' it! The HSE had selected the protocols and had overseen the research from beginning to end and they rubbished it. What must we think about that?

In the course of all this, I recognised that the Gulf Veterans were beginning to complain of symptoms which seemed to be familiar. I was put in touch with some of the Veterans and am now deeply honoured to be a patron of the Gulf Veterans Association. They are a wonderful lot for digging out information; they all seem to be on the Internet and receive quantities of information from America. This I find very helpful. Much of what we now know about OPs has come from Gulf War research. I am also firmly convinced that BSE was not caused by sheep and scrapie but by the OPs we were pouring on the cows' backs and pushing down their gullets in their food. Future research will sort this out for us.

Now to the current research. Much has concerned the Gulf War syndrome but in the UK the Government has not, until very recently, seen fit to fund any causal research into Gulf War illnesses. They are funding two epidemiological studies which will only tell us whether there is a higher incidence of illness or birth deformities among Gulf Veterans and their families. They have just announced that they will be funding research at King's College Hospital into neurological and immunological problems in the Veterans. I have a lot of questions to ask about this and am suspicious of it.

There has been quite a lot of work done in the USA, where the establishment has also tried to push Gulf War illness under the carpet; but there is a lot more private money available there. Ross Perot, of attempted Presidential fame, has funded some extremely good research but it has all been done on a shoe string. The researchers have found that when you combine an OP, a

pyrethroid and a carbamate (closely related to OPs) their effects are very much greater than when each chemical is used alone. The Veterans were exposed to OP sprays, their clothes and tents were impregnated with pyrethroids and the nerve agent pre-treatment tablets they were given contained a carbamate. OPs and carbamates lock up the enzyme acetylcholinesterase. They have also found that under stress, be it emotional, physical or heat stress, the blood/brain barrier is penetrated. This was thought to be inviolate. The Gulf soldiers were working under extremely stressful conditions, and working for long hours, and filling up with coffee to keep themselves going. Caffeine also breaks through the blood/brain barrier. There are similarities with sheep farmers, for they too work in hot stressful conditions.

It has also been found that the effects of OPs can be potentiated by up to 1600 times, when they are used in conjunction with other chemicals. For example, it was found that the effects of diazinon, one of the OPs used in sheep dip, were 1,000 times more potent in a man who had a stomach ulcer and had been prescribed cimetidine, an H2 inhibitor. There has been no research done in this field. It is too complicated. There are thousands of combinations of chemicals and we simply do not know what their effects are. Many of the chemicals that we spray around the place, which we pour on our animals and on our children's heads, have ingredients described as 'inert'. Many of these inert ingredients are poisons in their own right. For example, coal tar is an inert in many pesticides, but is a known carcinogen. Naphthalene, used in mothballs, is another ingredient. It is of unknown toxicity, but it is known to kill red blood cells and cause aplastic anaemia in children. Nobody looks at these 'inert' chemicals and this is one of the matters upon which I intend to press the Government. All these ingredients should be declared, so that we may know what may be causing our health problems. It may not necessarily be the OPs on their own. Most OPs are tested for their carcinogenic effects

— will they cause cancer? Very few have been tested for their effects on the immune system, the hormone system or on the major organs: the heart, the lungs, the kidneys. If something kills you it is important, but the quality of one's life is also important. It breaks my heart to see young sheep farmers and Gulf Veterans whose lives have been totally ruined, and who have no means of earning a living. These were previously fit and healthy young men and women who have been treated with lack of care and I am infuriated by the cavalier way in which those who make money out of these products have ignored them. I can understand that years ago the manufacturers may not have known the long term effects, but they must realise that when a problem begins to be flagged up they must act promptly, before they let hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people get themselves into such a poor state of health that nothing can be done for them.

There is another and equally important concern: what are we feeding our children? We must remember that children are not little adults. Their immune systems are not fully developed until they are six or seven. Their central nervous systems are not fully developed until the same age. Their activities, as they crawl about the floor, hug their pets, chew objects, are not the same as those of an adult. The tolerance levels have been assessed on six foot tall, extremely healthy US marines. Obviously nobody has tested OPs on children, for they are known poisons and it would be far too dangerous. An extremely good report from the American Environmental Working Group called 'Overexposed' tells us that one million American children every day receive more than the safe daily intake of OPs from eating fruit and vegetables with OP residues in them. This is on the evidence of laboratory tests done by the US Government, not by someone plucking figures out of the air. 100,000 of these children exceed the safe daily dose by a factor of 10. Now this is horrendous. We know about the problems this generation of children are suffering. Who ever heard of 'Attention Deficit

Syndrome' when we or our children were young? Nor were there all the cases of asthma, developmental problems, minor birth defects and food allergies, now so prevalent. OPs can cross the placenta and affect the foetus. There is a high rate of cancers, particularly brain and soft tissue cancers among some children. I was not aware of these when my daughter was young and I do worry about my two little grand-daughters. What are we doing to them? We must remember that while our children are eating the recommended five portions of fruit or vegetables every day they may also be absorbing a high pesticide dose.

I recently asked questions about imports from the American continent — peaches, apples, nectarines, pears, grapes, cherries and kiwi fruit. How many tons of each did we import and how many tests for residues did the Government laboratories conduct? In 1996 we imported 49,338 tons of apples from America. Four tests were done on them. We imported 5,689 tons of pears. No tests were done. It is incredible that there have been so few. The only fruit they did test often was grapes. 435 tests were done on 85,882 tons of grapes. Anyone who has read about what happens to people working in agriculture and horticulture in South America, from where we import fruit, vegetables and flowers, will know about the deaths and illness caused by OPs, particularly in Chile and Peru. Our manufacturers export to these countries organophosphates which have long been banned in this country, with the labels written in English, which the workers do not understand. As a result they are used in the wrong dilutions and without protective clothing.

An Oxfam doctor who had been working in Malaysia a little while ago has described workers in the palm nut plantations literally coming to him and dying on his doorstep. They were hand-spraying with knapsack sprays wearing a pair of shorts and perhaps a pair of sandals on their feet. They did not know what concentration to use and mixed some of the concentrate with water. That our manufacturers can do this is absolutely atrocious. We

recognise that these products are unsafe and withdraw them but they then export them to the Third World countries. Do you know that they are sponsoring, funding and building factories to make DDT which we banned thirty years ago in China and Africa?

The responsibility for seeing that these sort of things do not happen is ours. We have to tell the manufacturers that we know what they are up to, that we do not want their poisons in our food and water; we do not want to have our children poisoned and their mental and physical capacity impaired. Some OPs cause genetic mutations which can be passed from one generation to another. We do know that. We must ask the Government to prevent the use of organophosphates in our homes; to prohibit their use in cat and dog flea collars and other pet lice dressings; in the fly sprays and, particularly, in children's head louse shampoos. Head lice are now becoming resistant to malathion. The parents realise the treatment has failed, so they repeat it, maybe with a little more shampoo for a longer period. I have heard of children being treated up to twenty times, and then the parents wonder what is wrong with them: "My child has suddenly become listless and unstable."

If OPs are to be used in agriculture and horticulture, they must be used with extreme caution; and anybody who is found selling produce containing OP residues should be promptly and very severely dealt with. Mr Rooker has announced that he was going to name the sinners who allow such produce to be sold. He said he was looking at supermarkets but they have their own testing arrangements; fruit and vegetables are sold in shops and from stalls all over the country. How can we be sure that these are tested and safe? We must ask for minimal use and perhaps an eventual ban of OPs in our food. I am horrified by the effects for I know what it is to have a brain like porridge. A little child cannot tell you his brain has suddenly fallen to bits.

People often ask me what happens to the sheep. All that I know is that, since we have stopped dipping in 1992, our

sheep seem to be living longer. We now have thirteen, fourteen, fifteen year old ewes still producing lambs, whereas in the past, if they got to seven or eight they were old ladies. A sheep cannot tell you if it is tired or aching. It may be lying in its field, chewing its cud — that is a normal thing for a sheep to do — but it may be lying there in a lot of pain and feeling very tired. We do not know. There have been some tests of chronic, low level exposure on pigs, and the pigs were affected. Those responsible did not transpose these results to humans — they just said they were safe.

I do think that it is important that, with the knowledge we have now about the effects of OPs on their own and particularly about the effects of OPs in combination with other chemicals, their effects on vulnerable young chil-

dren, the elderly, the ill and the malnourished, we must act. We tend to forget that those who are in poor housing may be affected. Cockroaches love blocks of flats and tenement buildings and OPs are sprayed in living quarters and kitchens in order to kill them! I know of a mother with two young children who worked in a hospital which was regularly treated for cockroach infestation with OPs, pyrethroids and carbamates. Both children and their mother are very chemically sensitive. Her nine year old son weighs about two and a half stone and has severe food absorption problems and skeletal deformity. It has been known for some time that this is a recognised syndrome resulting from this particular combination of chemicals, but the National Poisons Unit at Guy's Hospital did not tell the parents. Their GP

obtained the information from the USA, where they have a Freedom of Information Act. We need this too, to discover easily every single ingredient that goes into any pesticide so that we can assess for ourselves whether or not we want to use it.

People power is being promoted by this Government. I think we should use it.

The Countess of Mar came to the Lords in 1975 after her father died. She holds the Premier Earldom of Scotland, the oldest title in Britain. This article is adapted from the Lantern Lecture given in April 1998.

Natural Resources and the Countryside

Ralph Clitheroe

Biodiversity, as we are all aware, is primarily determined by the suitability and diversity of habitats. It is sometimes forgotten that, in this country at any rate, all these habitats have been created and adjusted by man. The lie of the land was formed by the last ice age (not very long ago, according to the geological clock). But the countryside as we think of it today was created during the 18th and 19th centuries. It was formed by the activities of quarrying, farming and land-owning in the context of the rural estate.

It is true that signs of mineral works predate the 18th century: old tracks used in the middle ages for bringing peat from the moors still show up on

Pendle Hill and many old quarry faces can be seen. But, in the part of Lancashire that I know well, hardly a tree, hedge or wall was in its place before 1790. The same is true of most of the cottages, farmhouses and barns. Villages and farming communities certainly existed before that date. However, repairs, replacements to deal with dilapidation, and changes of farming practice during the 19th century brought about a huge refurbishment which has given us the countryside as we now know it.

The predominant driving force that produced the landscapes and habitats during the 18th and 19th centuries was the land-owning class. Their objectives were not predominantly to make

money — in most cases they had wealth enough from other resources — but they were confident of continuity, proud to create and show off beautiful countryside and devoted to field sports. They believed they were creating something truly sustainable and the net result, fortuitous perhaps in part, was to produce the exquisite countryside, with its abundant habitats for wildlife, which is for so many people the icon of England. More time, care and money has been spent on the English countryside than on any of its European neighbours; and the same is true of the English garden. It is not just by chance that our countryside has contained the finest man-made habitats and conservation areas in the world.

Social change and the cataclysm of the 1914-18 war brought the evolution of the country estate to a halt. Death duties broke up estates and drained money out of the countryside economy. Farming suffered, investment in amenity tree planting ceased, and the countryside slowly withered. During the 1939-45 war we were very short of food; hence the post-war government gave considerable incentives to farming in the hope that this would never happen again. Their generosity, while doing a great deal to increase the productivity of farming, did nothing for the countryside and indeed produced some very bad side-effects.

Mechanisation (the tractor); the change from haymaking to silage making (reseeding meadows and permanent pastures into mono-cultures of single grasses); the introduction of barbed wire and sheep netting and the consequent dereliction of hedges and walls; over-expansive drainage schemes, excessive application of fertilisers, intensive grazing and its damage to moorlands and waterways: all these things and many more resulted from the fair wind of prosperity blown by government towards the farms. Then we joined the Common Market and the CAP determined the flow of funds. However attractive it may have been to the arable farmer, the livestock farmer has never been happy with the results of the CAP.

The livestock farmer is now at his wits end and losing a lot of money. But despite the problems the post-war farming practice had brought to the environment, we would be in even worse shape if there were to be a serious decline in farming and the land were to be left derelict. We should not blame the farmer for these problems, which have been the direct result of successive government policies.

How should we respond to the threats posed by agribusiness, subsidised over-production, and the collapse of livestock farming? One response — not necessarily the only one — is to revive some of the old practices that have been jeopardised or forgotten. This is our approach at Downham, the family estate, which has been in the family

from the year Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne. Downham consists of some 3,000 acres on the banks of the Ribble, through limestone pastures and meadowland, with streams, small woods and copses up to the moorland on the top of Pendle Hill. Downham was not our main home until my grandfather's great grandfather decided, in about 1780, to live there. During his and his son's time, through the Napoleonic Wars and afterwards, they planted the woods and park trees, rebuilt most of the cottages and farms, enlarged the Hall, and rebuilt the Church and school. Almost all the stone walls and hedges date from that time. They created the landscape and did it with a confidence and verve that I envy.

More time, care and money has been spent on the English countryside than on any of its European neighbours; and the same is true of the English garden. It is not just by chance that our countryside has contained the finest man-made habitats and conservation areas in the world

When my great-grandfather took over in about 1860, he expanded the estate somewhat and had the great foresight to purchase the adjacent limestone knolls called Worsaw and Warren. If he had not done so I have little doubt that they would by now have been quarried and ground up into cement. Downham would then have been a poor thing indeed.

Shortly before the first world war, my grandfather came into the estate and took great care of it, though it was only just financially viable. He re-built

the church and post office in the village and he and my father after him modernised the village with electricity, sewers and all mod-cons, improving and expanding the farm buildings. But, after the last war, the estate became an increasing burden, and on my grandfather's death much of the property had to be sold for death duties; it appeared probable that all would have to go by the next generation. There was certainly no money for the frills of conservation, though in 1972 I planted a wood, named 'Folly Wood' for obvious reasons.

It is a curious fact of land-owning that the land quite soon begins to own you and you will go to great lengths to support it. As young men, both my father and I went south to earn our living, and to raise money, in order to support the estate. After taking a science degree at Oxford, I spent most of my working life in industry.

At the time my father died in 1984, I had been trying for some years to find the means to keep the estate together and viable. Then the winds of fate blew favourably for us and the Countryside Commission agreed that the Downham Estate, which is part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, consistently well maintained and a considerable tourist attraction, deserves some conditional exemption from the inheritance tax that had arisen on my father's death.

As the result of this — and of the undertaking that the estate made at that time and of co-operative efforts with different agencies and authorities — much has been achieved during the last ten years to preserve and rejuvenate the landscape and to improve and regenerate wildlife habitats. I like to think that Downham has provided an example of successful stewardship arrangements and partnerships for conservation and that this is just the beginning. I am very fortunate in having a son who is at least as interested in this programme as I am, and has been the driving force behind it. Some 30 acres of new woods and copses have been planted, covering about four different sites. Some 14 miles of hedge-row have been laid, gapped, planted

and protectively fenced and, in all, some eleven Conservation Schemes with different bodies have been managed, ranging from burying cables to river bank improvements, from livestock exclusions to orchard restorations. Probably the most impressive co-operation has been the preparation for a Biological Heritage Site on Pendle Hill. My own personal delight is the new, naturally regenerated, bluebell woods.

A hundred years ago there were more than 4,000 rural estates of the average size of Downham. I would be surprised if there are a tenth of that number now. Well-managed rural estates are a threatened species, yet we have virtually no other model of a settlement pattern which is both sustainable and friendly to wildlife. It is against the example set by the rural estate that we should consider our current anxieties. For me, the most important are these:

- The viability of livestock farmers — not just for their rents, but for the essential part that they play in the ecology of our land
- The continuing pressure on financial resources: all grants for environmental projects have to be matched by new investments and few of these projects produce any income
- Any changes in the relatively benign capital tax structure
- Movements against field sports. As everyone who takes part in them is aware, field sports have been one of the most important motives — perhaps *the* most important motive — to conserve and enhance habitats, and to leave wildlife undisturbed out of season.
- The Right to Roam attitude. I do not see this as a great threat to Downham; but I do have concerns about rights without corresponding responsibilities. What about the effect on wildlife?
- Paperwork: there is much of this involved in partnership and co-operative schemes, and the more of it there is, the more likely that spontaneous enthusiasm will be dampened and goodwill withdrawn.

Since 1955 I have been involved in natural resources, most of that time on the board of Rio Tinto, a world leader in the metal mining industry. Mining has an unfortunate propensity to occur in some of the most beautiful places, since that is where you find the ores. Those are the places, only too often, to which people have great emotional ties. So, the Nimby principle applies very widely; it certainly applies to me, living as I do in an area of cement quarries.

Mining has therefore always had problems from conservationists. But the birth of environmentalism in the early 70's (perhaps the Stockholm conference in '72 was the official starting date) added greatly to the miners' problems. The green movement was more like a religion than a political party and the depths of emotion and confrontation were sometimes disturbing.

Rio Tinto had to learn to come to terms with this and I was involved in setting up an environmental department, in order to establish codes and policies. All this was created *ab initio*. Environmental scientists didn't then exist, we had to invent them and train them. It is hard to believe that this was only 25 years ago.

Our policy had two aspects: first education within the company, training people to appreciate that the environment was as important as health and safety. No self-respecting natural resource company these days could afford not to have a board committee devoted to health, safety and the environment. The second aspect was in dealing with the outside world. We endlessly exerted ourselves to turn confrontation to negotiation, emotion to reason and, indeed, to move from a reactive and defensive position to a pro-active one. It was a question of persuasion and compromise without damaging anyone's integrity.

Sometimes, even with the best will in the world, there are problems with this approach. The Shell/Greenpeace/Brent Spar saga was an example. Fundraising for a single issue is often made easier by the publicity that arises from

confrontation: an interesting ethical problem which does not make life any easier for the natural resource company. Nevertheless, it is my view that natural resource operations, if carried out properly, should have little negative effect on biodiversity. Indeed such operations can often be, or become, a benefit to habitats. Consider, for example, what Lancashire Wildlife has achieved at Meer Sands wood. The Nature Reserve that is there now is probably of infinitely greater value as habitat than the land before the sand was extracted. Likewise, I remember hippos flocking in from nowhere to wallow in the tailings dam at Rossing in Namibia and brown bears and bald eagles thoroughly enjoying a deserted mining road in the wilderness of Alaska.

Moreover, natural resources operations should be well enough funded by their activities to contribute serious money to conservation in all its forms — and they or their directors should, and normally will be, happy to be identified with green activities whenever they can be. It is clear to me that, although there may be minor variations of agenda, landowners, farmers and miners should in theory all welcome environmental initiatives. Nevertheless, when it comes to action, it will be money that counts. Those exploiting natural resources should, I have suggested, be ready and able to pay their way in full. The rural estates should be pleased to co-operate, but will need reasonable grants to make this possible. The livestock farmers, on the other hand, will need very serious financial support. They need more than matching grants or tax relief. They are now as poorly off as anyone in the country and to expect practical support from them without payment in full would be wishful thinking. I suspect that, in the last analysis, a fair wind from government will be the most important factor of all. But fair winds from government do not often blow across the English countryside.

**Lord Clitheroe is President of
The Lancashire Wildlife Trust.**

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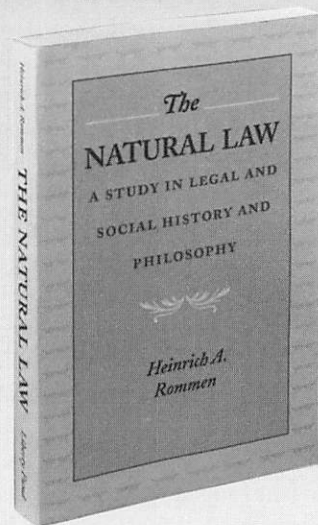
THE NATURAL LAW

A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy

By Heinrich A. Rommen

Introduction by Russell Hittinger

Originally published in German in 1936, *The Natural Law* is the first work to clarify the differences between traditional natural law as represented in the writings of Cicero, Aquinas, and Hooker and the revolutionary doctrines of natural rights espoused by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Beginning with the legacies of Greek and Roman life and thought, Rommen traces the natural law tradition to its displacement by legal positivism and concludes with what the author calls "the reappearance" of natural law thought in more recent times. In seven chapters each Rommen explores "The History of the Idea of Natural Law" and "The Philosophy and Content of the Natural Law." In his introduction, Russell Hittinger places Rommen's work in the context of contemporary debate on the relevance of natural law to philosophical inquiry and constitutional interpretation.



Heinrich Rommen (1897–1967) taught in Germany and England before concluding his distinguished scholarly career at Georgetown University.

Russell Hittinger is professor of philosophy and law at the University of Tulsa.

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We Are All 'Indigenous Peoples' Now

Aidan Rankin reflects on Tribal identities

Edmund Burke is best remembered for *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, that critique of abstract 'rights', the cult of the new and egalitarian levelling-down, which makes him the founder of modern conservatism. His defence of tradition and the organic political community was no mean feat of courage, for in the feverish political climate of 1790 being against 'liberty, equality and fraternity' was somewhat like being against 'gender balance' edicts today. Yet for Burke revolution, be it cultural or political, was anathema because it destroyed the foundations of inherited wisdom on which any successful polis is based:

By preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve, we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obsolete.... we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosoms of our family affections; keeping inseparable our state, our hearths, our sepulchres and our altars. (*Reflections*, Everyman edn., pp31 - 37)

Burke's emphasis on 'the method of nature' is significant because it represents the common strand in the development of his political thought, the one that led him towards conservatism. Just as he supported the American Revolution as a healthy revolt against the unnatural intrusions of big government, so he opposed the French Revolution because its logical conclusion was social engineering, tyranny and the twisting of Enlightenment principles into an early version of 'political correctness'. As a young man, he published a lesser-known work, *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1856), where in terms familiar to deep ecologists today, he lampooned the idea of 'de-

velopment' for its own sake, expressing sympathy with paganism and also his supreme belief that 'Nature left to itself were the best and surest Guide' (pp 3-4). This work was praised by William Godwin, whose tolerant, individualist version of anarchism contrasted refreshingly with Jacobin zeal. This association with English radicalism was perhaps one of the reasons why Burke repudiated his early work, dismissing it alternately as a spoof and as evidence of youthful Whiggish folly. Nonetheless, the message explicit in *A Vindication of Natural Society* turns the Whig view of history on its head. For if nature is our surest guide, then history ceases to be a straight line moving inexorably forwards, the urban no longer supersedes the rural, the global no longer triumphs over the local, whilst 'progress', 'growth' and other liberal-rationalist shibboleths can all be called into question.

Vindication shows that nature, and peoples close to nature, can set a positive example to 'civilised' societies. *Reflections* cautions that a free and just political order is built on more than abstract reason. They must reflect national or local culture, accumulated wisdom and the sacred in man and nature. This concept of a natural, sacred hierarchy is characteristically taken further by the counter-revolutionary Joseph de Maistre in his definition of kingship:

God makes kings in the literal sense ... They appear at length crowned with glory and honour; they take their places; and this is the most certain sign of their legitimacy. The truth is that they arise as it were of themselves, without violence on their part, and without marked deliberation on the other; [theirs] is a species of magnificent tranquillity, not easy to express. Legitimate usurpation

would seem to me to be the most appropriate expression (if not too bold) to characterise these kinds of origins, which time hastens to consecrate. (J. de Maistre, *Essay on the Generative Principle of Constitutions*.)

The idea of politics as an expression of nature, rather than a rebellion against her, should offer a link between conservatism and green politics. The 'blueprint for survival' enunciated by Edward Goldsmith and *The Ecologist* magazine in 1971 is conservative, rather than socialist or liberal, in character. Its vision of a society where the environment, people and community matter more than economic growth resembles Aristotle's *polis* more than today's post-welfare state:

We have seen that man in our present society has been deprived of a satisfactory social environment. A society made up of decentralised, self-sufficient communities, in which people work near their homes, have the responsibility of governing themselves, of running their schools, hospitals and welfare services, in fact, of running their own communities, should, we feel, be a much happier place. Its members, in these conditions, would be likely to develop an identity of their own, which many of us have lost in the mass society we live in. They would tend, once more, to find an aim in life, develop a set of values, and take pride in their achievements as well as in those of their community. (E. Goldsmith et al, *A Blueprint for Survival*, 1972, p 62.)

Progressive critics, of left and right, accuse Goldsmith and colleagues of advocating a new parochialism. However, human-scale communities, strong local cultures and a revival of voluntarism, all point the way to greater diversity and more political choice than our increasingly uniform world order. They are also themes central to conservative thought, which

traditionalist Tories would do well to rediscover. In *Reflections*, after all, Burke writes of the 'little platoons' which hold communities together through shared values and acts that are often unpaid. True parochialism is found instead in the accelerated decadence of 'New Britain', with its confusion of the democratic and the demotic, its reduction of politicians to cheerleaders for 'change' and politics to third rate advertising copy, its elevation of the sanctimonious and the vapid, its obsessive moral relativism, its misguided egalitarian dogmas, its assault on all that is distinctive or unique. Faced with this cultural quagmire, it is tempting to withdraw from larger questions into a private, 'unmodernised' sphere. Yet in the vindication of natural society, an intellectually rigorous and spiritually strong conservatism might just re-emerge.

Wendell Berry, the American poet, ecologist and advocate of rural living, wrote recently that the main political conflict now was not between left and right, conservative and socialist, but the 'party of community' and the 'parties of globalisation' (Wendell Berry, 'Conserving Communities', in *The Case against the Global Economy*, Sierra Club Books, 1996). Attracted as I am by his thesis, I would substitute another dichotomy: the 'party of progress', which believes in an inexorable forward movement, and the 'conservative party', which is inherently sceptical about change. It is a paradox of modern living that we pride ourselves on being 'global', the more inward looking we appear to become. Take our press as an example. Broad sheet newspapers, which once prided themselves on their reportage of far-away lands, now let stories of earthquakes and nuclear tests make way for the antics of rock stars and overpaid, loutish football players, or features in which celebrities interminably talk about themselves. This 'dumbing down' of the quality press is matched now by a 'dumbing up' of the tabloids to the anodyne middle ground. Like the rest of politics, environmentalism has been stripped of its intellectual content, reduced to sentimental im-

ages of pandas, workshops on 'eco-feminism', or sanitised, 'relevant' versions of Buddhism, Shamanism and Tibetan Bon, presented to a gullible public not as great spiritual traditions demanding sacrifice, but as consumer products to be marketed like rival fabric conditioners. In this sense, our problem is not so much globalisation as a flight from the global, a retreat into the same *individualisme étroit* that Tocqueville, the other great chronicler of the French revolution, detected in nineteenth-century Bonapartism. Those conservatives who are bored with the New Insularity should look outwards, and see in those peoples who have avoided consumer-capitalism concerns that reflect our own.

The term 'indigenous peoples' is scarcely a satisfactory way to describe the three hundred million or so people who live outside the dominant economic system while being often vulnerable to it. Hardly surprisingly, some American Indians prefer the term 'First Nations'. I use the word 'indigenous' partly out of convenience, but also to denote an attitude of mind. For the word 'indigenous' implies, for me, peoples who make a connection between land, culture and social organisation in a manner that is foreign to liberal modernists, but in keeping with conservative principles. Let us take as an example a joint declaration by the Sioux, Navajo and Iroquois peoples, published in 1978 by a resurgent Indian movement:

Our roots are deep in the lands where we live. We have a great love for our country, for our birthplace is here. The soil is rich from the bones of thousands of our generations. Each of us was created in these lands and it is our duty to take care of them, because from these lands will spring the future generations of our peoples. We will walk about with great respect for the Earth, for it is a very sacred place.

Similarly, the Wichi Indians of Northern Argentina connect the colonisation of their land by Criollos with its reduction to a virtual dust bowl. They understand the dry, fragile Chaco territory because they have managed it for thousands of years. Small wonder, then, that they refer to the settlers as *ahatai*, a word that approximates to 'devils':

The *ahatai* have always coveted *Llakha Honhat* [Our Land], and they have used deceit and violence in order to take it from us They did not plant the trees; they do not keep the bees; the wild animals and fish do not belong to them. We have always lived here, since the time of creation. We are as much a part of *Llakha Honhat* as the trees that grow on it. Our land belongs to us because we belong to the land (Wichi Oral History, quoted by Aidan Rankin, 'The Land of Our Ancestors' Bones', in Helen Collinson (Ed.), *Green Guerrillas*, 1996)

Such passages sound mystical to Western ears, and lose much in translation, too. Their message, however, is far from alien. The connection between land and identity, resistance to arbitrary forms of 'development', are part of our own political discourse, although they are seldom starkly expressed. Those who resist the single currency, compulsory metrification, or any other aspect of the Euro-leviathan should understand well the idea of indigenous 'land rights'. It is based, after all, on the defence of local peculiarities against universal principles. So should the ecologists and concerned residents who oppose roads, out-of-town superstores and housing tracts built for 'off-cumdens', the Yorkshire Dales word for *ahatai*. Sadly, eco-warriors and Euro-sceptics rarely work together, for their conservative goals overlap.

