

*The Thinning Ranks:*  
Neo-Victorians and the Victorian Intellectual Tradition,  
1860 - 1980.

Submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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To George.



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## Preface.

This thesis developed in several stages and from several directions. It began, as far as one can speak of a beginning, with a sense of *déjà vu*, the distinct feeling while reading and listening to modern critics of society, hearing their concern with the "modern" situation, their fears for culture as they knew it, that what they said had been already voiced a hundred years earlier. In 1986, I had formulated enough of an argument to put forward a research proposal for a doctoral thesis, tentatively entitled "Mid-Victorian Prophecy and the Twentieth Century". The next stage in the development of this thesis began when Dr.W.H.Brock directed me to Coventry Cathedral as symbol of modern England. The Cathedral rewarded me with an unexpected discovery. I did not just find a Victorian but a medieval environment and identity: existing alongside the accumulation of Victorian and modern additions was the powerful presence of a local and oral order. Indeed, I was soon to learn that Coventry Cathedral was not the only habitat in England where the oral traditions of the past continued to be alive and well and that this habitat had something to do with shaping the perspective and attitudes of certain cohorts who were concerned with the fate and destiny of civilization, whose dedication to public life seemed to come from some compelling power, a power so mysterious, that is to say, so far from conscious consideration, that I have chosen to call "the myth of the sacred trust of civilization".

I am indebted to many people. First of all to the Association of Commonwealth Universities who have faithfully sponsored and countenanced me for past three years and who have so happily matched me with my supervisors: Dr.W.H.Brock, whose guidance, support in terms of articulating my arguments and their illustration was crucial; Dr.Peter McKenzie who, until his retirement this year, assisted me in gaining access to further information on ecclesiastical and theological matters; Dr. Joanne Shattock who supervised the final stages of composition and presentation of this dissertation; Prof. Emeritus Philip Collins, who showed an interest in my thesis during its early development and who discussed his war-time experiences and his attitude to

religion with me; and Sue Lloyd, the secretary of the Centre who, through many acts of kindness over and above the call of duty, has seen to much of my material welfare while in Leicester.

Part of my research consisted of four month of immersion into the life (and archives) of Coventry Cathedral and I would like to mention those who have gone out of their way to help me reconstruct their experience at a time when their commitments were stretched to a breaking point. Provost Emeritus W.H.N.Williams gave much of his time to help me understand his and the Cathedral's life in the sixties and seventies. Provost Semper also availed himself for several interviews. Connie Dawes, the Cathedral's information officer, Pat Holmes, the Social Secretary, Trevor Cooper of the Industrial Mission, Canon Oestreicher of the International Centre, Malcolm Eglen the Cathedral Bursar, and Richard Owen, the Cathedral archivist, Barbara Aspell, secretary and volunteer in the service of the Cathedral's educational outreach, have given me much of their time and shared their personal experiences. I am also grateful to Bishop Simon Phipps, former Industrial Chaplain, who discussed his personal background and motivations with me; Stephen Smalley, Dean of Chester, who used to be Precentor at the Cathedral and who was able to give me a preliminary overview of the ministry and its task, and Peter Barry, now Provost of Birmingham Cathedral, who shed further light on the demands made on the team by modern life.

My work was greatly influenced by Professor Walter Hollenweger of the Theology Department of the University of Birmingham who helped me realize that the concept of myth was a more useful category when investigating the motivations and ideas of ancient orders than ideology and class consciousness, and I am grateful for the many sessions he spent with me discussing the problems arising from my thesis. I am also grateful to Richard Hoggart, one of the neo-Victorians discussed in this thesis, who granted me, in addition to an interview, access to his manuscript for *A Sort of Clowning*, the second volume of his autobiography which will be published by Chatto in June 1990.

Then I wish also to thank the participants of the oral

history project, entitled "War Time Leicester" (January to March 1987) for their willingness to speak about the past in relation to society today, and Dr. Salter who directed this project. I was also privileged to get to know two Leicester parishes, that of St. Mary Magdalen in Knighton, and before that, St. Philips, where I learned to appreciate the parochial structure of the Church of England and its vicissitudes in modern life. My involvement with Charles Street Baptist Church has allowed me to contrast this with the "chapel" experience. All three communities have welcomed me into their midst with great openness, initiating me at once into local life.

I would also like to mention the assistance provided by Prof. F.W.Dillistone who, in his role as "friend", helped me to reconstruct the theological world over the past fifty years, providing insights and the "facts", that is to say, more reading; and also Prof. George I. Hopton, who helped by just being a neo-Victorian himself, by discussing and debating my conclusions, and, in his own words, by "putting the commas in". Needless to say, this list of acknowledgements cannot include everybody. A work like this is really a joint effort and I am indebted to everyone who has directly, or indirectly, contributed to it.

"Yet, it was observed that the modern world proceeded as before".

Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*.

## Introduction.

"The Intellectual Elite against the World:  
The Thinning Ranks of the Old Order and the Open Society".

## I.

Although this is an introduction, introducing as it were the general argument, focus of analysis, sources and structure of presentation of my thesis, it should be borne in mind that it was written at the end of my research. As such it represents conclusions which were formed as a result of an enquiry into certain phenomena. At this point, however, it presents them in the form of certain hypotheses which will be supported by the evidence found in subsequent chapters.

The General Argument.

A little over 55 years ago, Carl Becker stirred up the intellectual world by claiming that the Enlightenment philosophers,<sup>1</sup> far from spearheading the new liberal forces of the new order, were more at home in the world of St. Thomas Aquinas than in that of the modern mind.<sup>2</sup> In all the Enlightenment's striving for change, there was something that reminded Carl Becker of the eternity and the perfection of the medieval philosophers' Heavenly City. The philosophes' absolute faith in natural law seemed to rest on the same unquestioned premises which inspired St. Thomas' idea of God as the prime mover whose absence cannot be imagined:

Before the historian can do anything with Newton and Voltaire, he has to make it clear that they come, historically speaking, after Dante and Thomas Aquinas and before Einstein and H.G.Wells". [*Italics Mine*]<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the Enlightenment's advocacy of individual freedom banked on a collectively shared certainty that each and every member of society was equipped with a natural reason which could discern

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<sup>1</sup>Becker uses the terms philosophes and philosophers without the distinction usually accorded to the former as publicists.

<sup>2</sup>Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1932)

<sup>3</sup>C.Becker, 28-9.

universally true and valid moral principles.<sup>4</sup>

In this Heavenly City there were signs of change, of course. A major change from the past was the discovery of history. But here too, Becker found the novelty neutralized by anterior dispositions: history served to substantiate pre-known truth, helping Hume to illustrate, in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, "the constant and universal principles of human nature".<sup>5</sup> Another sign of the new was that the philosophers addressed themselves to a new audience: the "people", and that they spoke of a new dimension: the future. But Becker suspected these changes of being but new manifestations of older, religious impulses.

The oblivion to "unexamined prepossessions" suggested to Becker that the Enlightenment thinker had a "secret entrance way to knowledge" barred to the modern mind.<sup>6</sup> Modern tools of investigation could never, ultimately, free the entrance gate. Becker resorted, therefore, to religious analogies:

The reserve of a Fontenelle or the expansiveness of a Diderot were but outward characteristics - the outward evidence of an inward grace; an inward grace, they would have you know, far more efficacious than that of the religious.

Still, the origins of this inward grace seemed external. It appeared to Becker that in the eighteenth century, contrary to his own experience, the mind and world of the philosophes and that of society still formed an indivisible unity. There was a consensus so powerful that the philosophers could not escape the straightjacket of the climate of opinion.<sup>8</sup> The intellectual elite operated within a collective blueprint:

Most eighteenth-century minds were too accustomed to a stable society with fixed ranks, too habituated to an orderly code of manners and a highly conventionalised art, to be at all happy in a disordered universe...It seemed safer, therefore, even for the enlightened ones, to retain God, or some plausible substitute, as a kind of dialectical guarantee that all was

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<sup>4</sup>C.Becker, 59.

<sup>5</sup>C.Becker, 71.

<sup>6</sup>C.Becker, 45,47.

<sup>7</sup>C. Becker, 41. The entire book argues a metamorphosis of the Christian impulse, but especially the last chapter which sees the ideas of progress as a metamorphosis of the heavenly kingdom.

<sup>8</sup>C.Becker, 25.



well in the most comfortable of common-sense worlds.<sup>9</sup>

He was, moreover, deeply impressed with the "naturalness" with which this service to society was assumed and accepted.<sup>10</sup> Becker had indeed come across the philosophical tradition par excellence: the sacred trust of civilization. He was, however, wrong to think it was only as old as the scholastic philosophy. It was in fact much older. My investigation into shared characteristics between the modern and the Victorian intellectual tradition leads me to propose that it was as old as ordered society itself, that is to say, as old as antiquity, and that it continued to exist even as Carl Becker wrote the *Heavenly City*.

Indeed, re-examining the self-awareness and practices of intellectual elites in England during the past century, it is clear that a certain number continued to carry out the clerkly tradition, remaining obedient to the social contract of the eighteenth century, or, finding even more ancient beginnings, to the highest virtue of all, the virtues of citizenship as expounded by Plato and Aristotle. Both Julian Benda and, a bit later, Basil Willey paid full tribute to the clerkly tradition's ancient identity. Benda argued in *La Trahison des Clercs* (1928),<sup>11</sup> that in all ages it was important "that there should be men - even if they are scorned - who urge their fellow beings to other religions than the religion of the material".<sup>12</sup> Movements then (in 1928) in the vanguard, like "politics first", through which the "influential" men of letters were giving themselves to the passions of the masses, constituted a betrayal of the "sacred trust" hitherto passed on from one generation of moralists to the

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<sup>9</sup> C. Becker, 49.

<sup>10</sup> In a Symposium celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Becker's book, many of these ideas were challenged. Many felt he had underestimated what were real breaks from the past. But in the light of recent scholarship on the French Revolution, which reassesses the strength of the ancien regime, his conclusions seem more valid than ever. Raymond O. Rockwood, Ed. *Carl Becker's Heavenly City Revisited, Studies resulting from a Symposium held at Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y. 13 Oct. 1956* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1958).

<sup>11</sup> Julien Benda, *La Trahison de Clerks* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1927. In English: *The Great Betrayal*, transl. Richard Aldington. (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1928).

<sup>12</sup> Benda, *Betrayal*, Foreword. ix.

next. The new "clerks" transferred their services from metaphysics to physics, from the spiritual to the practical, they converted their passions to reality and divinised realism.<sup>13</sup>

Benda's clerkly elite, however, was ordained in the mysteries of the eternal world beyond finite considerations, endowed with a sense of authority to lead rather than follow the mass of humanity. "The 'clerks' did prevent the laymen from setting up their actions as a religion, they did prevent them from thinking themselves great men as they carried out these activities". Even if they were scorned, it was thanks to this elite's gaze on perfection that "civilization slipped into the world".<sup>14</sup>

Lamenting the fate of the clerkly tradition on the English side in 1965, Basil Willey pointed out its antiquity in *The English Moralists* (1965):

It is probably true - and the signs are much more apparent and alarming than when Benda was writing - that we have been witnessing the break-up of the clerkly tradition which we have inherited through Christianity, from the Greeks and the Hebrews.<sup>15</sup>

He sensed that this break-up was the result of a process in which the intellectuals had co-operated. Thinking of the 1920s, he said:

Those were the most high and palmy days of the unmaskers of ideologies, when all motives and ideals, formerly masquerading as spiritual, ideal or altruistic, were 'shown up' and disguised as rationalised egotism and power urges.<sup>16</sup>

He himself had lived through the "art for art's sake movement" and had felt rather defensive about having the "life and thought" of moralists on the Cambridge tripos. The situation did not improve in the years following World War Two.

In the anxious decades which have followed that war, M. Benda would have seen signs and portends more disquieting than before, though he might also have discerned, in some quarters, a revival of the clerkly tradition, perhaps, of a revulsion against the surrounding chaos.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Benda, *Betrayal*, 1-29, 60, 97, 154, and *Trahison*, 46, where Benda speaks of "passions réaliste" and "réalisme divinisé".

<sup>14</sup>Benda, *Betrayal*, v. and 31. The term Clerk was defined in Chaucer's time as all those who are not laymen and by Julien Benda as "those who speak to the world in a transcendental manner". (Translator's Note)

<sup>15</sup>Basil Willey, *The English Moralists* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 18.

<sup>16</sup>Willey, *English Moralists*, 18.

Willey's retrospective began with Plato. No one could appreciate the moralists without this "broad" philosophical foundation: Plato provided the essentials to be worked upon.<sup>18</sup> He was indispensable to moral analysis itself, even to thinking itself, and so to Hooker, Bacon, Hobbes, John Smith, Browne, Addison, Hume, Chesterfield, Burke and Coleridge, the moralists of Willey's panel. Each and every one of them had speculated about the structure which made for "society". Willey ended his history with the early nineteenth century. But this did not mean there were no more moralists. Willey himself, joined the same ever-broadening stream, discussing for example the humanism of Hooker in the light of Marx and E.G.Chesterton, but always in the light of the eternal things which made for culture.<sup>19</sup> However, an important change had taken place. Even if as a true "clerk" Willey embraced the good of society, his passions in that matter could not be thought of great influence in a society which had, more or less, ceased talking of the sacred, defined in 1989 by Bhikhu Parekh, professor of political theory at the University of Hull, as "that which is beyond utilitarian considerations and has an intrinsic or non-instrumental significance, which transcends and links up individuals with something greater than themselves and gives their lives depth and meaning".<sup>20</sup>

No matter how committed Willey might have been, it is noteworthy that his position and voice in society could not be compared to that of a Burke. Willey's tone and enlistment of historical support for a moralist tradition in England reveal certain weaknesses, one echoed in a book that had appeared only a year earlier: *Crisis in the Humanities*. J.H.Pumb introduced the volume of essays with the following words:

History, Classics, Literature, and Divinity - were, with Mathematics, the core of the educational system and were believed to have peculiar virtues in producing politicians, civil servants, Imperial administrators and legislators. In them the arcane wisdom of the Establishment was preserved and handed down from generation to generation. Alas, the rising

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<sup>17</sup>Willey, 10, 19.

<sup>18</sup>I am borrowing the term "broad philosophy" from Newman, who saw it behind the ancient concept of economy. John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, David J. DeLaura, Ed. (New York: Norton & Co. Inc., 1968) 34.

<sup>19</sup>Willey, 120-1

<sup>20</sup>Bhiku Parekh, "Between Holy Text and Moral Void" *New Statesman & Society*, 24 Mar. 1989.

tide of scientific and industrial societies, combining with the battering of two Worlds Wars, has shattered the confidence of humanists in their capacity to lead and to instruct.<sup>21</sup>

Willey and Plumb, it might be argued, and people as sympathetic as they were to "culture" engagement were always a minority. But Willey's weakness vis à vis society is not a question of numbers but a question of power. The question really is, has a society, organized as T.S. Eliot suggests according to the individualistic principle, which therefore acknowledges no hierarchy of authority, any function for an intellectual elite in the traditional sense of an elite? Between Burke and Willey lay a transformation of society which has steadily undermined the external conditions for the traditional function of a clerisy. Why then is Willey still feeling the call of the sacred trust of civilization?

The answer appears to be that although Willey no longer possesses the same authority, power and influence of the clerkly order, he still shares its consciousness. A look at the lives and ideas of Willey's fellow moralists and their Victorian predecessors has convinced me that many of the engaged intellectuals were naturalized into the experience and worldview of an order rather than a class. It is my hypothesis that in the process of the past two hundred years this order found itself, as far as its authority, power and influence were concerned, increasingly in the position of a class in the new Cobbettian sense (not acknowledged by either Ruskin or Eliot as a proper definition of class), competing with other classes for the supporting authority of the public. The key to understanding the Victorian intellectual tradition and its successors, the neo-Victorians, seems to be in this contradiction.

## II.

### The New Intellectual.

Modern scholarship has produced a variety of theories

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<sup>21</sup>J.H.Plumb, Ed., Introduction, *Crisis in the Humanities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 7.

about the fate of the intellectual elite since the Enlightenment, singling out the nineteenth century as the critical moment of its transformation in which the very idea of "intellectual investigation began to mean the exclusion of moral concern".<sup>22</sup>

What these theories have in common, it will be seen, is that they convey the impression that the Enlightenment type of philosopher, or man of letters, has been replaced by a new type whose role in society is different. T.W.Heyck suggests that the "intellectual" as a specialized academic was a phenomenon proper to the second half of the nineteenth century, and introduces the intellectual elite as a self-conscious group accidentally thrown together by professional interests, plagued by isolation and social and political irrelevancy.<sup>23</sup> The term "elite" seems therefore fraught with difficulty. Can such a group maintain cultural hegemony, using the concept in its full inclusive sense? This problem becomes particularly poignant in Ann Parry's article, entitled, "The Intellectuals and the Middle Class Periodical Press: Theory, Method and Case Study". The theory is Gramscian, namely that the intelligentsia in the 1870s is no longer a homogenous group, a traditional elite, but a "whole mass" which is organized and defined by its activities, namely, as Gramsci has said, "performing the function of organization in the broad sense whether in the realm of production, culture or public administration".<sup>24</sup>

Looking at 214 contributors and their contributions to *Macmillan's Magazine* during the years 1859 to 1868, Parry finds the "ordained" clergy still a sizeable bloc. However, the presence of other professions and occupations suggests the intellectual elite's reorganisation into a new group of subalterns who represent diverging and competing sections of the new interest groups of the industrial state.<sup>25</sup> Having in this way

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<sup>22</sup>Robert M. Young. *Darwin's Metaphor - Nature's Place in Victorian Culture*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985, 159.

<sup>23</sup>T.W.Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, Croom Helm Studies in Society and History, (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 13-22.

<sup>24</sup>Ed.V.Gerratana, *Quaderni del Carcere* (Turin:1975), Notebook 1, 43, as quoted in Ann Parry, "The Intellectuals and the Middle Class Periodical Press: Theory, Method and Case Study", *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History*, IV, 3 (Autumn 1988), 21.

<sup>25</sup>Parry, 21.

established the "class" identity of the new intelligentsia, Parry investigates this heterogeneous group's function. Her case studies confirm Gramsci's theory: the new intelligentsia seems to be involved in the organisation of a new industrial society, facilitating the smooth transition to new organisational realities while preventing the worst excesses of liberalism. It is found that J.M.F. Ludlow and F.D. Maurice, two of the contributors from different backgrounds, were both engaged in the formulation of "two types of ideology: critical and relational". However, this discovery also invites another conclusion, one not drawn by Parry: that the intellectuals which she studied responded to and adapted to contingencies in the external world which were not of their own making. They seem to play, as Gramsci would have conceded, a passive role, capitalism being a passive revolution.<sup>26</sup> Parry's study also fails to enquire into the matter of the intellectuals' control over the outcome of their endeavours - the impact of their writing on the reading public, for example. An important difference between the traditional clerisy and the new intelligentsia seems to be, although this is not articulated, the implication of the intelligentsia's powerlessness. In an important way the intellectual class's powerlessness seems related to its own heterogeneity.

The findings of Robert Young, who found analogies between the fate of natural theology and the fate of "the common intellectual context", urge a similar conclusion. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the contributors to the *Edinburgh Review* and *Quarterly Review*, showed an indiscriminating and unspecialized concern for all subjects ranging from theology to science, in Young's twentieth-century vocabulary, signs of a "rich interdisciplinary culture".

There was a relatively homogeneous and satisfactory natural theology, best reflected in William Paley's classic *Natural Theology* (1802) and innumerable works reflecting the same point of view.

However, this "common intellectual context" came "to pieces in the 1870s and 1880s":

This fragmentation was reflected in the development of

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<sup>26</sup>Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State*, Transl. David Fernbach (1975, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), ix.

specialist societies and periodicals, increasing professionalization, and the growth of general periodicals of a markedly lower intellectual standard.<sup>27</sup>

By the middle of the last century the symptoms of this fragmentation showed "in the increasing disciplinary and topic boundaries recognizable to our own demarcations". Language, too, was no longer unified. "Where they used the same terms, they lacked common meanings". They were in a vicious circle for "they simply lacked a common context of ideas..." The intellectuals, in Young's view, thus entered the nineteenth century with a unified religio-moral intellectual context fully intact and exited with the basic structure of a secular and pluralistic context already fully discernible.

Secularization and specialization are, of course, but a small part of the wider process of enclosures which together led to the modern professional intellectual and the academic organization of knowledge with interdisciplinary boundaries. In our own time the division of labour leads an intellectual to respond to the wide and deep question which natural theology<sup>28</sup> and Victorian periodicals asked with, "That's not my field".<sup>28</sup>

The pulverisation of the common intellectual context seemed unstoppable. Even a voluntary reorganisation into associations, the associations' very purpose being the re-establishment of a common intellectual context, could not reverse the pattern. Whatever the defenders of the common intellectual context did, they seemed only to hasten the process of its dissolution.<sup>29</sup> Contrary to Gramsci's hypothesis concerning the intelligentsia's ideological function, Parry's and Young's findings do not allow any positive inferences about the intelligentsia's control over the outcome of its endeavours. Neither seems to follow up the implications of this new heterogeneity of the intellectual group. Although these historians look at the agenda and content of the intelligentsia's literary outpourings, they do not investigate "how" it influences society, the actual ways by which the thought

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<sup>27</sup>Young, *Darwin's Metaphor*, 128.

<sup>28</sup>Young, *Darwin's Metaphor*, 152-3, 160.

<sup>29</sup>Young, *Darwin's Metaphor*, 149. Associationism, as for example, individuals coming together in The British Society For the Advancement of Science, The Metaphysical Society, or The Synthetic Society around one interest, even if that interest of "inclusivity", bears the mark of fragmentation.

of the intellectual bears on the morals and virtues of others. What does the fragmentation of their context and dispersal imply about their relationship to society?