Peoples who live close to nature do not draw arbitrary lines between the environment, the sacred and the political order. This definition of traditional African kingship, for example, corresponds well with the philosophies of de Maistre or Burke:

For what the kings did was to subsume in their persons the many ancestral powers formerly invested in a more or less large number of lineage leaders, and so enable a people's unity to survive.... Willingly accepted only when legitimate, they could not become kings except when recognised as standing at the ritual apex of their people's moral order. Hence the accent on "divinity". For the king's existence as a political or military person was a secondary thing. (Oral History of the Wichi Indians, quoted by Survival International in 1994).

Research by George Ayittey, the Ghanaian conservative thinker, has shown

that kingship in African societies was a flexible, even democratic institution, based on consensus-seeking, with the ruler's actions constrained by convention and taboo. It reflects more Burke's idea of good government than de Maistre's absolutism or the 'divine right of kings' as once described in school books. Indeed those who search for a new model of 'civic conservatism' could do worse than look at the traditional Asante. (See R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, Oxford, 1923.)

Indigenous peoples do not demand 'rights' in the narrow, Western-liberal sense — the 'right' to be assimilated in a 'multi-cultural society', the 'right' to participate in a global market place, the 'right' to citizenship of a remote, impersonal, irrelevant state. In most cases, all they ask is the right to be left alone, a conservative demand if ever there was one. In this sense, their enemies are as likely to be do-gooders, the new missionaries of 'political correctness', as they are to be greedy corporations or uncomprehending governments. A good example of this was a story told me by James Wilson, who has worked extensively with the Innu Indians of Labrador, which they call Nitassinan. A young woman teacher, fresh from urban Ontario, told her Innu primary school students that hunting beaver, or any other animal, was evil, an attack on 'pristine nature'.

'Who is the greatest predator of all?' she asked her unfortunate charges. 'We are,' she answered, when they refused to respond.

Were she transferred to Inner London, this same teacher would doubtless busy herself removing books about explorers, war heroes and all other reminders of 'colonialism' or patriarchy. Her romantic suburban pacifism stops her from seeing that hunting is central to Innu life, that they respect the animals they hunt, incorporating them in folk religion where they give them qualities of courage and wisdom. Contrast her approach with that of John Seymour, a true ecologist whose wide experience of the world precludes 'politically correct' nostrums. In his book *The Ultimate Heresy* (1989), he refers to Joseph, the Bushman com-

panion of his African days, who revered the gemsbok even as he hunted it with a spear:

Though he would probably not have put the prayer into words, it might have run something like this: "The life force ordains that your kind shall crop the grass after the rains and munch the tsava melons You destroy these things so that they should become part of a higher form of life, and the life force ordains that I shall kill you, my Brother, and partake of your flesh, so that I can live too".

Here, there emerge two contrasting views of indigenous people, the progressive and the conservative. To the left-wing teacher they are 'good' people who nonetheless need to be 'helped', whereas Seymour views them as allies or personal friends, with human needs as varied and complicated as those of anyone else. From them he learned what we now call 'survival skills', and whilst their societies nurtured his interest in self-sufficiency, he has no illusions that they are ideal. To the progressive mentality, which dominates the green movement at present, indigenous societies are 'valid' only as long as they are benign, vegetarian and pacific. When they defy these stereotypes, they become 'racist', 'sexist', 'homophobic' and all else that is politically incorrect. The conservative ethos, meanwhile, accepts cultural differences when they are based on firm precedents, preferring natural variety to socially engineered conformism.

The conservative outlook is also reflected in *Black Elk Speaks*, the life story of a Sioux warrior and holy man transcribed in the early 1930s, before the resistible rise of 'PC'. There, we are presented with a nature-religion in which the 'two-leggeds' and 'four-leggeds' are 'children of one mother and their father is one spirit'. Yet the hero has also 'made much meat in his time' and fought bitterly against the Asichu, or white man.

A sense of nationhood, supported by religious worship and the war-path, pervades this 'Native American' text. (*Black Elk Speaks*, John G. Neihardt, University of Nebraska Press, 1979.) Liberals have always felt uncomfortable with this primitive nationalism, but unlike 'blood and soil' ideology, it

is about defence and conservation more than expansion and conquest. The nationalism of indigenous peoples would have been readily understood by Proudhon, the anarchist pioneer who was at heart a cultural conservative. His anti-state philosophy was inspired by the fiercely independent peasant communities of the Franche-Comté, who resemble many of today's indigenous peoples in their self-reliance and their emphasis on the extended family.

Indigenous societies evolve like any other human groups, perhaps more than most. They have complex histories of convulsion and change, be that change political or climatic. They create art and oral history, make music and adapt themselves to some of the harshest conditions known to man. Some societies, like those of the Pygmies, are made up of individualistic hunter-gatherers, whose communal bonds are loose. Others, such the Kalahari Bushmen, the Nuer of Sudan and the Wichi of Argentina, practise forms of anarchist communism, where an ethos of social responsibility can override personal freedom. The Tuareg of North-West Africa are nomads with a proud warrior tradition and a rigid hierarchy — the reverse of the green left's ideals. Although by definition non-industrial, many indigenous peoples make selective and practical use of technology; some use the Internet to great effect and without 'losing their culture' in the process. They cross the religious spectrum, too, for whilst many are pagan, many have creatively merged their old beliefs with Christianity or Islam. Sudan's Nuba, for instance, have been a Muslim people for centuries but still have shamans who communicate with the spirit world. The Jummas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts are Buddhist tribesmen who resemble the Thai and Burmese more closely than their Bengali neighbours. Argentina's Wichi are an outpost of Anglicanism, and for the people of East Timor, the Catholic Church is central to national identity and the campaign against Indonesian rule.

When writing about indigenous peoples, it is easy to lapse into lists of examples. The above should

demonstrate nonetheless how hard it is to generalise about societies outside the political or economic mainstream. Some are not even indigenous in the strict sense; the 'Bush Negroes' of Surinam are the descendants of escaped slaves, but they have successfully resurrected in South America a pre-colonial African culture. The disparate nature of these peoples is, in itself, a challenge to liberal universalism, and so it arouses the cultural intolerance of the left. Feminists and their male fellow-travellers, in particular, promote a universalist form of 'liberation' that takes no account of local custom or the distribution of power within tribal societies. This model assumes that the extended family and the tribe are inherently oppressive to women. It presumes that indigenous women sit helplessly in villages waiting to be 'empowered' by their white sisters, so that they can don suits or overalls, pursue Western-style careers or 'choose' abortion over motherhood. Ironically, women in many tribal societies often have powers beyond the wildest dreams of feminist apparatchiks in the West. Among the Tuareg, it is women who are the purveyors of history and myth, while it is the men who wear the veil. Mircea Eliade, who is perhaps the greatest authority on primitive religion, notes that shamans are often women or inverts, for both possess magical powers. (*Mircea Eliade, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. W.R. Trask, Arkana, 1989.) Often, equality of the sexes is achieved precisely because they assume different roles, the men as hunters and fighters (usually), the women as householders and economists in the true sense.

After a recent lecture at the Buddhist Society, the predominantly liberal audience discussed the problems of countries where The Eight-Fold Path predominates. The consensus seemed to be that Buddhist societies had more to 'learn from us' than we from them. I then described things they are now 'learning from us', such as environmental pollution, sexual promiscuity and gross economic injustices. The response was, to say the least, mixed, with my views supported by Asians

and opposed by fellow-Westerners. It occurred to me after this event that a philistine, 'West-knows-best' arrogance is now the prerogative of liberals, not conservatives. Just as Buddhist societies can 'learn' from us better than from their own traditions, so the remaining tribal peoples 'benefit' from 'modernisation' or 'empowerment'. Indigenous peoples threaten the liberal world view, for their continued existence proves that there are values more important than money and sex, that the market is not always enough, that ethnic loyalty is not always racist and that male-female balance works better than interchangeability. To liberals, indigenous populations are useful only when accommodated in a gallery of victimhood, when part of a rainbow coalition of minorities, or as political fashion accessories promoting tribal kitsch. The 'anti-imperialist' mania is often irrelevant to tribal peoples, too. For the Jummas of Bangladesh, British rule was preferable to independence and subsequent genocide.

Unlike Liberals, Conservatives welcome difference, whether between individuals or between cultures, for 'sameness' is never our goal. Support for unrepresented peoples should therefore be central to a conservative interpretation of ecology and human rights. What right, after all, is more important than the right to preserve one's land and one's culture? And those who care about biodiversity should surely care about human diversity, too? In upgrading conservative principles, we should also question the idea of development and material progress for their own sake. Peoples close to nature might be poor, in global terms, but enjoy a quality of life far better than their urban counterparts. Pre-literate tribes are often richer culturally than the semi-literate majority of the modern world, for whom pop culture has replaced folklore. Without romantically copying indigenous peoples, we can learn from them that consumption is not the key to happiness. The belief in higher living standards as the universal goal underlies the hypocrisy of 'ethical' foreign policies that collapse as soon as any personal or communal

sacrifice is required. Peter Gregory, the founder of Conservatives for Human Rights and long-time campaigner against the arms trade, expressed the view recently that our prosperity is founded on 'blood money' — an opinion heard rarely on conservative lips (Policy statement, Conservatives for Human Rights, April 1998). When Tony Blair greeted the Chinese Prime Minister as a 'fellow-moderniser', we learned what minority peoples, such as Tibetans and Inner Mongolians, could really expect from the New Establishment.

Under the influence of the left, most greens today identify conservatism, and 'the Tories' in particular, as their enemies at all levels, be they cultural, political or economic. The conservative, or 'conserving' component of ecology surfaces only fleetingly and amongst the less politicised greens, as in this delightfully unexpected editorial comment in a pagan magazine:

As someone brought up on the edge of the North York moors, and as a lover of mountains and high places, the vegan vision of a vegan Britain appals me. Remove all economic value to the raising of livestock and the moors and uplands die. When there is no call for sheep meat or sheep's cheese, or their wool for clothing, when grouse shooting and hunting have been outlawed, what will be the future for the uplands of this country?

Such publications are dedicated to reviving hidden traditions, and so it is hardly surprising that they should encompass Green Toryism. For with the attack on the countryside, the spread of suburban monoculture, the rise of unelected transnational institutions, there is a sense in which indigenous peoples' struggles are becoming our own.

Aidan Rankin is a Political Consultant and freelance writer. He is British spokesman for Friends of Peoples Close to Nature.

Cassandra in the Environment

Sev Sternhell looks at science and pseudo-science

Scratch a Greenie and you will find a Viet Nam protester of yesterday, a Soviet apologist of the day before, a Jacobin of two centuries ago and so on. Keep scratching and you may find a Zealot of ancient Israel. In other words, the Green movement is just the most recent version of The One True Faith.

Greenies use scientific data like lawyers, to make a case; and not like scientists, to discover what is the case. They argue dishonestly and habitually resort to gross exaggeration, distortion and intimidation. They rely on the ignorance of their followers, of the public at large, and of élites and politicians.

Even if these two assertions (and related ones) were demonstrably correct, they would tell us exactly nothing about the environmental issues themselves. This is invariably acknowledged by critics of the environmental movement, typically with the phrase “of course, the environment must be protected”. However this falls short not only of positive suggestions but even of elements of analysis of the environmental problems. In the following brief overview I shall propose where such an analysis may start and what political processes may be appropriate for the amelioration of environmental problems. I would like to take as the starting point two aspects of the environmental issue whose importance is not generally appreciated. Firstly, unlike other social and political issues, environmental issues are grounded in physical and biological sciences. In other words, they are largely on the other side of the great Snowian divide (between Science and the Humanities) and are poorly understood even by our élites. It is hard to say where the dividing line lies between simple and *wilful* ignorance, but ignorance there certainly is.

This is a major problem, particularly as environmental issues often involve difficult science, but public ignorance exists concerning even basic issues. The public and the élites are, for example, totally ignorant of chemistry. This is serious. Nearly all matter on, in and above this planet is in a chemically bound state, that is the atoms are chemically bonded to other atoms. In the universe as a whole, matter exists largely in chemically unbound states and indeed often in subatomic form.

Such ignorance makes it virtually impossible to discuss most environmental issues in any depth and leads to widespread use of categories such as “natural” versus “man-made” and “a chemical” which are meaningless. A molecule has no memory. Synthetic vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is totally indistinguishable from the vitamin C present in an orange while the physiological effects of substances (eg toxicity or carcinogenicity) depend on their molecular structure and not on their historical origin. While very large and complex molecules may form the physical basis of memory, small molecules such as vitamin C do not contain any features which could be related to their origin. A structural formula describes such a molecule fully, leaving no room for any vitalistic nonsense. Elementary as these points are, I have had many depressing encounters with supposedly educated friends who absolutely refuse to understand these basic facts. Such fallacies are perhaps only a remnant of the Vitalistic Theory which received its death blow in the first half of the nineteenth century, but they lead me to the conclusion that educating the public in matters scientific is an unrealistic option. It is certainly unrealistic to aim for the level of sophistication which would

enable the layman to understand an issue involving chemical reactivity, such as the radical chain-reaction initiated by chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) leading to ozone depletion.

Lest it be imagined that chemistry is a special case, the public has also a very poor grasp of the nature of statistical significance and hence is incapable of seriously discussing, least of all evaluating, matters related to risk. Only such ignorance can explain calls for “zero pollution”, an impossible goal given the size of molecules. Indeed, thinking in quantitative categories is not a common habit, which is surprising given the fact that practically everyone is involved in budgeting decisions. Perhaps the problem lies with the fact that in environmental issues, as in other scientific matters, quantification involves many orders of magnitude while everyday decisions rarely involve more than four.

The problem of scientific ignorance in the population as a whole is almost certainly insoluble. However, the élites and the decision-makers (in governments and elsewhere) are in an excellent position to obtain all manner of expert advice and are *duty-bound* to do so.

The second aspect I would like to discuss is analytical. There is a tendency among environmental activists to stress the totality of environmental issues, a tendency well illustrated by the phrase “spaceship earth” and by the celebrated statement by Barry Commoner, one of the early Green gurus, that “everything is connected to everything else”. Indeed, the style of environmental publicists, such as Erlich and Suzuki, is to pass lightly over numerous issues rather than to discuss anything in depth. This style may reflect a realistic appreciation of the

limited attention spans of the readers, or more often viewers, and it may be a useful consciousness-raising technique. However, as an analytical method it is useless. If progress is to be made towards understanding, problems must be broken into manageable chunks. As a start, we must get rid of the impression of exaggerated interconnectedness which has been foisted upon us by ecologists, whose business it is to find interconnectedness. Everything is indeed connected to everything else, but most of the connections are weak and can be ignored. The gravitational field in Sydney is affected when a tennis ball in Wimbledon changes position, but not by very much. Molecules of pollutants from an oil-spill in the Arctic do find their way into the Indian Ocean, but not many and certainly not enough to cause local concern in Perth. The fluttering of the wings of a butterfly in the Amazonian forest does not in fact cause a typhoon off the coast of Queensland, although in principle it might.

There is, of course, an ever-present risk that some significant interconnectedness may be overlooked, but this is a matter of judgement in individual cases — judgement to be made on quantitative, not emotional grounds.

In a very broad sense, it is possible to break up the environmental problems into five distinct, although sometimes overlapping classes. These are conservation, resource depletion, over-population, pollution and cataclysmic effects. I place the latter in a special category because, following Marx, I believe that a sufficiently large quantitative change is equivalent to a qualitative change and because disaster scenarios have loomed large since the environmental debate began. There are undoubtedly other ways of breaking down the environmental problem, but broken down it must be if we are to examine and seek a remedy and not just emote.

Conservation

By conservation, I mean the preservation of species, natural landforms and natural landscapes, the word natural being used to denote not man-made.

The conservationist places a particular value on wilderness, ie places where the impact of man has been minimal. Environmental activists often try to rationalise conservationist goals in terms of economic advantages. They speak of preserving the genetic pool or quote specific instances of the value of wilderness, such as the possibility of extracting new medicinal substances from species of plants threatened by extinction. These, however, are paltry arguments in comparison with the spiritual values of Nature. Most of us (and I emphatically include myself) simply value the natural world and are prepared to make economic sacrifices to preserve it.

And decisions on conservation issues, eg whether or not to mine or log, can be made rationally even though they involve the apparently irreconcilable conflict between spiritual and economic values. They are also decisions where political pressure by environmentalists is valuable because the emotionally-based case is here the case and needs stating strongly.

Resource Depletion

Resource depletion is not a fashionable topic at present and I bring it up here partly precisely for this reason. In the heady days of the Club of Rome, resource depletion was held up as the primary doomsday scenario; the term “non-renewable resources” is still with us. It is, in fact, a particularly deplorable characteristic of New Class preoccupations that causes are picked up then dropped like clothes going out of fashion.

The reason for the failure of the Club of Rome predictions was threefold. Firstly, as amply pointed out by critics at the time, their predictions did not take account of the fact that substitution becomes more economically feasible as resources become more scarce. Secondly, they assumed a constant knowledge base, ie an unchanging technology. This was, and remains, absurd. Thirdly, they relied on computer extrapolations — a dangerous procedure in cases of scarce data and dubious algorithms. As the saying goes, GIGO: garbage in, garbage out. In this particular case, it has been pointed out,

their only desirable scenario (reduced investment leading to lowered economic activity and living standards) also had catastrophic consequences, only a bit further down the track than other scenarios.

Paradoxically, some of the most serious environmental problems involve renewable resources such as water, fish, timber products and soil, the latter being almost certainly the most pressing environmental problem in Australia. In each case the basic problem can be reduced to ignorance of optimal long-term practices. Thus underground aquifers must not be drawn on faster than their replenishment rates; fish and timber harvesting must conform to both sustainable yields and appropriate practices which certainly do not include drift netting or clear-felling of forests. Sustainable farming practices, which of course vary greatly from place to place, have not yet been fully defined, but undoubtedly even this difficult problem is capable of solution. In each case good practice depends on knowledge and is in the long-term self-interest of all groups concerned. There is thus no reason to be pessimistic about the final outcome and, at least in developed countries, a remarkable consensus is rapidly emerging.

Overpopulation

Other things being equal, environmental problems depend by definition on the size of populations and simple mathematical projections have led many Greens to preach apocalyptic environmental doom following the current population explosion. Like Malthus, Erlich predicts a self-limiting situation, but unlike Malthus' steady-state misery, Erlich postulates an irreversible catastrophe because the exploding population would wreck “spaceship earth” before numbers fell, due to starvation and other causes.

What Erlich and others overlook is that affluence results in levelling and indeed falling populations, as witness Western Europe, Japan and, most recently, Singapore. Unfortunately more affluent populations also exert more environmental pressure per unit and the rate of attaining affluence is unpre-

dictable. Thus the ultimate, sustainable and self-regulating population of an affluent "spaceship earth" cannot be easily predicted and, as far as I know, no such studies have appeared. However, there is no reason for pessimism because it is quite obvious that environmental problems are least serious in prosperous liberal democracies, however densely populated. Thus this part of the environmental problem is subsumed in the great political battle of ridding the world of corrupt totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

Pollution

Pollution must be defined as the introduction of undesirable substances and objects through human activity. The great majority of such issues are not strictly environmental because they concern fears about the safety of *people*. Most of these fears revolve around toxic, particularly carcinogenic or radioactive, substances introduced into the environment by industrial or agricultural activity and are *overwhelmingly groundless*.

Part of the problem is the inability of the public to distinguish between *toxicity* (the ability of a material to injure a living organism by other than mechanical means) and *toxic hazard* which is the likelihood of a material to cause harm. It is the latter which is important and it always involves many factors in addition to toxicity itself, of which the likely level of exposure is most critical. It turns out that the substances which engender the most hysterical responses, viz, insecticide and herbicide residues and some industrial pollutants such as dioxins, polychlorobiphenyls, asbestos and radioactive substances, represent negligible toxic hazards to the population at large although they may present very real hazards to workers and farmers involved in handling such materials in bulk. In fact the carcinogenic hazards due to insecticide and herbicide residues in food are much smaller than those due to naturally-occurring substances in many common foods. To put it picturesquely, dioxin (at the levels encountered by the general population) is less of a hazard than broccoli, which is, of course, quite safe. It has

recently been estimated by the US Food and Drug Administration that 98% of the cancer risk in the diet results from ordinary foods and not from additives, poisons or other man-made contributions to the food chain. Paradoxically, the so-called "organically-grown" products may be more hazardous than those grown with the aid of insecticides, artificial fertilisers and herbicides because they tend to be varieties more naturally resistant to insects and thus containing higher levels of naturally-occurring insecticides which are just as likely to be carcinogenic as the man-made ones.

The truth of the above is obvious from the fact that cancer rates in industrialised countries are definitely not soaring and that life expectancy is very high and still increasing. Modern man lives a longer and healthier life in spite of (probably because of) the artificial surroundings he inhabits. Legislating for ever-decreasing permissible levels of insecticide residues etc represents a totally unjustified misallocation of often enormous resources. It also represents a combination of political expediency, cowardice and ignorance which would be uproariously funny if it did not cost us so much.

The above does not imply that pollution never causes environmental or toxic hazards, but only that the public concerns are misdirected. To be really dangerous the pollutant must meet at least one of four criteria:

- (i) Be present in high concentration (this is invariably local and is exemplified by acid rain and by the environmental destruction of Soviet inland seas and lakes and by the now largely reversed fate of Lake Erie).
 - (ii) Be self-replicating, ie pathogens, which are still the major pollution hazard in Third World countries.
 - (iii) Be cumulative, as exemplified by heavy metal ions. The discontinuation of the use of tetraethyllead as a petroleum additive is entirely reasonable.
 - (iv) Be catalytic, as for instance CFCs in their action on the ozone layer.
- All of these problems can be detected and ameliorated and are reversible.

Once the possibility of such occurrences has been recognised, as is certainly the case in liberal democracies, ameliorating action can always be taken. Moreover, provided that the goals are set in a reasonable manner, ie so that hazards are not reduced to a level ridiculously lower than those involved in simply living, such action need not be economically damaging.

Cataclysmic Effects

Predictions of imminent catastrophe are not confined to the Green movement but have certainly played a large role in it. Resource depletion, overpopulation and nuclear Armageddon all occupied centre-stage in turn and have now been replaced by the Greenhouse Effect. I am little perturbed by this latest doomsday scenario because even the worst-case predictions are not all that catastrophic compared with the previous non-materialised cases. Furthermore, while an increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has certainly occurred, significant global warming has not. In addition, given the fact that the biosphere depends on carbon and that this element is scarce, it is probably much better for the health of the biosphere to have additional carbon in the form of carbon dioxide than uselessly locked up in fossil deposits.

Does it follow that mankind lacks the capacity to damage the biosphere in a cataclysmic way? Not at all. Firstly, one of the now unfashionable doomsday scenarios, the "spasm" launching of all nuclear missiles by the superpowers, would have destroyed civilisation even without invoking long-term damage by radioactivity or exotic effects such as "nuclear winter". It is a sobering thought that the capacity to produce such a catastrophe still exists and will *always* exist given the fact that thermonuclear devices and rocket technology cannot be uninvented. Perhaps the only strategy for avoiding this particular catastrophe is to develop defensive technologies (the Strategic Defence Initiative, the so-called "Star Wars") in the breathing space afforded by the current political thaw and to disseminate them widely.

Secondly, and more importantly,

future global threats could arise, the most obvious ones being genetically engineered pathogens produced either deliberately as weapons or accidentally. Just think what the HIV virus would be like if it were only more transmissible and less delicate! Equally catastrophic would be a pathogen which would clear all algal life from the oceans or destroy the soil microbes.

Thus the mere fact that the New Class has cried wolf a number of times and will undoubtedly continue to do so, does not mean that a wolf may not materialise. We should certainly keep our guard up and hope that the wolf-criers have not desensitised the public to such an extent that, when need for

urgent action arises, we will allow the planet to be eaten.

Conclusions

Environmental problems are largely real, but are far from intractable. They are certainly less daunting than the political, social and economic problems facing mankind.

Once the environmental problem is broken up into its component parts, amelioration becomes entirely feasible, although while mankind exists it must have a severe impact on the rest of the biosphere. The political problem is that the attention given to the various components and the resources devoted to amelioration are at present misdirected. This is due to the lack of

grasp by the public of the relative importance of the various environmental issues which in turn is due to an abysmal and incurable ignorance of the scientific and technical aspects. Responsible action by governments and élites is thus imperative in spite of the ever-present temptation to use environmental issues for electoral purposes.

Sev Sternhell is the Professor of Organic Chemistry, University of Sydney. He is not connected with any food or chemical industry.

Architecture and the Prince

Mira Bar-Hillel explains how Prince Charles' vision failed

On a sunny afternoon in the summer of 1984, in the beautiful setting of Hampton Court Palace, the Prince of Wales declared war on Modern architecture and the ravages of post-War planners. His speech that day and several others that followed, along with a television programme and book, *Vision of Britain*, captured the minds of his subjects-to-be. They found his pleas for more humane, human-scale designs and less architectural megalomania reflecting their own frustrated views and feelings about what was being done to their environments. They loved him for it and cheered him on.

In poll after poll 80 per cent of people warmly identified with his condemnation of various Modern buildings as "carbuncles" and "glass stumps". The establishment, wedded as it was — and remains — to the rhetoric of "progress" and modernity, no matter

how ugly and dysfunctional, was shaken to its very foundations. It was, however, powerless to resist.

Then fate intervened. In June 1992 Andrew Morton published Princess Diana's story, which shattered forever the myth of the royal "fairytale" marriage. In the aftermath of this shock, a cease-fire in his architecture crusade was forced on the Prince. He was, his advisers insisted, going to have a difficult enough time surviving the damage inflicted by his wife without taking on any other powerful enemies. He would do better, they whispered, to find more "positive" ways of channeling his views on architecture and planning.

These "positive" ways turned out to be The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, set up and run with no clear sense of purpose, and a magazine, *Perspectives on Architecture*, whose contents were as aimless as its title.

In the autumn of 1997, an article in *Perspectives* contemptuously dismissed the Prince's own criticisms of the hideous new British Library as "having a period feel about them". The author, Kenneth Powell, also called for a knighthood to be given to Colin St John Wilson, the library's architect, a man who once publicly likened Prince Charles to Stalin, Hitler and Pol Pot. The knighthood was duly awarded, earlier this year.

Only a few weeks later, in January 1998, *Perspectives* was forced to close down, having found no readers for its non-message. Its debts of £1.8 million to the Institute will not help what is already a very troubled organisation whose entire governing council had to be sacked in 1996 by an increasingly frustrated Prince.

The Institute's last stand has been to call in a retired but committed Modernist architect, who once worked for

Mies van der Rohe, Adrian Gale, to head its School of Architecture.

The denials, statements and attempts by the Institute to reinvent itself (there is talk of it being replaced by some ill-defined "foundation") have fooled no one. The Prince's bitter enemies, after over a decade of being on the defensive, recognised surrender as soon as they saw it.

On 22 January 1998 Paul Finch, editor of the establishment's house magazine, the *Architects' Journal*, admitted to "a new spring in my step this week" over the "demise" of the Prince's campaign. A cartoon by the excellent Louis Hellman shows the Prince, on bended knee, surrendering his broken sword to the conquering ranks of glass stumps.

The Prince could have made a real difference to the way architecture is viewed and practised in this country by giving a voice to millions. But he has allowed himself to be compromised, marginalised and ultimately silenced. His direct influence is now negligible.

What is both ironic and tragic is that the Prince's own views have never changed. He loathes the Millennium Dome every bit as passionately as he hates other buildings by Lord Rogers, Sir Norman Foster, Sir Michael Hopkins and others who have flourished regardless of his views of them.

But we can no longer expect him to add his weight to any future anti-Modernist campaigns. His success in defeating "a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved friend" (a Modernist extension to the National Gallery) and the "glass stump more suitable to Manhattan" (the scheme by Lord Palumbo to build a Mies van der Rohe design opposite the Bank of England) will, tragically, not be repeated.

His forced silence has already cost him the loss of a Classical design for Paternoster Square, which he won after a five-year battle in which he was assisted by the London *Evening Standard*. The present Japanese owners will shortly have planning permission for a bland, no-style scheme with mediocre buildings by some of the Prince's least favourite architects.

His voice was noted by its absence

when the hideous megalomaniac Millennium Tower by Sir Norman Foster threatened to burst through the City of London skyline. He remained silent when the V&A cocked a snook at him by choosing a competition winner for its extension which resembled a random pile of multi-coloured boxes in a Grade I-listed environment.

He said nothing when Lord Rogers proposed a building rising to 20 storeys on the riverfront at Battersea. As a result, the building was allowed and now Sir Norman is trying for two even more massive riverside buildings which will be difficult to stop because a precedent has been set.

This is all very sad, but we must now accept that, while his views have not changed at all, we can no longer expect the Prince to voice them in the defence of his architectural realm.

National Museum of Scotland

The Prince's last major public stand was made in August 1991, over the competition for an extension to the National Museum of Scotland.

His resignation as President of the Patrons of the National Museum of Scotland was announced on the eve of the declaration that a crude Modernist scheme had won the architectural competition. The Prince was accused of having gone in a fit of pique and of having timed his resignation to maximise the damage to the Museum. Although both accusations have often been repeated since, neither was true.

The Prince resigned because the museum panjandrum misled and misled him. Having been conned, he was then expected to go out and help raise funds for a project in which he had lost faith. His resignation was inevitable and his departure left the museum with an unpopular scheme and an uphill struggle to find the 25-30 million pounds needed to build it. But the crisis was entirely of the museum's own making.

The Prince did not resign because the chairman chosen for the competition assessors was Sir Philip Dowson, designer of a scheme for Paternoster Square which the Prince described in his book, *Vision of Britain*, as "inhuman", and who might just possibly

harbour a grudge. Nor did he quit because the winning scheme was by Benson and Forsyth, designers of the ghastly Maiden Lane estate in Camden, brimming with defects and unhappy tenants less than ten years after its completion. Knowing as he did the devastating effect his departure would have on the Museum's fund-raising prospects, it was a decision taken not lightly but of necessity. His repeated warnings about the unsatisfactory way the competition was being run had gone unheeded for too long.

In 1989, the Marquis of Bute and Lord Perth insisted on an open international competition for the museum. The Prince suggested that a limited competition, among a number of architects individually interviewed by the trustees, would produce a better result. He was overruled but stayed on hoping he might still be able to exert a positive influence.

He then expressed concern that the architect-dominated selection panel would become too powerful in the assessment (of what turned out to be 330 entries from all over the world), overwhelming the lay trustees. He proposed modifications to the process which he hoped would redress the balance and was told they would be taken on board.

But that did not happen. Instead, the trustees were faced with a shortlist of a dozen schemes chosen for them. The other 318 had been discarded and the architectural panel refused to discuss the also-rans or any merits they may have had.

Worse: incredible though it may sound, the trustees were effectively barred from discussing what the building would actually *look like*. The professional selectors decreed that the sole criterion was to be the internal arrangements and their suitability for the Museum's requirements.

What about the elevations? What would be the effect of this major new public building on the streetscape? Would it make a worthy contribution to historic Edinburgh? The Prince was shocked to discover that these issues, vital to the people of Scotland, had not even been discussed and that the trustees had also been excluded from the

briefing given to the finalists concerning the appearance of the building.

The "international" competition ultimately yielded six finalists, five from London, none from overseas, none from Scotland, none well known. Shown the six finalists at the last minute, the Prince knew his efforts to inject common sense into the competition had failed, knew he had been hoodwinked for some time and knew he had to resign. He also knew this had to be done before the winner was announced, so that his gesture would not be seen as a personal attack on any individual architect. As to the principle of resignation, however, he had been left with no choice. In spite of his efforts to give lay people more of a voice, the finalists were yet again the product of a system by which architects decide the architectural future of important sites. It was not what he was there for.

A close source told me at the time: "The Prince has many calls on his time and attention and many calls he could espouse. He could not in all conscience go out and raise funds for a project he feels was not a success. And he resented attempts to keep him as a useful figurehead while ignoring his contributions and effectively running rings round him".

Eva Jiricna, a super-trendy architect who was on the selection panel, was quick to attack. "I don't know what he is objecting to. We are all professionals," she is reported as saying. She missed the point, of course. It was that very fact which forced him to resign.

News of the Prince's resignation were leaked to the *Daily Telegraph* on the eve of the competition winner announcement, although he had resigned a fortnight earlier, before knowing who the winner was. The leak was intended — and succeeded — in presenting the totally wrong and damaging image of a childish, petulant Prince walking out in a fit of pique, not on a point of principle. The image has never been corrected by the Prince's staff, and the aftermath helped them convince the Prince that he should not attempt another such principled stand ever again.

Paternoster Square

In June 1986 the *Evening Standard* revealed that the Paternoster precinct,

the dismal 1960s development north of St Pauls Cathedral, was to be redeveloped. A 250-year lease on the site had been bought from the Church Commissioners by a consortium led by developer Stuart Lipton for £80 million.

At the time the project director said: "If possible we would like to bring back the medieval street patterns with lower buildings". But Mr Lipton decided to hold an international architectural competition for the site and chose eight Modernist practices to take part, including Britain's top three, Richard Rogers, Norman Foster and the late James Stirling.

The competition entries were not made public, but Prince Charles had a private viewing in July 1987. He made it clear to the developer that none of the eight, including the winning scheme by Arup Associates, remotely met with his approval.

The Prince could have made a real difference to the way architecture is viewed and practised in this country by giving a voice to millions. But he has allowed himself to be compromised, marginalised and ultimately silenced.

A few months later, in December 1987, the Prince made his celebrated Mansion House speech, dubbed the "Luftwaffe speech".

In a stunningly forthright fashion he slated Britain's post-War planners and architects and singled out the Paternoster competition for comment. It was "deeply depressing" and "demoralising", he said. The competition brief which specified a million square feet of offices forced all the competitors to "cram in as much as possible on to the site". There was no consideration for "architectural good manners",

materials or style.

At the same time, he described his own vision for St Pauls. Apart from the restoration of the medieval street pattern, he wanted "to see a roofscape that gives the impression that St Paul's is floating above it like a great ship on the sea. I would also like to see the kinds of materials Wren might have used — soft red brick and stone dressings perhaps, and the ornament and detail of classical architecture, but on a scale humble enough not to compete with the monumentality of St Pauls".

It was in direct response to the Prince's vision for Paternoster that architect John Simpson produced what began its life as an "alternative" scheme. The idea was conceived late at night after the Mansion House speech: a real plan which would be formally submitted to the City of London as a planning application to challenge the official schemes which the Prince had likened to "a stunted imitation of Manhattan".

In February 1988 I persuaded the *Evening Standard* to support the Simpson scheme by paying his substantial planning application fee. As the paper explained at the time, "We support this effort not because we are convinced his is the only correct solution, but because we agree with Prince Charles that such decisions must not be taken behind closed boardroom doors and through private competitions, but have a proper public debate so that the people of London may judge for themselves".

Following the *Standard's* intervention, things began to happen. A Paternoster Committee was set up by Lord St John of Fawsley, chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, who organised an exhibition of the Arup and Simpson schemes in the crypt of St Pauls in June 1988.

A comments book at the exhibition was analysed by the *Standard*: three out of four visitors who commented preferred the classical approach to the modern.

In June the Simpson scheme was presented to the City, and was welcomed by the Planning Committee. In the meanwhile, the site itself changed hands twice. Arups continued to work

on their scheme, but never made a planning application.

In October 1989 the Paternoster site was acquired by a consortium made up of UK developer Greycoat, New York developer Park Tower and the powerful Mitsubishi Estates of Japan. One of the first people the new owners called on was Prince Charles. John Simpson was taken on as joint masterplanner.

They made a commitment to "traditional concepts of urban design with fine streets and public spaces... new buildings should be human in scale... we want to create a place which will be admired and liked not only by the people that use the buildings, but also by the public at large".

The Simpson scheme was then developed and went on public exhibition in 1991. 18,000-odd visitors attended over five weeks. A Gallup survey commissioned by the developers had the inspired idea of asking visitors their profession and listing some of the responses separately for architects and others.

The conclusion: most non-architects (85 per cent) liked the Paternoster proposals. Of the architects, 67 per cent hated the scheme, some with an alarming ferocity.

Most ordinary people found the classical facades in stone and brick, arranged along traditional street patterns to complement Wren's masterpiece, comforting and attractive. But among architects it brought out fear and loathing.

Jeremy Melvin, one-time director of the publicly subsidised Architecture Foundation, was not content with attacking the Prince and had a go at Wren himself. St Pauls, he said, was "a very unsatisfactory piece of architecture", and should be demolished while the horrible 1960s building surrounding it should be kept. Architect Peter Moro, at 80 a grand old man of Modernism, said of the classical Paternoster proposals "I wanted to vomit".

Roy Worskett, who as former City Planner of Bath should really have known better, complained of "tacky Georgiana stuck to giant steel frames" and accused the developers of the heinous crime of seeking to gain "instant public gratification".

The scheme went on to obtain planning permission. But it was ultimately defeated, not by the Modernists but by circumstances. By the time consent was given, the London property market had plunged into a deep recession. For most of the 1990s nothing got built unless a tenant had already signed up to take the space. The classical Paternoster design became a casualty of circumstances.

By the time the market had recovered sufficiently for developers' interest to be rekindled the Japanese, who had by now acquired the entire site from their British and American partners, allowed themselves to be persuaded that the Simpson scheme was not viable.

Sir William Whitfield was appointed new masterplanner and began a long fight to keep an incompatible and endlessly bickering architectural team together. The Prince had several opportunities to tell the Japanese he would rather they proceeded with the approved scheme, but was talked out of it by his advisers. The classical scheme for Paternoster Square has been consigned to history; the Prince said nothing.

Poundbury

It was in his "Vision of Britain" television special in October 1988 that the Prince first hinted at what he hoped would become his most important contribution so far to the great planning debate. Some viewers were puzzled by the special attention given in what was a programme about Britain to two foreign places: Sienna in Italy and Seaside in Florida. The answer came a few weeks later. The Prince was going to implement some of the modern planning ideas of Seaside and the organic, traditional architectural aspects of Sienna into a new development at Poundbury in Dorset.

The decision to develop at all was not his, nor that of the Duchy of Cornwall which owns Poundbury along with large tracts of Dorset countryside. It was the decision of Dorchester City and West Dorset District Councils, taken after thorough studies and consultation. The area between Dorchester (which is at present remarkably small for a County Town and where local

people already cannot afford the house prices) and the Dorchester by-pass was deemed the best location.

Outline planning consent already existed for the 400 acres which would almost double the size of the town. Over 15-20 years an additional 3000 houses would be built to house some 8000 people, the planners had decided.

Normally at this point the Duchy would simply have put the land up for sale leaving its future to be thrashed out between private developers and local planners. For the Duchy this would have been the easy and traditional way, and many of its old hands never wanted things to be done any differently. But in those days the Prince was still making his own decisions.

Starting as he did from a sincere regret that such a lovely landscape must be developed at all, the Prince decided that the least he could do was ensure it was done properly.

Ideally, he wanted a solution which would enhance, not destroy, the special beauty of the area. He also insisted on a solution which would be welcomed, not resisted, by existing residents.

He commissioned the great Leon Krier as his masterplanner and organised the Poundbury planning weekend for local people. The starting point of the masterplan was the overwhelming desire not only to create a new kind of development but to set a new standard and promote a new approach which would be emulated all over the country.

Leon Krier says he has been "accused" of creating an "Italian hill town" in Dorset, but sees no need to defend himself. "Why is it that the Modernists mock 19th century pumping stations beautifully designed to look like oriental minarets, but drool over churches (by Mies van der Rohe) that look like garages and museums (the Centre Beaubourg) that look like factories?" (or insurance company headquarters that look like oil refineries).

Charges of being "picturesque" and "nostalgic" are also not rebutted. "Nostalgia literally means 'longing for home'. Fine! I want to design places that people will be proud to have come from — and always yearn to come back to".

What he and the Prince were desper-

ate to avoid were the sprawling suburbs, the housing estates which have desecrated the outskirts of our important towns and cities for decades. Krier's "quarters" are urban by design, mixed in uses and emerge on a self-contained basis.

One reason why Poundbury may end up being the only one of the Prince's positive architectural interventions not to disappear without a trace is that Leon Krier does not readily compromise. On the Poundbury project he regularly has to threaten to resign whenever he uncovers yet another attempt to dilute or subvert his masterplan. He confirms that, even in 1998, he has to keep an eagle eye on the project to protect it from predators and hostile forces, some within the Duchy itself.

School of Architecture

After many years of pointing out that the architectural emperor has no clothes, and after a series of highly successful international summer schools, Prince Charles finally announced his intention to set up a permanent school, teaching architecture as he thinks it should be taught.

Did the announcement come in response to being likened to Hitler by architect James Stirling in a newspaper interview the week before? It would be fun to think so, but of course the Prince's intentions were made known — privately — well in advance of the public announcements.

They resulted from his realisation that the existing 36 schools of architecture not only preach Modernism exclusively, but often vilify and even victimise those who want to draw for their inspiration on anything classical or traditional. As he said: "Those rare students courageous enough to pursue the traditional approach are sometimes browbeaten by their tutors. Luckier ones are merely ridiculed as freaks".

Sadly, however, while the Prince's intentions were commendable, the implementation was amateurish and lamentable. The first mistake was to appoint as director of the school Dr Brian Hanson, who had done a good job as the Prince's Secretary in Architecture but was completely out of his depth in his new role.

A mild architectural historian, Dr Hanson had neither the managerial ability to run the new organisation nor the public relations skills to present it to sponsors, students and the public.

He also had the most unfortunate knack of appointing staff who regularly turned on him and undermined his position, while at the same time alienating his — and the Prince's — real allies. The Institute quickly changed from being a centre of classical excellence into a hive of bickering courtiers.

Not surprisingly, all the world-class figures involved in the Institute's launch were very quickly disillusioned and departed. Leon Krier, while he continues to correspond with the Prince trying to warn him of what is happening, lives in France and wishes not to be formally associated with the Institute.

Professor Christopher Alexander's views on the need to consider human feelings in design and the dangers of Modernism closely echo the Prince's own. "The tactic that architecture professors use to subdue beginning students is to create a subtle and highly repressive atmosphere of esoteric knowledge. This enables them to keep in motion the gigantic scam they have been perpetrating on the unsuspecting public for 50 years", Alexander said at one of the early summer schools, by way of explaining why a different kind of school was needed.

But he soon found himself the butt of a whispering campaign and left the Institute in disgust. People of the stature of Krier and Alexander were replaced by a stream of nonentities, and the Prince did nothing. The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture can best be described using Ghandi's famous comment on Western civilisation: "It would be a very good idea". Sadly, it never actually happened and would not be missed if it disappears.

Architectural Modernism, like socialism with which it has long been closely associated since the Bauhaus itself, is not so much a style as an ideology, almost a religion. Like socialism, it has to be imposed from above by the "enlightened" elite on the unwilling and ignorant masses — for

our own good, of course. And, like socialism, it is exclusive and tolerant of no dissent. Its doctrinaire and indoctrinating principles dominate all of Britain's 36 schools of architecture.

Should the aesthetic tide ever turn against Modernism, most architects stand to lose not only their ideological base but much of their livelihood as well. That is why, as Professor Christopher Alexander says quite bluntly, they must "stifle debate, prevent criticism, so that they can maintain their monopoly over the billions of dollars of capital investment in new buildings".

In contrast, when setting up his school, the Prince said that architecture must go "beyond the purely functional and material... give us a sense of well-being, of harmony and of appropriateness without which we cannot claim to be the true heirs of civilisation.

"I suspect there is a great hunger among young architects for those principles which guided the builders of old. I would like to try and find a truly effective way of responding through research, through practical building experience, through craftsmanship, through the more sensitive use of modern materials, through enlightened humility, through the application of wise and ageless principles gleaned from constant observation of the natural world and the ways of the universe".

He also said of the Modern Movement: "It has taken 50 years to destroy the accumulated architectural wisdom of thousands of years. I am quite prepared for it to take at least as long to rebuild it — even if I have to be sent to a taxidermist in order to see it through".

This important promise now appears to have been tragically abandoned. Only one man can change that — the one who made it in the first place.

Mira Bar-Hillel is planning correspondent of the *Evening Standard*.

Blair's Britain

Hal Colebatch provides an Australian view.

Since arriving in Britain last September I have seen something new. The bizarre atmosphere of the Diana funeral greeted us, so like the sad and horrible atmosphere of the last days of the Arthurian mythology, complete with its addances and mordreds, and led me to think further about something which had started to pre-occupy me some time before I left Australia: that is, the changing shape of cultural conflict, its increasing importance in the shaping of the future, and its gradual emergence over other, more conventional, aspects of the political process. Allied to this was another thing which the Dianamania impressed on me: how much we seem to have exhausted our religious and ethical capital: what I saw was a people who did not know how to believe, how to think, how to feel, or how to behave.

I don't say that to denigrate British culture especially. It was a universal phenomenon. According to one authoritative survey, the Diana affair generated more publicity, internationally, than any other event in the entire history of the world. This is, surely, something for any social commentator to consider very seriously.

The Australian historian Manning Clark, in Britain as a young man at the time of the fall of France in 1940, had been given a chance to be present at a great world-historical crisis and had fled. In my own case the question of fleeing or otherwise did not enter into it — there was no physical danger to test one's courage against in that sense — but I was certainly present at something important.

Tony Blair leads the first major post-Cold War government and the first government of any major Anglophone country to launch a *specifically* cultural war. Its objectives go far beyond

entrenching the Labour Party. They encompass changing the entire culture and national identity of the country and the mental landscape and values of those who inhabit it. The destruction of Britain's links with its past and with its traditional culture seem under Blairism both a political strategy and a personal obsession.

The relationship between government, economic power and culture is complex and multidirectional: Blairism inherited and benefited from a certain cultural as well as economic climate. Now, to an unprecedented degree, it seeks to use that climate to entrench a certain élite on the commanding heights of cultural power, and by excluding and silencing the traditional culture of Britain. This is to be done by a coalition of political, media, artistic, financial and other interests. The issues in British politics today do not look like those of the past and often do not look political at all. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci said that:

Any revolutionary class, in addition to seizing political power, must secure *cultural* hegemony... To seal its victory, such a class... must challenge and oust [its enemies] in the realms of religion, philosophy, art, morality, language and manners.

It would be hard better to encapsulate New Labour's agendas, objectives and strategy. New Labour is not a monolith, but it is given coherence by a specific *Weltanschauung* which amounts to a virtual ideology. New Labour is uniquely positioned for cultural revolution, for it came to power free from the social disciplines and, to an extent, the military alliances of the Cold War, the traditional power of the big unions and the ideological baggage of socialism. Further, with 43% of the vote converted into 63% of the seats in Parliament, Britain is at least temporarily a One-Party State. This was achieved partly through tacti-

cal voting but fundamentally through a huge failure among traditional conservative voters to support Tory candidates. Blair is commonly depicted as a centrist — almost non-political — politician, the least radical of politicians, a “chipper apolitical imp”, in one paper, “startlingly unradical” according to political writer Edward Pearce, or as the *Economist* put it, “The Strangest Tory Ever Sold”, leading a meritocratic government, a managerialist who sees government in technocratic terms. Paul Johnson, an increasingly fervent admirer of Blair, claimed:

In essentials, Blair's Government is a continuation of Margaret Thatcher's after the hiatus of the John Major interregnum.

Stewart Steven claimed:

He thinks the ideological approach to politics was almost a perversion of the 20th Century.

There is an official government version. The British High Commissioner to Australia told an Australian audience:

Britain is a buzzing, exciting place spreading out in many areas of manufacturing and industry, in creative design and cutting-edge technology.

Blair is leading a third wave, between free markets and the traditional socialist approach ... He did not say what the Tories had done was bad, he agreed to build on them. New Labour is very different from traditional labour.

These things are in a sense true. They also disguise a deeper and opposite truth. One of the most perceptive descriptions of Blair's real ideology has been “radical centrist”. Blair is not the least but the most radical British Prime Minister since the office emerged in its modern form. Labour is trying to destroy the traditions, values and culture in which traditional conservative ideas can exist. They have taken to heart one of the most important lessons of ecology — you don't make a species extinct by going after specimens of it: *you make it*

extinct by destroying its habitat. Mao Tse Tung said the sympathetic peasants were the sea in which the fish of guerrillas existed. Modern Labour — and cultural Nomenclatura — strategy is to dry up the sea in which conservative fish can exist.

Why does Blair invite drug-sodden, violent, child-corrupting rock-stars like Noel Gallagher to Downing Street receptions? I think much of the answer is along the lines of what Orwell said of the Nazi goose-step — it is a raw demonstration of *power*. It says: “However ugly this is, you daren’t laugh at it. Your protest is futile. Your world, your values, are ended.” New Labour’s infatuation with degrading, barbarous, soul-destroying rubbish in art, fashion, films, music and architecture, is part of the same thing, as is its thrust to destroy traditions and values in the armed forces, the churches, the ceremonies and offices of State, the teaching and awareness of traditional British history — the various symbols, traditions and attitudes which have made up the notion of Britishness. Legislation is not necessary to kill a tradition, not even the crude weapons of satire are necessary. Mere flippancy can do it, or the well-bred snivelling voice of the narrator of an historical television feature. An institution can be killed simply by labelling feelings of affection or reverence for it, *even sympathetically and regretfully*, as “nostalgia” — the labelling of it as something dead and gone is effective. It can be killed simply by being ignored, and once it is dead it doesn’t come back.

The proletarianisation of the media aids this process of cultural destruction enormously. At the other end of the cultural spectrum you have fin-de-siècle artists and arts bureaucrats promoting every kind of artistic and cultural degeneration both for their own enrichment and also for the objective of destroying those traditions and values which depend on notions of beauty and civilisation. If this destruction is completed, conservatives will have *no means of existing* and in a sense *no reason to exist*, like Orang Utans when the rain-forest has been burnt.

A Cool Britannia whose salient points of existence are rock-musicians, fashion-designers, millionaire soccer club

managers and recipients of prolefeed who feel the events of Coronation Street more deeply than those of the actual world is simply incompatible with a Britain whose history is a living culture — the Britain that is a part and product of (to make a very small and I emphasise very idiosyncratic list) Alfred the Great, Mallory, Purcell, Shakespeare, Dr Johnson, Nelson, Turner, Wellington, Constable, *Rewards and Fairies*, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gainsborough, Gilbert & Sullivan, *The Ballad of the White Horse*, Arthur Ransome, Richmal Crompton, “BB”, *The Wind in the Willows*, “Bartimeus”, W. E. Johns, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Forester, Douglas Bader, Meccano, John Wyndham, Hornby trains, Sir Frank Whittle, C. S. Lewis,

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Geoffrey Household, Berkeley Mather, Rosemary Sutcliff; Kenneth More in *North West Frontier*, Colonel Wintle, *Carry On* films, Lord Denning, *Genevieve*, village cricket, Dan Dare, Benny Hill, Alec Guinness, Thomas the Tank Engine, and, late and perhaps closing the circle, John Boorman’s 1981 film *Excalibur* (this last a smashing riposte to the notion that satires like *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* had succeeded in killing the deep cultural resonance and magic of the Arthurian myth). The two are as incompatible as the Soviet Union and the writings of Solzhenitsyn: they cannot ultimately both exist in the same culture and one or the other has to go.

But Labour and the cultural penumbra of Cool Britannia is *not* in possession of some kind of *Zeitgeist*. These are historically very interesting times. I conclude with two quotes from favourite authors: One is by the great American Science-fiction writer Larry Niven, who

is my own SF editor with Baen Books, and was one of the group of SF writers who helped persuade President Reagan to press ahead with the Star Wars defence initiative and break the Soviet economy. He concludes a story set in the not-too-distant future in the following terms, with an eerie echo of the apparently irrational nature of the great driving forces:

“Why did Earth go into space in the first place, if not for abstract knowledge?” Words crowded over each other to reach Lit’s mouth. They jammed his throat, and he was speechless. He spread his hands, made frantic gestures, gulped twice, and said, “It’s *obvious!*”

“Tell me slow. I’m a little dense.”

“There’s everything in space. Monopoles. Metal. Vacuum for the vacuum industries. A place to build cheap without all kinds of bracing girders. Free fall for people with weak hearts. Room to test things that might blow up. A place to learn physics where you can watch it happen. Controlled environments —”

“Was it all that obvious before we got there?”

“Of course it was!” Lit glared at his visitor. The glare took in Garner’s withered legs, his drooping, mottled, hairless skin, the decades that showed in his eyes — and Lit remembered his visitor’s age....

“Wasn’t it?”

The other is from John Christopher’s *Beyond the Burning Lands*, set in Dark Ages Britain: small besieged cities with heads of malefactors impaled above their walls, wide shallow marshes, beaver-dams and forest horns, wet tangled woods, and savage men, with tiny islands and pockets of order, hard-riding knights and torches in the wind. The hero seeks the aid of a local priest or wizard who has an ancient weapon, and with a sudden jolt for us the weapon is handed over and the priest tells him so we may date these Dark Ages: “You could not handle many of our ancestor’s weapons, but this one is simple. They called it a Sten Gun.”

Our enemies may be singing *Tomorrow belongs to me*, but tomorrow belongs automatically to no-one.

Hal Colebatch is writing a book on Blair’s Britain.

The English Tradition in Literature

Robert Grant

Great works of literature are those which deal convincingly with the grand themes of human life. We are all born, most of us marry and bring up children, we all have to live with others, we all need friends, and we all die. These momentous facts, especially the last, have led writers in every society to try to make sense of them. All great art, and all great literature, however disturbing or unpleasant on the surface, aims at bottom at making us feel more at home in the world. It does this both by reconciling us to those things about it which we cannot change, and by encouraging us to change those things in it that we actually can.

But when one asks, 'What is *English* literature?', things get complicated. English, French, German, Italian, Latin and Greek literature all deal, in their different ways, with the grand themes. All celebrate love, friendship, and the rest, and confront the unpleasant facts of violence, death and hate. So what makes English literature specifically English, as opposed to French or German?

Language has much to do with it but language is not everything. American literature is written in English, but is no mere appendix or offshoot of the English tradition. This is so because literature, though distinct from life, is related to it, and there are many features of American life which differ from ours, such as the ethnic diversity and tensions of its huge cities, and the isolated rural communities scattered across its famous wide-open spaces. Our history is longer, our landscape, climate and culture much less various, and our whole mental universe, though no less profound, much more constricted. It is only to be expected that such differences should be reflected in our literature.

Does the essence of a national literature lie in those superficial differences? It can, but they can surely not give us the essence of *great* literature, which, addressed precisely those deep human themes and predicaments which underlie *all* national societies and traditions. Surface differences, the familiar, the particular and the local, are in a general way the stuff of *light* literature.

This is why humour, and particularly the comedy of manners, often does not travel well. Of course there is great comic literature, and even slapstick has a universal appeal, but it is barely possible for someone unfamiliar with the detailed nuances of English life and history easily to understand *The Diary of a Nobody, 1066 and All That*, Stephen Potter, the Molesworth books, or even P.G. Wodehouse. Just how culture-bound Wodehouse really is can be seen from the fact that Americans and others often insist on treating him as some kind of realist, without seeing that his creations belong to a wholly imaginary world, an Arcadia. It is said that at the beginning of the last War German spies were parachuted into England dressed in spats and monocles, apparently in the Wodehouse-derived belief that these, being everyday wear, would be good protective colouration. Be that as it may (and it would be wonderful in all senses if it were true), to see that Wodehouse's England is, and is meant to be, non-existent, it surely helps to be English in the first place.

Taken singly, the surface features of any society, as of any literary tradition, are not the material of great art. Each by itself may be subject to change and fashion. But taken as a whole they constitute a culture, to which its inhabitants may be fiercely attached, since it is the source of all their meanings and they have none outside it. It is only

through their specific cultural embodiments that we can ever approach the universals of human life. Isolate those from their cultural contexts, and you have merely animal or biological life, the 'birth, copulation and death' to which T.S. Eliot's brutish Sweeney reduces them. The catch-all word 'copulation', for example, throws no useful light on whatever is represented by such different phenomena as Romeo and Juliet, fornication, Antony and Cleopatra, arranged marriages, Paolo and Francesca, romantic love, and so-called 'living in sin'. To know what all these mean, and to evaluate them properly, we have to know something about the societies in which they figure. (And that is why historical background is of such importance in the understanding of literature. We need first of all to know what it meant to them, then.)

English literature makes a greater effort than most to keep hold of the local, the specific and the familiar, even when treating the 'grand' themes, that is, even when it is 'great'. Everywhere we find a distrust of the abstract, the ideal, the theoretical and the otherworldly, and a corresponding trust in the immediate, the known and the concrete. It is no accident that historically our mainstream philosophical tradition has been empiricism, which makes experience the final source and test of truth. We have a genuine spirituality and idealism of our own, but for us an empirical bird in the hand is always worth two ideal birds in the bush.