For Edward Said, the humanist scholar is the successor of the traditional intellectual class in the context of the twentieth century. Such scholars, Edward Said seems to suggest, lack a relationship with the general world. He observes that the transmission of culture, the traditional activity of the intellectual elite, is increasingly associated with the study of, and instruction in, "the great monuments of literature". Those who serve culture in this way engage in activities, however, which are rather anomalous when weighed against the preoccupations of society as a whole:

For the first time in modern history, the whole imposing edifice of humanistic knowledge resting on the classics of European letters and with it the scholarly discipline inculcated formally into students in the Western university through the forms familiar to us all, represents only a fraction of the real human<sub>30</sub> relationships and interactions now taking place in the world.

The "humanistic scholars" devotion "to the study of the great monuments of literature" is the activity of a minority, carried on in the face of "resistance and heterogeneity of civil society".<sup>31</sup> This humanistic remnant seems surrounded by a sea of society organised with no - or only a negative - relationship to it. The question of how this situation has arisen is answered by Said by pointing to the contradictions within contemporary criticism:

Contemporary criticism is an institution for publicly affirming the values of our, that is, European, dominant elite culture, and for privately setting loose the unrestrained interpretation of a universe defined in advance as the endless misreading of a misinterpretation. The result has been the regulated, not to say calculated, irrelevance of criticism.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Edward Said, *The Word, the Text, and the Critic* (London: Faber & Faber, 1984), 21.

<sup>31</sup> To Gramsci, the new humanists are people who have de-mythologized their religious tradition for the sake of reaching the masses. [Antonio Gramsci, "The Study of Philosophy and of Historical Marxism" (written during the prison years: 1926-37), transl. Dr. Louis Monks. *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1957)]

<sup>32</sup> Said, 20-1, 25-6.



This removes the lustre given to the intellectual elite by Edward Shils who interpreted "the intra-intellectual alienation" more positively as a "crucial part of the intellectual heritage of any society", through which intellectuals question "the inherited and prevailing values of those intellectuals who are already incorporated in ongoing social institutions". Said's assessment of the contemporary situation looks askance at Edward Shil's assertions that "the larger the society and the more complex the tasks its rulers undertake, the greater the need therefore for a body of religious and secular intellectuals", or that they "guide and form the expressive dispositions within a society" through "their provision of models and standards", and "by the presentation of symbols to be appreciated".<sup>33</sup>

In other words, the debate over the identity and practices of the intellectual elite from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards generally overlooks the question whether the new organisation of society permits the intellectual the same influence as one which is organized into orders. T.S.Eliot, however, who connected the new situation of the modern intellectual to the emergence of the classless nation, considered it impossible to speak of a culture-creating elite unless the conditions which made an elite possible were also present. In his view, an elite belonged to an aristocratic society rather than a liberal state organised into competing classes of interest and rooted in the negation of anything transcending a finite, material economy. My research strongly confirms Eliot's insights.

In the *Notes on the Definition of Culture*, Eliot permitted only one meaning of class. As his chapter on class and region pointed out, it had to be the original, ideal, sense of the word, that is to say, "class" as it has been known since antiquity. Taken in this traditional sense, class was a moral not an economic identity, carrying with it commensurate authority and duties which, in the case of the elite, spilled way over the

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<sup>33</sup>Edward Shils, "The Intellectuals and the Powers" in *The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 4-7.

boundaries of its own "class" or order and stretched to envelop the totality of society. It seemed to him futile to discuss class in a "new" sense, a sense devoid of these cultural and moral criteria. A class devoid of moral identity was no class. Although Eliot did not use the word "order" but "class", it is clear that Eliot's definition of "class" really described an "order".

Class was to Eliot a synonym for culture and inseparable from it. The elite's representation of culture was a natural, not a self-conscious, activity. He rejected the idea of an intelligentsia as a culture-creating group. "Culture is the one thing that we cannot deliberately aim at".<sup>34</sup> It was, as Newman would have said, demonic.<sup>35</sup> Mannheim's notion of "new" intellectual elites, made up from individuals and not as a result of natural class membership meant to Eliot an upset of the very idea of culture, which is a collective phenomenon:

It would seem that as we perfect the means for identifying at an early age, educating for their future role, and settling into positions of authority, the individuals who will form the elites, all former class distinctions will become a mere shadow or vestige, and the only social distinction of rank will be between the elites and the rest of the community... No honest man but is vexed by such a spectacle. But the doctrine of elites [as distinct from one elite] implies a good deal more than the rectification of...injustice. It posits an atomic view of society.<sup>36</sup>

It will be seen in greater detail in the next two chapters that the "atomic view" which Eliot spoke of was not just a perception but a real pulverization of the power of the old classes or orders, England's groups, classes and regions, which were to him vital to the natural procreation of culture, that is culture as he knew it and as it was known hitherto, the culture which the past added up to, the only kind of culture worthy of

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<sup>34</sup>T.S.Eliot, *Notes on the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948) 19.

<sup>35</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 34-5. He discussed the validity of the insight of the Alexandrian cosmology, about a "middle race, *δαιμόνια*, neither in heaven, nor in hell; partially fallen, capricious, wayward; noble or crafty, benevolent or malicious, as the case might be. These beings gave a sort of intelligence to races, nations and classes of men. Hence the action of bodies politic and associations; which is often different from that of individuals who compose them".

<sup>36</sup>Eliot, *Notes*, 36-7.

the name. In other words, the new liberal view of culture, the atomic view, was accompanied by a real loss of the power which was once invested in the elite's position in the old image of society. In the modern situation it was not immediately obvious whether Mannheim's new-type intellectual elites had any influence beyond their own professional circles. Mannheim thus said:

Whereas the political and organizing elites aim at integrating a great number of individual wills, it is the function of the intellectual, aesthetic, and moral-religious elites to sublimate those psychic energies which society,<sup>37</sup> in the daily struggle for existence, does not fully exhaust.

The amount of power accorded to humanist activity was commensurate to the amount of energy left over after the priority of economics and administration had been satisfied. Eliot was not happy with this situation:

I have suggested elsewhere that a growing weakness of our culture has been the increasing isolation of elites from each other, so that the political, the philosophical, the artistic, the scientific, are separated to the great loss of each of them, not merely through the arrest of any general circulation of ideas, but through the lack of those contacts and mutual influences at a less conscious level, which are perhaps even more important than ideas.<sup>38</sup>

With power evenly distributed among atomic units regardless of position in society, the elite's conduits of direct power and influence do not seem immediately obvious. Culture appeared in imminent danger of becoming the sum of Mannheim's elites, never once leaving the sun deck where they dwelled:

The levels of culture may also be seen as levels of power, to the extent that a smaller group at a higher level will have equal power with a larger group at a lower level; for it may be argued that complete equality means universal irresponsibility; and in such a society as I envisage, each individual would inherit greater or lesser responsibility toward the commonwealth according to the position in society which he inherited. Each class would have somewhat different responsibility. A democracy in which everybody had an equal responsibility in everything would be oppressive for the conscientious and licentious for the rest.<sup>39</sup>

Coleridge's notion of endowing the intellectual elite with power, so as to safeguard financially against the disintegration of the

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<sup>37</sup>Eliot, Notes, 38. Eliot took this text out of Mannheim's *Man and Society* (82).  
<sup>38</sup>Eliot, Notes, 38.  
<sup>39</sup>Eliot, Notes, 48.

aristocratic system, the guarantor of its position and influence, had already anticipated Eliot's concerns. But it was, ultimately no safeguard. Eliot again:

The content which Coleridge gave to [the clerisy], has been somewhat voided by time. You will remember that Coleridge included the extension of meaning to three classes: the universities and great schools of learning, the parochial pastorate, and the local schoolmasters. Coleridge's conception of the clerical function and of its relation to education was formed in a world that has since been strangely altered...In the field of education it is obvious that the conformity to Christian belief and the possession of Christian knowledge can no longer be taken for granted; nor can the supremacy of the theologian be either expected or imposed in the same way.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, some unexamined prepossessions protected Coleridge from envisioning the possibility that a common intellectual context, valuing the intrinsic necessity of Christian civilization, might some day be gone. Coleridge did not see that the endowment of the clerisy might only ensure the intellectuals' freedom from narrow considerations. It could not guarantee their influence over society.

The breakdown and fragmentation of the intellectual community and its isolation as a class as implied by Young, Parry and Said, suggests a great reduction in the individual intellectual's influence and power. Taking this a step further: the new-type of engaged intellectual, self-consciously critical and concerned with culture, seems the direct product of this loss of position and power. An examination of the nineteenth-century and twentieth-century texts discussed in the body of this work will support this view. There are, it will be seen, many metaphors of powerlessness and exile. However, there is also evidence that the intellectual elite never articulated to itself the ramifications of its new position. Indeed, its actual position seemed to be hidden from its view. Antonio Gramsci's own resilient sense of power expressed itself in the assumption of educational and "ideological" mandates which far outstripped his powers to carry them out in practice.<sup>41</sup> His criticism of the

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<sup>40</sup>T.S.Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society* ; (1939, London: Faber & Faber, 1982), 65.

<sup>41</sup>An interesting discussion of Gramsci's own role as intellectual is found in the editors' introduction to Antonio  
(Footnote continued)

"immanentist philosophies", whose weakness it was to have not "been able to create an ideological unity between the lower and the upper, between the 'simple people' and the intellectuals", implies a continuing faith in a philosophy potent enough to create the right kind, that is to say, inclusive ideology.<sup>42</sup>.

This enquiry suggests that a sense of power and duty appropriate to the intellectual tradition's former position in society continued to be operative long after the close of the eighteenth century and well into the present. Throughout the Victorian era, it will be seen, there were still ranks who carried with them a burden of duty and service to society which far outweighed their ability to perform it. Their sense of devotion and commitment to the objective conditions of human society, it will be seen, continued to reach beyond their personal interests or those of their class. Their repeated experience of failure and frustration found and still finds expression in their unhappiness over the state of culture, the state of their own situation, the state of the pluralistic world as a whole, the narrowness of human relationship, in short all limitations to their influence. They seem to be nay-sayers, prophets with an uncomfortable message for society from their own, still unshaken, world.

This thesis rejects the argument that the intellectual tradition has been fundamentally altered. On the contrary, although it has continued to lose its audience, to which it, in the atomic view of society, must turn for power and authority, it will be shown that the tradition has stayed a tradition. The political and social transformation going on relentlessly for more than a hundred years suggest that the intellectual elite has been reduced to a "class". This however is not true of its self-awareness and function. It has remained within a

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<sup>41</sup>(continued)

Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985), 13. Gramsci's original bias toward the "written word as the core of cultural formation in individuals and in society" was never quite supplanted by his political experience and theory.

<sup>42</sup>Gramsci, "The Study of Philosophy and Historical Marxism", 63-4.

universalist ethos, an ethos embracing the nation along with all its social strata.

The difficulty if not impossibility of effectively carrying out its mandate in ever-worsening circumstances has given its idea-world its peculiar Victorian tone. This is why it is called here the "Victorian intellectual tradition". There can be no doubt, and this will be illustrated in the following chapters, that the elite's self-conscious concern with culture, the intellectual's self-perception as radical critic of his order, has much to do with the experience of powerlessness, a sense of profound alienation experienced in the face of the intractability of the modern world and its problems. In modern days, the Victorian intellectual elite is faced with unprecedented challenges to its sense of duty and yet is deprived of the concrete means to serve effectively. This explanation is quite compatible with Said's notion of filiation and affiliation, the dynamics of "critical" activity that grow proportionately with literary metaphors of impotence, in Said's words, the failure of the regenerative impulse. The "critic" becomes critical at exactly that moment when the natural chain of cultural reproduction has snapped, when it is challenged by the awareness of being singular and opposed to the world outside.

In this thesis I have preferred to substitute the word orthodoxy for Said's filiation, a word which suggests the natural rather than conscious membership in a culture. It also seems more appropriate in the case of the Victorian intellectual tradition, because the orthodox are aware of a heterodoxy at their doorstep. There is nothing simple about an orthodoxy. It belongs to the mind of another order, so peculiar to itself that it cannot be unlocked through the techniques and methods of structural scholarship. In other words, the experience of the old order is particularistic and personalistic, subject to the infinite variations which this implies of relationships which are face to face and unpredictable. Such a natural, first-born, orthodoxy is not the same as fundamentalism, which is based on a conscious emphasis on literalness of belief.<sup>43</sup> It is, as has been said, held together by commonality of experience that is mythical, a word which suggest unconscious membership.

It is a commonplace among historians that the day-by-day experience is as important in grafting an individual into a culture as the ideas imparted consciously. But although frequently alluded to, it is rarely exposed to conscious view. This thesis wishes to submit the relationship between experience of life and certain ideas to direct scrutiny. To be more specific: the purpose of this work is to demonstrate that there is a connection between traditional elements of thought and traditional elements in life-style, that a self-awareness featuring so much consistency with the past is rooted in a consistency in the experience of life. This consistency is vital in reproducing, and validating, the ongoing predisposition to the virtues of citizenship, to the recognition of and interest in the objective conditions of society. It is, to its participants, the invisible and inarticulable foundation of the myth of the sacred trust of civilization.

It could be said that this work relates a pre-modern ideology with a pre-modern substructure of material existence. This, however, implies the application of modern theory to something which is ancient, which, being the direct contradiction of self-conscious structure, cannot be detected by it. Marx and his sociology, from which the foregoing terminology derived belongs already to another world, one in which the sacred, the hegemony of universally shared symbols, is given a subordinate position to forces considered without symbolic significance.

### III.

#### Method, Sources and General Outline.

This thesis, therefore, does not propose to use a sociology of elites. It would be impossible to enter the world of an order with the tools of modern science - to which sociology does aspire. To enter the mythical realm of an order and its orthodoxy, requires a different key, one which is sympathetic to

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<sup>43</sup> John A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, (London, SCM, 1963) 27. He used the distinction from the "born again" emphasis of fundamentalists. See ch. 14.

its own, credal and sacred, gestalt. Applying a structure of specific questions, grouping intellectuals into class, educational and social background, age, income, professional specialization has not only been done but produced predictable results.<sup>44</sup> Studies of this nature tend to reduce the richness of the actual experience of belonging to a certain class or order to a set of economic or academic circumstances. This is not to say that the thesis is without conscious structure. But this structure serves the specific function of investigating, holistically, the mythic experience of being inside an order, an order that cannot be captured by these scientific filters.

At the heart of this thesis is a distinction between myth and ideology. In speaking about a myth rather than an ideology, this thesis wishes to isolate the peculiar experience of being a member of a social order at a certain period in history when this order's relationship to society is being transformed and how this finds expression in the tradition's moral and intellectual predisposition. The concept of myth includes that which Rudolf Bultmann, a German theologian, has called *vorverständnis*, a pre-understanding, which exists anterior to the attraction which the sacred trust exercises on its defenders.<sup>45</sup> Bultmann's idea of *vorverständnis*, seems another version of Michael Polanyi's idea of a "tacit understanding".<sup>46</sup> Such an understanding is implied when the modern theologian refers to his or her sense of a "Thou", in the gaze transfixed on non-material values and rejection of the fragmenting trends of the modern order, or when when Ruskin felt bettered by the wisdom of the Greeks, when Newman found the broad philosophy beyond the thought of the Alexandrian theologians of the first and second centuries, Origen, Dionysius the Great, and Clement, "like music to my inward ear",<sup>47</sup> or when Richard Hoggart, writer of *The Uses*

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<sup>44</sup>A typical work is T.W. Heyck's *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982)

<sup>45</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Myth*, (1960, London: SCM Press, 1966), 50.

<sup>46</sup>The importance of "tacit understanding" to the generation of critics influenced by F.R. Leavis is discussed by Christopher Norris, in his *Editor's Foreword to Michael Bell, F.R. Leavis* (London: Routledge, 1988), viii.

<sup>47</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 34.



of Literacy (1957), whose life and work will be considered in great length in this thesis, felt that there was something metaphysical about the bond one felt to society as a whole.<sup>48</sup> Bultmann identifies the cultural or collective origins of this unity between language and experience in a life-relationship. This thesis, rather, accepting such a life-relationship as universally the same for all people, wishes to show that it is connected to the experience of a certain order, and, since this order exists in time, to certain generations in particular.

Given the collective nature of the *vorverständnis*, it does not seem at all inappropriate to speak of the myth of the sacred trust of civilization. After all, the clerkly tradition has its roots in societies which defined themselves in relation to the sacred. Moreover, the word "myth" seems preferable to the ambiguities of ideology. Although ideology also suggests something held in common, theorists generally link ideology to the State and so seem unable to give it a particular substance relative to a region and period of time. For example, when Said refers to the "ideology" of European culture or Western civilization he tends to speak of "the world" of the critic, a concept stretched so wide it reveals almost nothing about particular beliefs and the historical experience this implies but seems a sort of shadow shading and shadowing all thinking. Speaking from within my European background I feel compelled to ask: which culture, which region, which class, which generation?

The way "myth" is employed here is not in its casual meaning of "collective unreality" or national "neurosis", but something much closer to its archetypal sense: the "mythos" which in antiquity expressed the collective experience of society.<sup>49</sup> The difference here is that the myth of the sacred trust of civilization only holds sway over a minority group, an intellectual elite, not society as a whole. The concept myth

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<sup>48</sup>Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainment*, (1957, London: Penguin, 1959) 79.

<sup>49</sup>According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word myth appeared for the first time in English in 1838, when nineteenth century critics first separated the myths from abstract moral principles and facts of history.

allows me to describe a particular insideness, true only for some. It also captures the basically intuitive and unconscious nature of being a member of a certain class of people and its mission; it captures the instantaneous, in fact, simultaneous nature of moral thought and action: evaporating under rational reflection. As Walter Hollenweger says: a myth is not the same as a principle, it does not decide between true or false".<sup>50</sup> The myth, unlike ideology, is not passed on through conscious learning, nor can it be grasped individually. It precedes individual learning. As will be seen, it arises from collective, shared, experience and only lives fully as long as it is verifiable and echoed in and by others. It depends on conditions outside those considerations. The myth is colourless yet always there; it is a sort of natural orthodoxy, natural in the sense that it is not confessed; nor is it exclusive, confining its adherents to hear only the voice of their own world.

Most importantly, myths like that of the sacred trust (or of the oneness of humanity) must be in some life-relationship to real, existential experiences of unity and interdependence. This life-relationship is the historical dimension of the myth, the element which sustains the myth in time. In short, the concept of myth, unlike that of ideology, offers an historical-experiential model of the relationship between experience and attitude, underpinning a certain image of society and social relationships. The survival of an ancient myth into the present, it is argued, strongly points to the survival also of certain conditions of life which permit them to be transmitted naturally - the only basis by which they can be transmitted. In other words, if it is argued that the myth of the sacred trust depends on the experience of the old order, it must be assumed that the old order, or life as lived during the old order, is still a possibility, even today.

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<sup>50</sup>cf Walter Hollenweger, *Umgang mit Mythen*, Interkulturelle Theologie, 2 vol. 2, (Munich: Chr.Kaiser, 1982) 63. Hollenweger, who is Professor of Mission at the University of Birmingham, seems to think that certain myths, like that of oneness, or of being in the service of humanity, are eternal. This poses problems when considering the thin diffusion of these myths.

Indeed, the full identity of the Victorian intellectual tradition will continue to be misunderstood if its treated as a new profession or an economic class. Its self-awareness and outlook contains much more the moral and cultural, if not to say, idealist, characteristics germane to an "order". Its survival as an order, it will be argued, was not so much a matter of conscious inculcation of its creeds but, it will be seen, through maintaining its own charismatic and ceremonial practices, without any self-conscious understanding of their uses. Although T.S.Eliot saw class tied to region and to ancestral continuity,<sup>51</sup> he did not seem to grasp fully the "openness" of this order. The English elite, it will be seen, had infinite ways, but always the ways of the ancient order, of incorporating new members. In fact, it could be argued that the vitality of the ancien regime owed much to the fact that it had always been a universal culture using, however, local rather than universal means of inviting a co-identification with universal interests that far outstripped regional and group boundaries.

This discussion of the Victorian intellectual elite, part order, part class, is a more modest undertaking than meets the eye. It is not meant to be a revision of contemporary scholarship claiming that the reforms and changes which implicate the Victorian intellegentsia in ideological gradualism are without significance. All that is attempted is a refinement on what is already known, giving equal time to the traditional side of the narrative in the hope that it will lead to a better understanding of certain features and practices of the Victorian intellectual elite and why it is that intellectuals separated by more than one hundred years should sound so much the same.

The continued prominence of eighteenth-century modes of thinking is not an original discovery. It belongs properly to Josef Altholz, who studied the orthodox reactions to *Essays and Reviews*, a periodical so controversial that it saw only one edition, and so formidable in its impact on Victorian society

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<sup>51</sup>Eliot in fact referred to top families which belong to a class or group with local roots reaching into the past. Notes, 43-4.

that some historians have given it a central place in the Victorian crisis of faith. This thesis, however, argues that certain criteria of the eighteenth-century mind and outlook were not confined to the acknowledged orthodox. On the contrary, the very object of their indignation, the writers of *Essays and Reviews*, can be demonstrated to have remained loyal to the basic idioms and prepossessions of common sense philosophy and the social contract.

The reason for making the text and context of *Essays and Reviews* central to this study is that it helps to discover how a traditional intellectual elite, aristocratic in sentiments, born and naturalized into the sacri-political realities of the ancien regime, became critical, that is to say, self-conscious of its role and influence on cultural trends. The contributors to *Essays and Reviews* wished to adapt (rather than dismiss) the old. To do so, however, meant that they had to become radical: they had to propose changes to the meaning of words hitherto considered unchanging and unchangeable (hence Dissent). But it must be kept in mind that their radicalism only pushed against the outer limits of the traditional - sacred and religious - view of society. It never left it. This dual identity, the identity of the radical who is basically orthodox, is central to understanding the Victorian intellectual tradition.

The point is to show that the very voices that seemed so critical, that belonged to the so-called radical liberal set, were still part of an intellectual tradition in the full sense of the word. The reformers of Oxford, those who cooperated and invited outside (parliamentary) interference, as most of the contributors to *Essays and Reviews* did, also were deeply rooted in the past, so much so that they were totally oblivious of their continuing loyalties. There can be no doubt that each and every one of the contributors to *Essays and Reviews* considered himself a modern man, steeped in the ways of modern life. It was the very fact that their membership in the ancient order was completely unconscious, that made them fearless of radical changes, oblivious to the ramifications for their own world.

Moving on to the modern side of the thesis, I have

focused on the life and work of two neo-Victorians: Bishop John A.T. Robinson, and Richard Hoggart. The former created in the 'sixties as much of a tempest with his book *Honest to God*, as *Essays and Reviews* had done. His life and work reveals the same experience and predispositions that governed those of his Victorian forebears. He, therefore, seemed a natural choice through which to illustrate the consistency between the condition facing the Victorian and neo-Victorian critic. His radicalism, just like that of his Victorian counterparts, sprang from the deepest orthodoxy. He shared their commitment to an objective moral truth, a metaphysical view of the world and society.

Important continuities with the Victorian intellectual tradition were also found in the thought of Richard Hoggart. His words on class and culture seem direct reincarnations of those spoken by Ruskin. Indeed, the fact that Richard Hoggart is of working class origin, that he was as it were not born into the order but grafted into its myths through a series of progressive moves away from his original world, makes him especially interesting. His life and thought, brought into correspondence, confirm the argument that it is not simply exposure to the same myths but to the same experience of life, to the oral elements of an "order", which are the most significant elements in the entry into or exile from the world of the myth of the sacred trust. This seems to explain how individuals of such divergent background as Bishop Robinson and Richard Hoggart, but also individuals separated by more than a hundred years of change and modernization, could sound so much alike.

Generally speaking, the method employed in this thesis has been an historical analysis of the texts themselves: Mark Pattison's and other contributions to *Essays and Reviews*; Jowett's critical introduction of one of the *Dialogues* of Plato; the memoirs and letters of these men; the autobiography and biography of Richard Hoggart and Bishop Robinson respectively; together with literary works that are expressive of these two neo-Victorians' theological and cultural criticism; the sermons, addresses and reflections of the team of the clergy at the new Cathedral of Coventry, brought into correspondence with the experience of the ecclesiastical world. The purpose was to

illustrate the persistence of the myth of the sacred trust of civilization, about which more will be said below, and to bring this myth into relationship with the liturgical elements of their lives, those day-to-day experiences they were hardly conscious of.

However, the continued historical emphasis on the progressive, changeful elements in modern life has made it necessary to introduce and discuss recent developments in modern history which invite a rethinking of this emphasis. New scholarship, to be precise, the revisionary work of Jonathan Clark, has offered a new time schedule, one which not only explains why the great transformation only begins to happen in the nineteenth century but why there is this paradoxical consistency which my research uncovered in the arguments and perceptions of the Victorian intellectual tradition. Not enough surprise has been shown by Young and Parry that the dismantling of the common intellectual context, that is, of the mind of the old regime, has not taken place long before the second half of the nineteenth century. This seems to prove J.C.D.Clark's revisionist contentions that the ancien regime, far from petering out in bumbling incompetence, enjoyed surprising vitality and viability well into the nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> In other words, the clock of history has been slowed and the death knell of the old regime postponed. The historiographic basis for this postponement has been in preparation for several years, particularly by the scholars of the French Revolution, of which more will be said in the first chapter. Their discoveries have revealed the complex character of an order maligned simplistically as autocratic and absolute. As a result, the old regime has gained new respect.

Similary, the scholarship by family historians, particularly by Peter Laslett and Edward Shorter, as well as the work in cultural psychology by Richard Sennett, it will be seen, have decisively pinpointed the nineteenth century, particularly the second half, as the beginning of cultural transformation

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<sup>52</sup>J.C.D.Clark, *English Society:1688-1828*, Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics (1985, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 7. I am following J.C.D.Clark's example and use the term ancien regime without italization and accent.

toward the confinement of "personal" to the narrower spheres of family and self.<sup>53</sup> Of course, the Victorians have said so all along. It is no accident that Walter Houghton noticed but disbelieved the Victorians' assertion that they were just emerging from the middle ages.<sup>54</sup> This thesis will show that the Victorian intellectual tradition approached society with an aristocratic conception of its essential nature. Moreover, even after the reforms, much of the actual experience of life as manifest in day-to-day family life, circle of friends and colleagues, relationships to public spheres, enabled the intellectual elite to have a "life-relationship" with the imagined culture of the old society even if it now was increasingly handicapped communicating them to those outside their still ancient world.

A few words about the general outline of the thesis: The first section tries to establish the new context in which the old order and its representatives found themselves after the 1828-32 Reform Acts. Chapters one, two and seven have the purpose of illustrating the processes which have reduced the Victorian intellectual tradition's audiences and which have effectively cut the cords which connected it to society. The political changes are presented in terms of their impact on the sacri-political culture of the ancien regime. They attempt to spell out what some of the nineteenth-century reforms ramified for the oral tradition, which, as will be elaborated later on in the body of this work, is also a public tradition. The purpose of the first chapter is not so much to refute the Whig interpretation of history as to understand the peculiar nature of the political culture of the ancien regime which helps to recognize its elements as they carry on beyond the reforms. In other words, it looks at the transformation of public life and the traditional organisation of society which allowed for a common intellectual context.

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<sup>53</sup> Peter Laslett, *The World we have Lost*, (London: Methuen, 1965), Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, (1973, Collins, 1976), Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (1977, London: Faber & Faber, 1986),

<sup>54</sup> See Ch.1.

Chapter seven, at the beginning of the third section of this thesis, sets the context of the modern era as part of a process which is over a hundred years old, showing the ongoing loss of elements of culture as it was known hitherto, culture being considered in its historically connected identity. This interpretation of culture alone - to Eliot's mind the only one possible - has, since the Victorian age, increasingly received rival significations. However, chapter nine concerns itself with the progressive loss of the oral, local and public elements of English life, beginning with the Victoria Jubilees and ending with the advent of David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*.<sup>55</sup>

The second section, beginning with Chapter Three, enters the world of the old order through the life of the Oxford don, Mark Pattison - supplemented with the experiences and ideas of contemporaries like John H. Newman and Benjamin Jowett. Mark Pattison considered himself a "critic" in Said's sense, and is thus exemplary of the new self-consciousness. His life and experience at Oxford allow interesting conclusions as to the formation of the new "critical mind". Chapters Four and Five set out to illustrate the continued fidelity to, yet new defensiveness about, the tradition of a broad philosophy, the objective importance of metaphysics, as well as to an aristocratic blueprint for the social dynamics of society. Chapter Five, in particular, renegotiates the current scholarship on *Essays And Reviews*, to show it as a work of an order finding itself in new circumstances: what the writers called criticism often meant the translation of values which the contributors held in an orthodox fashion into the self-consciously critical language of the day. The third section of this thesis has a bridging function. Chapter six describes the fate of the sacred trust during the interwar period, introducing Virginia Woolf as the representative of the poet-seer, and John Baillie as the theologian-metaphysician, both remembering and searching for a centre, both carrying on the tradition of the social contract. Chapter seven has the function of setting the context which faces the Victorian intellectual tradition in the 1960s and beyond, a context which, it will be seen, greatly imperilled an already

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<sup>55</sup>See Ch.7.



fragile order.

The fourth section invites to an examination of the lives of some neo-Victorians and so of the orders which allow them to experience a life-relationship with the myth of the sacred trust. Chapters eight, nine and ten follow the life and thought of Richard Hoggart, the literary and culture critic who became known through *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), with the express purpose of re-constructing the oral environment of pre-World-War-Two local habitations, the world of the feminine hearth and extended community. His life is, therefore, the source which, on examination, discloses the oral world of the academic order (supplemented by the experiences of another working-class recruit to the old order: A.L.Rowse) and of the army. Chapters eleven and twelve seek to reconstruct the ancient world of Bishop Robinson, who in the early sixties made an active bid to join the secular world to his centre by writing *Honest To God*. His life is again a source which reveals the mythic experience of life inside the ecclesiastical order.

The fifth and final section, composed of chapters thirteen and fourteen, is a longitudinal study of the "life" of an ancient order in modern times. Coventry Cathedral is local, immediate, ritualized, and is orthodox in being afflicted with a great concern for society. This section summarizes the themes which have been touched on all along: the experiential underpinnings of genuine corporate-communal life, predominated by personal relationships and a keen sense of local rootedness. Coventry, it is argued, is the ancien regime in modern society in microcosm. It is a cathedral with huge social ambitions and, given the atomization of modern society, almost no power to put them into practice.

Section One.

*The Ancien Regime as Partner to  
Victorian Studies.*

## Chapter 1.

"The Ancien Regime in the Nineteenth Century:  
The New Timetable".

## I.

Re-Setting the Clock.

Searching for the Victorian frame of mind in 1957, Walter Houghton discovered a rather strange phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> The Victorians seemed optimists, progressivists, individualists, libertarians, Aristotelians on the one hand, and pessimists, medievalists, Platonists on the other. The Victorian age continues to be known for its contradictions: W.L.Burn spoke in 1961 of the *Age of Equipoise*; Richard Jenkyns felt in 1981 that it was a peculiarly "divided age".<sup>2</sup>

However, Houghton was indeed struck by one shared attribute. He claimed to be intrigued and puzzled by the fact that Victorians thought of themselves as medievals who were "leaving behind not the first stage of the Industrial Revolution but feudal society with its ordered universe of God, Church, Monarchy and People".

To Mill and the Victorians, the past which they had outgrown was not the Romantic period and not even the eighteenth century. It was the Middle Ages. They recognized, of course, that there were differences between themselves and their immediate predecessors, but from their perspective it was the medieval tradition from which they had irrevocably broken---Christian orthodoxy under the rule of the church and civil government under the rule of King and nobility: the social structure of fixed classes, each with its recognized rights and duties, and the economic organization of village agriculture and town guilds.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957)

<sup>2</sup>W.L.Burn, *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the Mid-victorian Generation* (London: Allan & Unwin, 1964) Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1981), 69. David Newsome's alludes to a similar dividedness in *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought* (London: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1974), taking up the sense of division described in Matthew Arnold's idea of Hebraism and Hellenism in *Culture and Anarchy*, 1869.

<sup>3</sup>Houghton, 1-2,4.

He disbelieved them, because it was, in his view, contrary to the facts known to him:

The process [of change] had begun much earlier, starting with the Renaissance and the Reformation, gaining momentum, quietly but steadily through the next two centuries of philosophic rationalism and expanding business, until it finally broke into the open when the French Revolution of 1789 proclaimed the democratic Rights of Man and the atheistical worship of the Goddess of Reason.<sup>4</sup>

Houghton's passage makes it clear how much re-thinking of the past will be necessary in order fully to appreciate the ancient identity of the Victorian intellectual elite. One immediate problem appears to be the establishment of the relative immediacy of the fall from grace of the old order. Indeed, even if the clock is set back it seems more appropriate to speak of its loss of power than its end altogether. The gradual "profanation" of the old order is a process which is still underway. My research leads me to conclude that it is less a matter of a disappearance of an order than a decline of the number of people living this way of life, and, more poignantly still, a reduction in the number of people it is able to influence.

When Newman referred in 1833 to the "calamity of the times" and contended that "the Establishment" is "divided and threatened, thus ignorant of its true strength", when he admitted that "the success of the Liberal cause...fretted me inwardly", when he refused to look at the tricolour of a French vessel at Algiers because he considered it "unchristian for nations to cast off their governors, and much more, sovereigns who had divine right of inheritance", he was speaking out of a real and concrete experience.<sup>5</sup> Nor was he the only voice which echoed the old order's assumptions. Ruskin also referred to an older map of the social order when he criticized the "general profanity of temper in regarding all the rest of nature, that is to say, a total absence of faith in the presence of any deity therein":

Nearly all our powerful men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery, the worst in reckless defiance; the plurality, in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as they can, what practical work lies ready to

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<sup>4</sup>Houghton, 2.

<sup>5</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 37,39,42.

their hands. Most of our scientific men are in the last class.<sup>6</sup>

This position vis à vis "this age of the world" attests to a form of estrangement, indeed, an indirect admission of having had no hand in the events taking place in it. In order to appreciate the frame of mind behind these perceptions it is necessary to understand two things: the actual existence of an old order well into the nineteenth century, and, the new situation in which it found itself and the position it occupied in this situation. This section therefore begins by drawing attention to J.C.D.Clark's re-dating of the transformation of England as a traditional order, and goes on to provide a better appreciation of the nature of the ancien regime. A brief look at its fundamental, even irreconcilable, difference from the modern order will enable an appreciation of its tenacious hold on the intellectuals' imagination. The second chapter in this section has the purpose of illustrating, using both secondary and primary sources, what the transformation of ancien regime England felt like in actual practice for those whose consciousness still belonged to an older map. The point that I wish to illustrate by co-ordinating the findings of constitutional-social and family historians is that many nineteenth-century reforms really implied a "passive" transformation: the new was not so much the arrival of a new vision than an elimination and removal of the established classes, their function and ideas, from power.<sup>7</sup>

Scholarship on the Victorian age, it will be seen in this chapter, has in recent years steadily supported the claims of the Victorians over those of Houghton. Some family historians see the nineteenth century as the moment of the Great Transformation which exchanged the traditional "household" for the sentimental father-mother-and-child unit and erected a barrier between itself and the outside community.<sup>8</sup> Institutional

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<sup>6</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, in John D. Rosenberg ed, *The Genius of Ruskin: Selections From His Writings*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1963), 74.

<sup>7</sup> I am borrowing the adjective "passive" from Gramsci who referred to capitalism (and socialism) as "passive revolutions". [Buci-Glucksmann, ix.]

<sup>8</sup> Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 5,18. There are of (Footnote continued)

histories speak of the nineteenth century as the time of the transformation of old orders - the Church, the Army, the Public School, the University, from their unspecialized, erratic and charismatic activities into institutions which conformed more or less to a national standard - without, however, following up the implications of their findings on the received calendar of modern history. Olive Anderson, for example, when referring to 1855 and the Crimean war as the moment of crisis when the "historic defence of aristocracy - its supreme value in time of war - received for the first time in England an outright denial", seems insensitive to the implicit admission contained in this argument that the aristocracy had remained valid in principle until 1855.<sup>9</sup> In other words, while there is a general consensus on the nineteenth-century transformation of the social order, there seems only scant appreciation for what it is exactly that is being transformed or on the fact that such a transformation requires the co-presence of the old. Here, the historians of the French Revolution and J.C.D. Clark and his revision of English constitutional history have done invaluable work in the refinement of existing assumptions about the ancien regime and how it functioned.

It is due to their efforts over the last fifteen years or so that the old order has re-entered the historical focus and so gained a new respect. Historians like Denis Richet or Ralph E. Giesey (on French history) and J.C.D. Clark (on English history), to mention but a few, have made the concept of the old regime as an outdated and dead building, crumbling under the assault of the new middle classes and their liberal institutions, quite untenable. There is hardly anyone now who would portray the French Revolution as the "final blow" to the ancien regime. As far as society as a whole was concerned, the real transformation of the old order began, so Richard Sennett and others contend, only after 1848.<sup>10</sup> These arguments shed new light on the

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<sup>8</sup> (continued)

course, as he points out, family historians who feel that the vie intime has always been one and the same.

<sup>9</sup> Olive Anderson, *A Liberal State At War, English Politics & Economics during the Crimean War* (London: Macmillan, 1967) 107.

<sup>10</sup> Sennett, *Fall*, 136. He bases this on the findings of J.H.

(Footnote continued)

Victorian intellectual tradition, indeed, they present a challenge to re-interpret its self-awareness as a "critical tradition" in the context of their imminent emergence from the social realities of ancien regime England.

## II.

### A Revision of History.

J.C.D. Clark, the Cambridge revisionist who is now a fellow of All Souls, Oxford (one of England's last bastions of the clerisy), argues that English society did not become a modern state until 1828-32.<sup>11</sup> Until then, it remained a traditional, that is to say, a religious, aristocratic and monarchical, order. This discovery seems almost inevitable, given "the bitterness and tenacity with which the [Reform] Bills were resisted and the despair and triumph which accompanied the third Bill's final passage". Re-examining the past from this hypothesis leads Clark to assert that until these Reform bills, England was a "society, preoccupied with religion, in which the terms of the politico-theological debate were dictated to the heterodox by the orthodox".<sup>12</sup> All moved within a religious dimension "whether Anglican, Roman Catholic or Dissenter". Why else would "Radical critique" be aimed "against the Church's established status, and against its official commitment to the key articles of its creed" and not parliament?<sup>13</sup>

The Whig interpretation of history, against which Clark must present his case, tended to highlight only the "elements of the new which are emerging" and so "excluded from the agenda, or relegated to minor place: religion and politics, the Church and the social elite of aristocracy and gentry", ignoring "the elites

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<sup>10</sup>(continued)

Clapman, the economic historian's argument that until until 1848 France had no factory system to speak of. (*The Economic Development of France and Germany 1815-1914*, 4th ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968)

<sup>11</sup>J.C.D. Clark, *English Society: 1688-1832* [See also Introduction].

<sup>12</sup>Clark, 423.

<sup>13</sup>Clark, 43, 278. .

who dominated ancien regime England".<sup>14</sup> Clark concedes the reality of the Puritan Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. It is their importance in relation to English Society as a whole that he questions: what were these revolutions to the "world view of the inarticulate millions".<sup>15</sup> Clark provides persuasive evidence that as late as the eighteenth century parliamentary government aroused no general interest. Until 1828, it was the debating arena of a marginal but radical minority, a world apart from the only legitimate power in the eyes of the majority: Church and Monarchy. These are not new insights. In 1938, G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate wrote in *The Common People*:

The composition of the House of Commons in the eighteenth century was of a character so eccentric - to use no more severe term - that it is surprising that it retained as it did the reputation of being in some degree a representation of the people.<sup>16</sup>

They also pointed out, what was common knowledge in the history of the nineteenth-century reforms, that "the distribution of the borough seats among the counties made it still more improbable that Parliament could in any way adequately represent...the people".<sup>17</sup> While Cole, and most historians hitherto, have seen this as evidence of the failings of the old regime, Clark forms a rather different conclusion. Representational parliament is not where the real government of the nation takes place. Participation in the life of the Church-State was exercised, for those who participated, via the Church, not via Parliament.

The ubiquitous agent of the State [in the 18th-Century] was the Church, quartering the land not into a few hundred constituencies but into ten thousand parishes, impinging on the daily concerns of the great majority, supporting its black-coated army of a clerical intelligentsia, bidding for a monopoly of education, piety and political acceptability.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Clark, 1,3,42. Nor is Clark the only one who questions the liberal narrative. He appears to have opened the floodgates to revision. R.Colls for example, notices with wonder how the "cultural" politics of the late nineteenth century viewed even aspects of the middle ages as incubi of modern England with its institutions of freedom and reform. However, Colls' essay is not a re-interpretation of the old order and its mind. Robert Colls and Philip Dodd, Eds. *Englishness: Politics and Culture:1880-1920* (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd. 1986) 36.

<sup>15</sup>Clark, 42.

<sup>16</sup>G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, *The Common People*: 1746-1938 (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1938) 87.

<sup>17</sup>Cole, 90.

<sup>18</sup>Clark, 277.



Until 1828, it was the position of the Church, not parliament, that caused the greatest debate. This is not historical conservatism but a conclusion pressed home by re-examined evidence. Clark's revision invites a better understanding of the religious conception behind "Church-State", which the religious qualifier to government until 1828-32 duly confirms.<sup>19</sup>

In ancien-regime England, the mass of the population was organised, given an identity and a direction within the public arena (in so far as those things happened at all) not by political parties but by churches. Not until the 1830s did parties assume a psephological role that led to progressive bouts of franchise extension. Not until the 1850s did the Liberal party assume from Dissenting religion the role of intellectual and moral emancipation of small men from traditional ties, obligations and allegiances.<sup>20</sup>

Religion as a part-time activity in a specialized sense was similarly the result of the momentous transformations begun in 1828. Modern historians, accepting the specialized sense of religion, are prone to exclude an important part of the political debate simply by assuming, as Robert Young said of the general process of specialization, that something was theological and therefore outside their "field".<sup>21</sup> Clark's respect for the language of the old order led him to evidence which, in the new context, is often misunderstood as meaningless obedience to external (assumed powerless) forms. Re-examining the polemics of the intellectual ascendancy, Clark, like Becker on the Enlightenment, found that even after 1688 politics without God, Church and King, politics without sacred justification beyond itself was inconceivable. Parliament under Providence was still under the headship of God. It may have been less mysterious than the government under the divinely ordained monarch which it replaced, but it bore the same patriarchal implications.<sup>22</sup> In this case, too, Clark's novelty is not in unearthing new evidence but in the conclusions which he draws from it. Geoffrey Best, for example, observes the blindness of the Whig reformers to the

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<sup>19</sup>David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914* The Pelican History of England, 9 vol, 8 (1950, London, Pelican, 1987) 278. In his view, England still had a State Church but was no longer a Church State.

<sup>20</sup>Clark, 375.

<sup>21</sup>See Introduction.

<sup>22</sup>Clark, 175.

ramifications of their reforming activity to their own position in society.<sup>23</sup> This lack of foresight is to Best ironic. But it also seems to prove Clark's contention that neither the Whigs nor Dissent had moved conceptually into the new world which they helped create through their destruction. As Clark comments:

Far from the "old society" steadily declining in effectiveness, petering out in bumbling incompetence, a consideration of the cultural hegemony of the elite, of the political systems of electoral management, and of the ideological defence of the State suggest the reverse.<sup>24</sup>

Best observes that as late as "24 months before the Catholic Emancipation Act" there seemed as much uncertainty about the cause of the reformers as in 1807.<sup>25</sup>

It is one thing, however, to refer to the establishment, to the old regime, and another, to understand fully what is meant by these terms. Clark tries to overcome the limitations of constitutional history by illustrating time and again its symbolic-ceremonial identity, by elaborating that he is dealing with a world that defines itself "theologico-politically", that is to say, in relation to the sacred. In French history the debate over the identity of the ancien regime has unveiled similar limitations in language. Keith Baker, speaking of the "political culture" of the ancien regime considers this an inadequate term, merely an approximation of the delicate interdependencies of the old order. The ancien regime not only rivals but outdoes "modern" political culture in subtlety and complexity but slips through modern categories of analysis such as politics or economics.