That is perhaps because, at least in modern times, our world has always been more or less one in which we can be at home. For us the immediate, the known and the concrete are pleasant or at least tolerable, rather than something we might wish to escape. Take

our climate and geography. We complain about them, but they are pretty hospitable to all but sunbathers. Contrast them with the harsh, dangerous, starkly monotonous environments of the Eskimo or the desert Arab, and consider how those must condition their inhabitants' outlook. It is easy for us in temperate zones, with variegated, non-threatening surroundings and changeable weather, to fancy ourselves and our moods reflected in external Nature. This is what Ruskin famously called the Pathetic Fallacy, viz. the superstition that Nature feels as we do and sympathises with our emotions.

Thus a Victorian novelist (Charlotte Brontë or George Eliot) will set a human conflict against the backdrop of a thunderstorm, and bring the sun out when the characters finally make up. How could an Eskimo novelist symbolically emphasise his characters' shifting emotions, when little in his outside world changes, and all of it is potentially hostile? Be it natural or man-made, we find ourselves reflected in our environment.

Man-made environments can seem all-too-human. But a temperate landscape makes the whole universe seem friendly. It is humanised, and may owe much to artifice, but there is something in it which seems, whilst engaging with the human, to transcend and ennoble it, to give it a place in the final, extra-human scheme of things. Here we need only to make the best of the world we have. Thus, from Wordsworth and Emily Brontë to Hardy and Richard Jefferies and Vaughan Williams and the Ruralist painters of the 1970s, we find a pagan, quasi-religious, numinous or 'nature-mystical' apprehension of the countryside, a kind of pantheism. If there is a God, he is not elsewhere, but here; and he is not concentrated into an overbearing, patriarchal Jehovah-figure (Blake's 'old Nobodaddy aloft'), but is variously manifested in every detail of his creation.

If climate has helped us to feel at home in the natural world, so has our history in the social world. By nature we are no more or less violent than others, but our circumstances have inclined us over centuries to political

moderation and a deeply peaceable way of life. In fact, what seems to other nations our notorious lack of spirituality is probably due in part to our folk memories of religious persecution, first under Mary Tudor and then, briefly, under James II, as well as the Civil War, which had a religious as well as a political side. We dislike both otherworldliness and fanaticism, and in religious matters prefer sentiment to doctrine, just as in politics we prefer practice to theory.

Alone of all the major European tongues, English is a genuine hybrid. When the Romans left Britain, their language survived only in the monasteries. The Jutes, Angles, and other German tribes invaded, driving the old native British language into Wales, which they never fully colonised. Their

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language, Anglo-Saxon, was the everyday speech of England for four or five centuries, and remains the basis of much of our ordinary vocabulary, especially of short, sharp, vigorous words like grip, grasp, leap, bed, bend, dog, stick, stool, head, hat, shoe, food, and so on. Probably nearly all everyday business could even now be carried on, as it once was, using nothing but Germanic words.

Romance vocabulary came back through the Norman Conquest. The conquerors spoke Norman-French, which became the official language of England for three centuries. In a society whose ruling class is perpetually under threat there are rigid class divisions, enforced by law, and marked in all kinds of ways from language to dress and manners. But when, as in insular and seldom-invaded England,

a ruling class is relatively secure (at least from foreign attack), it finds it advantageous gradually to share power, and eventually culture, with its subjects. Gradually, over the centuries, this is what happened in England, so that the most powerful man in England after Henry the Eighth, and almost the best educated, was a butcher's son, Cardinal Wolsey. Yet social mobility was already well advanced a century and a half earlier when Chaucer, a wine-merchant's son, diplomat and high government official, chose to write *The Canterbury Tales* not in the Court language, French, but in the English vernacular.

I say English, but it was not what the Anglo-Saxons spoke. Chaucer's English was quite like today's. In other words, it was already full of French, which is to say ultimately of Latin, words. The rulers' language had percolated downwards, as the common people, or at least individuals from among them, had begun, quite spontaneously, to percolate upwards into the ruling class. In fact, the court of Richard II, the king under whom Chaucer served, was the last English court to speak French.

Our dual linguistic heritage has made English a language of unrivalled poetic resource. Consider some well-known lines from Shakespeare (and well-worn also, since Matthew Arnold first drew attention to them). Hamlet is dying, and Horatio offers to join him by drinking the poison that has just killed Gertrude. No, says Hamlet:

'Absent thee from felicity awhile, /
And in this harsh world draw thy
breath in pain / To tell my story.'

Now, 'absent thee from felicity awhile' literally means something like 'do not die or kill yourself yet', in other words, postpone the happiness of death (happiness, because after death, as Hamlet sees it, there is no such suffering as there is in this life). But why does he use such a formal expression as 'absent thee', and such a remote, philosophical-sounding word as 'felicity', when he could have said happiness?

Surely it is because he is describing an unknown, other-worldly thing, the state of being dead, a thing which is

abstract because we can only imagine it. But we imagine that it must be something smooth, pleasant, and stress-free, and that is just what that beautiful, flowing, melodious line conveys. Both the key words in it are Latinate.

Now compare it with the world that Hamlet is asking Horatio not to leave. The sharp monosyllables and the Germanic words 'harsh', 'world' and 'breath' give an impression of someone straining, panting, and sucking air in through his teeth, trying stoically not to cry out. The first of those two lines contains five words, which make it flow easily; the second contains ten, so that it comes out in spurts. There could hardly be a more graphic contrast between the stress of this world and the tranquillity of the next.

Much English poetry is in the manner of 'absent thee from felicity awhile'. A poet who is dreaming of a better world will tend to adopt that high-toned, lofty philosophical style, full of Latinate words. I have mentioned Tennyson already, but there are others, Platonists such as Spenser and Shelley, who are equally notable for what critics used to call mellifluousness. Or there is Milton, who gives you a similar effect but with the bass control turned up. Milton was one of the foremost Latin writers of his time, and also, when young, wrote in Italian. The result is a deep, dignified, weighty rumble, entirely appropriate for a Biblical epic at least half of which is set in Heaven. Many readers and critics, in fact, have complained that, impressive though Milton's idiom is, it isn't really English. 'In affecting the ancients,' as Ben Jonson said of Spenser, 'he writ no language.'

Other writers go to the opposite extreme, seeking to banish all 'foreign' — by which they mean Romance — words from their poetry. I say poetry, since these things count for much more in poetry than in prose, prose being a more neutral medium, and also easier to translate; but even George Orwell said that in prose one should never use a Romance word when an Anglo-Saxon one will do. What he was suggesting was that Romance words, being in large part the vocabulary of philoso-

phy and the sciences, tended towards abstraction, and thereby obscured the true nature of everyday human, non-scientific things. He thought that this was particularly dangerous in politics, where, because people's lives and happiness are at stake, it is especially important for them to understand exactly, and in a concrete way, what they are being offered. Abstractions, Orwell thought, are the basis of the lies and self-deception endemic to all political endeavour.

He gives a parody example from an imaginary contemporary, a Communist professor such as E.H. Carr or J.D. Bernal. In the 1930's Stalin wanted to get the Soviet Union industrialised, and its agriculture collectivised, as fast as possible. He succeeded, but only by having tens of millions of people shot, starved or worked to death. Orwell's professor whitewashes Stalin's methods — which were probably less efficient, economically speaking, than twenty years of capitalism would have been — like this (I am quoting from memory): 'Few would disagree that the rigours the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been more than amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.' The words, Orwell says, 'fall upon the mind like soft snow', blurring the writer's true meaning, which is this: 'I believe in killing people if you can get good results by doing so.'

Orwell was right in this instance, but only because abstractions are here being used to mislead. If what you want to describe really is abstract, and not an all-too-concrete pile of corpses, then it seems perfectly reasonable to use abstract, which is to say, from our point of view, largely Latinate language. I say 'from our point of view' because for Romance nations Latinate vocabulary must naturally be the language both of the concrete and the abstract, since, unlike us, they have no other to draw on. The Italian word for a concept, *concetto*, is in itself no more and no less 'concrete' than the German *Begriff*, which seems more 'physical' to us. But etymologically both signify a thing grasped, which, metaphorically speaking, is just what a concept is. This information of course

plays no part in the mind of one who uses either word, any more than we think of the word 'concept', when we use it, as entailing the idea of physically grasping something.

How English speakers came to associate Germanisms with practice and Latinisms with theory is clear enough but it is an association and no more. Nevertheless, the distinction has entrenched itself at the heart of English cultural politics. There have been literary nationalists — and they have their equivalents in every other nation, usually in music — who have sought out the knobliest, most Anglo-Saxon-sounding vocabulary they can find with the object of making English, not as like Italian, but as like German as possible. The underlying belief is that their favoured lexis is somehow the vehicle of earthy native authenticity, as opposed to rootless foreign intellectualism. Put that in religious idiom, and you have the distinction to which I have already referred, between simple practical piety, a spiritual habitus or communal sentiment on the one hand, and heavyweight theology and doctrinal religion on the other.

There is no doubt that F.R. Leavis's rating of Keats above Shelley, of Hopkins above Tennyson, and of the Metaphysical poets over Milton, was more than a merely aesthetic preference. His elevation in each instance of a relatively vernacular idiom over the European High Style was an index of his own undeclared commitment to practice over theory, to experience over its explanation, and to vital ambiguity over rational certitude. The trouble with Leavis was that he managed to convert even his pragmatic and ideally provisional judgments into a curiously unshakeable dogmatism of his own, such as we see embodied in his notorious league tables of literary heroes and villains. They were, after all, only poets and novelists, that is, composers of self-confessed fictions.

Yet for Leavis all were prophets, with human destiny in their hands, between whom it became essential to choose. It was imperative that vitality, spontaneity, and the concrete should triumph over the dead hand of rationalism, as represented by philosophy

and theology. Both of those claim, in their different ways, if not always to know the answer, at least to believe that there is one, or so Leavis implied. His counter-dogma was that there is no answer, but that the question, and how it is asked, is everything. Because of that, and because, like the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus, Hopkins embraced the immediate as the vehicle of the eternal, Leavis almost forgave him for being a Roman Catholic. For much the same reason he forgave Bunyan for being a Protestant. (He didn't like religion.)

The contrast between these two idioms, and the fact that it is a contrast of substance as much as one of style, can be brought out by comparing some famous lines of Shelley's with some by Hopkins. Shelley writes in *Adonais* that:

The One remains, the Many change and
pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's
shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured
glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

Now it is true that, if we do a word-count, the language of that passage is not especially Latinate; but many key words of the antithesis, 'radiance' and 'Eternity' on the one side, and 'Life', 'shadows' and 'glass' on the other, do show this etymological division. The 'feel' of this passage is very much like the lines from *Hamlet*, and is brought about by similar means.

Contrast it now with Hopkins's well-known mini-sonnet 'Pied Beauty', which begins 'Glory be to God for dappled things'. Where Shelley soars above the world of variety and transience, the Many, Hopkins embraces it. For Shelley the Eternal precludes the mortal and the transitory, making a mere 'shadow' of it; for Hopkins, the very miscellaneousness of the natural and human worlds is what makes them real, and points also to God's authorship. Here the mortal is seen as an aspect of the eternal, rather than something set up in permanent opposition to it. Its reality is emphasised by a plethora of knobby, vigorous, concrete language, of predominantly Ger-

manic derivation: couple, brindled, stipple, fallow, gear, tackle, freckled, trout, cow, and so on.

Sometimes this English fascination with the pullulating vitality of particulars can almost run mad. Consider Browning's *Englishman in Italy*, who sees:

... Our fisher arrive,
And pitch down his basket before us,
All trembling alive
With pink and grey jellies, your sea
fruit;
You touch the strange lumps
And mouths gape there, eyes open, all
manner

Of horns and of humps,
Which only the fisher looks grave at.
While round him like imps
Cling screaming the children as naked
And brown as his shrimps;

Or consider Dickens's fantastic catalogues. Here, including a second helping of shrimps, are the contents of the crazy philanthropist Mrs Jellyby's cupboard in *Bleak House*, which the narrator Esther is attempting to clear out:

bits of mouldy pie, sour bottles, Mrs Jellyby's caps, letters, tea, forks, odd boots and shoes of children, firewood, wafers, saucepan-lids, damp sugar in odds and ends of paper bags, footstools, blacklead brushes, bread, Mrs Jellyby's bonnets, books with butter sticking to the binding, guttered candle-ends put out by being turned upside-down in broken candlesticks, nutshells, heads and tails of shrimps, dinner-mats, gloves, coffee-grounds, umbrellas...

Esther calls this a picture of 'waste and ruin', but Dickens describes it with enormous relish. We might say that here we have a love of texture, detail and the miscellaneous simply for their own sake, whose meaning lies in their very lack of meaning. Santayana memorably characterised the same habit in Browning, the celebration of vitality, or even mere existence, as an end in itself, as 'the poetry of barbarism'. (But then Santayana was very largely a partisan of what I have called the European High Style.)

One final example from Hopkins, here showing how one can be blinded by too myopic a focus on the immediate. It is from his unfinished *Epithalamion*, and describes a hiker stripping off for a swim in a woodland pool:

Here he feasts: lovely all is! No more:
off with — down he dings
His bleached both and woolwoven wear:
Careless these in coloured wisp
All lie tumbled-to; then with loop-locks
Forward falling, forehead frowning, lips
crisp
Over finger-teasing task, his twiny boots
Fast he opens, last he offwings,
Till walk the world he can with bare his
feet....

The most bizarre thing about this passage is not even its preposterous language — 'bare his feet' for 'his bare feet', 'bleached both and woolwoven wear' for the man's underclothes and topclothes, to say nothing of his 'dinging' them down — but the fact that Hopkins is so intent on rendering every slightest physical nuance of the performance that he has his bather take off his boots last, a clear impossibility when you consider the narrowness of a Victorian gentleman's trouser cuffs and the size of his boots, especially if he is a hiker. Think of that famous photograph of Brunel in his stovepipe hat, and ask yourself whether he could possibly get his trousers off before his boots. Unlike 'Pied Beauty' this ludicrous passage amounts, quite simply, to detail for its own sake, in other words sheer pointlessness, and illustrates precisely that linguistic vice of 'queerness' which Hopkins diagnosed in himself.

It seems that there is a definite strain, not only in English literature but also in English life, which particularly favours or reflects this 'concrete' vocabulary we have inherited from our Germanic forebears. Although there is much good in that strain, there is also much that is not and just as characteristically English — our Philistinism, the down-side of our down-to-earthness.

England was once personified by a gross figure called John Bull, familiar to us from the works, amongst others, of the Regency cartoonist Gillray. John Bull was little given to reflection. He despised art, education, and music, did not see why children should go to school instead of sweeping chimneys and hauling coal-trucks underground fourteen hours a day. He loved roast beef and Yorkshire pudding washed down with gallons of beer and port,

hated all foreigners, and, though stupid about most things, was shrewd when it came to money or knowing on which side his bread was buttered. It was not for nothing that Napoleon called us a nation of shopkeepers. Only the English could have devised the moral philosophy called Utilitarianism, according to which the goodness or badness of a thing can be judged simply by totting up the pleasures and pains it generates.

You might think there could be no poetical representative of this calculating, materialistic and unspiritual outlook, but there is, and he was one of the most successful versifiers the world has ever seen, the Victorian poetaster Martin Tupper, author of *The Proverbial Philosophy*. Amongst other gems this massive didactic work contains advice as to how to choose a wife. Love comes bottom of the list of relevant considerations, while the top priority is making sure that she has plenty of money, no madness in the family, and is free from consumption.

At its worst, our down-to-earthness means being hopelessly earthbound. But at its best it is a great virtue. More spiritual or idealistic nations might see it as a lack of fervour. But such nations might have been forced to put all their emotional eggs into an otherworldly basket simply because for them this world was so full of horrors that the only way to stay sane was to escape into an imaginary realm. And once they had done so, they would naturally add to those horrors by punishing those who challenged their visions of otherworldly perfection. Spain and Italy have produced men and women of unequalled piety and religious fervour, but it was also in those countries that the Inquisition flourished most fiercely.

An example of the characteristic English view of religion can be found in the Regency writer of light verse, Winthrop Mackworth Praed. In *The Vicar*, Praed takes as his subject a country vicar of the time, a learned man who is a staunch upholder of the Church of England against the Dissenters: indeed, Praed calls him 'of loud Dissent the mortal terror'. Nevertheless, the Vicar is invariably kind

and hospitable to passing travellers:
 Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
 Pundit or papist, saint or sinner,
 He found a stable for his steed,
 And welcome for himself, and dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end,
 And warmed himself in Court or

College,
 He had not gained an honest friend,
 And twenty curious scraps of knowledge, —

If he departed as he came,
 With no new light on love or liquor, —
 Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
 And not the Vicarage, nor the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream, which runs
 With rapid change from rocks to roses;
 It slipped from politics to puns,
 It passed from Mahomet to Moses;
 Beginning with the laws which keep
 The planets in their radiant courses,
 And ending with some precept deep
 For dressing eels, or shoeing horses.

The Vicar may be a staunch Anglican, but his humanity comes first, and, it might be said, is even a part of his religion. Here are the Vicar's, and Praed's views, on religious tolerance:

And when religious sects ran mad,
 He held, in spite of all his learning,
 That if a man's belief is bad,
 It will not be improved by burning.

These charming little verses may be minor stuff, but they do tell us something useful about our literary, as about our cultural, tradition. Two things stand out. First, the Vicar is interested in absolutely everything: love, liquor, astronomy, politics, cookery and horses. His religion, one might say, doesn't for one minute exclude earthly matters.

There is humour, but no bathos, in the reference to dressing eels and shoeing horses. On the contrary, they seem to be naturally part of the ensemble. Life is good, and various, and interesting, and though it is not the be-all and end-all, God has clearly put us here to enjoy it.

And secondly, it is implied that in any other country an educated man, being in possession of what he thought was the truth, would naturally try to impose it on others. But Praed says that 'in spite of all his learning', and not, as one might normally assume, because of it, the Vicar would never want to burn people for their beliefs. In our

own century, by contrast, millions have been massacred, not by ignorant mobs, but by soldiers and policemen acting on the orders of intellectuals, that is, of learned men carrying their theories honestly, and often selflessly, into practice.

I don't wish to sound sentimental, but there is a great kind-heartedness about our literature. It may have to do with our not being a very *Angst*-ridden nation, and with our never having been dogmatically-inclined in religious matters, and so never having experienced the spiritual turmoil and alienation consequent upon the collapse of dogma. English literature has its satirical passages, but even its expressions of hatred usually amount to a hatred of hatred, or 'hatred for love's sake', as the philosopher F.H. Bradley called it. Indeed, its kind-heartedness takes the edge off that preoccupation with class that our literature shares with all others. Like it or not, class is a fact of life, not least in free societies. So long as people are free to choose their friends and acquaintances, and thus to exclude others, there will always be social class, or something like it. But the question is, whether that matters very much.

The English view, if our literature is any guide, is that it does not. Life's universal experiences should give us a sufficient fund of sympathy with all our fellow-nationals. But 17th-century France did not view things this way. The French moralist La Rochefoucauld ironically drew his countrymen's attention to the curious fact that the strange creatures bent double in the fields were actually human beings, as you could see when they stood up. He meant, of course, to satirise the French, and very aristocratic, view, that the lower orders were somehow subhuman. You can see it again in Shakespeare's portrait of the French nobles in *Henry V*, who deplore the fact that their dead are piled side by side with the common soldiery. If you look at 17th-century French drama, you notice that whenever there are dirty deeds to be done it is always a servant who physically carries them out, on his master's or mistress's orders. Even an aristocratic murderer

keeps his hands clean, remains an aristocrat.

In Shakespeare's own portrayal of the lower classes we find something very different, though it is true that he doesn't care for them whenever they compose a mob. But under normal circumstances their spontaneous, unperturbed responses to events carry a great deal of moral weight, for they are in touch with things in a way that their betters often are not. In *King Lear* the wicked, indeed wholly inhuman, Duke of Cornwall seizes his host, Gloucester, and sets personally about putting the old man's eyes out. One eye is already gone, when a servant of Cornwall's, who has been present all the time, suddenly challenges his master:

Hold your hand, my lord [he says]:
I have served you ever since I was a
child,
But better service have I never done
you,

Than now to bid you hold.

It is impossible for us to realise the shattering effect which that must have had on stage at the time. Here is a man, sworn from childhood to obey his feudal master, actually telling him, in the midst of the hideous cruelty he is committing, that enough is enough. Yet Shakespeare more than justifies his disobedience and implies that it is not really disobedience, but the reverse. It is obedience to an ideal of proper behaviour which his master Cornwall has betrayed and which Cornwall was morally bound, to obey as much as his servant was bound to obey him. When the system of subordination, or as Ulysses calls it in *Troilus and Cressida*, 'degree', is perverted to inhuman purposes, then — but only then — it must be outwardly defied in order, as it were, that its inner moral purpose shall be realised, that being to maintain just relations between naturally unequal human beings through an elaborate, prescriptive network of mutual duties, liberties and responsibilities. Cornwall's servant is stabbed by the Duchess, but not before he has given his master a mortal wound, or before poor old Gloucester has lost his other eye. This horrible scene closes with the remaining two servants leading the blinded Gloucester away with these words:

I'll never care what wickedness I do
[says one].
If this man come to good [he means
Cornwall].

If she live long [says the other],
And, in the end, meet the old course of
death,

Women will all turn monsters.

He sends off his companion to get a guide for the old man, and adds:

Go thou; I'll fetch some flax and whites
of eggs
T'apply to his bleeding face. Now
heaven help him!

What is seen here in the social order is much like what Hopkins, and indeed Shakespeare too, saw in the natural order: one great interconnected system whose unity in no way belies its necessary diversity. It is this also which underlies the country-house idyll found everywhere in English literature from Ben Jonson's Penshurst to Mr Knightley's house in *Emma*, from cakes and ale at Olivia's house in *Twelfth Night*, to apples and caraways at Justice Shallow's in *Henry IV Part II*. That Justice Shallow is a parvenu squire and a foolish old man is no more an objection to the idyll than the fact that it in some sense idealises the real relations between the classes and between Man and Nature. It does not conceal the imperfections of the status quo (as exemplified, say, by Justice Shallow's unmerited rise to fortune). What it does is draw out its positive implications, so that even despite its admitted shortcomings we can detect in it — in the status quo, that is — intimations of something worthwhile. What is important is that neighbourliness and hospitality should continue, not that a Justice Shallow should from time to time be seen ostentatiously dispensing them in a manner to which he was evidently not born.

Extend these idealised social relations to the natural world and you have the notion — true or not — of an hospitable nature of which we are part, which therefore cares for us, and to which we owe a corresponding duty to care for it. It is accordingly possible to sin against nature, to fall away from it by some act of wanton destructiveness, as the Ancient Mariner does in shooting the albatross, and the young

Wordsworth, by his own account in 'Nutting', does in vandalising the hazel grove.

I referred earlier to the English preference for a kind of vague, undemanding pantheism as opposed to real, substantive belief in a transcendent personal God. (You can see this in Philip Larkin's poem 'Church Going'.) For all their Philistinism, the English are not spiritually insensitive, but they are spiritually indolent, as I have said, being little concerned with dogma and doctrine and not much interested in saving their souls or in the hereafter generally. I mentioned this once in a so-called 'underground' seminar I gave to a group of Slovaks during the bad old Communist days. Suddenly a voice from the back of the room said quietly: 'Then you will all go to hell!'

I disagree. Many of our great poets have been religious in the orthodox sense. But on the whole, this worldliness has been the prevailing trend. It has been a symptom less of materialism than of profound gratitude for the existence we already have. As Rat and Mole discover in *The Wind in the Willows*, when they come face to face with the god Pan, the transcendent is a thing so awful that the mere memory of it would overshadow and incapacitate their remaining lives. And it is just for that reason that the kindly god bestows upon them the gift of instant oblivion, so that they forget that they have ever seen him.

Roger Grant is Reader in English at Glasgow University.

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Euthanasia

Ray Honeyford opposes legalisation

Do you believe in “mercy killing”? In “doctor-assisted suicide”? In “living wills”? You may well think these questions require no reply, that they stir no interest, and certainly no fears. You may have become vaguely aware that there is a man in America, known as Doctor Death, who provides people with the technology of suicide, and who, despite three appearances in court, remains free because juries have failed to agree on the charge of murder. You may have learnt that a state in the US — Oregon — has made assisted suicide legal. And Holland may have entered your consciousness as a place where, despite all sorts of official restrictions and guidelines, euthanasia is commonly practised. But these are far away places, and their doings have little or no significance for this country. For us, you may well believe, euthanasia is a non-issue. But you would be wrong. Euthanasia is, or ought to be, very much the subject of public debate in this country now. But first just what do the key terms actually mean? Euthanasia is Greek for “good death”, the implication being that when a life is considered not to be worth living, to have no real value, then it is a good thing that the person’s life should be ended by act, or by omission. A living will, sometimes called an advance directive or refusal, is where the patient signs a piece of paper instructing his doctor to end his life, either by painless injection, or by the withdrawal of life-saving treatment, when he feels life is no longer worth the effort and death is preferable. Assisted suicide is where the doctor himself does not administer the fatal dose, but provides the patient with the means, and it is the patient, therefore, who takes his own life.

These terms are bandied about by

supporters of euthanasia in order to give their philosophy a certain pseudo-scientific status. In reality we can cut the whole issue down to size by calling these various means of leaving this world by the proper, inevitable and honest term — intentional killing.

Just what are the arguments for and against intentional killing in a medical context? The Voluntary Euthanasia Society — which has been campaigning for years, and is increasingly active — advances two basic arguments: ending the life of a person who is enduring insupportable pain, and who has expressed a wish to die, is an act of mercy; and keeping that person alive is very expensive, and takes resources that could be invested in more valuable developments in the NHS. This latter argument has taken on a certain urgency in the light of a rapidly increasing older population, and a decreasing younger generation who have to bear the burden of a constantly increasing NHS bill.

However, these arguments suffer from a number of defects. For instance, we now know how to control pain with increasingly sophisticated and powerful drugs. The medical director of a well-known hospice recently declared that, after twenty years in the hospice movement, he had never seen a patient die in agony. As for the economic argument, this offends every principle on which the NHS was founded, and would be dismissed as cynical and immoral by the vast majority of the public. The pain and suffering argument also suffers from the fact that surveys have repeatedly shown that most people do not fear a painful death so much as becoming a burden on others, and losing their personal dignity. What is more, euthanasia is, at the moment, unlawful; and anyone who aids, abets, counsels or procures a

suicide commits a serious offence under the Suicide Act, 1961. But perhaps the most telling anti-euthanasia argument is that any kind of intentional killing in relation to the incurable or terminally ill offends established medical ethics. And that is bound, over time, to undermine the vitally important element of trust between doctor and patient, as well as placing an unacceptable burden on the shoulders of the doctor. I recently heard an experienced Dutch doctor state that many old people in Holland will not enter hospital for fear that they may never come out alive.

Those who advocate intentional killing, however they rationalise their intention, are challenging the great moral tradition that human life has an intrinsic value and dignity. Once this principle is violated, then we are on the slippery slope to regarding persons as objects who have only instrumental value — they are of value only in relation to other factors such as personal comfort, satisfying relationships, or present wishes.

However, there are many thoughtful people who, with some justification, believe that this country has already taken the first, fatal step to euthanasia because of the case of Tony Bland. He was a victim of the Hillsborough football tragedy, and entered a state of deep unconsciousness the doctors have described as Persistent Vegetative State (PVS). Now PVS patients are not dead. They can breathe independently, and their heart beats without assistance. They are not on life-support systems. They can be successfully fed by tube. Some can respond to stimuli, and there are a number of cases on record of PVS patients who have been written off who have successfully communicated with others.

However, PVS patients do die, if they

are deprived of nourishment — just like anyone else. And the courts have fatally ruled that doctors may withdraw food and water from PVS patients even though the intention is to cause certain death. One of the law lords involved has actually said, “the proposed conduct has the aim... of terminating the life of Anthony Bland by withholding from him the basic necessities of life”. The judges were led to this decision by a perverse interpretation of the principle of “double effect”. What this holds is that treatment which is doing no good to the patient may be legitimately withdrawn, even if this may hasten his death; but this only applies when there is no intention to kill, and is strictly in relation to treatment. What the judges did in order to get round this latter requirement was to declare that food and water could be described as “treatment” — an interpretation of the word that defies both common usage and every known dictionary definition. This ominous judgement set a precedent, and helped to create a climate in which the taboo on intentional killing in a medical context was significantly undermined. The euthanasia lobby was given a boost.