Of course, it is understood that the situation in England was in many ways different, beginning with the constitutional subordination of the Church to the State to the toleration but exclusion of Roman Catholics and Non-Conformists. Both Matthew Arnold and T.S.Eliot have commented on the fissiparous tendencies of the religious, which was until 1828-32

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<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Best, "The Whigs and the Church Establishment in the Age of Grey and Holland", *History*, 45 (1960), 115.

<sup>24</sup> Clark, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Best, "The Whigs", 110.

also the political, realm of England. However, Clark seems justified in dismissing claims about the uniqueness of the English constitution, or that the Glorious Revolution anticipated change undergone involuntarily by the French aristocracy. If this was indeed the case, why does Dissent continue to direct its attacks on the religious order, why does it continue to argue over creeds? Best in fact suggests that the Dissenter did not and could not envision the consequence of the reforms: within its understanding of the world, it could only wish "the humiliation rather than the reform of the establishment".<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Best's observations about the lack of polemical wit and political acumen of Tory Protestants during the Whig assaults on the Protestant constitutions can be construed to indicate that on the eve of the nineteenth century the establishment was not used to opposition. The Tories' inability to go beyond repetition of traditional arguments showed they were as yet not self-conscious of age-old assumptions nor able truly to envision their upset.<sup>27</sup>

In the light of these considerations, the differences between the French and the English ancient regime no longer look insurmountable and until the fruits of similar research become available about the political culture of the ancien regime in England, the re-visions on the French ancien regime are most helpful. Indeed, the experts have come up with a new iconography of the ancien regime which will be most helpful once this study attempts to reconstruct the life and experience of the intellectual tradition as an "order" in the traditional sense. On the eve of the Revolution, it is now contended by the new school of thought, the ancien regime was neither arbitrary nor absolute.<sup>28</sup> It consisted of what Keith Baker called a "particularistic" system in which multiplicity and local and individual variation partook in national unity under the imagined

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<sup>26</sup>Best, "The Whigs", 108.

<sup>27</sup>Geoffrey Best, "The Protestant Constitution and its Supporters, 1800-1829", *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society*. Vol. 8, (1958), 107, 123-4.

<sup>28</sup>According to Michel Vovelle these were adjectives coined by the new journalism. "La représentation populaire de la monarchie", in Keith Michael Baker ed., *The Political Culture of the Ancien Regime, The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, 2 vol (Oxford: Pergamon, 1987), I, 80-6.

headship of the King. Underlying this form of rule was its own political logic, a logic based on a universally confirmed monarchical authority as "one and divisible":

In the particularistic society of order and Estates that was the ancien regime then, the king represents the whole, not in the sense that he is authorized by the body of the nation to act on its behalf, but precisely because the nation exists as a body only in the individual person of the monarch,<sup>29</sup> which constitutes the source and principle of its unity.

The old order's particularism is the exact opposite of the Nation State's form of unity. In the liberal State all individuals relate directly and equally to the centre. This, at least, is the picture created by Thomson, who says that the reforms of 1832

laid the foundation for a new kind of State in Britain, as a state in which the electoral rights and civil rights of citizens were extended and given greater legal protection, but in which the ordinary citizen was subjected to a much greater degree of administrative interference, and control from the centre...<sup>30</sup>

In the particularist culture of the ancien regime, the individual was responsible to immediate personal and local, therefore emotional, contacts with persons who were superior or inferior members of the social order, whether in matters of patronage, administration of justice, employment, worship, relief of suffering, all with infinite and only loosely predictable multiplicity of meanings and relationships. In short, the particularistic regime had a direct face, it could not withdraw behind an official or neutral administration of power.

To say, with Denis Richet, that the French monarchy was "one and divisible" is to insist upon the logic of the relationship between absolute monarch and corporate social order. The monarchy was "divisible" because it comprised a multiplicity of orders and Estates, communities and corporate bodies, provinces and pays, each enjoying a particularistic status before the law. It was "one" because the aggregate of rights and privileges of each of these particularistic entities was understood as constituting a realm in which the authority of a monarch preserved harmony and order among the parts that made up the whole. From this traditional conception of the monarchy, several consequences flowed. First, royal power was conceived as essentially judicial, because it existed to give each his due in a particularistic social order. Second, it was

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<sup>29</sup> Keith Michael Baker, "Representation" *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, 470.

<sup>30</sup> Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth-Century*, 74-5.

limited, because in maintaining the rights and privileges within a particularistic social order it was also constrained to respect them. Third, it was absolute (which is to say not accountable before the law) because only on this condition could its adjudications be uncontested and therefore binding for the public good.<sup>31</sup>

The growth of an administrative monarchy did not undermine "privilege and particularism in favor of equality and uniformity" but strengthened "the relative position from which individuals or groups may legitimately make claims upon one another",<sup>32</sup> so that what Benedict Anderson observed was still applicable until 1789 and beyond:

We may today think of the French aristocracy of the ancien regime as a class; but surely it was imagined this way only very late. To the question 'Who is the Comte de X?' the normal answer would have been not 'a member of the aristocracy,' but 'the lord of X,' 'the uncle of the Baronne de Y,' or 'client of the Duc de Z'.<sup>33</sup>

The exercise of authority in the ancien regime was basically a "mystery", since, being absolute in relation to the particularistic corporate order by which it was limited, it occupied its place at the sacred center of the social order precisely on the condition that these limits never be precisely spelled out.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, the ancien regime was a sacred-mysterious order whose economy pointed to realities beyond itself which could not be spelled out without destroying or cutting down its power. As such it was operating on another fuel, a fuel of a much more emotional form, than that of the secular state.<sup>35</sup> The idea of ancient political culture as "one and divisible" complements Laslett's refusal to fit the world of 1650, with its notions of status, titles and honours, into the modern meaning of "class".<sup>36</sup> As Raymond Williams said: the word "class" reflected "the changed social structure, and the changed social feeling" of the

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<sup>31</sup>Baker, *Introd.* xiii

<sup>32</sup>Baker, *xiv.*

<sup>33</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* (London: Verso, 1983) 16.

<sup>34</sup>Baker, *xiii.*

<sup>35</sup>Ralph Gisey, "The King Imagined" *The Political Culture of the Ancien Regime*, 54-8..

<sup>36</sup>Peter Laslett, 22-6. In his chapter "A one-class society" he does not rule out inequality and conflict but the notion of classes in a competitive sense.

nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Clark similarly finds that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the modern concept of "class" as interest group can be only applied to one class, the elite, which however would have difficulty making sense of such a concept in a world view that imagines society as a unitary "confessional" entity.<sup>38</sup>

### III.

#### A Loss of Power.

What happened to the ancien regime and its empowered representatives and orders through whom it participated in everyday local life? According to Clark, the symbolic and imaginary transcendence which constituted the essence of the old regime was not reformed but eliminated:

In the early nineteenth century, three explicit challenges were made to [the] interlocking system of beliefs and institutions: demands for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, for the repeal of legislation against Roman Catholics, and for parliamentary reform (here termed 'Repeal', 'Emancipation' and 'Reform').<sup>39</sup>

This went to the very heart of the old regime in which "the essential polity of the nation [was] the indefeasible union of divine with human law" and "the unity of the individual with the nation [was] to be attested by his unity with the Church".<sup>40</sup> The removal of the religious qualifier from politics did not simply challenge Church authority, power and influence, but the moral logic behind the old State's essence. What destroyed the ancien regime, Clark says in fact, was the destruction of its "confessional" - in modern language, ideological - essence, in other words, the deposal of any "intellectual ascendancy" over the material things of life.<sup>41</sup> It was after all a sacred rather than real unity. This might be dismissed as an "idealist" interpretation of history. However, materialist-structuralist

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<sup>37</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: Coleridge to Orwell* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1987), xv.

<sup>38</sup> Clark, 91, 94-5.

<sup>39</sup> Clark, 350.

<sup>40</sup> Clark, 350-1. The quote was taken from Henry Drummond, *A Letter to the King, against the Repeal of the Test Act. By a Tory of the Old School* (London, 1828), 4, 6-7.

<sup>41</sup> Clark, 89-90.

interpretations, coined in and reflecting post-reform realities, cannot unlock and unveil the ancient order and its mysterious-symbolic nature.

Clark thus contends that the modern world - tolerant, pluralistic, secular - arrives not, as Whig history urges, because of enlightenment, the inexorable sweep of the democratic idea. "Mainstream Whigs imbibed not democracy or republicanism but a measure of anti-clericalism".<sup>42</sup> The modern appears less something positively new than an absence of the old, the removal of the positive, the emotional and moral elements of the ancien regime.<sup>43</sup>

What was evident in England in the half century after the American Revolution was not any massive conversion of the population to toleration (Repeal, Emancipation) or democracy (Reform), but the largely negative phenomenon of the steady erosion of Anglicanism, and the related growth of Protestant Dissent and unbelief.*[Italics Mine]*<sup>44</sup>

This is in complete harmony with John H. Newman assessment of liberalism's anti-dogmatic nature,<sup>45</sup> echoed by T.S.Eliot who wrote in 1939: "We have today a culture which is mainly negative", confirming what Newman sensed in his own time, to be just as an appropriate description for English society before the Second World War:

[Liberalism] is something which tends to release energy rather than accumulate it, to relax, rather than fortify. It is a movement not so much defined by its end, as by its starting point...By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of getting on to which the alternative is a hopeless apathy...<sup>46</sup>

Clark has given Eliot's emotional-moral assessment, made within the thoughtworld of the old order, an historical

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<sup>42</sup>Clark, 302.

<sup>43</sup>Clark, 409.

<sup>44</sup>Clark, 375.

<sup>45</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 50.

<sup>46</sup>T.S.Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982; first published 1939), 47. The idea of the essay was, of course, to outline the basic incompatibility of the ideal of a Christian society and liberalism.

explanation. The changes of the liberal reforms spell not only the castration of the old order but of culture - hegemony - itself, as far as cultural hegemony means some sense of transcendent and symbolic unity.

'Cultural hegemony', before 1828-32, is a phrase aptly describing the aristocracy's entrenched dominance in a unitary society, a confessional State; after 1832 the English elite, and the Anglican Church, fought for survival within a plural society. Their survival for so long was a remarkable achievement; but the rules of the game had been changed, and the elite had been deprived of a winning advantage. [Italics Mine]

Subsequent reforms only made the de-mystification of the ancien regime manifest:<sup>48</sup>

The effect of the measures of 1828-32 was to open the floodgates to a deluge of Whig-radical reform aimed against the characteristic institutions of the ancien regime. Prime targets were the universities, the public schools, the professions, the armed forces, colonial administration, the civil establishment's patronage machine, the corporations, the old poor law, and the criminal law.<sup>49</sup>

The picture provided by David Thomson, not a revisionist historian by any means, is also one of gradual displacement of all particularistic and personalistic forms of power. The symbolic order of the ancien regime has been profaned through constitutionally and legally defined relationships. His narrative makes the conclusion inevitable that the 1832 reform bill established a concrete universality which was completely contrary to the religious and confessional unity which formerly transcended disparities in regional and personal power. Toleration was a negative unity, a dismissal of a commonality of ideals. Replacing "the old ideal of one State-one Church", separating "public life" from "private religion, and citizenship from churchmanship", the Emancipation Act turned sacri-political institutions which had been in effect "for centuries" on their heads. Local government experienced usurpation not in the name of new beliefs but in the name of efficiency and improvement of services.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Clark, 375.

<sup>48</sup>For a similar view see Laslett, 25-6. "We live among the material remains of the world we have lost".

<sup>49</sup>Clark, 412.

<sup>50</sup>Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth-Century*, 62.



Right until 1832, according to Thomson, most government was local government. The day to day administration of the country was still conducted mainly on the periphery - in the localities themselves in the hands of the corporations in the boroughs and the magistrates in the counties, where it had been for centuries.<sup>51</sup>

He suspected that such local idylls sustained the "old ideal of uniformity" beyond the reforms well into the nineteenth and twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> However, the re-consideration of the old regime and its culture does not suggest uniformity but points to fine variations of local form and colour with Church and Monarchy representing a symbolic unity rather than a universality.<sup>53</sup> The universal side of the ancien regime was that of a "higher", in other words, a spiritual and moral unity, not fictitious but dwelling in the realm of the sacred, the religious institutions and sacraments which transcended the local, even the national, realm. This universal state participated in local life in an informal and undefined way, through local saints, wells, rivalling cathedrals, spires.<sup>54</sup>

By contrast, almost all of the reforms beginning with 1828-1832 can be seen as ways of bringing local life to a lower unity and greater universality. The point is, that this constituted a different type of universality, a levelling imposed by the increase of the numbers participating in decision-making alone. The institution of "elected local bodies and strong centralized control"<sup>55</sup> was an innovation which suggested a completely new basis for social relationships. It brought the state into explicit partnership with local decisions, replacing one which was hitherto implicit rather than defined. The ancient economy of the state was based on mysterious relationships beyond

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<sup>51</sup>Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth-Century*, 63.

<sup>52</sup>Such a view is echoed in J.Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) 5-10.

<sup>53</sup>Laslett, 59. According to Laslett the parishes were not settlements but often comprised several distinct hamlets. Also: one village at times consisted of two parishes.

<sup>54</sup>A discussion of the tenacity of these aspects of local life is found in Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England* (1971, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973)

<sup>55</sup>Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth-Century*, 69.

the economic transaction itself and was thus able to invite not only less but more than the fulfilment of duties and obligations.<sup>56</sup> The new three-way relationship between local rate payers, elected representatives and central (national) boards and commissions not only secured a minimum of commitment, but had the danger of fixing it at that minimum. In other words, it portended a diminution of relationships to the public realm.

The model of this triune relationship was copied in other areas of public life, with similar effects: separating them from the services hitherto rendered by the community or mysteriously (through birth or ordination) empowered individual.

Again a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the government of towns: and again a reform based on the twin principles of local representation and tighter central control was proposed. In 1835 the Municipal Reform Act instituted borough councils elected by the ratepayers as the regular form of town authority. Financial functions such as the floating of local loans required approval by the Treasury. These councils were to work through certain paid<sup>57</sup> officials, at least the town clerk and the borough treasurer.

Public order and welfare which had been from time immemorial a personal and communal responsibility, were increasingly assumed by national institutions whose duties were task specific and so again, hemmed in by explicit, therefore, finite obligations: national education, national health, a national police, a universal penal system, the list can go on and on.<sup>58</sup> These developments could only take place by discounting the moral and regional diversity of the ancient State, by overriding the sacred, or supra-communal, identities of certain individuals with special status or class position, relegating these "moral" attributes to secondary significance. The association of individual power, regardless of background, into numerical aggregates for the purpose of gaining authority further reduced the possibility of a transcendent unity. A passage from Thomson's nineteenth-century history gives the picture:

The conservative Central Office was not set up until 1852, and its chief function was to keep lists of approved candidates for elections. It also stimulated the formation of local

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<sup>56</sup> I am using "economy" in the "household-management" sense which it has in the original, Greek, meaning of the word.

<sup>57</sup> Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth-Century*, 72.

<sup>58</sup> Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth-Century*, 67.

associations. In 1867 the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations was formed. Its aim was not so much to shape policy as to help win elections. Meanwhile in 1835 the radicals had set up registration offices, and in 1838 founded the Reform Club to offset the Carlton club.<sup>59</sup>

The universal share in political power thus weakened the unequal powers of the ruling ranks, groups and individuals.

The actual electorate, which had been increased by only some 50 per cent as the immediate consequence of 1832, had by 1866 come to include some 1,056,000 voters.<sup>60</sup>

This meant that any personal and particular interests had to be brought into a ratio with this slightly more than a million which now constituted the voting public. In short, the odds for those empowered to vote for their interests were 1:1,056,000. It is clear that for those who had their sensibilities toward the public realm nurtured in the world before these reforms, this state of affairs could only mean a tremendous loss of influence. Their indignation, it will be seen in the next section, was proportionate to their alienation.

Considering the reforms of 1828-32 from the viewpoint of the ancien regime, it seems that they removed from the public realm much of its transcendent meaning. To describe this process in the language of the old order: these reforms profaned a relationship which was hitherto sacred. They did so by making relationships, whose essence was mysterious, explicit. Setting down rights and duties blotted out the supra-legal and intangible dimensions of the old economy: the moral and emotional elements implied in words like sacrifice, respect, deference, generosity, devotion, to mention only a few qualities of a non-instrumental, unmeasurable nature. Creating a new "mythology" for this de-spiritualized realm, as many of those concerned with the well-being of the nation felt the need to do, meant from here on inventing something that did not grow naturally from the experience of modern relationships. Ironically, this mythology was charged with the function of spiritualizing these relationships.

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<sup>59</sup>Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth-Century*, 124.

<sup>60</sup>D. Thomson, 124.

## Chapter 2.

## "The Profanation of Public Life".

## I.

The Narrowing of the Personal Realm.

The work of social historians, that is to say, historians concerned with the perceptions and lives of the "inarticulate millions", has been invaluable in tracing the impact of this new de-spiritualized public realm on the general experience of life.<sup>1</sup> Richard Sennett, therefore, linked the fall of the ancien regime to the fall of public life. *The Fall of Public Man* is the story of the replacement of public life - the scenes of life lived in open view, the populated streets and other meeting places where one may be spoken to by anyone - by the concept of space as a place of transit.

There grew up the notion that strangers had no right to speak to each other, that each man possessed as a public right an invisible shield, a right to be left alone, of<sub>2</sub>passive participation, of a certain kind of voyeurism.

Sennett's insights find ready support in English literature. In 1845, Alexander William Kinglake described how ten years earlier he and his scant retinue of Arabs had travelled for days in the Eastern desert when they noticed a speck on the horizon. On getting closer, it turned out to be another Englishman and his servant:

As we approached each other, it became with me a question whether we should speak. I thought it likely that the stranger would accost me, and in the event of his doing so, I was quite ready to be as sociable and chatty as I could be according to my Nature, but still I could not think of anything particular that I had to say to him. Of course, among civilized people not to have anything to say is no excuse at all for not speaking; but I was shy and indolent and I felt no great wish to stop and talk like a morning visitor in the midst of these broad solitudes. The traveller felt as I did for, except that we lifted our hands to our caps, and waved our arms, we passed each other quite as distantly as if we had passed in Pall Mall.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Clark, 41. Clark emphasises this in his demotion of constitutional history.

<sup>2</sup>Sennett, Fall 57.

In Sennett's view, such diffidence toward the other members of the public was a portent of things to come. Changes in the behaviour of theatre audiences could be observed in everyday life. The public stage was taken over by "personalities", whose virtuoso action was more startling and fascinating than conventional and conformist behaviour. As a result, public acts on the political platform, on the playing field were "voyeured", not participated in.<sup>4</sup> In present-day England, the growing fascination with the Royal Family, a phenomenon with nineteenth-century beginnings, is a case in point. The public's interest in members of the Royal "household" concerns their private rather than public or ceremonial identities. In *The Enchanted Glass* (1988), Tom Nairn condemns it as "a national devotion, deluding itself with the goal of an unobtainable (and in any case irrelevant) intimacy". The question: "What are they really like?" mirrors the reduction of what is popularly considered "personal".<sup>5</sup> Macaulay noticed a similar obsession with a glimpse of the private lives of great men; he called it "Boswellism".<sup>6</sup>

A book put into the hands of Victorian youths for their edification, *Charicles* (1866), was about an Athenian boy's ordinary life. The introduction mirrored the growing separation of private and public personality, the increasing importance given to "the domestic scenes" as the cradle of character.

This description of the every-day pursuits and lighter occupations of the Greeks, this glimpse at their domestic scenes and introduction, so to speak, to the interior of their dwellings, will not only infuse additional zest to the student's survey of their life as a nation; but will also prove no mean auxiliary in estimating the motives and springs of their public actions as chronicled by the historian; pretty much on the same principle that we...contemplate the doings of public men with more curious interest should we happen also to enjoy their private personal acquaintance.

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<sup>3</sup>Alexander William Kinglake, *Eothen*, (1844, London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1896), 234.

<sup>4</sup>Sennett, 196-7, 201-2.

<sup>5</sup>Tom Nairn, *The Enchanted Glass: Britain and its Monarchy* (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1988) 3-44.

<sup>6</sup>Richard Jenkyns, *Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 81. He named it so after the manner of Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*.

W.A.Becker, *Charicles, or Illustrations of the Private Life of the Ancient Greeks* Transl. Frederick Metcalfe, 3rd ed. (1866, Longmans, Green, & Co, 1899), Translator's preface: vii.

The admiration for private details emerges alongside a new passivity about public life. Sennett writes:

The entrance of personality into the public realm in the 19th Century prepared the ground for [the] intimate society. It did so by inducing people to believe that interchanges in society were disclosures of personality. It did so by framing the perception of personality in such a way that the contents of personality never crystallized, thus engaging men in an obsessive and endless search for clues as to what others, and themselves, were "really" like. Over the course of the hundred years, social bonds and social engagements have receded in the face of inquiry about "what am I feeling?" Indeed, the tasks of developing personality have begun to appear antithetical to the tasks of social actions.

But there seemed some important reasons for these new attitudes. One of the immediate effects of the end of society-as-it-was was a collapse of consensus. The *flaneurs* of the boulevard who "strutted past" or those who sat, as in Degas' paintings, self-absorbed, in cafes, imagined themselves part of a class of people with a general consensus on prominent issues. But such a consensus had in fact lost the only possibility of being maintained: the habit of public debate. "If people are not speaking to each other in the street, how are they to know who they are as a group"?<sup>9</sup> The emphasis on toleration seems both the result and the condition of the new silence. From this point of view, Sydney Smith's opposition to the secret ballot seems no longer simply reactionary. His failure to accept "that there was nothing sinister or undemocratic in privacy of voting" seems suddenly a heroic battle against the destruction of public debate.<sup>10</sup> But loyalty to the old, public, ways, the silencing of Sidney Smith indicates, was not a matter of choice.

What were the reasons for the massive dropping out from public life? The most compelling of them, to Sennett, was the wide-spread rejection of "impersonality" as a moral evil.<sup>11</sup> Giving public functions, buildings, administrative apparatus, the public infrastructure which served the public impersonally, the

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<sup>8</sup>Sennett, *Fall*, 219.

<sup>9</sup>Sennett, *Fall*, 196, 222.

<sup>10</sup>Thomson, *Nineteenth-Century*, 130.

<sup>11</sup>Sennett calls it in fact a myth by which he means an untrue perception. This meaning is not the definition given to myth in this thesis.

epithet "impersonal", allowed them, in Sennett's opinion, to be viewed apart from private concerns. The idea of the "impersonal" public realm, Sennett finds, grew in proportion to the belief in the bliss of family-life, the notion that the intimate circle of the family was the only place where meaningful activity took place. "As the family became a refuge from the terrors of society, it gradually became a moral yardstick with which to measure the public realm of the capital city".<sup>12</sup>

A whole body of "family history" enquires into this phenomenon.<sup>13</sup> The mid-nineteenth-century novelty of "childhood" has been interpreted as a telling symptom of a new role of the family.<sup>14</sup> Looking for reasons for this sudden switch from Luther's "little hell" to a heaven apart led historians to point an accusing finger at industrialization and urban growth.

The machinery of modernization was grinding traditional society into piecemeal at the time most of [the antiquarians who took an interest in it] were writing, the last half of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

In the "Bad Old Days", Shorter argues, "the family shell was pierced full of holes, permitting people from outside to flow freely through the household, observing, monitoring", on its "journey into the modern world" the family became separated from "the surrounding community" and began to be "guarded...by the high walls of privacy".<sup>16</sup> The new emphasis on "romantic love" and "affective sexuality", as Shorter realizes, presupposes the transfer of emotional importance from the collective and public

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<sup>12</sup>Sennett, *Fall*, 20.

<sup>13</sup>For a review of scholarly positions on the phenomenon of the sentimental family unit see Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family* (St. Andrews: The Economic History Society, 1980)

<sup>14</sup>The trendsetting work here is Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*; transl. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1965). Peter Coveney's work, *Poor Monkey* (1957), republished as *Image of Childhood* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), has challenged the novelty of the concept of the innocent child, pointing to a much older history in literature. Without going deeper into this debate, one that is far from settled, there seems abundant evidence of a pervasive interest in domestic life as cradle (rather than school, church, court) of the individual in the nineteenth century.

<sup>15</sup>Edward Shorter, *The Making of The Modern Family* (1973, London: Collins, 1976) 13.

<sup>16</sup>Shorter, 3-5.

realm to a much more narrow sphere: the individual and the immediate family. Romantic love between individuals replaced bonds which require constancy of place and time: region and genealogical descent. The withdrawal into the family is to Shorter a welcome liberation,<sup>17</sup> whereas Peter Laslett viewed the severance from the network which led beyond individual life into the communal realm as an expulsion from *The World We Have Lost*. This world, to Laslett, was one where emotion was not reduced to the family circle, but part of all life: "Everyone had his circle of affection: every relationship could be seen as a love relationship".<sup>18</sup>

Christopher Lasch considers the reduction of private life an inevitable consequence of the growing insecurity of the public realm, the abdication of public concern for individual members of society:

The nineteenth-century cult of the home, where the woman ministered to her exhausted husband, repaired the spiritual damage inflicted by the market, and sheltered her children from its corrupting influence, expressed the hope on which bourgeois society has always rested - that private satisfactions can compensate for deprivations suffered in the realm of work. But the machinery of organized domination, which had impoverished work and reduced civic life to a competitive free-for-all, soon organized "leisure" itself as an industry. The so-called privatization of experience went hand in hand with an unprecedented assault on privacy. The tension between the family and the economic and political order, which in the early stages of bourgeois society protected the members of the family from the full impact of the market, gradually abated.<sup>19</sup>

Privatization, therefore, is not a synonym for liberation but for limitation. To Sennett, too, the emphasis on "intimacy", on individual happiness *à deux*, is a straightjacket, limiting the realms which the individual may embrace as personal.

One thing appears certain: the impersonal, therefore moral inadequacy, of the public realm seems more than just a

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<sup>17</sup>Shorter, 19-21.

<sup>18</sup>Laslett, 5.

<sup>19</sup>Christopher Lasch, "The Family and History" in *New York Review*, (27 Nov. 1975): 40. This criticism is specifically aimed at Fred Weinstein & Gerald M. Platt, *The Wish To Be Free* (University of California Press).



socially harmful fancy. Indeed, Sennett's own study into the experience of families in a Chicago neighbourhood, *Families Against the City* (1970), made it clear that toward the end of the nineteenth century, public activity demanded more and more risk taking. The sheer increase of numbers in the community destroyed the capacity the neighbourhood once had for social gatherings in the home. The usual public meeting places had changed their face. "The arena of social contacts had shifted by 1880 to the Churches, a more functional, more impersonal meeting ground, especially since the churches themselves had by 1880 become so large".<sup>20</sup> The experience of men at their place of work, the non-voluntary public realm, further invited a limitation of involvement beyond the home. "People in an industrial-bureaucratic situation who do not thus learn their functional limits, or the value of self-limitation, will be ultimately disoriented and dysfunctional in the work world".<sup>21</sup> Paul Thompson made similar observations about the relationship of work to self-limitations in his study of Coventry after the decline of the British car industry.<sup>22</sup>

This then was the situation after the fall of the old public world, as reconstructed by social historians. However, the consequences to personal life had always been clear to a Victorian minority whom the bias of social history prefers to ignore: the people who continued to hold "public" office, who learned their oratory well and practiced it, who published and spoke of their ideas, who cared about public opinion to a degree

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Sennett, *Families Against the City: Middle Class Homes of Industrial Chicago, 1872-1890*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1970) 51. This study is unique as it combined diaries and autobiography of family-heads to re-construct changing attitudes to the outside. Unfortunately no counterpart, employing similar methods, exists for the British experience. Still, a look at the mission activities engaged in by the urban Churches at the turn of the century, leading to the building of big churches and auxiliary buildings, confirms a similar picture of urban transformation, if perhaps on a smaller scale and slower pace than in Chicago.

<sup>21</sup> Sennett, *Families Against the City*, 67. He took this insight from Parsons.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Thompson, "Family, Education, and Culture in two Industrial Cities: Twentieth-Century Coventry and Turin", a paper given at the Oral History of Childhood and Schooling Conference, Faculty of Education, University of Birmingham (6 May, 1989)

which far outstripped their ability to influence it: the members of the Victorian intellectual elite. Indeed, in Shorter's definition, this minority would have qualified as a traditional communal culture:

"Traditional" denotes a kind of attitude that coincides closely with a certain period of time. Drawing from a century of analysis, I would suggest that traditional people are willing to put the demands of the community of which they're a part above their personal ambitions and desires. For modern people, on the other hand, the wish to be free triumphs over the community's demands for obedience and conformity.<sup>23</sup>

Ruskin, Marx, Newman, Arnold, the men and women who produced the literature of the Crisis of Faith, it will be seen, were preoccupied with the new economy of society and what it meant to relationships with those who were beyond the self, family, group and class.

## II.

### The Garden Wall.

A de-luxe edition, "beautifully bound and printed on velum", of *Sesame and Lilies*, Ruskin's famous work on the virtues of women, was a "classic present" to young Victorian ladies.<sup>24</sup> For some strange reason, Ruskin was seen, indeed, still is, as the upholder of the Victorian family sanctuary.<sup>25</sup> In fact, it was a brilliantly conceived plan of reaching the hearts of his readers through what he knew they hallowed most. But the ideal of the family which Ruskin had in mind was very contrary to what they might have expected. Speaking "of Queens' Gardens", Ruskin enquired, pretending to accept the prevailing climate of thought, why it was that there were only angels (Queens) inside the house and not outside.<sup>26</sup> It seemed to him that the "queenly power" of

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<sup>23</sup>Shorter, 18. He was, indirectly, referring to Ferdinand Toennies juxtaposition of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*.

<sup>24</sup>Derrick Leon, *Ruskin: the Great Victorian* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), 375-6.

<sup>25</sup>Kate Millet thus felt it was symptomatic of Victorian sexual politics, a view which, as David Sonstroem has pointed out, betrays Millet's lack of "philosophical latitude and historical perspective". [David Sonstroem, "Millet Versus Ruskin: A Defense of Ruskin's 'Of Queens' Gardens', *Victorian Studies*, vol.xx, 3, (Spring 1977): 283-297, esp. 284.]

women should transcend the narrowness of the family's present conception. These are powers "not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere".<sup>27</sup>

Home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermillion,<sup>28</sup> shedding its quiet light far, for those who are homeless.

Ruskin wished to undermine the unnatural separation of the spheres of men and women, the new attitude which placed love and irrational commitment, emotion and enduring patience in the domestic lap of women, the world outside - calculating, instrumental, allowing no squeamishness at the ugliness of the struggle of existence - into the hands of men.

We hear of the mission and of the rights of Woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of Man; - as if she and her lord were<sup>29</sup> creatures of independent kind and of irreconcilable claim.

The separation of male from female qualities merely re-enacted the modern separation of the public and the domestic realm. But - did the public and private realms not deserve equal refinement? The narrowness of the private garden walled in affection. "You have heard it said - (and I believe there is more than fancy even in that saying, but let it pass for a fanciful one) - that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some

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<sup>26</sup>The mock agreement was part of Ruskin's missionary method. Concerning *Sesame and Lilies* he said that it was "the best expression I have been able to put in words of what so far as is within my power, I mean henceforward both to do myself, and plead with all over when I have any influence to do according to their means". (Leon, 375) Having received assent to his first argument, here for example, that women ought to be Queens, it follows that they must consent that Queens' powers reach beyond the family. This Ruskinian genre will be seen again below. I owe this insight into Ruskin's pedagogy to the Ruskin scholar, John Unrau, York University Toronto, under whose supervision I studied in 1985-6.

<sup>27</sup>John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (Two Lectures given in 1864: "Of Kings' Treasures" and "Of Queens' Gardens", (1864, London: Cassell and Co.Ltd, 1907) 62.

<sup>28</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 74.

<sup>29</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 63. This passage raises men to the idealized level of women which they themselves have coined, and should, therefore not be taken as an anti-feminist statement, as it so often is. The point is emphasised when he restates the relationship of men and women into service and devotion on both sides as in "yielding of obedient devotion, by the lover to his mistress". (70-1)

one who loves them". Not the home alone but all England deserved this love:

The whole country is but a little garden...And this little garden you will turn into furnace-ground, and fill with heaps of cinders, if you can; and those children of yours, not you will suffer for it.<sup>30</sup>

How did the restriction of emotions like love and care to women and the home come about? Ruskin points to the forbidding "scale" of modern life. In the past the world could still have real Bishops. What made Bishops of the nineteenth century "false", was that they could no longer do their duty properly and "oversee" everything that is going on in the "see".

The first thing, therefore, that a bishop has to do is at least to put himself in a position in which, at any moment, he can obtain the history from childhood of every living soul in his diocese and of its present state. Down in that back street, Bill, and Nancy, knocking each other's teeth out! - Does the bishop know all about it? Has he his eye upon them?<sup>31</sup>

Ruskin and his Victorian audience knew quite well that the demand for a true Bishop, a real "overseer", was completely unthinkable, absurd.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, "familiarity" was all-important, vital to survival and human dignity. It was even necessary to the very will to live, as emerged from Ruskin's discourse on a newspaper clipping which he read to his listeners during a lecture in Manchester in 1864, entitled "Of Kings' Treasuries".<sup>33</sup> The clipping told the story of a "translator" of boots who preferred hunger to the workhouse.<sup>34</sup> The little family wanted "to keep the home together". Their refusal to go to the workhouse until the summer pointed to a deeper source of anxiety than material welfare:

Witness: "If we went in, we should die. When we come out in the summer, we should be like people dropped from the sky.<sup>35</sup> No one would know us, and we would not have even a room."

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<sup>30</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 85.

<sup>31</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 30.

<sup>32</sup>However, Newman did imagine himself in his Bishop's sight. Newman, *Apologia*, 52.

<sup>33</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, The actual clipping, Ruskin claims, came from an 1864 issue of the *Daily Telegraph*.

<sup>34</sup>A translator of boots remakes old boots into good ones.

<sup>35</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 48-9.

In Ruskin's view, these simple people, preferring illness and death to impersonality, to the state of non-being, of having no identity, knew more about the human condition than their interrogators. "Personality", a state of confirmed identity, depended on familiarity beyond the family, on being known to people in the surrounding area. Public institutions like workhouses, Ruskin implied, without root in local space, springing from national plans and policies, stripped their inhabitants of personhood. A similar anxiety about individual duties and privileges led A.W.N. Pugin in 1836 to publish his *Contrasts*.<sup>36</sup> His sketch contrasted the impersonal features of the Victorian Town of 1840 to those of a Catholic town in 1440. The characterless, ugly sites of the New Jail, the Gas Works, the Lunatic Asylum, represented the institutional treatment of what used to be personal and spiritual problems in the extended sense of their meanings (Illustration, Plate 1, next page).

The diminished personal realm, however, found its chief opponent in someone who is not normally thought of as a typical Victorian: Karl Marx. Unlike Ruskin, who continued to be committed to the moralistic/personalistic language and model of the old order, Marx's frame of reference had assimilated the dis-establishment of the old, moral and personalistic, order. His language employed the metaphors of the market economy, and strategically so, for the ascendant system which Marx must describe in order to protest, was invulnerable to old concepts.<sup>37</sup> But this did not change the fact that underlying Marx's writings was a kindred experience and perception.<sup>38</sup> To Marx, an identity which did not contain a relationship to the use of the earth, to the fruits of human labour, to the daily life and aspirations of the community to which it belonged, was really no identity at all.

The "natural" conditions of a full identity, he showed

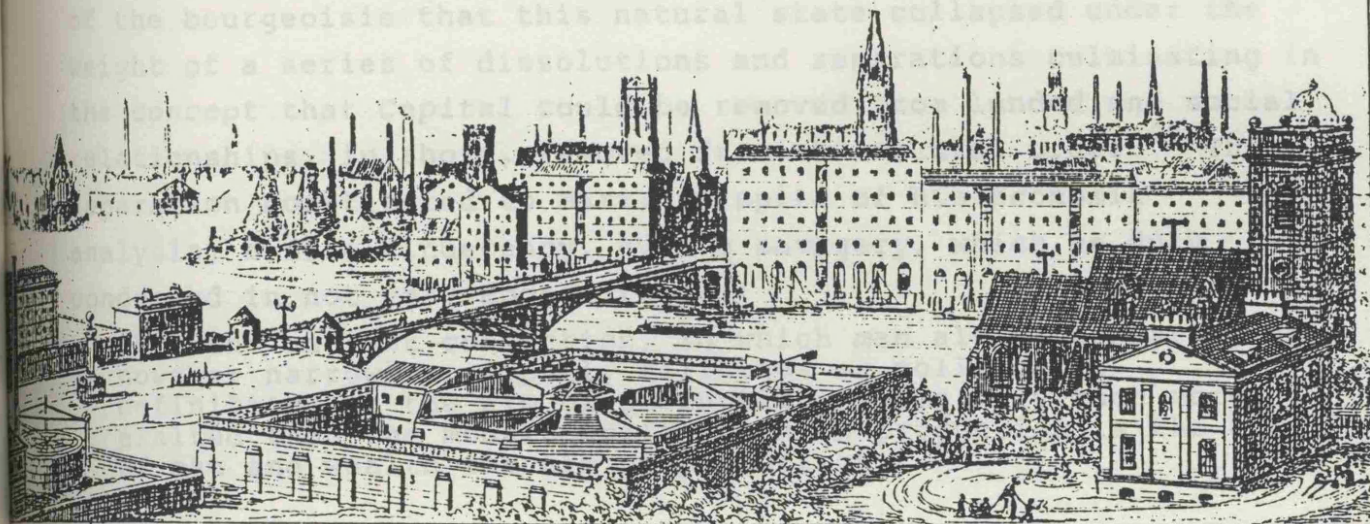
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<sup>36</sup> A.W.N. Pugin, *Contrasts* (1836, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1969)

<sup>37</sup> The power and longevity of Marx's ideas, contrasted to Ruskin, is no doubt due to this difference in genre.

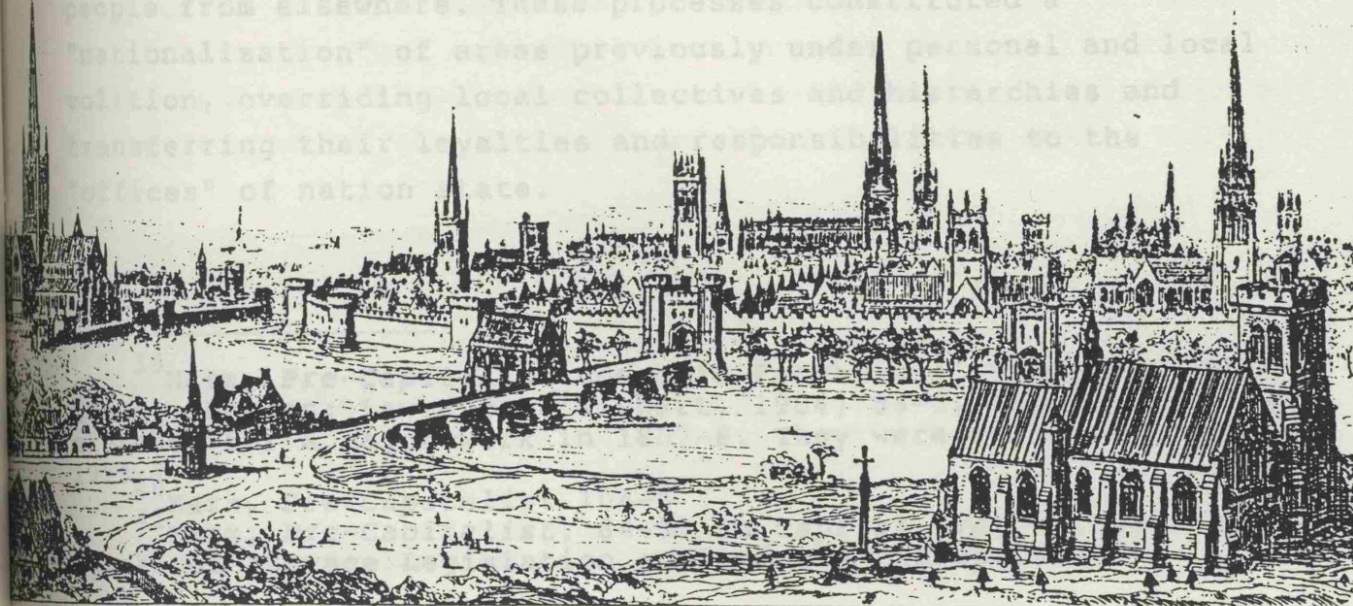
<sup>38</sup> Laslett felt he was by far "the most penetrating of all observers of the world we have lost". (16)





THE SAME TOWN IN 1840

1. Michael's Tower, rebuilt in 1750. 2. New Parsonage House & Pleasure Grounds. 3. The New Jail. 4. Gas Works. 5. Lunatic Asylum. 6. Iron Works & Ruins of Old Abbey. 7. St. Evans' Chapel. 8. Baptist Chapel. 9. Unitarian Chapel. 10. New Church. 11. New Town Hall & Concert Room. 12. Wesleyan Centenary Chapel. 13. New Christian Society. 14. Quakers Meeting. 15. Socialist Hall of Science.



Catholic town in 1440.

1. Michael's on the Hill. 2. Queens Crofts. 3. St. Thomas's Chapel. 4. St. Mary's Abbey. 5. All Saints. 6. St. John's. 7. St. Peter's. 8. St. Alkmund's. 9. St. Mary's. 10. St. Edmund's. 11. Grey Friars. 12. St. Cuthbert's. 13. Guild hall. 14. Trinity. 15. St. Olave's. 16. St. Botolph's.

in *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, were very far removed from those which related identity only to the monetary value of wage-labour. These conditions were to Marx as old as human history, so natural and everlasting, they belonged to the very existence of communal man.<sup>39</sup> To Marx, it was not until the arrival of the bourgeoisie that this natural state collapsed under the weight of a series of dissolutions and separations culminating in the concept that Capital could be removed from landed and social relationships, in short, removed from the natural order.<sup>40</sup> This separation constituted to Marx, in spite of his economic analysis, a moral indecency, even a savagery, which he duly condemned in not very modern tones:

Thus the ancient conception, in which man always appears (in however narrowly national, religious or political a definition) as the aim of production, seems very much more exalted than the modern world in which production is the aim of man and wealth the aim of production...<sup>41</sup>

### III.

#### The Irresponsible Public.

The middle of the nineteenth century saw what seemed an opening up of hitherto local territory, through transport, through impartial - a small step toward impersonal - examinations for the civil service, through the proliferation of educational and medical institutions, through national associations and professional interest groups, through a nation-wide press, post and telegraph services, and through the sheer influx and flux of people from elsewhere. These processes constituted a "nationalization" of areas previously under personal and local volition, overriding local collectives and hierarchies and transferring their loyalties and responsibilities to the "offices" of nation state.

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<sup>39</sup> Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, Transl. Jack Cohen. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1964) 84-5. [Marx wrote these sketches for a major work in 1857-8. They were first published 1953.]

<sup>40</sup> Marx, *Pre-Capitalist* 104-5

<sup>41</sup> Marx, *Pre-Capitalist*, 84-5. In *Capital*, Vol. 2, 813. Marx speaks of "Savage Legislation against the Expropriated".