The Scottish courts followed the law lords in 1996 in the Janet Johnstone case. She, too, was in a PVS state, and she, too, was starved and dehydrated to death. There have been other disturbing developments. In relation to the Johnstone case an influential professor of law and ethics has said it may be necessary to consider, “Legalising active euthanasia on a voluntary basis” (BBC Radio 5, Five Live, 24.4.1996). A paper in the leading medical journal *The Lancet* has suggested that patients in PVS might be subjected to a “more speedy termination of life”, which would facilitate the use of organs for transplanting (1.11.97). And there has been an attempt by Joe Ashton, M.P. to introduce a Bill in the House of Commons legalising doctor-assisted suicide. According to Sir Ludovic Kennedy, a well known advocate of voluntary euthanasia, there are now more doctors in favour of voluntary euthanasia than against — and he quotes the British Medical Association

in support of this view, (*Daily Telegraph*, 7.4.98). But why should this be seen as an urgent issue now? For this reason: the Government has issued a consultation document, or green paper, called “Who Decides? Making Decisions on Behalf of Mentally Incapacitated Adults”. The period of consultation ended on 31st March this year. So the first stage in any proposed legislation has already been passed.

Now this green paper is based on the Law Commission Report “Mental Incapacity”, and promotes its basic arguments. And there is no doubt that this

Euthanasia is Greek for “good death”, the implication being that when a life is considered not to be worth living, to have no real value, then it is a good thing that the person’s life should be ended

latter document contains several disturbing proposals, including the possible legalising of some forms of euthanasia. Since the green paper relies heavily on the Law Society arguments, it can be safely assumed that, broadly speaking, it supports its (the Law Society’s) philosophy. Yet the government has declared its opposition to euthanasia. The Government attempts to resolve this contradiction by maintaining that withholding treatment or care can never amount to euthanasia. But this is manifestly false. If the intention in withdrawing treatment — which now includes food and water — is to terminate life, then that is euthanasia. And no amount of semantic quibbling can change that.

There can be little doubt that the great principle of respect for human life, and the absolute prohibition of deliberate killing in a medical context, — these fundamental safeguards are

being challenged. When we should be pressing for our greater support for the marvellous system of hospice care — the best in the world — we are being led inexorably down the road to euthanasia. At the moment the issue is focused on the PVS patient and the mentally incapacitated. But these “small beginnings”, as they have been called, could well lead to demands for the swift exit from this world of other inconvenient groups.

We should never forget that much the same euthanasia arguments we are hearing now in this country were being heard in the Germany of the 1920’s and 30’s. Just as now medical and legal experts were advancing arguments why “mercy killing” ought to become acceptable. That led to the compulsory sterilisation of the “unfit” initially, and that in turn led to the despatching from this world of the terminally ill, the disabled and the mentally afflicted. Once the sanctity of human life was violated, this created a climate in which the pernicious notions of eugenics and racial superiority could flourish. This so corrupted the German medical profession that it became a key factor in the Nazi killing machine. The way to the gas chambers and the Holocaust was thereby opened up. Now the doctors, lawyers and sundry academics in the Germany of the 30’s were just as civilised, just as well educated, and, often, just as Christian as our present day intellectuals who are seeking to make euthanasia morally defensible and legally permitted.

Of course there are those who would assert that in arguing thus I am being alarmist, and overstating the case. If ever euthanasia were permitted in this country, then there would be all sorts of guidelines, restrictions and conditions applied to the sort of medical practice involved in caring for the gravely ill. There would be cast-iron guarantees preventing abuse. Only in the most exceptional of cases would deliberate killing be allowed. And the courts would always be there to ensure respect for the law. I would say this to such people: consider just what has happened to the history of abortion in this country. When the 1967 Abortion Act was placed on the statute book, all

sorts of conditions were to apply, and many arguments were advanced to justify reform. Abortion would be largely restricted to cases where the mother faced grave risks to her life or health, or where the foetus was expected to be seriously deformed. In fact it has been reliably calculated that only a tiny fraction of abortions have been carried out to save the life of the mother — less than one per cent. And less than two per cent of abortions have been carried out on the grounds of deformity of the foetus. Ninety per cent are effected with reference to vague and undefined risk to the mental or physical health of

the mother. We are now destroying babies in the womb at the rate of about 500 a day, more than four million since 1967. And yet, anyone who had suggested this would happen at the time of the Act would have been considered not merely alarmist, but at least slightly crazy. The plain truth is that we have abortion on demand in this country — there is no other way of explaining these horrendous figures. And the medical profession, parliament and the courts have proved incapable of enforcing the conditions, which were supposed to be inviolable when the Act was passed.

Once the first, fatal step was taken to adopt an instrumental, rather than an absolute, view of the sanctity of the human person, then the consequences were foreseeable, but ignored. I believe the same is true of euthanasia. There is an influential and growing euthanasia lobby in this country, and the Government's green paper has undoubtedly given it a boost. How long before parliament reacts to euthanasia as it did to abortion thirty years ago?

Ray Honeyford is a former headmaster and writer.

European Union Propaganda and British Freedom

David Marsland looks at a schools pamphlet

Notwithstanding his intelligence and charm, Mr Blair is by habit and by nature a fixer. On every front, from Ulster, through constitutional reform and control of arbitrary trade union power, to reconstruction of the NHS and the Welfare State, his inclination is to determine his own — usually glib, unprincipled and mistaken — objective, and to bring to bear every resource of Machiavelian cunning, arbitrary pressure, shifty bargaining, and irrational persuasion to achieving it. He is a master of the low art of propaganda.

He is deploying these tactics particularly craftily in relation to the involvement of the United Kingdom in the European Union. Apparently hedging on EMU, he is actually working feverishly for British entry at the earliest possible moment. Supposedly committed to discussion and genuine debate about the costs and benefits of integration into Brussels' bureaucratic snares, in fact he is marshalling all the Government's considerable machinery of propaganda to securing betrayal of the British people to the Franco-German axis of corporatist socialism.

This local Quisling enterprise is being supported aggressively by the EU, with millions of pounds of our money squandered by the Commission and its agencies on persuading a sceptical British people of the benefits of Europeanisation. A notable example is provided by the Commission's blatant campaign of propaganda directed at British schools.

They are currently preparing a pamphlet for dissemination in primary schools intended to cozen little children into Sieg Heiling our new European masters. Already they have published, in November 1997, a remarkably unscholarly and mis-educational document, disingenuously entitled "What exactly is Europe?". Fortunately it came to the attention of the *Sunday Times* recently, and a short critique was published (March 29 1998) as follows:

Teachers hit at EU 'propaganda' by Judith O'Reilly and Joe Perry

The European commission has been accused of producing "blatant and misleading propaganda" after sending out thousands of copies of a classroom "guide to the European Union".

The guide has gone to 30,000 schools

for use among 11 to 14-year-olds, with a further booklet planned this year for primary pupils.

Teachers and politicians have condemned the document for not spelling out the case against a single currency, giving a one-sided view of events such as Britain's ejection from the exchange-rate mechanism and misleading pupils about the much-criticised common agricultural policy (CAP) and common fisheries policy.

Professor David Marsland of Brunel University, a leading EU critic, described the guide as propaganda rather than education.

"It is a booklet which is supposed to be helping children as an educational resource. The essence of education is that it puts both sides of an argument, but it fails to do that," he said.

The guide offers a detailed explanation of the virtues of a single currency. Although it admits that Britain has reserved its position on the euro, it falls to spell out arguments against a single currency, such as the loss of national control over interest rates and possible consequent increases in unemployment. The guide describes the European monetary system, which almost collapsed in 1993, as a success.

On the CAP, the guide admits there are problems with overproduction but mini-

mises criticism of food mountains with the claim that “these are used in Third World countries and for needy persons in the European Union”.

However, Geoffrey Martin, head of the European commission’s London office, said the material was entirely apolitical. “We do not include in any of these publications any sentiments whatsoever concerning European policy.”

He added that the guide had been written by teachers rather than European commission officials.

One might have wished that the *Sunday Times* could have found space for a longer article, but at least the propaganda threat from Brussels was flagged up — and it apparently upset EU bureaucrats considerably. For only two days later I received the following breathlessly impatient fax from Geoffrey Martin, the European Commission’s “Head of the Representation in the United Kingdom”.

Dear Professor Marsland

My attention has been drawn to an article in the *Sunday Times* entitled “Teachers Hit at EU Propaganda” in which you figure prominently as a source.

I have attempted unsuccessfully to reach you by telephone and am, therefore, faxing you to ask for an explanation of your criticisms. May I point out that the publication entitled “What Exactly is Europe” has been circulating widely in the United Kingdom for just over a year. It is one of the most popular of our publications and has been widely requested by teachers as it fills an important gap.

It may be, of course, that the *Sunday Times* article is inaccurate, but the quotes attributed to you about alleged propaganda in the booklet, on subjects such as CAP and the Euro are simply preposterous.

I hope that you will accept this fax as a serious request for a serious response to an article which has caused considerable confusion. We have received no complaints from any teachers, or any other individuals about this publication since it was first available. Your complaint is the first we have received. I am sorry that you did not feel able to write to me before your comments to the *Sunday Times*.

Yours sincerely
Geoffrey Martin

I wrote back to him on April 9th, thanking him for his letter, and indi-

cating that I had not been aware until I read his fax that we had already become so much Europeanised in the United Kingdom that we were expected nowadays to consult the authorities before we criticised them. I reminded him that, as an academic social scientist, my role — long established and securely preserved in the UK by contrast with most of continental Europe — was to investigate carefully and assess honestly the whole range of public policy issues.

I told him I would continue thus, and expected that anyone who happened to disagree with me — including especially anyone I criticised — would answer me, in accordance with British custom and the norms of scholarly and democratic debate, in the public prints.

I pointed out that his boastful claim about having had no complaints from teachers was in itself a further cause for concern. “Absence of critical comment on such a blatantly one-sided document,” I continued, “suggests that EU material is being accepted unthinkingly and uncritically by teachers responsible for the civic curriculum. I imagine this is because (a) such material is “official”; (b) because — as you admit — it is all that is on offer; and (c) because too many teachers are badly educated and inadequately trained”.

Looking forward to seeing the Commission’s next effort at educating British children about the EU, and to criticising it if it proved as mis-educational as “What Exactly”, I concluded my letter positively by offering to write “an alternative, more realistic, and better balanced account of European developments” for the Commission to publish as an aid to teachers.

This carefully written letter of mine, copied to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, had to wait for a response until April 23rd. By May 5th I had still had no response from the offices of either Mr Blair or Mr Cook.

Mr Martin’s letter addressed not a single one of my substantive points. It merely thanked me for my letter, and sought “a written response . . . identifying what you regard as items of propaganda (sic) in the publication”. One has had more straightforward communications from the Inland Revenue!

These bureaucrats seem to think their office absolves them from any need for common-sense and human courtesies. Nonetheless, since he obviously needs an explanation of propaganda, let me provide it.

Trumping Goebbels

There is little dispute about what distinguishes scholarly, and more broadly educational, writing from propagandistic communication. Arguments contrary to the author’s are honestly addressed. Evidence is carefully assessed, with counter-evidence systematically adduced and open-mindedly examined. Key concepts and their underlying assumptions are rigorously analysed. By each of these criteria “What Exactly Is Europe?” fails completely.

Thus, nowhere in twenty nine pages of text are the counter-arguments of Euro-sceptics, monetarist economists, or constitutional experts addressed even once, or indeed so much as mentioned. No source references other than those of the EU itself and its satrapies are provided. None of the several lists of contacts included under the heading of “How to find out more” contain any items which are other than official and Euro-approved. Contrast the recently published *Euro-Sceptical Directory* (Bruges Group, 1997). As challenges to its own argument and to help readers make up their own minds freely, this includes lists of pro-EU organisations (pp. 23-29), principal EU institutions (pp. 39-41), other, mainly pro-EU, sources of information (pp. 41-45), and pro-EU internet resources (pp. 46-47). The Commission apparently prefers single-minded propaganda.

Again, very few of the supposedly factual propositions which “What Exactly?” fires-off with cavalier abandon at 11-14 year old children are evidenced at all. Relevant counter-evidence is entirely ignored, with the “facts” of the author’s case blithely treated as unarguably self-evident.

This charade of seemingly self-evident factuality is fraudulently strengthened by the fourteen pages of lists, quizzes, maps, diagrams, and footling cartoons which comprise the whole of Part 1 of the document. It is as if one sought to provide evidence for

an argument for a particular transport policy for London by reliance on a map of the underground, a list of the dates when the major arterial roads were built, and a caricature of Dr Beeching.

But there is little improvement in Part 2. Even the opportunity offered by continuous text and real sentences is not used to adduce or address evidence. Instead, young readers are fed a relentless diet of self-evident, unproven, implausible, and in some cases manifestly false propositions. Their contestability is nowhere acknowledged. The existence of other relevant facts, alternative interpretations, and counter-evidence is nowhere admitted. Intelligent pupils working with able teachers in good schools might reasonably conclude that Brussels is the headquarters of the Flat Earth Society.

Again — and underlying the document's weaknesses in logic and evidence — its conceptual machinery is opaque and unanalysed. None of its key concepts, such as "Europe", "progress", "integration", "co-operation", and "rights", is subjected to critical examination. Indeed, they are not even coherently defined.

In all these respects "What Exactly Is Europe?" falls short of the standards typically deployed in the UK by the producers, let alone the regulators, of commercial advertising. It is substantially less self-aware or self-critical than the manifestos of British political parties. Its style, its language, and its logic are closer to theological dogma than to educational discourse, and as inappropriate in British schools as Nazi or Stalinist propaganda.

Little wonder if the Head of UK Representation for the European Commission cannot understand or even recognise these deficiencies. Like his masters in Brussels, he is *inside* the dogma. Its assumptions are fundamentalist principles of which he is himself a faithful adherent. Its concepts are tawdry notions which he uses every day as taken-for-granted practical guides to his every action.

Mythic past — fanciful future
Part 2 comprises six sections, each somewhat loosely aligned to different aspects of the curriculum.

A section headed "So what is the

EU?" and purporting to "review its past, present and future" (pp. 15 and 16) begins with the hackneyed foundation myth — less plausible than Romulus and Remus — about avoiding European war. Alternative explanations of the EU's origins in terms of anti-Americanism, corporatist business interests, or bureaucratic élitism are entirely ignored.

Leaping uncritically through expansion of membership, multiplication of functions, and growing political ambition between 1951 and 1993, the narrative carries us rapidly and little the wiser to the Single Market and Maastricht. The Single Market is described exclusively in terms of, no doubt laudable, free trade objectives, with no reference at all to deficiencies and derelictions in practice.

A similar logic controls the account which follows of the Maastricht Treaty, the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Committee of the Regions, the Social Protocol, and the Employment Chapter. Naive ambitions are reported uncritically: practical outcomes go unexamined. The UK's opt-outs are mentioned without any indication that they might have been wise.

Official optimism reaches a crescendo of fantasy in a characterisation of the EU (page 16) as inherently democratic, dynamic, modern, beyond ethical reproach, and a friend to the whole of humanity. Cynically selfish features of the EU and the hegemonic ambitions of France and Germany are barely hinted at with the claim that "the EU acts as one powerful body rather than the small individual countries trying to negotiate on their own with big trading partners such as the USA or Japan". On the basis of this account, school children might imagine its subject was the UN rather than the EU, or even Fairyland.

Warts and all?

A section headed "How does the EU work?" (pages 17 and 18) describes its financial and political structure.

It is notable for the impertinently absurd claim that agricultural surpluses and waste were due to the fact that the CAP "*proved rather too successful*" (my emphasis), and its boast — at best wildly optimistic and true merely tech-

nically and tendentiously — that "EU Governments have reformed the CAP ... (to make sure) that farmers can afford to stay on the land and preserve the countryside and rural economies rather than encouraging overproduction". No mention is made of fraud, which is rampant, of inequities in the collection and distribution of EU funds, or of the UK's struggle, led by Margaret Thatcher, to avoid being systematically robbed by Brussels.

The account of political structures is similarly over-simplified and flawed, especially in its capitalised claim at page 17 that it is "OUR MINISTERS WHO DECIDE ON EUROPE". An honest analysis surely requires an admission that the truth of this assertion depends on the ever-widening scope of majority-voting, the balance of power between members, the carry-through implications (and extensions of implications) of previous agreements, and the extravagant influence of the Commission and the Parliament. Which countries' Ministers precisely, one might ask, took the decisions which led to failure in Bosnia, to the banning of British beef, or to the unconstitutional limitation to four years of the tenure of the first President of the European Central Bank?

In similar vein, the work of the Commission and the Parliament are blandly described as if they were altogether beyond criticism. I particularly enjoyed the proposition at page 18 that "The Court of Auditors monitors the budget" — just as the Italian carabinieri police the Mafia, one might add — and the strenuous paragraph required to persuade readers that European law cannot be imposed on member states.

Among the projects set at the end of this section, I was most drawn to number 4) — "Describe the Single Market and the Maastricht Treaty in one sentence". Some answers spring to mind which, while perfectly reasonable, seem unlikely to score highly in terms of the marking schemes which teachers using this material will probably use.

Parochially correct

Pages 19 and 20 provide, at last, a genuinely factual, if somewhat trivial, account — of opportunities for travel, shopping, education, and work across

EU territory. It is flawed nonetheless by the introverted parochialism which colours the whole document.

People have been travelling between Britain and continental Europe, for the usual range of purposes which motivate most journees, for decades in ever-increasing numbers. Europe is a largely taken-for-granted destination for young people from the UK, as is Britain for continentals. Ambitions are now much more global, with the United States, Russia, Asia, Latin America, and even Africa providing the challenges which young people naturally seek without benefit of bureaucratic incentives.

Bureaucratic empire-building

The next section on pages 21-24 is altogether more dangerous, misleading, and biased. Its title reveals in and of itself the mistaken assumptions underlying the subsequent analysis. “*By working together*”, it boldly claims, “*EU countries can find better solutions to common problems*” (my emphasis).

With this the author manages in one sentence:-

- a) To encourage readers to imagine, quite implausibly, that a consensual understanding of the concept of “working together” is available.
- b) To stipulate *ex nihilo* a domain of “common problems” which is defined in the text entirely arbitrarily and threatens to be infinitely extensible at the whim of Euro-bureaucrats.
- c) To tempt student readers into believing that an EU approach is bound to be more effective than national policies. It thus discounts altogether the possibility that British approaches — for example to unemployment, or to trade union legislation, or to relations with the United States — might be the best available, and might be weakened rather than strengthened by incoherent interference from Brussels. These three conceptual errors conveniently serve to provide a smokescreen of specious justification for the argument which follows for extensive and increasing EU involvement in economic regeneration, “social rights” so-called, agriculture and fisheries,

the environment, health care, science, telecommunications, and transport. You name it, the EU can do it, and will. Yet in each case the document simply presumes that EU interference is necessary and useful. There is no sign of any attempt at demonstrating either the propriety or the necessity of any of these activities, still less at illustrating their practicality or their usefulness.

The section on “social rights” is still further vitiated by uncritical adoption of continental — not to say Napoleonic, Bismarckian, and Leninist — concepts in preference to the more modest and more democratic understanding of rights established in the Anglo-American tradition.

The section on agriculture is shamelessly antagonistic to free trade. Thus it asserts without qualification at page 22 that “One of the fundamental principles is to make sure that products produced by EU farmers are given preference over products which can be imported from the rest of the world, at cheaper prices”. Our children are thus discouraged from so much as contemplating the possibility that global free trade might serve both consumers and the environment rather better than a Franco-German cartel.

On environmental issues more broadly, the document uncritically parades all the usual eco-nonsense. It simply presumes (page 23) that every latest Brussels fad — from blue flags for beaches, through “eco-labelling”, to “green tourism” — is necessary, proper, and useful. The possibility that beach ratings may be based on fraudulent data, that green tourists may be innocent dupes of overpaid lobbyists working for vested interests, or that eco-labels may be badges of shame in a ramifying European Nanny State — all this is entirely neglected.

Moreover, dissatisfied with merely theoretical bias, the author encourages school children, in one of the projects appended at page 23 to this section, to “Find out about EU funded projects in your area which have created businesses and jobs”. A more honest and more genuinely educational approach would set practical work which stimulated pupils to explore open-mindedly

both the positive and the negative consequences of EU programmes, and the overall balance in social costs and benefits.

It is only in relation to science that the document at last comes clean and makes its case for EU involvement in all these many spheres fully explicit. “There is no doubt”, it alleges at page 24, “that by combining their resources and efforts EU scientists and researchers have much better chances of being competitive on the international scene (facing advanced technologies from the US and Japan and cheap labour costs from Asian countries)”. No argumentation or evidence is provided. This is a bald, indeed, dogmatic assertion of the old chestnut about “economies of scale” which has bedevilled the modern world for decades.

Massive scale seems to have done precious little for science, economic success, or the environment in the old Soviet Union. By contrast, tiny Switzerland, Israel, and Taiwan have succeeded triumphantly on these and other fronts. Yet none of the well-established weaknesses of the argument from supposed economies of scale are so much as mentioned here — as the norms of scholarship and real education require. That would interrupt the smooth flow of the document’s specious case for a massively interventionist EU, and challenge its slender plausibility.

Preparing for the referendum?

The last substantive section of “What Exactly Is Europe?” (pages 25 and 26) deals mainly with economic matters. Its one-sided and antique tone is signalled in the first sentence, with the quaint proposition that “small and medium sized enterprises are more likely to *suffer from competition*” (my emphasis). Competition is apparently to be regarded not as a positive element in economic prosperity and progress, but as a malaise for which Dr Brussels prescribes loans, grants, advice, and marketing support.

There is no such thing as a free lunch, however, even in Euroland. For part of the therapeutic package, it turns out, is business regulation galore, all directed by the EU and all glibly justified here as protection for consumers!

Unsurprisingly in this one-sidedly bureau-socialist context, economic and monetary union and the single currency are presented in a wholly positive light. All the usual — mainly trivial or specious — arguments in favour are trotted out as if they were gospel truth. Every element of the powerful case *against* monetary integration — supported independently by such considerable economists as Martin Feldstein and Milton Friedman — is entirely hidden from our children. This is neat propaganda, in both senses — undiluted and clever. It is a pristine example of the “big lie” recommended in *Mein Kampf* to secure effective deception of the people.

Education or indoctrination?

This tissue of transparent propaganda closes with a flourish of self-indulgent celebration of student exchanges, town twinning, “Europe weeks”, “Cities of Culture”, and EU grants. *Panem et*

circenses indeed. Even bribes are trumped by lies, however, with a table on page 27 which conveniently records the UK as having no Protestants at all! On the last page, readers are asked “How about visiting our Mobile Information Centre?” One hopes that some at least among children exposed to this document will say: “No thank you: it couldn’t be shiftier than this.”

I mentioned at the beginning of this paper that, almost a month after I sent them copies of my correspondence with the EU’s UK kingpin, I had still received no response from the offices of either the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary. I did, however, receive a reply from the Leader of the Opposition. Inter alia, Mr Hague expressed his hope that “the ferocity of the (EU Representative’s) response does not discourage you from making perfectly valid criticisms of the EU Commission!”

Grateful for this support, I have demonstrated, I trust, with this paper, that I am not easily put off by bullies. Nor must any of us who still believe in Britain allow ourselves to be bullied, either by UK Ministers and their tax-paid spin doctors or by EU panjandrums, into swallowing their lying propaganda. As the British referendum on the single currency approaches, the EU is continuing and extending its programme of indoctrination, with “information” for little children in primary schools in the pipeline. We must read it carefully, and where it is as biased as “What Exactly Is Europe?” get it banned from the curriculum.

David Marsland is Professor of Social Studies at Brunel University.

Leavis and Bakhtin

Patrick Miles

F.R. Leavis died twenty years ago, on 14 April 1978. The news affected me. I had just returned to reading Leavis after a gap of about twelve years, and was deep into his penultimate book, *The Living Principle: ‘English’ as a Discipline of Thought*. Over the next year I read works of his that I had not touched before, as well as his *Letters in Criticism* and what I assume was the first biography, Ronald Hayman’s *Leavis*.

The fact that I ‘dropped’ Leavis in my teens, then ‘rediscovered’ him, is important to me. Engaging with Leavis’s writing again at the age of thirty contributed to taking a rather important decision in my life.

As a sixth-former doing English A level I had been electrified by his essay on *Othello*. It seemed everything that great literary criticism should be: it radically altered one’s perception of

the play through a masterly handling of argument and example. At that age, its placing of sentimentalism modified one’s literary taste, preparing the way for an appreciation of Chekhov, Strindberg and Ibsen. I was also nervously aware of the Leavis antidote to my teenage addiction to Milton’s ‘music’, and at the drop of a hat would quote the phrase from Leavis’s essay ‘Johnson and Augustanism’ that ‘works of art enact their moral valuations’. But I found the tone of Leavis’s contributions to the ‘Two Cultures’ debate offensive and his socio-educational writings (which I regarded at the time as unliterary) left me cold. When I came up to Cambridge in 1967 to read modern languages I was not surprised to discover that Leavis was widely regarded as a boring old retired don.

In 1978, however, I ‘needed’ him

again. A biblical seven years earlier I had embarked on a Ph.D. under the working title ‘Modern tragedy in the work of Anton Chekhov’. I was supervised at first by Raymond Williams, as he was Professor of Drama and had written a book on modern tragedy. I already knew Chekhov’s major works in Russian quite well, so I spent most of my first year of research reading and discussing critics and thinkers on tragedy. But when I arrived in Russia for my second year of research I realized I knew only what one might call the ‘canonical’ Chekhov. I therefore set about reading his oeuvre from start to finish. The result was that I decided to concentrate on the 500 or so pieces of prose that Chekhov wrote in the first seven years of his creative life — probably the most neglected part of his writing.

This decision, made in Russia, put

me in a paradoxical position. Most of these early works of Chekhov are *comic*, whereas I was interested in Chekhov as a 'tragic' artist. However, the relation of comedy and the absurd to modern tragedy had been well explored by recent western critics, and I had my own ideas on the subject, so that was not a problem. The problem, it transpired, was that I had no vision whatsoever of popular humorous and comic writing that could make sense of what I was discovering in early Chekhov. In as deductive a way as I could devise, I was constructing a typology of the characters and conflicts in these works; I was trying to systematise the objects, phenomena and images in them; and I was intrigued by the fact that they included everything from nonsense, parody and travesty to fantasy, hierarchical inversions, and grotesquerie of a kind few people associated with Chekhov. How was one to unify all this critically, to bring it into a single focus? After all, it was the work of a single, prolific young author.

At this point a Russian student lent me a copy of Bakhtin's *The Art of François Rabelais, and Popular Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. I cannot say its contents were a revelation to me, although Bakhtin's Russian certainly was. Rabelais had been a favourite author for years. To a large extent, as with his book on Dostoyevsky, Bakhtin seemed 'merely' to be resurrecting parts of the European heritage and consciousness for a country in which they had been liquidated over the previous four decades. Nor was I attracted to Bakhtin's all-embracing theory of carnival. It seemed more a contribution to philosophical anthropology than to literary criticism. But the distinctions of official/unofficial, po-facedness/laughter, monologic/dialogic, flat/grotesque, finalized/unfinalized, and so on, were startlingly applicable to the Russian world, both in its early Chekhovian and its 1970s Soviet manifestations. Much that Bakhtin had to say in his book was relevant to my interpretation of character, object and language in Chekhov's early fiction, and Bakhtin's vision of humorous genres was of far more help in

understanding the variety of this writing than, say Bergson or Freud on laughter. It was the 'glue', the unifier, that I had been looking for. I discussed the relevance of Bakhtin's ideas with my supervisor, Vladimir Turbin, and he took me to meet Bakhtin. (I was reluctant at first to do this, as I felt I had not read enough of Bakhtin's other writing, but we conversed alone for three hours.)

Eventually I returned to Cambridge. There was a daunting amount to be done. I had to 'write up' my interpretation of the world of Chekhov's fiction 1880-87, but I also wanted in a long introduction to engage with the voluminous critical literature that I had collected in the Soviet Union and to analyse how Chekhov revised these early works in a tragic direction all through his life. Funds kept running out, I did a great deal of college supervising and scientific translation, but I was determined to complete the thesis. My overall conception of the world of Chekhov's early fiction was still very Bakhtinian: there was a section, for instance, entitled 'Chekhov's laughter and humorous culture'.

However the longer I was back in England, the more doubtful I became about my approach in the 'interpretative' chapters. They seemed too descriptive and were proving suspiciously boring to write. Moreover, this was the very time that the 'structuralist controversy' was raging in Cambridge. Neither Turbin nor Bakhtin had had much time for structuralism, and their reasons commanded respect. But I had not read any structuralists before I went to Russia, so I had nothing to base a personal view on. I now read Barthes, Kristeva and others, and followed the debate.