Ideally speaking, such processes should have been paralleled by a transfer of loyalty from the local community to the new and larger unit, the national community. In practice, quite the opposite took place. Ruskin and Matthew Arnold were two shrewd commentators who observed that personal investment tended to be only at a minimum. This aroused Ruskin's indignation.<sup>42</sup> Grinding an axe with the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who seemed in the process of divesting the national dispensation of poor-rates from personal generosity, Ruskin said:

The falsehood on which the writer had mentally founded himself, as previously stated by him, was this: "To confound the functions of the dispensers of the poor-rates with those of the dispensers of a charitable institution is a great and pernicious error." This sentence is so accurately and exquisitely wrong, that its substance must be thus reversed in our minds before we can deal with any existing problem of national distress. "To understand that the dispensers of the poor-rates are the almoners of the nation, and should distribute its alms with a gentleness and freedom of hand as much greater and franker than that possible to individual charity, as the collection of national wisdom and power may be supposed greater than those of any single person, is the foundation of all law respecting pauperism." [*Italics Mine*]<sup>43</sup>

The entire first chapter of *Sesame and Lilies* was a concerted effort to re-charge the "national" metaphor with personal emotion and accountability. Ruskin asked about the whither of a "great nation", about the nation's bread, the nation's love, compassion, guilt and books, the national mind, the national wisdom, the national amusement.<sup>44</sup> Using his readers own clichés, he wondered: should the "national" not be an increase in the personal: the "I" multiplied by the nation - quite the opposite of the growing decrease in personal magnanimity, responsibility and influence? How could it be that emotions which were intrinsically noble turned mean once they became national and public. The concept of the nation, which should in theory elevate, which should multiply

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<sup>42</sup>I realize that since the Second World War, "nationalization" is a word associated with the government take-over of vital services. But this meaning, despite its recentness, expresses fully what it should. It is the kind of "nationalization", often in the form of gigantism, which invited a lack of personal motivation and interest due to the impersonality of their organisation and services, indifference as to who gained and lost by them.

<sup>43</sup>John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 51.

<sup>44</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 38, 46-7.



one voice with the millions of the nation, seemed to achieve the opposite in practice.

We are still industrious to the last hour of the day, though we add the gambler's fury to the labourer's patience; we are still brave to death, though incapable of discerning true cause for battle, and we are still true in affection to our own flesh, to the death, as the sea-monsters are, and the rock eagles.<sup>45</sup>

He recognized that these virtues were in place when there was familiarity: toward our own flesh, toward our own platoon, our own material advantage. It could be added by way of analysis that virtue thrived where effects could be followed through, where reward was felt. Virtues ceased in those areas where these conditions were absent, where workers go "without praise", where the results of human efforts were not experienced.<sup>46</sup> The terrible thing to Ruskin was that the massive relinquishing of power and meaning by the members of the nation seemed a benign process. No one was being directly oppressed, yet everyone was being infantilized. The nation was childlike, in Ruskin's opinion, nothing but a collection of irresponsible children:

We permit, or cause, thousands of deaths daily, but we mean no harm...We are still kind at heart; still capable of virtue, but only as children are. Chalmers, at the end of his long life, having had much power with the public, being plagued in some serious matter by a reference to "public opinion," uttered the impatient exclamation, "The public is just a great baby!"<sup>47</sup>

Matthew Arnold complained in *Culture and Anarchy* that "we have not the notion, so familiar on the Continent and to antiquity, of the State - the nation in its collective and corporate character, entrusted with stringent powers for the general advantage, and controlling men's wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals". His England was a battle field of competing interests and yet devoid of interest of a deeper kind. The middle class "with its maxims of every man for himself in business, every man for himself in religion", and the working class, "pressed constantly by the hard daily compulsion of material wants", made Arnold speak of the public as a mass

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<sup>45</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 42.

<sup>46</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 53.

<sup>47</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 54.

without any idea "of public duty and of discipline, superior to the individual's self-will". Marx would have fully appreciated Arnold's reference to antiquity.<sup>48</sup> Looking back from the viewpoint of modern production and its narrowing effect on relationships, those were halcyon days:

Hence in one way the childlike world of the ancients appears to be superior; and this is so, in so far as we seek for closed shape, form and established limits. The ancients provide a narrow satisfaction, whereas the modern world leaves us unsatisfied, or where it<sup>49</sup> appears to be satisfied with itself, is vulgar and mean.

The foregoing overview of the works of social historians, supplemented as it was by the testimony of members of the Victorian intellectual tradition, suggests that an important implication of the reforms of 1828-32 was the removal of transcendent meaning from the expediciencies of government and other aspects of public life. To put it in the language of the old order: these reforms profaned an activity and relationship to public life which had hitherto a sacred component. This process was repeated by local reforms, many of which made relationships whose essence was until now mysterious, explicit. Setting down rights and duties blotted out the supra-legal and intangible dimensions of the old economy: the moral and emotional elements implied in words like sacrifice, respect, deference, generosity, devotion, to mention only a few characteristics of relationships of a supra-contractual nature.

For the traditional clerisy there seemed but two options. Some members attempted to cling to the old satisfactions by insisting on face to face relationships and personal sacrifices as suggested by the ancient economy whose spiritual side Newman glimpsed in the Fathers. Ruskin's idea of the Guild of St. George wishing to lay the foundations of simple, ordered, life, seemed a practical version of this sacred economy. Mark Pattison and Benjamin Jowett accepted the new organisation of society in principle - since it already existed, but attempted to catch up to the profaned relationships and return society to the

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<sup>48</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869, Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960), 75-6.  
<sup>49</sup> Marx, *Pre-Capitalist*, 85.

transcendent with a religion for the nation. Neither group, however, it will be seen in the next section, could go so far as to envisage society without the backing of the sacred, or for that matter, without their backing.

Section Two.

*The Victorian Intellectual Tradition  
and the Open Society.*

## Chapter 3.

"Old World without power:  
The evolution of Mark Pattison's 'critical' mind".

## I.

Introducing Mark Pattison.

Supposing there is a relationship between how life is lived and the myths and beliefs held and expressed by a certain group of people, how can this relationship be demonstrated? I propose to do so by looking at an actual "life" as lived within the old order as it moved from one era into another, and to enquire which experiences of academic life might have sustained the unexamined prepossessions in the "critic's" ideas. It is for this reason that this study considers the life and thought Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College in Oxford, and supposed instigator and contributor to *Essays and Reviews*.<sup>1</sup>

Pattison's fame has nothing to do with his orthodoxy. He was a liberal reformer. But, the conclusion that should emerge from this chapter is that although Pattison was a modernizer, he belonged to a traditional order and shared its mythos. Indeed, his willingness to be radical, it will be seen, had sprung from the solidity of his own orthodoxy. The mythos' power over Pattison was so strong indeed, that he felt there was nothing to protect. It was completely invisible to him.

The role of the radical-liberal wing of the ordained Oxford academics, the group of critical thinkers labelled the "Broad Church" party by Conybeare, has been fully documented and explored by Ieuan Ellis and Margaret Crowther.<sup>2</sup> Pattison's reforming activities and their consequences have been discussed

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<sup>1</sup>The origins and ideas of this "periodical" which saw but one issue will be discussed in chapter 5. That Pattison was its instigator is the argument of Mark Francis in "The origins of 'Essays and Reviews': An interpretation of Mark Pattison in the 1850s", *Historical Journal*, 17 (17 Dec. 1974): 797-811.

<sup>2</sup>Ieuan Ellis, *Seven Against Christ: A Study of 'Essays and Reviews'* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1980); M.A.Crowther, *Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England* (Devon: David and Charles (Publishers) Ltd., 1970)

in John Sparrow's *Mark Pattison and the Idea of a University* (1967).<sup>3</sup> These works elaborate the active role these liberal clergymen-academics played in the contemporary transformation of the State, in reforms attacking not only the Settlement of 1688 but much older institutions which this Settlement protected. This did not mean that they were wholeheartedly subscribed to by the Liberal ascendancy.<sup>4</sup> They were, it will be seen again and again, critical of, to them, unsavoury trends. Pattison's contemporary and co-contributor to *Essays and Reviews*, Benjamin Jowett, felt a lifelong aversion toward "specialized teaching and specialized research".<sup>5</sup> He never gave up hope that he might develop a new Christian idealism attractive enough to the educated classes to overcome the social evils which threatened the hegemony of the spirit: positivism, utilitarianism.<sup>6</sup>

If asked if perhaps they belonged to another, less modern world than the one they were so critical of, they would have firmly rejected such a suggestion. They saw themselves as moderns. Their critical awareness, their self-consciousness, of which they were conscious, their sense of alienation from the eighteenth century and its simplistic, narrow considerations, their new-found concern for culture and for history, seemed all part of being modern and having a modern mind. Even their activities to re-tie themselves to the past, as for example Jowett's invention of the Greek inheritance, of which more will be said in chapter four, appears to make them distinctly different from their seventeenth and eighteenth century predecessors and so irrevocably modern. So did their sense of having left the childhood of myth and their distinction between ancient forms of expression and their own.

The invention of tradition, just as the idea of

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<sup>3</sup> John Sparrow, *Mark Pattison and the Idea of a University* (Cambridge UP, 1967)

<sup>4</sup> Jowett was contemptuous of Gladstone's intellect. "It was the first time anyone of such great simplicity had been in so exalted a position". [Geoffrey Faber, *Jowett: a Portrait with background*. (Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 350.]

<sup>5</sup> Faber, 355.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Faber, *Jowett: A Portrait With a Background*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 326.

translation, however, is a more complicated activity than meets the eye.<sup>7</sup> When this chapter considers Pattison's involvement with the Tractarians it must be kept in mind that something preceded the invention of past practices, the conscious consideration of the ways of the early Church Fathers. There must have existed an anterior disposition enabling Newman, and his disciples, to hear and respond to the voice and mind of the past. I am alluding to an experiential link, a life-relationship, making the wisdom of the ancients seem eternally and universally true.

Although the criticism and the invention of tradition are new activities, it can be shown that the critics belonged uncritically, that is to say, unconsciously to another, less modern world. Indeed, it is their frequent use of metaphors of exile, of navigation and travel which justify the suspicion that they were, contrary to their self-awareness, never completely part of the industrial state and its new-type relations and policies. A look at Pattison's day-to-day life, reconstructed from his memoirs, and supported by the letters and biography of Jowett, suggests that he, and many of his colleagues at Oxford, did not share the experience of life and work with living in an urbanizing industrial state increasingly meant for many. His upbringing, his education and his experience of life and work contained many of the elements of the old order.

This section has the purpose of making these elements visible and explicit and of connecting them to the mental outlook of the "critic". This chapter in particular, in looking at Pattison's development, his own narrative of how he came to be "critical", seeks to illustrate how elements of continuity in inter-personal relationships, education and work were indirectly responsible for a sense of alienation, frustration and powerlessness experienced when in contact with contrary trends. It is, however, not until chapters four and five that an idea can be formed of the strength of the old order's mythos. Chapter four, especially, is an attempt to illustrate that Jowett had two

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<sup>7</sup>Eric H. Hobsbawm admitted that he was unable to find where and how these inventions took place. Eric H. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

relationships to the classics: one critical, one mythical, falling into the unconscious, inarticulate realm of the *vorverständnis*. Chapter five endeavours to expose the blueprint of society which underlies the arguments of the writers of *Essays and Reviews* as one which strongly reflects the prepositions of the ancien regime and its aristocratic, class-structured order. Moreover, it hopes to show that the writers' "criticism" did not penetrate beyond the same objective certainty of a moral sense and the priority of the social contract that guided the common sense philosophers of the eighteenth century. The essays and the motives behind their origin, however, also betray the new position of the clerisy: one in which power, authority and influence cannot be taken for granted.

## II.

Before turning to Pattison's "evolution" as radical reformer and critic, a cautionary note seems in order. The point of this chapter is not to give a precise history of the crises which shook Oxford from the beginning of the nineteenth century and which continue into the present. Several recent works have documented and analysed the reorganisation of university life and the changing role of the academic in the second half of the nineteenth century. Most directly concerned with Oxford, the traditional nerve-centre of the ancien regime, are A.J. Engel *From Clergyman to Don* (1983) and T.W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (1982).<sup>8</sup> Covering the crisis from the Cambridge angle, which is different but complementary, is Martha McMackin Garland's *Cambridge before Darwin* (1980).

The question I wish to address is basically this: what were the conditions which allowed Plato and Aristotle, moralists who lived more than 2000 years ago and in societies very different from modern England, to appeal to and hold such sway

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<sup>8</sup> A more general view of changing attitudes to education is found in Sheldon Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 102-116. A survey of the constitutional side of these reforms and their reception in Oxford is presented in E.G.W. Bill and J.F.A. Mason's *Christ Church and Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970).



over the minds of Oxford men in the nineteenth century? The answer given by educationalists has been traditionally: education. But "education" does not explain appeal, and the fact that the "classics" have been all but dropped from modern educational plans invalidates education as primary cause.<sup>9</sup> My hypothesis is that Plato and Aristotle could be assimilated by the men of Victorian Oxford because the latter also belonged, in terms of their life style and image of reality, to a traditional elite. They belonged to an "order" rather than a class in the modern sense, since the latter now suggests a negative, even an antagonistic relationship to other classes.<sup>10</sup> The society which they imagined did not wish to compete but to cohere. Such imaginings, it will be seen, grew mimetically; their mythic power grew when they were unaware.<sup>11</sup> Day-to-day life in Oxford brought them in fact and in feeling much closer to antiquity than the open society, that is to say, the society without ranks and orders, at their doorstep. This chapter introduces a world which was in many ways a different culture, with its own language, ethos and code of conduct.

To Mark Pattison (1813-1885), as this chapter will show, the Oxford background was only a background. He considered the growth of his personality a growth of mind. Mind was everything. His history was exclusively a mental history.<sup>12</sup> He was merely typical of a new self-consciousness, suffering from what is well known among modern academics as "intellectual isolation", and accepted it as the price of mental and moral superiority.<sup>13</sup> The evidence which follows suggests that his loneliness was less a fact than part of this new self-consciousness, one which has become the hallmark of modern literature and the cornerstone of existential philosophy.<sup>14</sup> His early life was unusual but not

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<sup>9</sup>cf. Richard Jenkyns, Preface, *Victorians and Ancient Greece* (1980, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Pub.Ltd., 1981) ix-x.

<sup>10</sup>See Ch.1.

<sup>11</sup>According to Sheldon Rothblatt, the Georgians accepted mimesis as a didactic theory. (49)

<sup>12</sup>Mark Pattison, *Memoirs*, Jo Manton ed. and intro. (Fortwell, Sussex: Centaur Press Ltd, 1969) 1. Pattison began these memoirs in 1883 and finished them on New Years Eve, 1884.

<sup>13</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 147

<sup>14</sup>W.H.Auden's introduction to *The Oxford Book of Light Verse*  
(Footnote continued)

solitary. Born 10 October 1813 in Hauxwell, Wensleydale, Pattison spent his childhood in the rather small Rectory, separated from his only brother (1834) by the birth of ten sisters.<sup>15</sup> As the eldest, and for the longest time only, son, he enjoyed the undivided attention of his clergyman father, an evangelical, and drank from the "*fonds de pietism*". He was privately educated, and so arrived at Oxford in 1832 "unbrutalized" by public school. Before long he was drawn, as were almost all students at Oriel, into the "vortex" of Tractarianism, becoming first a "declared Puseyite", then an "ultra-Puseyite",<sup>16</sup> yet becoming estranged from the movement in time for his election to a fellowship to anti-Puseyite Lincoln. He claimed to have been rescued by the discovery of a disinterested study of the past, an event which happened when he undertook to write two of the *Lives of the Saints* for Newman. Finding no precedent of thorough research of a life and its times, Pattison presumed himself England's first modern historian.<sup>17</sup> So far no one has contested his claim.

But Pattison's modest fame owed more to circumstances which he might have felt less inclined to cherish. He married quite late in life, one year after his appointment as Rector of Lincoln in 1861 (fellows could not marry), it is said that his wife, the beautiful and fashionable Emilia Francis Strong, had confided some of her marital woes to George Eliot who perused them in *Middlemarch*, modelling Mr. Casaubon in Pattison's image. The *Memoirs* are silent on the matter. The resemblance was rather superficial.<sup>18</sup> But as if life was to imitate art, Pattison died in 1884, too ill to finish his "Life" of J.J. Scaliger, an eighteenth-century philologist.

I have been nearly thirty years getting together the materials for my *vindiciæ*. In the autumn of 1883 I returned from the

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<sup>14</sup>(continued)

states: "as the old social community broke up, artists were driven to the examination of their own feelings...They became introspective, obscure and highbrow". (1938, Oxford: Oxford UP Press, 1952) xiv.

<sup>15</sup>John Sparrow, *Mark Pattison and the Idea of A University*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1967), 33.

<sup>16</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 34, 36, 184.

<sup>17</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 81, 186.

<sup>18</sup>For a complete discussion about Pattison as model for various fictitious characters in the novels of George Eliot, Rhoda Broughton, and Mrs. Humphrey Ward see Sparrow, 6-22.

Tyrol with the full purpose of devoting the next twelve months to complete the composition of the *Life*, of which many portions were already written out in their definitive form, when I was struck down by the malady which has cut off all hope of my ever being able to execute this or any other literary scheme.<sup>19</sup>

The work was never intended to be, as Eliot's Casaubon's *magnum opus*, the key to all mythology. Indeed, Pattison's historical essays bore the mark of modern scholarship, harnessing a large amount of research to one miniature aspect of the past. A similar restraint operated in the essay, "Tendencies in English Religious Thought: 1688-1750", which appeared in the most infamous volume of the mid-Victorian era: *Essays and Reviews*.<sup>20</sup> The public's response, or rather stupefaction, over his contribution, and over the periodical in general, led him to turn his back forever on theology. All this by way of introduction. At the time of Pattison's initiation in 1832, signs of a new way of thinking and organising reality were already subtly present. Pattison's self-consciousness, it will be seen, attested to two worlds in conflict. His mind hung suspended between the collective certainties of the past and realities where these could no longer be taken for granted. Pattison was not a genealogical descendant of the traditional elite of the old order. However, this did not mean that he could not be naturalized. The old order never re-created itself in a strict family or filial way. It was never a caste, but an order, perpetuating itself, it will be seen, only in a family-like way. These familial ways were, however, definitive of its ancient character and central to its reproduction.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 323.

<sup>20</sup>See Ch. 5.

<sup>21</sup>cf. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class: 1780-1850* (London, Hutchinson, 1987). This study of the "middle class" shows that the process of naturalization into aristocratic norms and values takes place even there where class is defined, by the authors, by occupational economic denominators.

## III.

Another World.

When Pattison arrived in Oxford in 1832, the University and its colleges were to all appearances an enchanted world. To Pattison it seemed as if nothing had happened since 1500. The Reformation debate over Church and State waged loudly in the Oriel common room. It was the non-specialized world of old. "There was no subdivision of labour as is now established in the form of combined lectures. The tutors of each college taught everything that was taught in the college to all its students".<sup>22</sup> It appeared as if outside the ravages of time altogether, a perfect place to give shape to visions of eternity. The founder's intention, the universal integration of every "nation" was, at the time of Pattison's arrival, still honoured by the ecclesiastical and parochial nature of the entire system, if one can call it that.<sup>23</sup> Oxford was "de-facto if not de-jure", since the fellowships had been subjected to examinations, "a close clerical corporation".<sup>24</sup>

Pattison's entry into the old order took place according to its customs. These were the ways of personalism.<sup>25</sup> Once Oriel was decided on, based on the reputation of "gentility", the question was how to get the boy in.<sup>26</sup>

We had recourse to interest; my father was good at making interest, which I have never been able to do. I cannot remember who were called in to work upon the Provost: Manuel Echalaz, a Fellow of Trinity, and an ally of Mr. Paddon, was to work upon Henry Jenkyns, a brother of the Master of Balliol, who in his turn was to intercede with his brother head.<sup>27</sup>

Pattison senior's reasons for getting his oldest son into Oriel reflected the assumptions of an older order: higher education was

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<sup>22</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 100, 215.

<sup>23</sup>The Foundations refer to Yorkshire as the northern nation.

<sup>24</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 69. Talent was therefore, Pattison admits, scarce.

<sup>25</sup>See Ch. 1.

<sup>26</sup>For a history of Oriel College to 1900 see David Watson Rennie, *Oriel College, University of Oxford College Histories*, (London: F.E. Robinson and Co., 1900)

<sup>27</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 30. Pattison's father was a graduate from Brasenose.

a matter of right contact, and exposure to like values and virtues. Academic achievement was appreciated, but what really mattered were names, to be more precise: people young Pattison would be known by, people in a position of giving the youth an identity:

As I had no acquaintances to begin with, my father begged my tutor to introduce me. Accordingly, I was breakfasted by Coplestone, and presented to a senior commoner, by name John Belfield, a Devonshire man, and neighbour of the Coplestones in the country. Belfield godfathered me, introduced me to his set...he took me under his wings, and was infinite use to me, in those ways in which a well-established senior in a college can aid a raw - in this case an incredibly raw - freshman... Through Belfield I came to know his set, comprising beside Froude, William Charles Buller, Arthur<sup>28</sup> Entwistle, Arthur Sheppard, William Phelps, and others.

Although the academically inclined Pattison denied this set any real importance, only crediting them with the "intimacy of playfellows", the time spent with them must have been enormous: "We went out together more or less every day, skiffing, walking, teaing...".<sup>29</sup> The possibility of personal and intimate contact was favoured by Oriel's size. At the time of Pattison's entry, Oriel lodged only sixty men, few enough for the Don to know all by sight, including the much embarrassed freshman Pattison.<sup>30</sup> News travelled by word of mouth, not only Oriel news but news from other colleges. Personal lives were no secret, making Pattison very self-conscious about his appearance; absences from Hall were noted, and presences attracted attention and admiration, as for example that of the gentlemen commoners, seated apart, and looking so refined in their silk-gowns.<sup>31</sup>

Personalism was also the dynamic behind the colleges' individual character, for appointments depended on "like choosing like". The choice was based on highly personal criteria, on "what a man was like", and not, "what a man had read".<sup>32</sup> The famous

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<sup>28</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 50-1.

<sup>29</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 51.

<sup>30</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 57.

<sup>31</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 57, 68. Newman disliked the gentlemen commoners and treated them haughtily and with contempt. Ian Ker, *The Life of John Henry Newman*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989) 37.