Increasingly, I felt that my own approach to the *realia* in Chekhov's early writing was more semiological than critical. I had applied what I thought were stringently objective, deductive techniques to analysing these *realia*, even to the extent of experimenting with storing the data on punched cards; but all I was saying at the end of it was that this was what the world of Chekhov's early fiction was 'like', this was how it was 'structured'. I was

certainly concerned with the *meaning* of this model or structure. For example, I claimed that although it functioned predominantly comically, it was implicitly serious, indeed 'tragic'. However, I had a nagging feeling that under the influence of Bakhtin's methods I was translating the given meaning of these works into one that appealed to me more, rather as Turbin once explained to me confidentially that the stray cat that adopted Bakhtin after his wife's death was 'really' Bakhtin's wife... I was making no attempt to evaluate these early works, and one obvious reason this needed doing was that three-quarters of them were regarded by critics as very sub-standard. I had to start applying literary-critical values to them; I had to bring a maturer judgement to bear on them. Instinctively, I turned 'back' to Leavis.

On the face of it, Leavis and Bakhtin are like chalk and cheese. I do not say Leavis was an agelast, but what humour he displays in his writing seems negative and ostentatiously donnish ('as a matter of fact, the whole sonnet turns out to be an orotund exercise in thuriferous phrases and generalities'). It is used rhetorically for destructive purposes and suggests the satirist. I imagine Leavis did write something about comedy, but I have never come across it. He scorned parody which he saw in narrow stylistic terms and associated with 'the absurd and significant cult of Max Beerbohm'. Bakhtin relished parody in all its forms, assigned great importance to it in the history of the novel, and rated humour far higher than satire. Even as an old man sitting stiffly at his desk, he looked at you with moist, somehow roguish eyes. His humour was light, unostentatious, but very penetrating. In order to assist the re-publication of his book on Dostoyevsky, he needed to mention Chernyshevsky, Dostoyevsky's proto-Bolshevik contemporary whose 'novel' *What Is To Be Done?* played a similar role in Russia's history to that of *Mein Kampf* in Germany's. Bakhtin did it in a highly original fashion. He discussed at length Chernyshevsky's preface to a 'polyphonic' novel that Chernyshevsky planned but never wrote, thus leaving the reader to conclude that

the officially lauded *What Is To Be Done?* (which Bakhtin never mentioned by name) was inferior even to a novel that did not exist.

Leavis and Bakhtin also differ radically in their approach to tragedy. In *Tragedy and the "Medium"*, Leavis writes: 'To postulate a "tragic experience" or "tragic effect" and then seek to define it is to lay oneself open to the suspicion of proposing a solemn and time-honoured academic game. Yet the critical contemplation of the profoundest things in literature does lead to the idea of such an experience, and we can see to it that the attempt at definition shall not be the kind of futility we associate with the Grand Style or the Sublime and the Beautiful.' He then discusses the tragic experience and the tragic mind philosophically and with reference not just to Shakespeare but to modern writers such as Lawrence, Yeats and Isaac Rosenberg. For Bakhtin tragedy and comedy are 'architectonic forms of completion'. He seemed to recognise only what Leavis, writing of Johnson, termed 'formal' tragedy. When I explained to Bakhtin why for me Chekhov in his later stories and plays was a tragic writer, he protested that tragedy was a Greek and neoclassical dramatic phenomenon involving declamation, the grand scale, and *natyazhka* (straining, forcing). 'You don't get that in Chekhov,' he said. 'Chekhov doesn't strain things. You want tragedy that isn't tragedy?' It is possible, though, that this was just a polemical gambit. When I talked about the modern tragic artist's open-ended view of existence and his subversion of any ready-defined 'self', he began to agree. And he was very interested to hear of the recent spate of western writing about tragedy, which was evidently news to him.

By temperament, Leavis was a literary critic and Bakhtin a philosopher. This is particularly clear in their work on the novel. Whereas Leavis's focus is specific novels and their placing within a line of literary history going back only two hundred years, Bakhtin posits theories about the novel's distant history, time/space in the novel, the 'problem' of the author, and so forth, quoting specific novels sparingly to illustrate his points. Both Leavis and Bakhtin would appear

to agree with Lawrence that 'The novel is the highest form of human expression so far attained', but Leavis could hardly have accepted Bakhtin's claim that Dostoyevsky invented the 'polyphonic novel'. Bakhtin speaks of a 'monologic' novel (Leavis's word was 'univocal'), but this would have been a contradiction in terms for Leavis. The arguments that Leavis gives for C.P. Snow not being a novelist, which can be applied verbatim to Chernyshevsky, come down to saying that he is a monologist. A high degree of polyphony would seem to inhere in all the great English novelists, yet when I

Bakhtin... was a key figure in sustaining Russians' contact with world culture, philosophy, and Orthodox christology through the Communist holocaust

broached this with Bakhtin he could not accept it and the name Jane Austen seemed new to him. The idea that historically the novel's polyphony might derive less from philosophical dialogue than from the theatre, which in the English context would perhaps appeal to Leavis, was also unacceptable to Bakhtin, even when I expatiated to him on the 'intrinsic theatricality' of Dostoyevsky's major novels.

Nevertheless, Bakhtin produces brilliant insights into specific texts and, as John Casey pointed out in his appreciation of Leavis twenty years ago, Leavis shows an 'acute *philosophical* instinct'. The concept of a literary critic hardly exists in modern Russian and Bakhtin deprecated the term *literaturoved* ('literary scholar') which has replaced it. For their part, Russian *literaturoveds* have accused Bakhtin of imprecise use of literary terms, too narrow a range of literary reference, and 'excessive Hegelian long-sightedness'. Perhaps it is still not recognised to what extent Dostoyevsky, Rabelais, the novel, or Marxism, say,

were 'honourable others' enabling Bakhtin to write on the metaphysical and religious issues that really interested him. Otherwise, indeed, the reservations about a philosophic training for the critic which Leavis expressed in his famous reply to René Wellek might apply to Bakhtin: 'It would be reasonable to fear — to fear blunting of edge, blurring of focus and muddled misdirection of attention: consequences of queering one discipline with the habits of another.'

In their attitudes to language, however, Leavis and Bakhtin are remarkably close. They both regard linguistics as 'Cartesian' in its concern with language as notation. They both insist that language lives in human utterances that mean. 'Where is the English language?' wrote Leavis. 'You can't point to it, and the perusal of a linguist's treatise will do nothing to help you towards an answer to such questions. It is concretely 'there' only as I utter the words and phrases chosen by the meaning (*in me*, but outward bound) which they convey and you take them.' Utterances such as poems therefore belong to what Leavis calls the 'third realm', a space which is 'neither public in the ordinary sense nor merely private'. Bakhtin uses a similar metaphor: 'the word is a two-sided act, determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant... it is territory shared by both addresser and addressee'. For him words come with all their connotations, their 'memory' of how and where they have been used before; they are the product of what Leavis called 'an immemorial living process'. Given their fundamentally different cultural and religious backgrounds, it is astonishing that Leavis and Bakhtin should meet in stressing again and again the collaborative nature of language and the human world. From this point, however, their interests again diverge. Leavis is primarily concerned with the collaborative response called criticism to the 'black marks on the page' of the concrete literary work; he is reluctant to draw metaphysical conclusions from his asseverations about dialogue. Both men emphasize the non-verbal aspect of communication (thus Leavis is particularly interested in dramatic poetry and 'movement' in

verse). But for Bakhtin the context of dialogue is wider — in fact endless — and dialogue itself is at the very heart of his philosophy.

It is surely significant for their view of language that both Leavis and Bakhtin were great teachers. Their styles of lecturing, however, seem to have been totally different. One has the impression from his published lectures that there were two 'addressees' of a Leavis lecture: an absent 'victim' with whom he disagreed, and a select group of highly-educated people who already agreed with him. However, this coterie might not actually be present either. From the point of view of most listeners, then, a lecture or supervision by Leavis must have resembled a monologue. By contrast, Bakhtin often lectured to huge, not very educated audiences with whom he had to find a common language — and did. He used a variety of styles to 'address' as many people in the audience as possible. His popularity as a lecturer was the result of a readiness to communicate with his audience, whereas I imagine that Leavis's lectures, brilliant though they were, never enjoyed spontaneous popularity of that kind. Yet it was Leavis who explicitly, gratefully, attributed the growth of his critical views to his dialogue with 'pupils' over the years.

The fact that both were used to expressing their ideas orally explains why both may appear to be bad writers. Leavis has been accused of 'systematic ankyloglossia' and Bakhtin of 'unwieldy formulations'. Here is a typical Leavis sentence: 'The obvious Wordsworthian element in the poem suggests a comparison with Wordsworth, and, regarding as I do the two poets, not as stating epistemological propositions or asserting general conceptions, but as reacting characteristically to similar concrete occasions, the comparison I actually make seems to me justified.' It seems to have far too many commas, 'regarding' looks like a misplaced participle, and the most important word in the sentence comes last. But to read Leavis this way is to echo Bridges' complaint that 'in Hopkins one often has to determine the grammar by the meaning'. If one 'hears' the above sentence, as one is directed to do by the commas, its

sense is immediately clear. It is crafted less grammatically than dramatically. One grasps each clause as one hears it, but the whole meaning fuses together only when the last word is delivered; i.e. the sentence has timing, suspense and punch. One could say that Leavis's style enacts his own anti-Augustan values. Similarly, for all its repetitions, near-synonyms and appositions, in Bakhtin's Russian I hear a writer caressing and combing his meaning, or probing different routes within one sentence to reach a multitude of readers. Unfortunately, the American English translations of Bakhtin give a misleading impression of his style by almost always opting for a word of Latin or Greek origin to translate philosophical words that in Russian are self-explanatory and not at all etiolated (for example, 'alterity' for *drugost'* (otherness), 'extralocality' for *vnenakhodimost'* (being situated outside), 'axiological' always for *tsennostnyy* (value)).

There are fine oral, aural, visual and tactile qualities to Leavis's and Bakhtin's language. It is partly these features, I think, that make them attractive to writers. For an English poet to dip into Leavis is, perhaps, to be revived by his vigour of expression and to feel put in touch again with ancestral literary forces. For Russian writers, apart from a superbly physical style, it is the historical sweep of Bakhtin's literary vision that is exhilarating. He was a key figure in sustaining Russians' contact with world culture, philosophy, and Orthodox christology through the Communist holocaust. Clearly both men were passionately committed to cultural continuity; to 'tradition' in Eliot's sense of 'the means by which the vitality of the past enriches the life of the present'.

Personally, since reading Leavis afresh in 1978-79 I have rarely returned to Bakhtin. Leavis took me firmly in the direction that I knew I needed to go. Perhaps it was just that I *am* English, I share a language and literature with Leavis, and can never be 'inward' with Russian in the way that I am with English. But some might say that the discrimination I learned from Leavis had a very negative effect on my view of

Chekhov's early fiction and on my thesis! I did not want to write a purely descriptive Ph.D., but the conventional wisdom of the times said that a modern languages thesis could not be 'critical' ('criticism' and 'values' were for 'the book of the thesis'). In Slavonic studies there seemed to be little notion of literary criticism anyway: even theses on literary subjects were so descriptive and documentary as to be a kind of historiography. Taking everything into consideration, I decided to give up the thesis and with it any idea of an academic career. Having improved my 'possession' of literature through Leavis, I concentrated on the theatre, translating Russian authors, and my own writing.

By the time I came up to Cambridge as an undergraduate it was too late to hear Leavis lecture or, I think, be supervised by him if I had read English. But I did see him on three occasions, and these have acquired a symbolic status in my imagination. The first time, I was in a paperback bookshop when Leavis came in, went straight to a shelf, took down a book, read something, put the book back and scuttled out again. He was presumably using the shop as a reference library. For the whole duration of the incident he appeared to be absorbed in what he was thinking. As he stood reading, he reminded one of a shoebill. On the other two occasions, he was literally teetering on the kerb of a busy road waiting to cross. He seemed so nervous and hesitant that one's impulse was to go and help him. (Later I read that his father had been killed by a car just before Leavis was due to take the first part of his Tripos.) But in both instances he had actually chosen the wisest place to cross: a bend from which he could see a long way in both directions. One of these spots was where the backs of Trinity and John's adjoin and along the stream a kingfisher's wing sometimes answers light to light.

Patrick Miles has translated Chekhov, Bulgakov and Vampilov for theatre companies and runs a translation agency.

The End of the “Velvet” Illusion

Marek Svoboda explains the economics and moral crisis in the Czech Republic

Whereas in other developed economies, instruments of government such as economic policy and legislation support virtuous cycles in the micro-economy, the opposite is true in the Czech Republic. There government policy provides businesses with reasons not to pay their debts on time, not to use regulated markets to raise capital, not to use the courts to resolve commercial disputes, to name but a few perversions of business conduct.

After almost a decade of democracy and the free market in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it is revealing to look at the Czech economy in particular, in order to try to understand why this is the case.

Privatisation and corruption

The “velvet revolution” of 1989 lent an aura of moral respectability to the ensuing economic reforms. As in the other post-communist countries, the process of “privatising” state property was politically popular at the time. The morality of this process, involving huge transfers of wealth, was overlooked.

Although most Czech industry had been in private hands before being expropriated for no consideration by the communists after the second world war, the privatisation legislation was laconically entitled “transfer (of) certain state property to other entities”. Clearly, this legislation was not passed to right any earlier property wrongs but as part of a government program to divest itself of property rights (and obligations) in all but the most strategic industries.

Under this legislation, cabinet government had the power to approve the privatisation project for each state enterprise to be privatised and to select the purchaser. Typically, it chose the management of the enterprise itself.

The assets were then transferred to the investor at book value; at worst to friends of the government and at best at an under-value. Privatisations were decided by government decree and by law not subject to judicial review. As is now coming to light, this process was accompanied by insidious corruption as members of the executive struck secret details on privatisation projects with interested investors.

Some new owners then sold on the privatised assets at a premium. Those that kept the business needed to borrow from the banks because they had no capital of their own. Unlike in developed economies, this was not a problem because the banks were put under political pressure to lend, most often without taking sufficient collateral to secure their positions.

Not surprisingly, those who acquired their business assets on credit directly from the state have gained a reputation which has nothing to do with increasing economic growth or the country’s wealth but everything with self-interest.

Macro-economic policy and indebtedness

The government and central bank economic policy in the period since 1989 has centred on currency stability and controlling the exchange rate. This has enabled the Czech currency to remain stable and to sustain interest rates attractive to speculative foreign capital. But the strong, central-bank-supported currency has had a disastrous effect on the ability of industry to raise capital for investment and its over-valuation has made exports uncompetitive.

The high interest rates charged by domestic banks have also forced Czech companies to turn abroad for foreign loans and have exacerbated the chronic chain of indebtedness in the economy.

As a result there is no incentive for companies to break the circle of indebtedness as the vicious nature of the cycle is reinforced by government policy.

Business and corruption

In the wider economy, companies’ problems only started once they were privatised. Many fell victim to the practice of “tunnelling”, a euphemism for the management of a company undertaking transactions which are plainly in the best interests not of the company but of themselves. Czech law has no concept of piercing the corporate veil to help shareholders fight these minority actions in court. It is common wisdom here that once somebody (usually in concert with the target company’s own management) takes control of a company and holds a simple majority of its stock, he can do what he likes with it. The courts are of little help as they are over-loaded and their judges inexperienced in dealing with commercial cases, let alone complex intra-group securities transactions, usually involving foreign tax shelters.

This climate of legal insecurity is naturally reflected in the share price and the lacklustre securities markets. No institutional investor with fiduciary responsibilities in its right mind would invest in such companies. As the foreign investors have learnt about the Czech market, they have deserted the market. It is the multi-national organisations who are able to negotiate directly with the government or the central bank, such as Nomura and General Electric Capital Services, which are willing to continue to invest in spite of the insecure legal environment. The vast majority of job-creating businesses however stay away, once they find out that they cannot rely on the local legislation being applied fairly and transparently.

Attitudes

The questions surrounding the privatisation process and the way in which business is conducted reflect a deeper moral crisis within Czech society. This crisis stems from people's attitude to life and work and what they feel they must do to survive and prosper, which is a vestige of the pre-1989 communist society. Although they would not like to admit it, to most people morality is a weakness which only the rich can afford, but dishonesty is appreciated as a skill which the ordinary man or woman must learn in order to survive. This attitude is typified by a popular slogan which people used to repeat under communism: "if you don't steal from the state you are stealing from your family". It was said in jest but, due to the sense of irony which people share here with the English, it was meant seriously. The effect of such attitudes is that they make the vicious circle feed on itself.

This sort of attitude is also common in societies based on feudal-like loyalties, for example the Mafia or the drug barons. These organisations have in common with the post-communist societies the loyalty only to family, distrust of impersonal state authority and indifference to the interests and property of strangers. They have their own codes of conduct by which they live, and systematically prevent any other alien authority, such as the state or the police, from interfering. However unpleasant many find it to admit this, in many ways, people's behaviour under communism was similar to that of members of successful criminal organisations.

Public morals under attack

This weakness in public morals is not peculiar to the Czech Republic but is common to all the post-communist societies in the region.

In Slovakia, for example, appointments in the state administration and in key state enterprises are characterised by nepotism and cronyism. The "sale" of state enterprises to political allies of the government is even more common than in the Czech Republic, where there was a politically successful government coupon privatisation program. Even private investors are not immune, and several have set up

joint ventures with members of the ruling Mečiar family.

In the C.I.S. republics, the transfer of state property to privately controlled entities is taking place on a vaster scale. Army colonels in their thirties and politically connected ethnic Mafia leaders are buying up huge stakes in the former state utilities for hundreds of millions of dollars. The western business media generally report this phenomenon as if it represented the reawakening of the enterprise culture in Russia. In fact, it may represent something more sinister — an unholy alliance between the state security services and the business conglomerates.

Reap what you sow

At the heart of the country's economic problems is a far deeper crisis of confidence of ordinary people in the ability of things to get better. As Václav Havel pointed out in 1989, the problem is one of a moral crisis in society itself. The challenge for the Czech Republic and other post-communist societies is therefore one of moral overhaul and not merely economic growth. The two problems, at first site unrelated, are in fact inter-related and co-determinative of each other.

It is essential in my view for OECD governments and international organisations, particularly the European Community, to show that they understand the problem of corruption and are willing to help these countries to avoid the vicious cycle of publicly tolerated corruption. With the moral weight with which the EC governments dispose, they are in the best position to influence these countries for the better. If the problem is not admitted publicly so that it can be combated, it will provide an election platform to the extreme opposition parties in these countries who claim that they want to fight corruption. Corruption will then work like a slow poison to foster division between East and West for years to come.

Marek Svoboda is an attorney at law with the French law firm of Gide Loyrette Noel in Prague.

Sophist's Corner

Stephen Perrella with Rebecca Carpenter – The Möbius House Study

This study is an investigation into contemporary domesticity to reconsider dwelling for the new millennium. A preliminary analysis revealed that the pervasive use of technology in the home presents an ontological dilemma. Current house formats are no longer tenable because space and time are reconfigured by a lived informational geometry. Dwelling has become problematic solely in terms of Euclidean space as a result of media infiltrations — a force that implodes distance and then perplicates subjectivity as it enfolds viewer perception into an endless barrage of electronic images. This occurs in combination with, and yet is dissimilar to the dynamics of teletechnology and computer-to-Internet connectivity. As home-viewing narrows onto the TV surface, it fuses with an image-bltz into a perpetual present. Teletechnology contributes to a burrowing effect, altering the home as an exclusively interior condition....

The Möbius House study diagram for post-Cartesian dwelling is thus neither an interior space nor an exterior form. It is a transversal membrane that reconfigures binary notions of interior/exterior into a continuous, interwrapping median — it is a hypersurface. The current phase of the study presents a fluxing diagram-membrane generated by an animated infection.... Within the animation sequences, temporal delays are programmed to avoid determinate, linear form: what is otherwise known as "the stopping problem". The Möbius House study is thus irreducible, rendering it open to complex, temporal experience....

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Editorial

Conservatives have been suspicious of environmentalists, who seem like the antinomians of the sixties: people for whom only radical solutions are tolerable, and who recognise no authority and no legitimacy outside their own circle of friends. The invention of the Gaiareligion did not help the environmentalist image, adding as it did an element of crankiness to the well-established fanaticism. And the publicity-seeking stunts of Greenpeace are seen by conservatives in the same light as those of the Peace Movement or the Animal Liberation Front.

Now that the environmentalists have made their case, however, it is time to recognise that their cause is a conservative one. They are in the business of conserving what is irreplaceable, and what cannot be made anew. Moreover, they are doing so not for their own sake, but for the sake of future generations, and on behalf of things which are intrinsically good. Where they differ from conservatives is in their posture towards human society. The typical environmentalist is a democrat, opposed to large-scale concentrations of power (and in particular to those enjoyed by the multinationals). He is against 'social injustice', is tempted by vegetarianism, and deplors hunting and shooting — maybe fishing as well. He believes man to be the most important and destructive of nature's diseases, and regards the wilderness as more holy than any place touched by human feet. And because these beliefs have a religious, or at any rate unconscious, origin, being the legacy of a hunter-gatherer innocence now irretrievably lost, they seem to authorise the most uncompromising forms of political action.

The conservative agrees with the environmentalist in one thing only: namely that it is far easier to destroy than to conserve and that without conscious effort nothing is conserved for long, not even the environment. But there the resemblance ends. Ask a conservative to specify the threats to the environment and he is likely to name democracy as the first among them. For democracy is the most effective way yet devised, whereby one generation can pass on the

costs of its actions to the next. Political parties enter elections with promises to divide and distribute the earth's resources — not among the dead and the unborn, but among the living, and the living only, since only the living have a vote. And the culture of democracy is an advertising culture — one designed to eliminate the long-term view, and to exalt the present appetites of present people. Electoral choices are therefore motivated by the attempt to grab as much of the earth as possible, for me, here, now. This motive can be read in all electoral promises, in all parliamentary debates, in all lobbying — and also in popular culture, which, thanks to New Labour, is now the official culture of our country.

Just consider one example: the motor car. It is transparently obvious that the private ownership of cars is an environmental catastrophe of unprecedented proportions. The car brings with it the ever-expanding road network, the dispersal of the population, the destruction of the inner city, the suburbanisation of the countryside, and the global market in food. It does this while polluting the atmosphere, threatening lives, destroying wildlife and habitats, and contributing massively to the greenhouse gases which will hasten the end of the earth. In a democracy, however, the car cannot be opposed. It is the primary means of asserting power for people who have no other taste of freedom. It offers work, and an incentive to work, as no other product of the machine age has ever offered. It is inconceivable that a politician should oppose its dominion and still be re-electable. This explains, in part, the mad attack on the tobacco industry. Governments need to conceal the fact that they are encouraging the greatest threat to human health and survival that has ever been invented. So they demonise one of the most peaceful and environmentally friendly of human pursuits, in order to show that they care.

The environment does not look after itself. On the contrary, it is the first victim of all markets. The global economy is one great exercise in the externalisation of costs. Aeroplanes, transport, agribusiness, pesticides, supermarkets — in every detail the

attempt to answer the clamouring appetites of democratic man involves the transfer of the cost to his descendants. And the more democratic man is, the less he cares about those who come after him.

The only way to protect the environment from human predation is to give people an interest in the needs of their descendants: to impose on them an attitude of trusteeship, which will cause them to bear the costs of their actions here and now. Two great human institutions have inspired this attempt in the past: hereditary aristocracy, and religion. The first encourages concentrations of power, and exclusive ownership of natural resources, subject to an *entail*. The aristocrat has a status to live up to, which makes him the jealous guardian of estates which others would like to pillage. He rescues whole landscapes from the self-made emergency of his species, and hands them on to others as vigilant as himself. This, the ideal form of environmental protection, is the sole explanation of the dwindling beauty of our country, and it is in the nature of the democratic process to destroy this inoffensive form of property, through taxation, museumisation and the 'right to roam'.

But religion too has played its part in preserving things. Pausanias, travelling through Greece half a millennium after the decline of Athens, encountered the same temples, the same sacred groves, the same holy springs and shrines that he had read about in the classical sources. For piety protects the past as no other motive can protect it.

Imagine an environmentalist who believes in aristocratic privilege, the hereditary principle, the concentration of power and property in a small ruling class, the adoption of a common religion and its pieties, and you will have imagined an environmentalist whose policies would save the earth. But he resembles none of those who call themselves 'greens' and who stand in democratic elections. He resembles men as they were, before they took it on themselves to destroy their inheritance.

Letters

Sir

A number of your contributors, like Dennis O’Keeffe in his measured treatment of Paul Johnson’s *Intellectuals*, contrast something they call the “free society” with the totalitarian state or society. But there is surely a third, quite distinct, kind: this is what may loosely be called the religiously-based society. Catholic Europe furnished an example, prior to the triumph of the 18th-century Enlightenment. The professedly Islamic regimes of the Ayatollahs in Iran and the Taliban in Afghanistan do so today.

Most modern people would agree that these are not “free societies”, and I would not myself describe them as such without some kind of lengthy preamble more or less re-defining the word “free”. But nor, clearly, are they totalitarian.

The totalitarian state or society has two necessary characteristics, one vertical, one horizontal:

(1) There is nothing, no God, no truth, no overarching system of morality, outside or above the state or society. Reality is what the state says it is. We should not be in the least surprised at the alleged existence of Nazi or Soviet science.

2) Nothing within society is outside the business of the state, and nothing exists except for the purposes of the state: no rights, and no separate purposes, for the family or for intermediary bodies. There is, in other words, no civil society.

(1) clearly comes before (2), logically but also in practice. The Bolsheviks did not seize power in Russia, then ask themselves why they had done it, and only then proceed to concoct an ideology.

It is worth noting that a modern secularist “free society” differs from a totalitarian society in respect of (2) far more than it does in respect of (1). If a “free society” is subject to anything outside itself, its citizens would find it difficult to agree on just what that something was. Thus all “free societies” are potentially totalitarian, provided they find sufficient excuses to extend the powers and responsibilities of government.

Now clearly neither medieval Catholic society, say, nor the modern Islamic regimes I have mentioned, are totalitarian. The Ayatollahs do not fit in with (1), because they claim that their government derives its justification from its fidelity to the precepts of Islam. Many Moslems, of course, say that this claim is fraudulent, that such regimes distort Islam for their own purposes. They may be right. But even if they were, it would not convict the Ayatollahs or the Taliban of totalitarianism. Even if these were cynics, they could not be open cynics. They could never say, without openly disavowing their own title deeds, that Islam meant simply what they chose to say it meant, and this would impose certain necessary limits unknown to the totalitarian. They could not, for example, justify devoting their countries’ resources to an expensive programme of space exploration on the grounds that the Prophet had said it was more important to go to Mars than to Mecca, because all their nationals know that he could not possibly have said any such thing.

The point could be amplified by considering our own Henry VIII. Henry no doubt had potentially totalitarian appetites. But he could not possibly qualify on either (1) or (2). Not on (2), because no ruler before the 20th century had the technology to make his will impinge sufficiently on society as a whole. Henry could not have helicopters surveying the hills of Cumberland, nor could he organise phone-tapping of potential rebels in Cornwall. But not on (1) either, because he did believe in a God who was above him (even if the will of Henry’s God showed an increasing tendency to mirror that of Henry), and so did his subjects. There was a limit to which even Henry could make up his religion to suit himself.

David Foster
Essex

Sir

Since my letter responding to A.W. Purdue’s review of *The Tainted Source*

in the Spring 1998 issue, we have had the benefit, or otherwise, of the four part dramatisation of Oswald Mosley’s pre-war career. I wonder if anyone else was left with the feeling that they had learned absolutely nothing of Mosley’s policies, either in the Labour Party, the “New Party” or the British Union of Fascists? We had some tantalising glimpses — his belief that unemployment could be ended by boosting the home market rather than the export market and that this could be done without inflation — but were left entirely in the dark about the mechanisms which would achieve this. We also learned that he believed in “strong government” which would not be hampered by “sectional interests”. If the Government want to build a motorway across my home and garden my opposition to the plan would presumably be a “sectional interest”.

Now it seems very plain to me that the series stopped with Mosley’s war-time internment because his post-war activity was devoted to promoting the grand idea of a United Europe in such books and papers as *My Answer*, *The Alternative*, *Europe A Nation*, *Europe Faith and Plan*, *European Socialism* etc. It would never do for the public to realise that the creators of “Yurrop” had all along been picking Mosley’s pocket; and that their “E.U.” is in fact Fascist, albeit without the shirt and the choreography. I think the coyness in providing an exposition of Mosley’s pre-war policies has a similar explanation. The public would have found something familiar about them. All post-war governments, with the exception of the Thatcher Ministries, have been picking Mosley’s pocket and are presently putting the final touches to the edifice.

Anthony Cooney
Liverpool

Sir

John Honey deserves our gratitude for his defence of standard English, but he is mistaken in his representation of the views of the Italian Marxist, Antonio

Gramsci, on culture and language. In his review of Honey's *Language is Power: The Story of Standard English and its Enemies*, Peter Bassett repeats Honey's misconception.

Gramsci placed great importance on mastery of the relevant standard national language, as against working-class or peasant patois:

Someone who only speaks dialect, or understands the standard language incompletely, necessarily has an intuition of the world which is limited and provincial, which is fossilised and anachronistic in relation to the major currents of thought which dominate world history. A great culture can be translated into any language with historic richness and complexity and it can translate any other great culture, and can be a world-wide means of expression. But a dialect cannot do this.

As Gramsci envisaged them, 'organic intellectuals', who would emerge from the masses, master the full range of knowledge accumulated under capitalism, and thus play a more effective role in its overthrow, would secure cultural hegemony by gaining thorough knowledge of the best of 'religion, philosophy, art, morality, language and manners' acquired in past 'class societies'. He regarded the potential hegemony of mass culture as a disaster and did not bow down before the predecessors of Frank Sinatra and the Spice Girls.

Gramsci, as well as or better than Roger Scruton, understood that the acquisition of the most valuable knowledge and cultural understanding is no easy matter, especially for children from homes with little 'cultural capital'. Instead of glorifying mediocrity, Gramsci called for intensive effort in education.

The destructive forces which John Honey has played so honourable a part in resisting owe nothing to Gramsci, although some Neo-Marxist ideologues falsely claimed him as a forerunner. At present it seems that David Blunkett and some of his colleagues are genuinely concerned by low achievement levels in many traditional Labour-voting working-class areas, many now with large ethnic groups. It will not be easy,

any more than it was for Conservative ministers, for Blunkett to return the schools to the task of ensuring that as many children as possible are initiated into the best that has been said and done. It is important that sincere people of the Left, and *Salisbury Review* readers should never forget that there are many of them, should be reminded that some past Left luminaries rejected the view that pop culture was as good as high culture, the Beatles as good as Beethoven, and worked to ensure that the masses should have access to the type of education once available only to a minority.

In this struggle, John Honey and Peter Bassett should recognise in Gramsci a valuable ally. For further reading, I commend Harold Entwistle's masterly 1979 *Antonio Gramsci: Conservative Education for Radical Politics*.

Geoffrey Partington
Malvern, Australia

Sir

I thank Vivian Linacre for his generous letter (Summer 1998) and, of course, he is quite right. The system we call Imperial in Britain is loaded with cultural baggage and the continental Metric system is arid. Every foot, yard, mile, pint, gill, ounce, stone, rod, pole and perch and back to ells and groats conjures images from childhood, folklore and literature.

But hang on! Each and every one can be exactly transcribed into a metric equivalent (though with sometimes a few decimal places...) A metric door to an imperial doorway will still fit.

Language translation does not even have that blessing. No word, no single word, has an exact equivalent in another language. If we add to that the fact that many words change meaning (where has gay fetched up?) over the years then we can never be sure of our ground.

But take heart. The Americans, the most technically advanced nation in the world, use miles, feet, inches, gallons and pounds. In Norway my three inch nails in the hardware store are 'tre toms' (three thumbs).

Rowland Whitehead
London

Sir

The contribution on *Ernst Jünger* (Summer 1998) only speaks of his best-known war book (there were others), while in the view of many informed people his *Total Mobilization* (1931) and *The Worker* (1932), in which he developed the notion of a new type of man, were far more important. And then there are, of course, also his numerous literary works. While his fiction will be forgotten (except perhaps the novel *On the Marble Cliff* of 1939 since it was read as a denouncement of the German concentration camps), his essays, travel writings and diaries will live.

But what should be of special interest to a conservative is simply this: in Jünger we have the rare case of an intellectual of our time who showed no resentments, who did not blame or praise, attack or defend, who neither celebrated nor bewailed the world he had to live in. Is that the reason why some call him cold, inhuman or nihilistic?

R Gruner
Kirkcudbrightshire

Sir

While I was pleased to see Richard Lynn's favourable review of my book *Why Race Matters*, he unfortunately seems to have missed my main point.

My point is that, because black/white performance differences are on the evidence largely genetic in origin, hence not due to white misdeeds, whites have no compensatory obligation to close the performance gap. As virtually all arguments for affirmative action and other forms of racial preference are compensatory in origin, these arguments are uniformly undercut by biological facts.

Unless this point is made clear, there is a logical disjunction between the two parts of my book — the two would have very little to do with each other.

The point Lynn mentions — that the whites penalised today by affirmative action are not the ones who damaged blacks — is one I do make, but only in passing.

Michael Levin
New York

Letter from America

Samuel Francis

“The values of the weak prevail,” wrote Friedrich Nietzsche, “because the strong have taken them over as devices of leadership.” This brief and rather cryptic remark contains virtually all we need to know about why contemporary movements like multiculturalism, feminism, homosexuality, and anti-white racism are such powerful trends in modern American and other Western societies. It is easy enough to say that these movements are merely the revolt of Nietzsche’s *Untermenschen* and the natural consequence of mass democracy and civilisational decline. But what Nietzsche grasped that many modern conservatives, who dislike Nietzsche almost as much as Karl Marx and Hillary Clinton, don’t grasp is that what looks like decline, decadence, and decay to conservatives appears to the champions of such trends as progress and the birth of a new civilisation. Because conservatives often fail to understand this, they perceive an apocalyptic collapse into anarchy and disorder where there is only an emerging structure of alternative power. The strong — those who like and want to use power — make use of unfashionable and forbidden ideas to gain power for themselves. Insofar as they are successful, the results do represent the decline of the kind of social and political order that conservatives are disposed to defend, but that does not mean that some sort of order is not at the same moment about to lurch forth from the apparent chaos.

Multiculturalism, for example, is less the result of ignorance and uninformed fantasies than a deliberate device by which the power-hungry can subvert a culture, whose moral codes deny them power, and build an alternative culture whose different moral codes yield power for themselves and none for their rivals. Much of the multiculturalist agenda that today rots the minds of children and students

from day-care centres to the post-graduate level of education and research in fact originates in an important but little-known organisation that calls itself the National Association for Multicultural Education, or NAME. Every year NAME holds a convention that is attended by more or less innocent but nonetheless power-hungry educators — not only teachers but also school administrators, superintendents, and education professors — as well as by an inner circle of what can be described only as the professional nucleus from which most of the nutty concepts of applied multiculturalism derive.

This past year the NAME folks convened in Albuquerque, New Mexico — a suitably obscure location for plotting the subversion of civilisation — and wove their many-tangled webs. The 600 attendees spent their time in seminars with titles like “Power Consciousness: Understanding Educator Power in the Classroom,” “Building Race Unity,” “Racial Identity, Jungle Fever, and the Politics of Interracial Relations,” “Enhancing Diversity from Self to Others,” “Challenging Cultural and Educational Hegemony,” and “Educating for Equity and Excellence: A Challenge for Black Learners to Use Anger as a Catalyst”. There were at least two keynote addresses, one of which was delivered by Peter McLaren of the University of California at Los Angeles and entitled “Towards a Revolutionary Multiculturalism,” and another, by Ward Churchill of the University of Colorado at Boulder, called “Assimilation or Liberation? Crossroads for Multiculturalist Theory”. Essentially what NAME and similar organisations do is transmit multiculturalist doctrine to the general run of dim-witted school teachers, show them how to apply it in classrooms, defend it against angry parents and sceptical community leaders, and con-

struct a national cadre through which their will to power may blossom.

In a statement of “NAME’s philosophy”, the organisation tells us that “Xenophobia, discrimination, racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia are societal phenomena that are inconsistent with the principles of democracy and lead to the counterproductive reasoning, that differences are deficiencies.” The premises of that statement, of course, are that the social institutions and identities — the “phobias” and “isms” listed — that define a particular order are (a) pathologies (hence the pseudo-psychiatric nomenclature) and (b) undemocratic. The implicit meaning of “democracy” in the statement is perhaps not what most Americans understand by the term, nor for that matter are most of the phobias and “isms” mentioned of the truly anti-social variety. The statement also says that NAME “rejects the view that diversity threatens the fabric of a society”.

But in enunciating such disclaimers the organisation, like the multiculturalist, wears two faces. One face tells us that American society is imbued with exclusionary and repressive pathologies and calls for the extirpation of the basic mechanisms by which the pathologies and repression are sustained; the means to extirpate them is the enhancement of “diversity” and the challenging of the dominant institutional categories that in effect define the social order. The other face denies any such goal and assures us that diversity is no threat at all. Pointing to this contradiction is important, not so much to expose and refute the muddled thinking of the multiculturalist mafia, but rather to make clear the tactics by which this mafia seeks power.

Multiculturalism is entirely correct in one of its major premises, that American society or any other kind of social

order defines itself by the exclusion or subordination of some kinds of beliefs and behaviour, and therefore also the partial exclusion of those groups that are culturally wedded to them. A moment's reflection shows that this is universally true, that the pagan Roman Empire or Christian medieval monarchies could not have been the kind of societies they were had they not excluded and repressed alternative beliefs and groups that did not share their identity. In the United States where Americans have historically boasted of their tolerance and openness, the processes of exclusion and repression have generally been lacking in the formal apparatus of the state, and the absence of state action against social deviance has enticed many Americans into believing that those processes don't exist, that America is a unique and exceptional society that defines itself by its tolerance and "openness".

The fact is that American society, in part because of the weakness of its national state throughout its history, has relied on informal mechanisms of exclusion and repression to control deviations from its norms and to enforce its own identity, and those informal mechanisms are located primarily in what we think of as the "culture". What the multiculturalists call "xenophobia" (the restriction of membership in American society to people who are culturally identifiable as Americans), "discrimination" (the exclusion of certain groups from certain kinds of participation because they do not adhere to an identifiable American identity), and all the rest of the "isms" they list are rooted not in the formal laws and Constitution of the American state but in the family, religion, communities, and schools.

The multiculturalists are entirely right: in order to challenge the mechanisms of exclusion and repression, overthrowing the state is not important. What is important is to overthrow the culture. If it's revolution and liberation from these "pathologies" and forms of repression you're looking for, forget the Pentagon, the FBI, and the CIA. The real enemies with whom you have to grapple are the family meal,

the Sunday school, the barber shop, and the commonly held beliefs that are reinforced and transmitted in those places.

Given this strategy and the correctness of its assumptions, the other face of multiculturalism acquires considerable importance as a tactic in carrying it out. The other face of multiculturalism insists that its challenge is not really radical or revolutionary at all but merely the fulfilment of "democracy" and what the NAME statement of philosophy elsewhere calls "the individual's noble quest to define one's relationship and responsibility to our global society." In other words, the other face of multiculturalism mobilises its revolutionary agenda by using commonly accepted words and icons of the contemporary dominant culture — "democracy" and the "global society", not to mention the ubiquitous cliché that "America is a nation of immigrants" or the "first universal nation" or is "founded on a proposition" too abstract to permit real cultural content. It uses these words and icons in order to gain a sympathetic hearing from the commonplace centres of cultural power. This suggests that multiculturalism is as powerful as it is because the groundwork for its revolutionary attack on traditional American culture has been laid for it by the contemporary dominant culture and by the jargon that the dominant culture has popularised and with which it defines itself.

What we have in the United States today, then, are ostensibly three different cultures (or subcultures). One is the traditional patriarchal, family-centred, Euro-American culture that defines and enforces itself through largely informal mechanisms and with which most who call themselves conservatives identify to one degree or another. The second is the dominant culture of the imperial metropole — the dominant media, the major universities, and national politics. The third is the largely imaginary culture championed by the multiculturalists as the alternative to the first two (though they usually don't distinguish between the first two in the delusion that the dominant culture is simply an extension of the

traditional one).

In fact, multiculturalism is not distinct from the dominant culture. It survives because of the ascendancy of the dominant culture's beliefs (embedded in such terms as "democracy" and the "global society") and enforced behaviour; it flourishes because it is lodged in the educational and governmental bureaucracies of the dominant culture; it is legitimised by the propaganda apparatus of the dominant culture; and its agenda is simply an intensification and a continuation of the agenda of the dominant culture, which is the replacement of the traditional culture by itself. Under the Clinton administration in particular, the dominant culture has intensified its war on traditional culture, in explicit alliance with multiculturalist legions. Hence, the president's fatuous "race initiative", which tolerates only perspectives based on non-white resentment and white guilt; hence, the administration's obsession with "hate crimes", the "stealth agenda" of which, as Robert Knight of the Family Research Council recently noted, is to "elevate homosexuality [and for that matter, all other victim categories excluded and subordinated by traditional cultural identity] to specially protected minority status".

It is true that multiculturalism differs from the dominant culture in much of its rhetoric and some of its tactics. The "diversity" it is always chattering about is not characteristic of the dominant structures of the state, media, and the higher perches of the economy, but because the dominant culture does not define itself through the same exclusions and repressions that traditional culture does, "diversity" is no real threat to it. What the dominant culture excludes and represses is the traditional culture itself, and "diversity" is today the principal weapon by which it seeks to achieve that goal. By enforcing "diversity" as both an ideal and an actual practice through affirmative action, forced integration, mass immigration, and multiculturalism itself, the dominant culture undermines the defining mechanisms of the traditional culture and renders its continued functioning impossible. Since the dysfunc-

tions in traditional culture that result often engender genuinely pathological behaviour, that simply reinforces the image of traditional culture as inherently pathological.

Conventional conservatives are generally correct that the dysfunctions they perceive in American society are signs of decadence—the weakening of families, the erosion of communities, the inversion of sexual morality, and all the other chants in the litany of decline. These are symptoms of the deca-

dence of traditional culture, whether induced by its enemies or not; but they are also signs of the triumph of the dominant culture, which regards them at worst as insignificant irritants or at best as indications of impending liberation from traditional restraints and the defeat of its adversary, traditional culture. The values of the weak, the weird, the excluded, and the repressed prevail because those who inhabit the dominant culture have taken them over as devices by which their own leader-

ship is entrenched. Nietzsche understood this long before the tactic had a name and long before groups like NAME discovered how to use the tactic to entrench their own power.

Samuel Francis is a Contributing Editor to *Chronicles* and a syndicated columnist. This article first appeared in *Chronicles* — a magazine of American culture.

Reviews

Chaudhuri's Revelations

George Chowdharay-Best

Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997.

A man who writes a book at the age of ninety-nine (at the time of writing this, a hundred) cannot expect a fair review. Either the reviewer will have to be excessively kind on account of the writer's age, or the book will be ignored. This reviewer is furthermore in the difficult position of being an employee of the Press by whom the author is published, which makes it even more difficult to enter any adverse criticism. Moreover, to pile Pelion upon Ossa, part of his surname is the same as that of the author; and, although their ancestors came from different provinces, he shares in a very loose sense the 'race' of the author. *Chaudhuri*, variously spelt, was and to some extent still is, not so much a surname as the name of an office. Under the Mughals and before them it meant the headman of a village or group of villages; and to use it as a surname is a little bit like calling yourself *Squire*. Chaudhri Sir Zafrullah

Khan, the first foreign minister of independent Pakistan, placed it as a title before his 'Sir' (he had been knighted by the British before independence); and in former times on visits to India I would sometimes experience the same usage, for example in the form 'Chaudhri Sahib' as an address of respect. In Bengal things may of course have been different; and here I must explain another difference between my hemi or demi-namesake and myself, namely that my ancestors came from the Punjab, he and his from Bengal. He had some very rude things to say about Punjabis in his second volume of autobiography *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!*, which I reviewed for this journal; one could I suppose summarise them by saying that Dr Chaudhuri, though he may have softened his views over the years, tends to regard Punjabis as a bunch of boorish peasants, whilst Punjabis tend to regard Bengalis (of

which he is one, and proud of it) rather like, shall we say, the English sometimes regard the Welsh. But all this is far away from the subject-matter of this centenarian's book, actually received, in one British library at least, on the hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Is it just a coincidence that the hundredth anniversary of his birth should fall in the fiftieth year of Indian and Pakistani independence? Probably not, but it has meant that the book has had to compete for the attention of reviewers with palates jaded by a surfeit of anniversary material.

The book is in three parts and runs to fewer than 150 pages. The 'three horsemen', which he perceives in modern-day terms as individualism, nationalism, and democracy, are discussed in the second part. He is certainly correct in arguing that the first of these, as a word, was not coined

by de Tocqueville. The earliest example in my files, in French, comes from a review of Dunoyer's *La Morale et l'Industrie* by P J Rouen in *Le Producteur* (1826) pp. 159-62. However, I am not sure he is entirely correct in treating authoritarianism as its true antithesis, for the authoritarianism of a dictator can be viewed as a form of individualism carried to extreme lengths. Individualism is more often opposed to collectivism, a word which admittedly was coined somewhat later, but whose germ is clearly discernible in Rouen's review of 1826. 'The principal base of all the political theories of modern times', he wrote, 'is knowledge of the individual human being, studied by different methods. From this has been deduced the rights and the duties, the needs even, individual liberty and the sovereignty of the individual.' Individualism ('*Individualisme*'), he added, from its origin has been offered to society as a 'political system'. It was the most powerful opponent of all evil systems — ('*systèmes vicieux*'). However, if society ('*société*') was just a collection of individuals, the rules of social organisation were inexplicable. Rouen's explanation was forthright. 'Society' was neither the nation, nor a period taken in isolation. It was the whole of humanity since it was first known to have existed; humanity represented in its development by its morally and physically predominant parties; thus the species appears as a collective being (*être collectif*) whose divers parties combined with and modified each other constantly by an uninterrupted sequence of action and reaction, at the same time as they were carried forward by a common movement and towards a common aim. This was not to say that the study of the individual person was absolutely foreign to social science thus defined; rather, that social science ran with it as an accessory.

This attempt at a refutation of the 'there is no such thing as society' argument has a curiously modern ring, as indeed does the conclusion of Rouen's thought-provoking review, whose nuanced use of the French

language is almost impossible to convey in English. It was essential, he wrote, to distinguish private morality ('*morale privée*') from social morality. He was opposed to a view which argued that, because all human beings were free to think for themselves therefore they all did so. Rather, they were inclined to follow opinion-formers. But many advocates of individual liberty seemed to think that there should be a duty, not merely a right, to think for oneself. They were against the benign domination ('*la domination bienfaisante*') which enlightened men ('*les hommes éclairés*') exercised over all classes of society. Nonetheless, conceded the author, individualism was the most powerful adversary of wicked or vicious systems and had destroyed an eighteenth-century social order which was merely an instrument of oppression. However, it had destructive but not constructive power and could not produce a new system. All this rather supports Dr Chaudhuri's view, and those of the dictionaries he has consulted, that individualism can be viewed from many aspects. Of course the concept is clearly tied up with that of liberty. Chaudhuri takes the line that 'individualism' in today's world means 'just unrestrained self-indulgence, more especially in regard to money and sexual relations'. In that aspect, 'it is bound to be destructive of civilisation'. Dr Chaudhuri takes refuge in reflecting that the individual remains important. 'He is not rendered a superfluity in the universe on account of his mortality. He is a necessity like the leaves in a tree which maintains photosynthesis.'

After this somewhat mystical conclusion he goes on to consider the second horseman, identified as nationalism. Again, he leads the reader into a fairly lengthy study of dictionary definitions, into which I do not intend to follow him, except to say that although it is quite true that 'nationalism' as a word dates only from the early nineteenth century, the concept is surely much earlier than he and many academic commentators seem inclined to assume. For example, when Henry VIII declared in a famous phrase that 'England is an Empire, entire of

itself' he was no less making a nationalist declaration than any late nineteenth-century representative of a people 'rightly struggling to be free'. Because the word was not invented, it does not mean that the concept was not there. Monarchs, even in the Middle Ages, could not wage war without the consent of the governed. These peoples constituted a 'nation' and they themselves, together with their peoples, were often aggressively nationalist, even jingoist, even though their critics did not use those words. Chaudhuri's critique of the word 'decolonization' is also flawed since, although historical dictionaries often do not recognise it, colonization as a term especially used by Americans, has come to mean the establishment of rule over alien peoples as well as permanent settlement. Expressions like 'colonial Williamsburg', 'colonial Virginia', or 'colonial America' have been extended to absurdities like 'colonial India' or even 'colonial Burundi'. One has yet to hear or read the expression 'colonial London' but perhaps that will come. Dr Chaudhuri is right to deplore and even laugh at such developments, but are they not inevitable given the political and cultural dominance of post-colonial America? On nationalism, Chaudhuri's general conclusion is that modern nationalism has exacerbated hatred between peoples.

The third horseman, democracy, is denounced mainly because in its extreme form it engenders equalitarianism, or egalitarianism as he and most commentators call it. (Equalitarianism is certainly the older term in English.) Chaudhuri seems to be asserting that modern egalitarianism, whilst accepting that differences between human beings exist in terms of brawn (the weight-lifter and the athlete) denies that they exist in terms of brain. By this he no doubt intends to refer by implication to the denunciation of intelligence tests and the character-assassination of those who originally devised them — certainly a shameful episode in recent Western intellectual history. It is a process by which equality of opportunity (in itself a noble ideal) has been replaced by equality of

attainment, in which excellence, outstanding performance in any field of endeavour, is frowned upon and treated with such jealous disapproval as to inhibit all effort to achieve it. 'Caliban has ceased to be militant — he is triumphant', writes Dr Chaudhuri.

The remaining four chapters, constituting part 3, are devoted to detailing the decadence which he sees all around him in British, American and Indian social life. The conclusion is

'the note of despair...Everything beyond is uncertain, and the foreground is...empty with nothingness in it. I wish I could see man's great age coming anew — it may; but I cannot see how it will.'

The *Salisbury Review* is a journal of conservative thought, but in these times of New Labour ascendancy it probably needs to look at socialist thought as well. So I will conclude by quoting from an early socialist journal, Louis Blanc's

Monthly Review, November 1849, where it was written that 'Socialism...is a system of Society by which all members of that Society are possessed of an *equal* right, chance and opportunity of developing their *unequal* faculties'. The phrase 'equality of opportunity' was, so far as is known, first used by the English moral philosopher, theologian, and historian of universities Hastings Rashdall (1858-1924) in an article in the *Economic Journal* in 1891.

Devastation and Death

Keith Jacka

A Muse of Fire: Literature, Art and War, A. D. Harvey, The Hambledon Press, 1998, £25.00.

The *Iliad*, that bloodstained tale of the long siege of Troy, recounts the tragic consequences of the ungovernable temper of Achilles, prince of combat killers; describes his passionate anger with Agamemnon because he, the hero Achilles, has not been accorded first place in glory and the spoils of victory, the place appropriate to his godlike gifts and deeds. This grim tale of doom and destruction, of honour, and pride beyond all compromise, was the central reference, the nurturing ground for the imaginative life of ancient Greece. In this greatest epic of Western Culture most of the later Greek achievements are prefigured: the profound speculations of Thales, the tragedies of Aeschylus, the subtle philosophical analyses of Socrates and Plato, the political eloquence of Pericles, the exact observation and clinical precision of Hippocrates.

There is no moral judgement in the story, nothing pro or anti war. War and Peace are presented as conditions of human existence, bound together as the destructive and creative aspects of life. Violent encounters are the nodal points of the narrative, but the texture

derives from the ordinary daily round: locked in battle the Trojans and Achaeans alternate in dominance like the scales of a widow, working for a pittance, as she weighs out her wool; Menelaus bestrides the body of Patroclus as a mother cow stands protectively over its newborn calf.

The *Iliad* set the tone of Western literature about war for the next two and a half thousand years. That is, until World War I. This was a turning point, and it is the literature of this war — the first truly Machine war, just as World War II is the first Science war — which makes up the body of A. D. Harvey's book. Two questions arise:

Is war a natural and inevitable aspect of the human condition?

Are the artistic methods and descriptive techniques of Homer adequate for presenting the wars of the twentieth century?

These questions underlie everything in Harvey's book. The author says: 'What one can see in the later nineteenth century is the accumulation of materials for a tradition of writing about war...' Meaning a new tradition, one more in accord with the fact

that mass industrial societies are now the bearers of Western Culture. He cites Tolstoy as the greatest single influence; and Tolstoy himself, although recording that Homer's poetry had been very important, names Stendahl as his main precursor: 'I owe it to him that I have understood war.'

Stendahl's portrayal of war is in *The Charterhouse of Parma*: Fabrizio at the Battle of Waterloo, which is presented by Stendahl as a bewildering agglomeration of chaotic, subjectively meaningless happenings. Which is incontrovertibly true, but is it a truth worth emphasising, since the peasant conscripts of empires have certainly known it for the last few thousand years? Evidently Tolstoy thought so, as he showed in that vast display of repetitive chauvinism, vanity and verbosity — all 600,000 words of it — which is *War and Peace*. This kind of situation is not peculiar to war; you will get exactly the same feeling — of incomprehensible arbitrariness, bewilderment, dissociation — in quite ordinary places: if you sit in the middle of a hospital ward at its busiest, or accidentally find yourself within the gi-

gantic uproar of a large mass production factory. Without a grounding in the preliminary competencies there is no experience, merely sensation.

There is here a large failure of intellect. This cult of the fact: fact as an end in itself, observation without theory, sensation without judgement; and the dull-witted conclusion that therefore value and victory derive from simple accumulation — more facts, more things, more material; millions of words, millions of deaths — seems to have been common ground for both writers and generals during the first World War, as Harvey's book makes clear. I suppose we had to wait for World War II to learn again how to use our brains, when we saw how an aggregation of a whole population of potential facts — each Japanese soldier devoted unto death to the Emperor — was negated over the space of a few days by the disciplined use of the one big insight into how to split the nucleus of an atom.

The book has several merits, but two especially: the author has read widely and selected well, in both English and other European languages; also he quotes at length, so that the reader can make up his own mind. If the commentary and analysis are not up to the

same standard, it is perhaps because there is a type of political correctness amongst historians. For example, the French are not to be blamed for their collapse in World War II; nor should one praise a great man unreservedly: one who really knows will always have to hand a secret pile of dirt to chuck into the left-hand scale pan.

But these are minor blemishes. Here is Osbert Sitwell, comparing the trenches with prep school:

At least there were no masters, matrons, or compulsory games. The discomfort was, at times, perhaps a little greater, the food, though tinned, perhaps a little more palatable... Through the long course of Samurai-like discipline to which they were, with few exceptions, obliged to submit in their most impressionable years, the children of the former British governing classes had been taught to bear with composure a high degree of physical hardship and spiritual misery, while enclosed in an atmosphere of utmost frustration... certainly the young of this class could bear bodily suffering and exhaustion, and a sense of the cruellest isolation, with a stoical equanimity unknown among those who came from good working-class homes and had been brought up, right from their earliest years to manhood, in an unaltered atmosphere of domestic affection.

Much of the better literature on World

War I — Owen, Sassoon, Graves — was written by those who ended up opposing it. They did not agree with Homer: for them war was both hideous and unnatural. Some say it is the best modern war literature we have. Perhaps. Owen said: 'The poetry is in the pity.' Certainly if you subtract the pity the poetry quickly reveals its intrinsic mediocrity.

What I found most interesting in Harvey's book was the remarkable range of responses to the war. Many soldiers hated it, most simply endured it, while others thrived on it. Here is one of the latter. While admitting the times of boredom, depression, pain, fear, nevertheless he concludes:

The horrors of the Great War and the miseries of those who were called upon to take part in it have been described by innumerable writers. For my own part I have to confess that I look back on the years 1914-1918 as among the happiest I have ever spent.

[Graham H. Greenwell: *An Infant in Arms.*]

The author discusses painting as well as literature, and pays tribute to the work of Paul Nash, whose paintings of the front are surely the most outstanding art that came out of World War I; certainly way beyond anything produced by writers.

Sense and Sentimentality

Hal Colebatch

Faking It: The Sentimentalisation of Modern Society, Digby Anderson & Peter Mullen, editors, The Social Affairs Unit, 1998.

Despite some questionable material, this collection of essays is a courageous and often valuable attempt to diagnose part of the prevailing cultural malaise.

It argues that sentimentalisation is corrupting religion, education, media and, in short, our entire culture. It prevents us behaving rationally in con-

fronting the problems of the world and leads to a squalid emotional dishonesty that deforms our characters. This is the world in which: "Faked public emotions include the well-scripted outbursts from mothers with daughters kidnapped or recently dead from drugs, who occasionally even give the impression of making the most of a

one-and-only chance of fame."