<sup>32</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs* 76. Benjamin Jowett recalled that Dr. Holden also wanted to base Balliol elections on potential rather  
(Footnote continued)

Oriel tutors, Whately, T. Mozley, Newman and Hurrell Froude, "were all men of low classes and taken against candidates of greater *prima facie* claim".<sup>33</sup> Pattison could not disapprove: not only did he fail to get a first but deep down he believed in that elusive thing, the speculative mind which examinations for knowledge could not detect. The heads of the colleges also ruled with personal idiosyncrasy. Their personal power was formidable and, importantly, beyond central "party" control. London had as yet no voice in Oxford.<sup>34</sup> The heads themselves and most of the tutors, saw Oxford, high and Tory, as the nation's "mind".<sup>35</sup>

The high percentage of pass men meant that in 1835 education was conforming to Pattison's father's expectations. Proof of the grafting force of the Oxford experience could be found everywhere. A good example was Benjamin Jowett, who arrived in Oxford only a few years after Pattison (October 1836). With parents in "trade", Benjamin Jowett, who was to become master of Balliol, was even more of an outsider than the pious vicar's son from Yorkshire. But he undertook the typical itinerary into the old order: St. Paul's choir school, then Balliol. Like Pattison, he believed himself to have been marked for life by the social disadvantage of not having been to a public school.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>(continued)

than accomplished knowledge: "*non res sed spes*" (promise not performance). Evelyn Abbott, *Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett*, [for full bibliographic reference see below], 61-2.

<sup>33</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 78. Ker's biography of Newman shows that Oriel used different criteria from the examiners in the schools.

<sup>(16)</sup><sup>34</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 72. This was especially true of Coplestone who was, however, made a Bishop in 1827 and so removed.

<sup>35</sup>Ker, *Newman*, 35. Newman could not imagine his pastoral work to be more effective anywhere else.

<sup>36</sup>Evelyn Abbott and Lewis Campbell, *The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett, M.A., Master of Balliol College, Oxford*, (London: John Murray, 1897) 42. A more recent biography by Faber has sacrificed much accuracy for irony. Geoffrey Faber, *Jowett: A Portrait with a Background*. (London: Faber & Faber, 1957) There is also the work by Peter Hinchliff *Benjamin Jowett and the Christian Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon 1987), concerning itself primarily with Jowett's theology and its influence on later Christian socialists. Jowett's work, it will be seen, contrary to Hinchliff's view, was traditional-aristocratic in its conception of social change and the "poor".

Patronage, being part and parcel of the particularistic old order, the fine network of personal power relationships known as personalism, played a central part in his career. In Jowett's case, it had the direct and particular face of the well-to-do Rugbeian and Balliol graduate, W.A.Greenhill, who was studying medicine at Oxford.<sup>37</sup> Both patron and client benefited from the personal and interested interference in Jowett's affairs, which resulted in a life-long correspondence, progress reports on the initial investment. A deep friendship ensued, resting on great integrity and personal affection way beyond the boundaries of instrumentality.<sup>38</sup> The modern meaning of the word patronage cannot do justice to the fullness of this relationship. Until recently, when the word has assumed a more sinister meaning, "to patronage" meant "to countenance, uphold, protect, defend" and so had, as J.M.Bourne notes, an element of personal sacrifice on the part of the patron.<sup>39</sup>

The priority given to important names by Jowett's erstwhile biographers, Evelyn Abbott and Lewis Campbell, speaks volumes about the importance of "others" in the evaluation of an individual identity. The biography was a meticulous assembly of the "important" people that Jowett had been in contact with: mentors, friends, students, admirers, people whom he visited for weeks, or on week-ends, or with whom he spent his holidays: Bishop Tait, Stanley, Gladstone, Mrs.Tennyson, Palgrave, Lightfoot, Earl Russell - the list is very, very long. The "Who's Who" began early on, as Abbott and Campbell presented the names of contemporaries of Jowett's undergraduate years. Between the pages 49 and 50 there are no less than twenty-four names, all with references to their present station in life. It was meant to be, and is, very impressive.

For some reason Jowett earned the reputation of being a

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<sup>37</sup>Abbott, 47.

<sup>38</sup>Abbott, 46 Jowett's letters to Greenhill take a large place in the biography. Their confiding tone make it difficult to agree with Faber that the relationship was never an easy one. (127)

<sup>39</sup>Hinchliff does not mention Greenhill at all.  
<sup>39</sup>J.M.Bourne *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1986) 4. The association of illegitimacy seems to Bourne an American inflection.

recluse, something he attributed to his everlasting self-consciousness. But, as in Pattison's case, this eccentricity was a luxury afforded in full view of a gregarious alternative. In fact, Jowett forged long lasting relationships right from his early days at Oxford, perhaps the most important one with the slightly senior Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, who "as his custom was" took Jowett "from time to time for a walk in the afternoon".<sup>40</sup> The custom appears to have been widespread, as is evident from the reminiscences of a fellow scholar, canvassed by the biographers to provide some background colour:

I can never forget the deep impression that the general aspect of things in College made upon me. The scene in Chapel, Hall, Lecture Room; the countenances of the men - of Tait, Scott, Oakeley, Chapman, Ward; the Scholars' Table and high table, the twos and twos going out for their constitutionals, live fresh in my memory after nearly sixty years. It was, a marvellous time, and a most interesting set of men.<sup>41</sup>

Life in Oxford was involved, personal and intimate. Pattison's involvement with the Oxford community expanded year after year. Involvement was diverse rather than routine: he found himself in the midst of all "the social distractions to which a youth is exposed to". The same man who claimed to suffer from acute loneliness was sorry to have seen a "variety of objects" fritter "away the summer", among them a "book club arranged among ourselves".<sup>42</sup> By 1835, Pattison felt he "knew all the men best worth knowing in college".<sup>43</sup>

It would be useless to enumerate a string of names unknown to fame. The list would have comprised the names of all who were reading for honours - I think four, besides myself, out of more than sixty...this fact speaks volumes about the state of Oriel.<sup>44</sup>

The underbelly of the academics' mental life revealed scene after scene taken from the *gemeinschaft*, the traditional community, personal, unpredictable, seamless. Pattison and Jowett lived in an oral environment so natural that it was enjoyed unselfconsciously, it was, even to their biographers, only

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<sup>40</sup> Abbott, 48, 233. The two, although later critics tried to associate them as the "Stanleyites" were often critical of one another. cf. Hinchliff, 70.

<sup>41</sup> Abbott, 59.

<sup>42</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 131.

<sup>43</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 144.

<sup>44</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 144.



marvellously interesting, but never more than a background.

But the point is, it was much more than that. It shaped longings and affinities that nothing could ever displace. As tutor of Lincoln, Pattison believed deeply in the community of congenial minds, even if the dream of finding a "responsive individual" had remained a perennial quest. Soon he was able to discover what Newman denied having consciously put to use: a sense of personal power over the minds of others: "I realized I was in possession of a magic influence, a moral ascendancy to which all succumbed".<sup>45</sup> Observing trends in 1876, Pattison felt bitter that the new popularity of achievement and honours led students to seek out young tutors rather than professors, swapping the true gift of knowledge for "tips" on passing. "Every teacher desires to communicate his thoughts and how much closer and more encouraging is the sympathy of disciples to whom you can speak than that of a public for whom you can only write".<sup>46</sup> Newman had indeed made such personal contacts of affection and care part of his fidelity to the sacred economy of the Fathers, describing simply as "the custom of a University":

I had lived with my private, nay, with some of my public pupils, and with the junior fellows of my College, without form or distance, on a footing of equality. Thus it was through friends, younger, for the most part, than myself, that my principles were spreading. They heard what I said in conversation, and told it to others. [*Italics Mine*]<sup>47</sup>

Of course, the initiation into the old view of the world was not wholly unconscious. Much of Pattison's training was directly intellectual, the purposeful "study" of traditional moral principles and modes of reasoning. Even after the University reforms of 1854, the works of Plato and Aristotle and the common sense philosophers held their place on the philosophical curriculum, although alongside "modern" subjects like the history of Greece and Rome and Political Economy.<sup>48</sup> The

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<sup>45</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 221. and Newman, *Apologia* 58. Ker, also describes the power of Newman's sermons over listeners. (Newman, 90-1)

<sup>46</sup>Mark Pattison, "Philosophy at Oxford" *Mind*, I, (1876): 89, 88.

<sup>47</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 58.

<sup>48</sup>Pattison, *Mind*, 90-1. The philosophers on the curriculum  
(Footnote continued)

basic orientation was, before and after,<sup>49</sup> clearly and prominently, toward a moral and rational basis for ethics. Pattison imbibed Steward's *Elements*, Reid's *Logic*, Whately's *Rhetoric*, along with Aristotle, Bacon and Locke, all works which Jowett grouped into that broad and transcendent philosophic tradition first begotten by Socrates.<sup>50</sup> In other words, even as late as 1876, it would have been an exaggeration to speak of the old order as one which was rapidly being shown out, collapsing at the first signs of liberal radicalism.

#### IV.

#### Conflicting Worlds.

It cannot be denied however, that the old order now had to face the ominous presence of the new. Reform to the new ways, however, took place in the presence of the old. Indeed it could not have been otherwise. David Watson Rannie's history of Oriel College (1900) referred to the "duplex character of the many academic phenomena", finding it very difficult to speak of unequivocal reforms to college life.<sup>51</sup> This "duplex character", it will be seen, was a constant feature of the activities of the Victorian intellectual elite. What posed as modern was often enabled by traditional elements, and what seemed traditional, often a self-conscious invention undermining traditional naturalness.

A typical example was the Oxford movement which, as it had such an impact on Mark Pattison, deserves careful consideration. Newman deliberately fought within the sacri-political frame-work and economy of the old regime. But, the movement bore too much the stamp of self-conscious affiliation, to be considered an unambivalent sign of the

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<sup>48</sup>(continued)

were: Aristotle, Plato, Trendelenburg, Bacon, Locke, Butler, Hume, Kant, Berkeley.

<sup>49</sup>Sparrow, 136.

<sup>50</sup>Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, 5 vol. iv. 3rd. ed. (1875, Oxford: Clarendon, 1924) 32-4.

<sup>51</sup>Rannie, 154. He attributed it to the personal element. Old-fashioned men implemented the reforms in their own style.

vitality of the past. Jowett wrote about the movement:

Newmanism though ecclesiastical and reactionary, was at the same time revolutionary against the old high and dry régime...Nor was Newmanism politically conservative. On the contrary, it sneered at conservatism, which was closely connected with Protestant orthodoxy,<sup>52</sup> and a particular object of its hatred and contempt was Peel.

Newman was however conservative, albeit in a different sense than what "conservative" had come to mean in his days. This is clear from Newman's defence of Mr. Rose who had been called a conservative. "Though Rose pursued a conservative line, he had as high a disdain as Froude could have, of a worldly ambition, and an extreme sensitiveness of such an imputation".<sup>53</sup>

Notwithstanding Ward's extremism, many liberal Oxonians viewed the Tractarians with great sympathy.<sup>54</sup> No one had any doubts about the political side of the movement's "ecclesiastical" radicalism; that it was a declaration of war against the profanities of anti-dogmatic liberalism and its atomizing principle, refusing to even duel with its weapons. Newman saw no possibility of accommodation, compromise or coexistence of the two orders: "Christianity is of faith, modesty, lowliness, subordination, but the spirit at work against it is one of latitudinarianism, indifferentism, republicanism, and schism".<sup>55</sup> The *Tracts* addressed themselves to those who were ordained to keep the sacred order, who had publicly and overtly declared their subordination to the principle of ecclesiastical authority, to those within a "natural" consensus: the country clergy. In spite of this, it will be seen, the *Tracts* could not escape profanation by modern life.

Newman was not unaware of the equivocal nature of the movement he had helped to launch. This was apparent from his

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<sup>52</sup>Abbott, 176-7.

<sup>53</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 44.

<sup>54</sup>Abbott, 93, 111, 113, 155. F.D. Maurice even proposed a petition against their persecution. Ward roused everyone's ire by proposing the wholesale adoption of Roman Catholic "superstitions". He was "degraded" for this in Feb. 1845.

<sup>55</sup>Ian Ker and Thomas Gornall, S.J., Eds. *The Letters & Diaries of John Henry Newman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 31 vol, ii, 129-30.

ideas on the organisation of a "movement", his resistance against officiousness, his fear of setting up "a large system at once", for he was "for no committees, secretaries etc -". He said: "Living movements do not come from committees, nor are great ideas working out through the post", associations would lead to compromise, and so the things which burned in the individual's breast would become "cold and formal and impersonal", and their vigour, truth and surprise value diluted.<sup>56</sup> "The real movers are secret and irresponsible - and thus, second rate men with low views get the upper hand".<sup>57</sup> Such enterprise was out of keeping the martyrdom and heroism of the Fathers, with their doctrine of the reserve in the communication of divine knowledge, picked up by Newman as the economy principle. The new contractual economy did not, as Carlyle had worked out independently, produce supermen. With the economy principle, Newman clearly had discovered much more than a theological concept. It was something closely connected to the old order and how it managed its household without defining it.<sup>58</sup> It seemed as if he wished to protect the essence of the oral tradition, recognizing that it was the soul of the religious life.

Newman tried hard to avoid modern mass communication techniques, envisaging the circulation of the *Tracts* among friends up and down the country who would in turn reprint and circulate them. But the scale of the endeavour soon profaned his methods, as Ker described:

Newman was now 'busy from morning till night' writing, printing and distributing tracts. He no longer had the help of Froude...In addition to writing to clergy around the country, he began making personal visits. It did not matter whether they were high or low church, as his object was to rally opposition to 'the principles of liberalism'. He did not think later that 'much came of such attempts, nor were they quite in my way'. Toward the end of October he began a series of lengthy letters to the *Record* newspaper on the revival of church discipline. 'Acts', he later commented, of such an 'officious character' were uncharacteristic both of his own<sup>59</sup> temperament and of the spirit and success of the Movement.

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<sup>56</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 44.

<sup>57</sup>Ker, Newman, 85-6.

<sup>58</sup>Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, Centenary Ed., 30, x, (1843, New York: Scribner, n.d.)

<sup>59</sup>Ker, Newman, 86.

Aware of the danger of controversy, Newman and his collaborators published the *Lyra Apostolica*, really "little stories of the Apostles, Fathers etc. to familiarize the imagination of the reader to an Apostolical state of the Church", nothing but "ballads", with "a view of catching people when unguarded".<sup>60</sup> In other words, the Tractarians employed the means of the story teller, appealing on a sub-rational, mimetic frequency that bypassed conscious barriers - albeit through print. Nevertheless, the fact was that Newman's methods banked on the presence of an older faculty, a *vorverständnis*, of which he was confident that it was still there.

*Tract I* made no distinction between external confession and inner mind. It only reminded the clergy of their consent to principles:

Now every one of us believes this, I know that some will at first deny they do; still they do believe it...They do believe it; for it is the doctrine of the Ordination Service...I know the grace of ordination is contained in the laying on of hands, not in any form of words; - yet in your case (as has ever been usual in the Church) words of blessing have accompanied the act. Thus we have confessed before God our belief that through the Bishop who ordained us, we receive the Holy Ghost, the power to bind and to loose, to administer the Sacraments, and to preach.<sup>61</sup>

These arguments were presented within the deductive structure of the old consensual mind. Newman argued "orthodoxly", presuming agreement in advance, thus carefully avoiding communion with any argument from without which might destroy the fine network of dovetailing premises. But was this possible? Could Newman subtract later knowledge, for example his knowledge of the purpose of the *Tracts*, and so invent a "mind" which would hold past knowledge true?<sup>62</sup> For all his trying, Newman had to tell at

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<sup>60</sup>Ker Ed., *Letters of Newman*, iv, 109.

<sup>61</sup>John Henry Newman, *Tract I, Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission, Respectfully addressed to the Clergy*, A.O.J. Cockshut, ed. *Religious Controversies of the Nineteenth-Century: Selected Documents*, (London: Methuen, 1966), 63-6.

<sup>62</sup>Such a possibility has been indeed suggested by Immanuel Velikovsky, the American anthropologist, who proposed that, assuming, for a heuristic beginning, past documents of ancient civilization to be true, a contemporary physics could be invented. For a discussion of Velikovsky's ideas, which have been disproved, see Stephen Jay Gould *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle* (Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1987), 27.

least himself about his intentions. For example, when he put the nature of the Tractarian movement into words, he had to conceptualize as ideas that which would have been natural to the Fathers.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, he had to define, to himself and members and critics alike, what it meant to be orthodox, thus - by internal memo - communicating with the orthodox mind about itself.

But Newman's orthodoxy was not so easily dismissed. The way even his opponents marvelled at his ingenuity attested to his power of reaching pre-existing affections deep inside them. He touched them in places where they had no defences and thus proved that, on another level of reality, the ancient ways still worked. Jowett wrote to Stanley (Dec. 1859):

Get Newman's new volume of Sermons - most remarkable. I don't know whether it is old association, or not, but his writings have an extra-ordinary power over one...No one ever mixed up such subtle untruths with such glorious truths.<sup>64</sup>

However, in the end Newman's economy could not compete. The new economy did without that on which he had of necessity to build his entire cause: the sacred-symbolic realm. Liberalism, as Newman realized, was anti-dogmatic, which meant anti-essence, while for Newman dogma was everything, it was the idea of religion itself: "I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream, and a mockery".<sup>65</sup> Religion lived only in consensus; heresies, and by implication, dissent, were diminutions, reductions of the inherent nature of religion, by definition of their opposition, incomplete.<sup>66</sup> This insistence on a confessional unity was the very antithesis of modern trends, the very thing modern developments, as J.C.D.Clark emphasises, destroyed.<sup>67</sup> Newman's dilemma epitomized the situation of the old elite: it could not respond in kind without becoming altered in the process.

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<sup>63</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 46, 55. Newman pointed out how the Evangelical method of making the implicit and mysterious into formula destroyed its power. Ker discusses the misrepresentation of Newman's economic principle and practice (51).

<sup>64</sup>Abbott, 168. The book referred to was *Discourses addressed to Mixed Congregations*, 1849.

<sup>65</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 51.

<sup>66</sup>Ker, Newman, 169.

<sup>67</sup>See Introd.

It was, therefore, not a folly that when Newman crossed over to Roman Catholicism, contemporaries felt there was nothing to replace the loss. The new was at first an absence. Pattison wrote:

I have spoken of the sudden lull which fell upon Oxford, and, indeed, upon all clerical circles throughout England, the moment the secessions to Rome were announced. The sensation to us was as of a sudden end of all things and without a new beginning.<sup>68</sup>

Echoing Arnold and Mill,<sup>69</sup> he said: "We felt that old things had passed away, but by no means that all things had become new". It felt like an ideological vacuum:

Instead of High, Low and Broad Church, they talked of high embankments, the broad gauge and low dividends. Brunel and Stephenson were in men's mouth instead of Dr. Pusey and Mr. Golightly; and speculative theology gave way to speculation in railway shares.

The theological debate in the Common Room died overnight, banished even "from private conversation. Very free opinions on all subjects were rife..."<sup>71</sup> The history of Balliol College (1899) similarly stated that after "the delirium of the Oxford Movement" followed "a period of exhaustion and apathy when the learner knew of no ideal as yet undemolished and no authority in whom he could place implicit truth".<sup>72</sup> As Clark says in his revision: the arrival of the new was not an exchange but a removal of the old. The notion of cultural hegemony, such as attributed to religion, was out of place in the new order of things.<sup>73</sup>

Nonetheless, Pattison also claimed that the end of clerical supremacy was "a deliverance from a nightmare which had

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<sup>68</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 235.

<sup>69</sup>Mill said "mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones" (*Spirit of the Age*, 1831), Arnold wrote: "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born" (*Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse*)...

<sup>70</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 235-6. Pattison took these lines out of G.C. Cox's *Memoirs* of the period.

<sup>71</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs* 244.

<sup>72</sup>H.W. Charless [sic] Davis Balliol College. University of Oxford College Histories, (London: F.E. Robinson and Co., 1899) 296.

<sup>73</sup>See Ch. 1.

oppressed Oxford for fifteen years".<sup>74</sup> The "false religious spirit" at Oxford caused the great discoveries, speculative thought, to happen outside Oxford, at the capital.<sup>75</sup>

Newman had laid it down that revealed truth was absolute, while all other truth was relative - a proposition which will not stand analysis, but which sufficiently convey the feeling of the theologians towards science.<sup>76</sup>

The profane posed as sacred, the sacred as profane. Newman attempted to rescue religious truths from the insidious relationship with science, cautioning conscious discrimination of two incompatible systems, one deductive, one inductive. By keeping them strictly apart, drawing around them the sweeping circle of the "imperial intellect", who valued both, reason and religion, he anticipated modern attitudes.<sup>77</sup> Pattison considered this reactionary. However, his own view was in fact much more traditional. Faithful to metaphysical philosophy, Pattison still believed in a philosophical-scientific understanding of all reality. His defence of rational Christianity, fearlessly inviting the scientific spirit into theology, revealed that he had as yet not realized that science progressed through the division and not through synthesis of knowledge.

The signs of the new, it will be seen, were not always as ambiguous as in the case of the Oxford movement. For example, the new existed as an unmistakable threat of outside interference, the certain knowledge of having to meet new standards. This could be seen in the defiant assertion by Dr. John Burgon, master of Oriel and High Churchman of the old school,<sup>78</sup> that "so long as the trustees of the property are faithfully discharging the provision of a beneficial truth, the State has no right whatever, legal or moral, to interfere".<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 236.

<sup>75</sup>Pattison, "Philosophy", 82, and *Memoirs*, 235-7.

<sup>76</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 237-8.

<sup>77</sup>Ker, *Newman*, 385, 395-6. For a summary of modern theological attitudes to science see John Stapylton Habgood's "The Uneasy Truce Between Science and Religion" *Soundings* (1963) 78 Faber, 264. Burgon, who replaced Coplestone as master of Oriel, was the clergyman who instigated the prosecution against Rowland Williams and Henry Bristow Wilson, two clergymen with a living who participated in writing *Essays and Reviews* (1860).