Faking It has plainly touched a number of nerves. Its defiance of Emotional Correctness led to a bizarre intervention into literary criticism by the Prime Minister and his staff, attacking the book as "unadulterated snobbery," and other cultural giants of Cool Britannia like Julie Burchill and

Peregrine Worsthorne dutifully spluttered with semi-coherent rage at it (the lofty Sir Peregrine actually accuses the authors of “posing as popular controversialists”, presumably something *he* would never dream of doing).

What has obviously attracted most attention is the essay by Professor Anthony O’Hear on the canonisation of sentimentality and ersatz emotionalism in Dianamania. Concentration on this is understandable as the whole affair revealed a strange madness and corruption of the national culture which had never been seen so starkly before. It was a shocking revelation of irrationality, of phoniness and, in its demands that the Queen and the young princes go on mournabout to make their emotions available to the public, callous or sadistic in a truly pathological way. As O’Hear says, it was one of those moments in which a nation discovers what it has become.

This essay produced the Prime Minister’s weird comment that: “Diana’s power is [sic] born out of emotion and there’s nothing wrong with that.” Power born out of emotion? The Triumph of the Will? That statement may also have been one of those defining moments: a moment when the benign, inclusive mask of Blairism seemed to slip. Something very strange is going on here.

Mark Steyn, whose sparkling wit and erudition mark him as almost the only great new stylist in British letters, is also well up to form here, writing on the modern media substitution of sentimentality for substance. Steyn here — I think correctly — uses the term “media” to include not only news but fiction. We cannot understand the present cultural malaise unless we see how much they have become part of the same continuum.

Peter Mullen is devastating on the erosion of religious doctrine in the years since the publication of *Honest to God*, and on how avoiding hard aspects of theology like the Four Last Things has deprived modern euphemistic religion of any power to uplift, console or touch the numinous:

A sentimental church here fails in its proclamation of the resurrection of the

dead because it is too squeamish to speak of death in the first place. (This is a society in which the BBC described the island where the body of Princess Diana was buried as “Diana’s final home”.) Lucy Sullivan also writes on the corruption of Christianity by sentimentalism.

It was, perhaps, providential that after reading these depictions of pseudo-Christian slop and drivel I came across Lord Hailsham, writing of the third great bereavement of his life in his memoir *A Sparrow’s Flight*:

I was asked ... whether my religion was not a great help to me during my trial ... [but] the Christian religion is not a painkiller, no analgesic, no patent medicine. It is not there to make tolerable the intolerable suffering that, at one time or another, we all undergo in this world. It is not to be abandoned because we are in pain ...

I find two main problems with the book, although I do not think they negate its value. “Sentimentality” is not the whole of our cultural malaise. It interacts with other things. “Sentimentality” has connotations of wide-eyed kittens, but our culture now is not only concerned with sentimental prettiness and dishonest euphemism but also with nihilistic obsessions with ugliness, depravity, baseness, sexual perversion and violent death. Ersatz sentimentality is a poisonous enemy of clear thought and feeling, but the other ingredient of the contemporary cultural cocktail is the ceaseless peddling of squalor, brutality, depression and despair.

Certainly Ian Robinson touches on this in “Faking Emotion: sentimentality in modern literature”, when he writes:

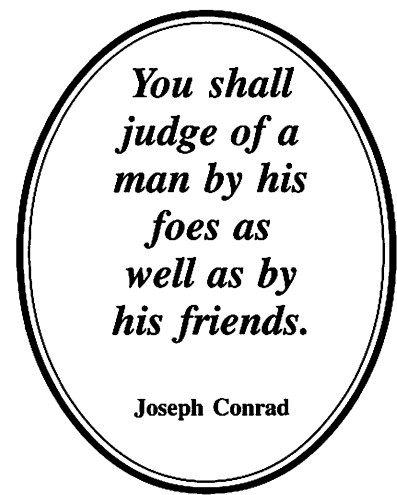
The book jacket of Martin Amis’s *London Fields* (1989) quotes recommendations from an earlier triumph, *The Rachel Papers*: “Scurrilous, shameless ... ingenious obscenity, loathing, lust, anxiety ... fairly nasty.” It tells us much about judgement in the modern world if a publisher with a very distinguished record thinks “fairly nasty ... ingenious obscenity” are phrases that will bring sales.

Secondly, the cumulative if unintended effect of these essays is an impression that the authors consider sentimentality *always* destructive. Possibly this

would not have been a problem if sentimentality had been properly defined or distinguished from more legitimate feelings. In *The Abolition of Man* C. S. Lewis warned against creating men “without chests” devoid of noble feeling, and urged that warnings against ersatz sentimentality be balanced by awareness that real emotions of awe, wonder and reverence are part of complete human beings. The intellect, he added, is powerless without trained emotions and it is not syllogisms that hold nerves and muscles to their post in the third hour of the bombardment. The most sentimental scrap of feeling about a flag or a tradition may serve better. Nor can environmentalism be simply dismissed as “sentimentality”.

Sentiment, surely, has its place. There are times when a small, simple, “sentimental” gesture may open a heart to that Joy which is the very opposite of evil. The significant and horrible thing about the Dianamania is that it is sentiment without reason or judgement, a crazily and inhumanly disproportionate outpouring of grief for a woman who practically none of those involved had met and who had been in life little more than an icon of empty hedonism.

The question of what has gone wrong with our culture — its remorseless coarsening and lowering, its corrupted arts, its debased media and its combination of sentimentality and viciousness — has no simple answers. But this book illuminates a number of areas where we may begin looking for answers and it should be read by every student of cultural conflict.



After Darwin

Paul Helm

Beyond Evolution, Anthony O'Hear, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997, £19.99.

Professor O'Hear holds that evolutionary explanation takes us so far, but not all the way; it is not the only plausible form of explanation. In particular, it is not an explanation of those powers and interests that are distinctive of human beings considered as self-conscious, reasoning, valuing, individuals.

Evolutionary explanation is the paradigm form of a genetic explanation, even though it does not claim that everything that presently exists does so because of its survival value, selected because of the advantage that it confers. Nevertheless, it claims that the most important things that exist do so because they confer advantage. (55, 60-1.) It is also one form of a type of explanation (which it shares with Freudianism and Marxism, among others) which contrasts the surface of human life (intending, planning, valuing) with the depths (the activity of drives, or of economic conflict, or of genes). *Beyond Evolution* might thus be seen in a number of ways: as a defence of the claim that there are kinds of objectivity other than scientific objectivity, and thus as issuing a warning against thinking that the only kind of knowledge is that gained from the view from nowhere; alternatively, an extended, wide-ranging and critical treatment of the fallaciousness of the genetic fallacy, the fallacy of arguing from the causal origins of a belief to its truth (or falsity). Finally, the book might be seen as the denial of the equivalence between the true and the useful. Whichever way one takes it, O'Hear's main counter-argument to the reductionism of some types of evolutionary explanation is what he calls the normativity of the mental.

Take, for example, evolutionary epistemology (52f) according to which our perceptual and cognitive faculties de-

velop to cope successfully with environmental problems of food and shelter, and with reproduction. Can we give an evolutionary explanation for the emergence of creative intelligence? O'Hear thinks that we can (81). Nevertheless, evolutionary naturalism inclines towards epistemological pessimism, for perhaps it is just in virtue of their evolutionary origins that our cognitive powers are limited and partial.

There follow two long discussions which widen and deepen O'Hear's case. The author argues that evolution cannot account for morality, with its features of universality and impartiality; nor can it, in the hands of a conservative thinker such as Hayek, justify, in itself, a hands-off approach to politics. Conservatives will find O'Hear's arguments against Hayek particularly interesting. Hayek argues that by evolutionary survival capitalism within a framework of law — in other words private property and the family — has shown itself superior to rivals. Society cannot therefore be arranged on rationalist, a priori principles, but experience alone shows us what works, and we disturb these arrangements at our peril. O'Hear counters that this is as much a rationalist argument as those not favoured by Hayek; further, since all the evidence is not in, we cannot be certain that the hands-off approach will prevail, nor (in any case) is what counts as evolutionary success in society altogether clear. Since new and enforceable circumstances might arise, how can we be sure now that those institutions which have been successful up to now will be successful then? (As if to testify unwittingly to this very uncertainty, the author asks 'Might Malaysia and Korea even now be providing us with examples of evolutionary development to challenge

and eventually overwhelm our outdated models of progress? (pp.150-1)) And does it follow in any case that inveterate ignorance should lead us to a hands-off approach? Might not acting upon limited knowledge be better than not acting at all?

The final chapter has to do with the appreciation of beauty. Like Kant, O'Hear argues that aesthetic judgement is disinterested and universal, but claims, against Kant, that it is objective. Beauty is not susceptible to a utilitarian or an instrumentalist analysis. The evolutionary fact that, say the peahen is attracted by the finery of the peacock is not a case of the one being attracted by the beauty of the other, but of seeing advantage in mating with the bird with the finest finery. In any case, since we cannot identify specific beliefs and intentions in animals, we cannot tell whether or not they have aesthetic beliefs.

As the author stresses, in mounting his critique of evolutionary thinking he is not denying the plausibility of evolution, but going beyond it. But this itself raises an interesting question. If the non-reductive approach to evolution is the correct one, what is the explanation for that? O'Hear is coy here. He is against religion (pp.213-4). But if it is reasonable to go beyond evolution — as the book convincingly persuades that it is — must there not be some non-naturalistic factor which accounts for this reasonableness? It is a pity that the author does not probe this question further.

With this reservation, the book is to be recommended. O'Hear engages with the informed general reader, as philosophy should do, but rarely does in these days of increasing specialisation and the pressures for 'research output'. He discusses broad themes of deep and abiding human interest with intelligence and boldness as well as with care and accuracy.

Political Animals

Aidan Rankin

Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain Since 1800, Hilda Kean, Reaktion, 1998, £19.95.

The cause of animals crosses conventional boundaries of left and right, producing unlikely political bedfellows. In January 1995, at the crest of a wave of protests against live exports, a young woman called Jill Phipps was crushed by a lorry delivering calves to Coventry airport. Her tragic death became a rallying point for an assortment of anarchists, hunt saboteurs, travellers and left-wing placard holders. Many professional protesters attended her funeral, but so did Alan Clark and Brigitte Bardot, the former an outspoken conservative politician, the latter an avowed supporter of M. Le Pen. Clark had joined the protests himself, having found his wife in tears after seeing sheep 'stuffed into overcrowded lorries'. Ann Widdecombe is full of surprises, but few expected her forthright speech against fox hunting in November 1997, when she condemned it, Maoist-style, to the dustbin of history. More than unemployment, more even than racism, live exports and vivisection mobilise people of all ages who would never normally consider demonstrating and who do not regard themselves as 'political'. Yet membership of animal welfare charities and protest campaigns by far outstrips that of political parties, making the animal cause one of the largest social movements in modern Britain.

Hilda Kean has produced an intelligent, meticulous history of the British pro-animal movement, which does much to help us make sense of recent debates. She roots concern for animal welfare in the non-conformist conscience once ridiculed by Oscar Wilde, the tradition of hard work and self-improvement that arose in the eighteenth century and was given a radical

cutting edge by the events of 1789. Broadly, this places the movement on the political and cultural left, but the story does not end there.

From the movement's earliest days, Kean discerns two rival strands competing for influence. The first, conservative in tone, was linked to movements against drink, gambling and other forms of dissolute living in the expanding cities. It was supported by politicians like William Wilberforce, better known as a crusader against slavery, but also a member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, the definition of which extended to 'seditious meetings' and working-class pursuits such as cock fighting. In 1824, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals was formed, ironically at a coffee house called Slaughter's in St Martin's Lane. Present at the meeting were the Quaker philanthropist and prison reformer, Thomas Fowell Buxton, MP, and James Mackintosh, a lawyer who despite liberal tendencies shared Burke's analysis of the French revolution as pernicious mob rule. The SPCA, which became the RSPCA in 1840, focused on cruelty to dogs and cart horses, usually by the poor, and on the inhumane or unsanitary killing of livestock. Jewish methods of slaughter, later attacked by fascists and secularists alike, were then perceived by reformers as enlightened.

Founded by prominent politicians, the mainstays of this movement were the artisans and small property owners who sought to distinguish themselves from dissolute rich and wanton poor. Highly politicised for their times, these men and women backed penal reform, the anti-slavery movement and the extension of the franchise. They aimed

to spread their ideals of temperance and clean living throughout society, but they favoured education and evolution, not revolution or utopia. Beneath the surface of this reformist movement lay a more radical current, rooted in the rights-based philosophy of the French Revolution and linked to an emergent socialism. As early as 1791, a radical, John Oswald, published *The Cry of Nature*; although an atheist, he was strongly influenced by Hinduism. The SPCA's founding statements reject bull-baiting as a relic of 'rude and obscure ages', but rejected 'all visionary and overstrained views'. Lewis Gompertz, its secretary from 1826-1832, nonetheless published *Moral Inquiries on the Situation of Man and of Brutes* in 1824, where he advocated a vegan diet along with the abolition of social divisions. When he was drummed out of the Society in 1832, he set up the Animal Friends Society. Thus, the foundations of today's division between 'respectable protesters' and 'revolutionaries' were laid.

Kean also chronicles the emergence of zoos, originally humanitarian institutions, and the anti-vivisection movement that grew through the Victorian era, with the advancement of science and increasing questioning of its new dogmas. She looks at the transformation of the dog from practical, working beast to symbol of stable family life, respectability and fidelity. Gelert, the mythical hound of Llewellyn, and Greyfriars Bobby in Edinburgh, both became icons of Victorian sentimentality. Today, the heroic Labradors of World War II, who were 'volunteered' by their owners to sniff for land mines, are rightly remembered with respect and affection. A convinced supporter

of feminism, Kean praises the role of women in campaigning for animal rights, but she also describes a callous Victorian fashion for Aigrette feathers which affected women of all classes. Such feathers were taken from the egret through a process that included the mother. Kean recalls a delightful story in which society painter George Watts summarily plucked a feather from Lillie Langtry. It was women, acting for themselves, who opposed this fashion by setting up the Plumage

League in 1886.

Kean's is an uplifting book, full of vitality and interest. She presents the reader with a seemingly infinite variety of eccentrics, hobbyists, philanthropists and perennial campaigners, men like the homosexual author Edward Carpenter and the social reformer Henry Salt. Many of them had little in common, although they were overwhelmingly 'middle-class'. Yet they shared a vision of society that transcended narrow economics, un-

like the Marxist dullard H.M. Hyndman, who denounced 'humanitarians and arty-crafties'. Despite the left-wing obsession with hunting, today's campaigners focus mainly on commercialised cruelty, including live exports and abuse of new species, such as ostrich, on intensive farms. Here, they have found a new enemy, the European super-state that places uniform practice before local custom, cultural identity or popular feeling for what is right.

Genius Loci

Derek Turner

The Case Against the Global Economy and For a Turn Toward the Local, Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (eds), Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1996, \$28 (distributed by Random House in the UK).

This book is one of the most important and interesting to emerge from the environmentalist movement in recent years, and may some day be regarded as a landmark. Forty-three well-crafted and exceedingly thoughtful essays by well-known and respected environmental thinkers and activists describe comprehensively the rarely discussed adverse effects of global free trade upon human lives and institutions and suggests how human beings can make "a turn toward the local".

It marks a shift away from the politically correct excesses of environmentalism, towards a more conservative conservationism. Some of this subtle change in emphasis may be attributed to the publishers, the Sierra Club, which is one of the more sensible ecological groups; but it is mostly due, I suspect, to the benign influence of Edward Goldsmith, Britain's most important ecologist.

This is not to say that all the contributors are "Right wing", whatever that means these days, but the book makes it clear that the concerns of some parts of the Left, honest liberals

and many in the Third World are found to be identical to those of populist and traditionalist conservatives: the necessity of protecting fragile institutions, respect for tradition, the necessity of human-scale living, desire for cultural self-preservation, desire for self-autonomy, desire to protect the natural environment, distrust of the media, the banks and big business and dislike of complacent political classes. These problems, foolishly ignored by the economics-obsessed mainstream Right, are now being addressed by populist conservatives like Pat Buchanan and Pauline Hanson and even, although the comparison is inexact, British Conservatives like Sir Richard Body, whose latest book, *The Breakdown of Europe*, echoes many of these themes.

There are tantalising hints of not too distant possible political and cultural realignments, of globalists against localists, internationalists against regionalists, separatists and nationalists, and Whigs against Tories and radicals. Indeed, one of the essays, by Wendell Berry, is explicit on this point: "A new political scheme of opposed

parties...is beginning to take form. This is essentially a two party system, and it divides over the fundamental issue of community". There is certainly scope for such a realignment. When Jerry Mander bemoans, in his introductory essay, that "soon, every place will look and feel like every place else, with the same restaurants and hotels, the same clothes, the same malls and superstores, the same streets crowded with cars", he is echoing the nightmare of small-c conservatives everywhere. What conservative can wholeheartedly defend incipiently totalitarian, inherently internationalist monsters like GATT, IMF, NAFTA or EU? What is taking place is a form of imperialism by the East India Companies of the present day. Although it can appreciate the glory of a Rorke's Drift, the real Right dislikes imperialism as much as the traditional Left, preferring the High Street to the high seas.

In the first part of the book, the effects of our modern *modus vivendi* are fairly plain to see, although many of them would have happened anyway, because of the improvements in com-

munications of the last few decades and because the modern way of life is so alluring. The contributors to this section cite amongst the evils of globalisation cultural homogeneity, divorce from the land, the weakening of old loyalties and bonds, the creation of insatiable desires for commodities, domination by transnational corporations, the impoverishment and degradation of native peoples, environmental damage, even the spread of new and resurgent diseases, as increased mobility brings this unpleasant form of cultural "enrichment" to many more people.

Globalisation is the logical conclusion of economic determinism, argue the writers in the second part, which is a sustained attack on the notion of free trade and the desirability of economic growth. They make some valid points — such as that there is no such thing as genuine free trade (the "level playing field" beloved of Smithian thinkers necessarily entails the hamstringing of successful companies) and that the schemata of GNP and GDP do tend to give a one-sided view of the quality of life, neglecting to take into account counterbalancing factors, such as declining family life or environmental degradation.

Some of the authors seem to be sur-

prised that the press distorts their ideas and lend credence to various conspiracy theories, for example that "bankers" and Western governments rule the world, centrally directing events for their own enrichment. The simple, if messier truth, is that banking is not a monolithic profession and at least some bankers are well-meaning, while masochistic Western governments usually seem to have no idea what they are doing at all.

One can, of course, be too romantic about traditional societies — "savages" are no nobler than anybody else. This kind of romanticism is a besetting sin of the ecological Left (there are trace elements even in this book). The ideals of the average Western Leftist and the ideals of those in the Amazon whom they would like to succour are a million miles apart. But there can be no doubt that these authors recognise something very important; what is human life without its families, communities and traditions, and its attachment to the land? Wendell Berry puts it strongly, perhaps even slightly too strongly: "You cannot have a post-agricultural world that is not also post-democratic, post-religious and post-natural — in other words it will be post-human".

In the last part of the book, twelve

writers make some practical suggestions as to how human-scale living might be preserved, ranging from Gandhian *swadeshi* ("home economy") concepts, through the encouragement of local consumption of local food to local currency schemes. They acknowledge the conceptual leap necessary to switch from globalism to localism, and also draw up an informal list of what people should think about when considering the future of their communities. A particularly interesting essay is provided by Kirkpatrick Sale, who calls for "bio-regionalism", or having a sense of place. I would have liked to see some mention made of the role that large scale immigration plays in disrupting traditional communities and threatening biodiversity, but that seems to be a bridge too far. The last essay is provided by Edward Goldsmith himself, who draws diverse threads together very well, and shows that family values, community values and environmental values are not the "constructs" of Marxian theory, but ingrained, interrelated instincts which need urgently to be reintegrated.

The many salutary lessons of this book need to be assimilated, articulated and acted upon by all who think that human beings are more than just consumers.

Notes on Reviewers

George Chowdhary-Best works on the staff of the Oxford English Dictionary.

Hal Colebatch is writing a book on Blair's Britain.

Paul Helm is Professor of the History and Philosophy of Religion at Kings College, London.

Keith Jacka is a Computer Analyst.

Aidan Rankin is a Political Consultant and freelance writer.

Derek Turner is Editor of *Right Now!*.

In Short

Michael Jacobs (ed.): *Greening the Millennium? The New Politics of the Environment*, Blackwell, £12.99

Published as a special issue of *The Political Quarterly*, and edited by Michael Jacobs, a leading Fabian, *Greening the Millennium?* is the response of reform-minded left-wingers to the growing crisis over the environment. A few, like Ted Benton, still cling to the old demons of capitalism, private property and the market. But most are aware that the real difficulty lies in reconciling popular sovereignty with the interests of future generations. In a far-reaching and perceptive contribution, Michael Jacobs shows that the whole structure of democratic politics in an age of consumption is an environmental threat. There can be no room for conservation when politicians are elected on the strength of their promises to present consumers. Only if a new, and publicly endorsed, conception of the 'quality of life' can be convincingly propagated, so as to include environmental factors among the aims of all consumers, can the problem be overcome.

Others, like Jonathon Porritt, whose merits as an activist are by no means matched by his qualities as a thinker, see the question in terms of health, wealth and opportunity, and regard the environmental movement and the cause of 'social justice' as continuous. According to Porritt we should be working to overcome world poverty — a goal which sorts ill with the evident fact that poverty consumes fewer resources than wealth.

Many contributors have astutely converted their environmental anxieties into publicly-funded academic careers. Pseudo-science, sociologese and self-referential pedantry therefore clog their prose. Of course, it is vital that people think more and do less — not only in this sphere, but in every other. The main threat to the environment, after all,

is that human beings *do* so much. It is also vital that people on the left, who will always dominate the thinking classes, should also think about this, the only problem to which democracy and popular choice plainly provide not even the ghost of an answer. But this makes it all the more important to drop the jargon, to confront the facts, and to ask ourselves troubling questions. Should human welfare be our only concern? What about other animals, other species, and the picturesque future of death and disease? Where in all this is the human soul and its fate, and how great a cause of present destruction is the loss of faith and the growth of new impieties?

Some contributors are tangentially aware of these questions. But reflection on them is unlikely to advance an academic career in 'environmental studies'.

Roger Scruton

Cod, A biography of the fish that changed the world, Mark Kurlansky, Jonathan Cape, 1998, £12.99

Did you know that John Cabot's men were reputed to have caught cod simply by dropping weighted baskets, that the first cod war took place in the 16th century with the Hanseatic League, and that West Indian slaves were sustained on the inferior salt cod produced by rich New Englanders who denounced slavery? These are among the many fascinating facts to be found in this brilliant example of a thematic approach to history.

Mark Kurlansky covers a thousand years and four continents and introduces the explorers, merchants and fisherman involved. By the middle of the 16th century 60 per cent of all fish eaten was cod and would remain so for the next two centuries. By the 18th century cod had changed New England from a poor distant colony into a thriving in-

ternational, commercial power and the "cod fish aristocracy" acknowledged the source of their immense fortunes by putting the cod on their official crests. Many of the first American coins had cod fish on them.

The history of cod has been intimately connected with the history of salt, and its success as a staple food increased when the Basque whalers applied to cod the salting techniques used on whales. Many English towns whose names end in 'wich' were at one time salt producers, while Europe's best salt came from Aveiro (Portugal); certainly Iberia has always been the most enthusiastic consumer of *bacalao*. Bilbao, with its iron works providing the anchors and other metal fittings for European ships, was one of the ports that flourished with the boom in shipbuilding created by the cod trade. The demand for replacement of sunken ships between 1530-1630 exceeded that of World War II.

After the end of the second world war fish stocks were at a level never seen since. Kurlansky takes the narrative up to the present tragedy. The most prolific fish is now faced with extinction owing to man's seemingly deliberate policy to destroy the environment through agencies like the Common Fisheries Policy.

The text is well enhanced by instructive maps, photographs, diagrams and gastronomic detail.

Merrie Cave

The Green Lanes of England, Valerie Belsey, Green Books, 1998, £12.95.

The English countryside was once covered by a network of green lanes, some in use since prehistoric times, like the Icknield Way. Valerie Belsey, in this comprehensive historical and topographical study — the last one was by Hippisley Cox in 1927 — has travelled throughout the country discovering

little enclaves of lanes that miraculously survive despite the Industrial Revolution and the onslaught of modern traffic.

Belsey presents a chronological survey of highway development with detailed descriptions of the different purposes of the lanes: Roman legions tramped through them, and Christian pilgrims reached Canterbury or Walsingham on them. By the end of the Saxon period, roads which came under the King's protection were defined, and had to be wide enough for two wagons. The various ways which connected monasteries to other religious establishments were known as cartulary routes, their chief function being the safe carrying of medieval documents by the forerunners of our modern couriers. Many church paths which remain as green lanes were used for Rogation day and other church ceremonies, while new ways emerged to meet the demand from the growth of markets both in the medieval and Tudor periods.

After 1750 the Drovers' roads, saltways and packhorse trails met the increased need for food. Later the Industrial Revolution completely transformed our landscape to a man-made one, while turnpikes superseded many of the green lanes.

The author's most important argument is that the lanes can only survive with continued use, but conservationists worry about the threat of 'green tourism' to wildlife, particularly birds. She hopes that a compromise can be reached whereby green lanes could be protected as wildlife havens closed to the public.

There is much useful additional information: a guide to identifying lanes which were rovers' ways and lists of those routes and other lanes by region, criteria for evaluating important hedges and instructive maps. While most of the illustrations enhance the text — one shows how a green lane can lie hidden in the landscape some of them are unnecessary and give the erroneous impression of a coffee table book rather than a scholarly study.

Merrie Cave

Sheila Lawlor: *Beveridge or Brown? Contribution and Distribution: the real social security debate*. Politeia, £1.

This short pamphlet, published by the dynamic think-tank Politeia, and written by Politeia's Director, testifies to the virtues of this new and important institution: serious thought, an open-minded vision of the contemporary political scene, and a commitment to the old conservative values. Dr Lawlor gives an exemplary and much needed exposition of the report by Lord Beveridge upon which the post-war welfare state was founded. She shows that the report made proposals which might have led, had the political climate been different, to a workable system of welfare, and one free from the imbalances and frauds that are familiar today. Beveridge remained true to the 'contributory principle', according to which pensions and other benefits are purchased by the contributor and not made available as unearned handouts. He opposed the idea that National Insurance contributions should be treated as taxation, and in everything wished to uphold traditional family structures and individual accountability. Political pressures pointed in another direction — towards redistribution, unearned handouts, the purchasing of votes with other people's money, and hence the dependency culture which makes weakness and vice into their own rewards.

Lawlor's trenchant analysis of Gordon Brown's revised conception of the welfare state shows that, if implemented, New Labour's proposals will contribute to the worst effects of the dependency culture, and do nothing to return the 'contributory principle' to the heart of welfare policy. Her vindication of Lord Beveridge may be rejected by some conservatives; but her dismissal of Gordon Brown will not.

Roger Scruton

Roots of Our Rights, Edmund and Ruth Frow, The Democrat (Campaign against Euro-federalism), 57 Green Lane, Merseyside, L45 8JQ, £1.50

This is a work of philanthropy as well as of aesthetic delight and cultural richness. When several pounds are frequently asked for a pamphlet, it is miraculous that such a well printed and illustrated book, on high quality paper with a proper binding, can sell for thirty bob. It will become a collector's item, for the value and originality of the contents match the quality of production.

After a tribute to Edmund Frow (1906-1997), a tool-room engineer who was imprisoned while agitating for the unemployed in the 1930's — the hero in *Love on the Dole* was based on him — and who with his wife Ruth created the "Working Class Movement Library" which is housed at 51 The Crescent, Salford, the text comprises eighteen short articles on struggles for freedom in centuries past, from the Peasants' Revolt to the Cato Street Conspiracy, featuring a parcel of rogues and martyrs such as John Wilkes, Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, Wolfe Tone, Richard Carlile, the Levellers and the Luddites. If primitive painting is a serious artistic genre, then this is primitive history: politically ingenuous, well-meaning but charming. Yet, however naive and shamelessly partisan the pieces individually, the collection as a whole commands respect, reminding us of the great radical spirit that imbues our history. The message shining through is that we are all now engaged in a fight for liberty. To quote from the end-note: "The EU is a direct attack on formal and practical democracy and is against the interests of the working class."

At £9 for half-a-dozen copies, this will make a perfect stocking-filler for Christmas. I loved the verse by William Hone (1821):

To check the circulation
Of little books
Vile 'two-penny trash'
Oh! they are full of blasphemies
And libels
And people read them
Of ten times more than their bibles.

Vivian Linacre

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