<sup>79</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 119.



Such touchiness admitted that the old order's power was waning. Indeed, the possibility of State interference in parochial matters had entered everyone's mind. "Think", Jowett wrote to A.P. Stanley, as if fearing collaboration with a foreign occupation, "of a Parliamentary Committee at which everybody should tell tales of everybody".<sup>80</sup> Something made everyone self-conscious of the "failings" of Oxford. The University's purpose and methods required definition, the functions of its incumbents description and proper endowment.<sup>81</sup> In the face of other possibilities of running an educational institution, the old seemed old rather than natural.

The Junior Tutors of Lincoln were just as worried about their obligation to improve, painfully aware of "abuses" which gave the outside world, as Burgon's defence affirmed, a moral right to be critical. The new men felt keenly conscious of being different from the old type of fellows. Nothing could any longer be accepted on authority of the past. "Green, Kay junior, Perry and myself formed an opposition contending for discipline, decency, order and religion (outward)".<sup>82</sup> But these were hardly modern principles: only their self-conscious advocacy was. Most Oxford reformers, it will be seen in the next two chapters, saw reform in highly moral terms, in other words, within the sacri-political, religio-moral frame of reference of the old regime. It seemed impossible even for the "liberal" intellectuals to do any more than that.

The potential threat of outside interference was a powerful incentive to reform voluntarily, more powerful than any ideological pre-dilection. Jowett wrote to R.R.W. Lingen on 3 April 1848, using the metaphors of foreign diplomacy: "Our only defence against attacks from without is to build up from within, to enlarge our borders that we may increase the number of our friends. We have no one to fear but ourselves".<sup>83</sup> It is therefore

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<sup>80</sup>Abbott, 173.

<sup>81</sup>Sparrow, 121. Pattison even wrote a pertinent article, "Oxford Studies" in *Oxford Essays, contributed by Members of the University* (1855), reviewing the situation before the Oxford Reform Act.

<sup>82</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 218.

<sup>83</sup>Abbott, 175.

questionable whether it was a reaction to the "clerical virus" that had lingered so long in the "system" (note the scientific terms), which swept people away by a

flood of reform, which broke over Oxford in the next few years following 1845, which did not spend itself till it had produced two Government commissions, until we had ourselves enlarged and remodelled all our institutions. In these years every Oxford man was a Liberal, even<sup>84</sup> those whom nature had palpably destined for obstructives.

As Pattison saw it, the pendulum had swung too far. People jumped on the liberal bandwagon without knowing where it was taking them - or without knowing where their natural interests lay.

There still survive many of this generation, who, having been caught up by the spirit of their day, and having then committed themselves to the Liberal colours too definitely to withdraw, are uncomfortable in their position, and present the laughable spectacle<sup>85</sup> of remaining liberal in spite of nature and constitution.

He was in fact one of them. Looking out at the new Oxford which the Reforms had created, he found little that inspired. Gone was much of the leisurely and liberal pace so conducive to his own mental growth. For someone in love with the great tradition of learning the new Oxford seemed to provide, Pattison's use of dietary metaphors implied, only a consumer product.

Our young men are not trained: they are only filled with propositions of which they have learned from the inductive basis... From showy lectures, from manuals, from attractive periodicals, the youth is put in possession of ready-made opinions on every conceivable subject; a crude mass of matter, which he is taught to regard as real knowledge. Swollen with this puffy and unwholesome diet, he goes forth into the world regarding himself, like the infant in the nursery,<sup>86</sup> as the centre of all things, the measure of the universe.

He called the secular University of his own making a "complex machinery of cram, which grinds down all specific tendencies and tastes into one uniform mediocrity".<sup>87</sup> The sacred order seemed to have absented itself from the higher regions of learning as University committees discussed their tasks in

a tone as of a lively municipal borough; all the objects of

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<sup>84</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 239.

<sup>85</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 239.

<sup>86</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 240-1.

<sup>87</sup>Pattison *Memoirs*, 89.

science and learning, for which a university exists, being put out of sight by the consideration of the material means of endowing them.<sup>88</sup>

Pattison felt not only alienated from the system but from the new-type individual it manufactured: rather hollow types. "Having no root in itself, such a type of character is liable to become an easy prey to any popular charlatanism or current fanaticism".<sup>89</sup> He spoke as a member of a thinning rank, self-consciously aware of his difference from the mass, the *schwaermerei* around him, product of the indiscriminate proliferation of mass education. In fact, it will be seen, that Pattison's alienation from the new-type society came from a failure to find in "others" what he felt so strongly inside himself: that old consensus on the basic axioms of moral sense, the indispensable *grundlagen* to any kind of discourse or debate. When, on his deathbed, he asked his wife to record his deepest convictions, it was clear that he spoke as someone who had glimpsed the Heavenly City. Glimpsing it, he knew it was not a solitary place:

All the philosopher can do in life, is to bear in mind that its moral value as a possession is transcendent...Remember that the momentary visitations of being are worth any object of ambition, moments of realization of self, if self it is. There is no such joy as this, hold it if once you have seen your way to it, keep it fast. [*Italics Mine*]<sup>90</sup>

## V.

### Self-Consciousness and the Critical Mind.

An all-pervasive feature of the Victorian intellectual tradition was its self-consciousness. Jenkyns traces the phenomenon to a new sense of geo-history, a being for the first time aware of a choice of identities.<sup>91</sup> It is my hypothesis, however, that the new self-consciousness was a general attribute rather than a phenomenon in itself, partner to trends like the

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<sup>88</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 90. He was, however, in favour of an "inclusion" of science itself, as for example in the University's acquisition of the Museum.

<sup>89</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs* 241.

<sup>90</sup> Sparrow, 131.

<sup>91</sup> Jenkyns, 81.

growing separation of the self into an outer, public, and inner, private, being, the new sense of having matured from a former state of mind, the desire for intimacy with another mind, the conscious concern with thinking about culture, or the past, or "England", and the new sense of being critical. It was a sort of thinking about the self thinking.

Pattison had more than his share in this phenomenon. His *Memoirs* began as a proclamation of mental selfhood:

I have no history but a mental history. I have seen no one, known none of the celebrities of my own time intimately or at all and have only an inaccurate memory. All my energy was directed upon one end - to improve myself, to firm my own mind, to sound things thoroughly out. If there is anything of interest in my study it is the study of mental development.<sup>92</sup>

This was, it has been illustrated, contrary to fact. Still, Pattison's sense of his isolated and distinct self was an actual experience and had concrete causes. It will be seen that his self-consciousness was part of an ongoing expulsion from the paradise of collective oneness, a succession of alienations from a once natural mental unity. Something had happened that made Pattison, and fellow academics, discover their inner self and to view them as different from those of others, and to see them separately from former states of consciousness, as if they were other beings. Pattison even remembered the state when he had not been self-conscious, in other words, not able to discriminate his inner from his outer life. He called that early self "characterless", a "shapeless thing".<sup>93</sup> He felt, "there was nothing in me that could be called intelligence or sensibility of feeling".<sup>94</sup> He supposed himself, not inappropriately, to have been "in a state of nature".<sup>95</sup>

Pattison's first alienation was thus from his former self, from the identity of his childhood and the natural extension of his identity to the place and people of his early community. The second alienation was related to the first, for it came from the memory of a seamless oneness with the outside which

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<sup>92</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 1.

<sup>93</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 49.

<sup>94</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 35-6.

<sup>95</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 35-6.

he had once possessed. "I never had that communion of mind with mind and soul with soul, for which I was all the while inwardly pining, pining inconsolably".<sup>96</sup> He interpreted this as the congenital loneliness of the superior mind, advising his sister to accept it as a natural plight.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, since his arrival at Oriel, Pattison experienced a growing wedge separating his "real" from the outer self. This was evident from his chagrin over his compulsive "personation". The word's modern counterpart would be "impersonation", or role playing.

I was trying to supplant that which was my real self and put on a new one...to seem better than I was...This constant personation and considering how I looked in others' eyes, clung about me till very late in life. Had I been thrown into an active profession I should have rubbed it off sooner, but living a student's life, and only emerging into the sunlight at intervals, this nervous self-consciousness adhered to me long. When at last got rid off, it gave way not to the ordinary social friction, but to the substantial development of the real self, which had been all the while dormant within me.<sup>98</sup>

The punishments for failing the code of Oxford etiquette were more bearable than "the yoke of moral tyranny which I fastened round my neck, by the growing anxiety as to what others were thinking of what I said and did".<sup>99</sup>

Given the closed milieu of traditional Oxford life, the dependence on public opinion was fully justified. Life in public view, life in God's view, is a significant aspect of the oral tradition. Newman adopting it purposefully, wrote: "I loved to act as feeling myself in my bishop's sight, as if it were the sight of God".<sup>100</sup> Pattison's desire to conform can be interpreted as the implant of the controlling superego of the community. The new ingredient, in my hypothesis, was his self-consciousness of it, his embarrassment, not for failing to comply, but indeed for complying with the external censorship. But it did not always have the matter-of-course authority: there were times when Pattison referred to the "college blinkers" which made him proud to be an Oriel scholar, when he dreamed of becoming a tutor for

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<sup>96</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 52.

<sup>97</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 147.

<sup>98</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 54-6.

<sup>99</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 60.

<sup>100</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 52.

the sake of the status and the life-style of such a profession, or when he decided to get ordained without so much as a trace of a Crisis of Faith.<sup>101</sup>

He attributed his inner nonconformity to the fact that he had missed out on the socialization which took place in public schools. But his words reveal that the principal separation was a prison of his own creation.

I had been brought up much like Caspar Hauser in the Bavarian wilds, and had, at eighteen, made my first essay of companions of my own age. Here was my second disillusion.<sup>102</sup> This first contact with my species, though it had brought along with it much necessary to be known, had been a disappointment. I had launched out into comradeship with eagerness, because I had been debarred from it, but I found no sympathy for the better and aspiring part of my nature...I was disconcerted to find that none of my new acquaintances had any share of [my] yearning curiosity. But though I felt a certain blank, I don't suppose the disappointment was very grievous to me, being overborne and lost in the amusements and novelties which surrounded me during these two months of May and June.<sup>103</sup>

Since the malady was both cause and effect of his isolation, there was no cure. Among intellectuals, a sense of mental solitude was a widely shared phenomenon. Pattison found that Bulwer Lytton's *Autobiography* revealed similar experiences:

The first term I spent at Cambridge was melancholy enough. My brothers had given me introductions to men of their own standing, older than myself, but not reading men. Quiet and gentlemanly they were, but we had no attraction for each other. I found among them no companion. I made no companion for myself. Surrounded by so many hundred youths of my own years, I was alone.<sup>104</sup>

Pattison's actual, to him immaterial, circumstances completely belied this solitude: he was to belong to a visiting liberal coterie and, in his later years, was known to enjoy tutoring the young women who flocked to him for education.<sup>105</sup> Yet the obsession with loneliness haunted the *Memoirs*. One thing was clear, the sense of the ultimate impossibility of mental intimacy was most acute when set in relief with the mind of others. For

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<sup>101</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 103, 256.

<sup>102</sup>The first disillusion was at his first lecture.

<sup>103</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 104-5.

<sup>104</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 228.

<sup>105</sup>Rhoda Broughton made this the subject of her novel *Belinda* (London: Virago, 1984)

example, he was greatly pained by the want of Newman's good opinion of him.<sup>106</sup> Keenly sensitive to the "watchfulness and sternness of the new dean", he winced under Newman's disagreement with his opinions, his "ponderous and icy 'very likelies'". At the same time he welcomed Newman's rebuke as a way of retrieving him from "the habits of self-consciousness". The evidence indeed suggests that Pattison vehemently desired to be in a membership of some higher harmony of beliefs. His diary, kept while at Newman's "monastery" of Littlemore spoke of his then ardent wish "to come into a better frame of mind", that is to say, to reach the non-arbitrary standards which the Tractarians alone were willing to set.<sup>107</sup> Under the guidance of Newman, the movement had adopted ways which prevented a collapse into plurality and personal disorientation. One way was a conscious return to the ritual observances of communal life. Re-reading his diary he felt estranged from his former frame of mind:

I find breaking in the Diary in these years evidence of abject prostration of mind before some unseen power of which it is not clear whether it is God or the Church. Indeed, I have great difficulty with the Diary in my hand in making intelligible the exact state of my mind and opinions on the whole of the four years from 1843-47. I do not see a single page in the Diary which savours of rationalism, I mean the application of the common reason to religion. I see a great deal of degrading superstition, of fasting and attending endless religious services.<sup>108</sup>

The excerpts which followed testified to an immense and self-conscious attempt of willing the mind to a higher and worthy consensus, to labour, through words and behaviour, an outward unity - hoping the inner sense would follow into harmony:

Sunday Oct. 1.-St. John called me at 5.30, and at 6 went to Matins which with Lauds and Prime take about an hour and a half; afterwards returned to my room and prayed, with some effect, I think. Terce at 9, and at 11 to church, - communion. More attentive and devout than I have been for some time; hope I am coming into a better frame; 37 communicants...<sup>109</sup>

Pattison appeared concerned with a frame of mind rather than

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<sup>106</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 207.

<sup>107</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 169, 171, 184, 191.

<sup>108</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 188-9. For the pervasiveness of the childhood metaphor among Victorian thinkers see David Newsome's *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought*. (1974)

<sup>109</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 190-1.

conscious articles of belief. As Newman said of the movement:

A far more essential unity was that of antecedents, - common history, common memories, an intercourse of mind with mind in the past, and a progress and increase in that intercourse in the present.<sup>110</sup>

Self-consciousness made Pattison see his mental life in highly dramatic terms. The growth of an individual being was analogous to a chrysalis:

An ovum was deposited in the nidus of my mind, blind, formless, no quality but life. Incubation warmed it; it differentiated itself into logical members, then threw out tentacles, which grasped with avidity all matter which they could assimilate from their environment, till the whole conception presented itself organically complete and articulate.<sup>111</sup>

The Tractarian phase was only a prelude to a maturer self; it "dropped off me as another husk which I had outgrown...I could not more have helped what took place within me than I could have helped becoming ten years older".<sup>112</sup>

He attributed his intellectual maturation to his stubborn refusal to accept anything second-hand. However, even in the years 1832-5 there was not enough time for an undergraduate desirous of honours to renegotiate the entire wealth of Western civilization, or just Aristotle's *Logic*, to start from the beginning, without some structure and selection.

My scheme [of self-education rather than of the hand-to-mouth requirements] required years for its realisation; I may say that I have all my life occupied in carrying out and developing the ideal that I conceived in July 1833, the first stirrings of anything like intellectual life within me. Hitherto I had no mind, properly so called, merely a boy's intelligence, receptive of anything I read or heard. I now awoke to the new idea of finding the reasons of things: I began to suspect I might have much to unlearn as well as to learn, and that I must clear my mind of much current opinion which had lodged there.<sup>113</sup>

Unshaken by actual experience, Pattison insisted: "I refused to make a single step upon trust, I must think every point out for myself, and required an alarming amount of time in order to do

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<sup>110</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 44.

<sup>111</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 328.

<sup>112</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 329.

<sup>113</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 120-1.



this".<sup>114</sup> The matter was, however, less a lack of faith than a dissatisfaction with traditional arguments which supported truths which he, as will be seen, never really rejected. Like most of his contemporaries at Oxford, Pattison believed himself, as a true scholar, to possess a "critical" mind. But his acceptance in principle of common sense philosophy's categorical assumption of a common moral sense, suggests that "criticalness" meant in fact only a self-conscious awareness of moral thought and its appeal, or lack thereof, to others.

Pattison's critical "self", in truth, was linked to a third sense of alienation, stronger than that from his former self and from his peers. It was an alienation rooted in a sense of separation from the world at large, from the hollow-types, from the materialism of the committees, and in turn, in an enormous desire to change it, to make it again familiar. The alienation spoke powerfully from one of Pattison's college sermons, preached in the early 1860s:

We perceive a new world underlying the world of sense, law and custom; the material world recedes from our ken in its present immensity without limit in space and in its past history without limit in time; the forces, electrical, chemical, gravitational, that govern the physical world, our own relations to the world around us...all this offers material of pressing importance for us to know, the material of a hundred sciences, a very small part of which can be exhausted in even the longest life. Then there is the social history of the race, in pre-historic periods; then written records from their commencement till now; political theory, the whole train of social evils and necessities loudly calling for aid and cure; art, literature, the history of the human spirit, place this and more, that cannot be enumerated - the *totum scibile* before the mind's eye, and what human intellect does not feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the demand made upon it? [*Italics Mine*]...The finite understanding is crushed when it is brought into the presence of the infinite expanse of the knowable and turns aside in despair.<sup>115</sup>

The existential tone of this passage revealed the extent of Pattison's and his order's feeling of powerlessness. Although they did not know it, they were now but a class among others, having lost the power to lead. They stood *vis à vis*, not inside "the social evils and necessities loudly calling for aid and

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<sup>114</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 140.

<sup>115</sup>Mark Pattison, *Sermons*, 1885, 236. They were given at two year intervals between 1861-5.

cure". The passage also gave a hint of a fourth alienation. the *totum scibile* could no longer be held in one intellect.

At Oxford, there were many who suffered from "critical" distance - from their past community of mind, from each other, from the affairs of the world. Jowett, like Pattison, was sensitive to the dangers of new self-absorption which accompanied the rise of criticism. As he wrote to A.P. Stanley in August 1846:

I feel every day of my life that if one is ever to be any good, idiosyncrasies, eccentricities, irritabilities, excitements, self-consciousnesses, follies of all sorts must be got rid off. No more subjectivity, but I hope you are going on your way rejoicing.<sup>116</sup>

Newman, too, fought against excessive self-consciousness, reflecting that his adolescent Calvinism had succeeded in "isolating me from the objects which surrounded me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, and making me rest in the thought of two and two absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and the Creator".<sup>117</sup> *The Grammar of Assent* emphasised the importance of the objective world, of sense experience, to the true spiritual life.<sup>118</sup> Jowett longed for healthy, objective, reality. Such a reality could only be one which was confirmed by everyone in common, as suggested in a German proverb which he quoted in the same letter: "Was ist wirklich, das ist vernünftig. Was ist vernünftig, das ist wirklich".<sup>119</sup> That such a common, therefore objective, reality was about to break down, made Jowett fear the worst consequences, a religion of self-consciousness: "egotheism". He thus wrote to R.R.W.Lingen on 21 August 1847.

Do you think that the existing state of openness in morals, theology, &c., will 'break up before we are yet old men'? Looking at the progress of criticism and of physical science, at the plasters we have been applying to theology, I fancy that a second Reformation is not impossible even in our time. I hope that whatever comes of it will not be egotheism - which seems a compound of indomitable egotism with the artistic love

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<sup>116</sup>Abbott, 154.

<sup>117</sup>Newman, *Apologia*, 16, 18-9.

<sup>118</sup>John H. Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1979) 68. This balanced approach to spiritual religion is further emphasised in Nicolas Lash's introduction (13).

<sup>119</sup>Abbott, 154.

of truth.<sup>120</sup>

Jowett's worries about an extreme form of private religion and art for art's sake might seem prophetic. They were but reflections of realities of the day, the observation of processes which were, in his days, only beginning to take over a large aspect of contemporary life. A hundred years later, it will be seen, these processes continued to alienate the intellectual elite and make it just as self-consciously critical.

## VI.

### The Victorian Intellectual "Tradition".

The myth of the sacred trust of civilization, although it faced new conditions, it will be shown, was able to hold on to its accustomed position. It worked through its own channels, that is to say, it worked mythically rather than consciously. Its vitality was implicit rather than explicit. The myth was present, for example, when Pattison felt attracted to the Tractarians: their disinterested devotion to the highest - can there be anything higher than the sacred - principles.<sup>121</sup> It was there and even stronger in Pattison's reasons for ultimately leaving them, when he was pulled by an abiding conviction that society and philosophy should not part, that there could be no separate, secular and sacred orders, no distinct scientific and moral reason. Moreover, he rejected the Oxford movement because it would not attempt this synthesis with the new, liberal and secular, order. It was not the first "philosophical" movement that had failed its sacred trust: "The first movement [Noetics], prior to 1830, failed of being a philosophy because it had not breadth enough to compass and express the feeling of its generation".<sup>122</sup> To Pattison, membership in the clerisy expressed itself in his belief that philosophy could not be just a discipline, but had to be part of the mental activity of an entire age and its people.

A philosophy must be the concentrated expression of the life

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<sup>120</sup>Abbott, 160.

<sup>121</sup>See Ch. 2.

<sup>122</sup>Pattison, "Philosophy", 85.

of the period. The thinking of these men [Thomas Arnold, Keble, Blanco White, Whately] did not amount to a philosophy, for they could not grasp in its totality the self-consciousness of their generation...<sup>123</sup>

Really, what Pattison demanded was a moral pre-commitment as to philosophy's purpose and end. As for Pattison himself, he was fully predisposed long before he defined philosophy. As Sparrow wrote:

I believe that this vision of the *totum scibile* as something which was in its totality, but not of course in its detail, really knowable by an individual mind, was one that sustained Pattison through a life of emotional and practical frustration".<sup>124</sup>

When Pattison failed to get elected to the Lincoln Rectorship in 1851 (he did get elected in 1861), it dawned on him that the source of his attitude to public duty was outside his conscious grasp. Although the betrayal by the fellows made him suffer for years he could not retaliate by restricting his commitment to Oxford and through Oxford, humanity.

I never at any precise moment made a formal devotion of myself as Goethe did, who, on entering his thirtieth year, "resolved to deal with life no longer by halves, but to work it out in its totality and beauty - Vom Halben zu gewöhnen, Und im Ganzen Guten Schönen Resolut zu leben."<sup>125</sup>

He equated this devotion to a power, something impelling him to noble action in spite of himself:

With me, on the other hand, there was no intervention of the will; I was moved by a power beyond myself, and by imperceptible steps, to approve and deliberately adopt that course of life which old instinct, like a fate, had chalked out for me.<sup>126</sup>

He wondered why it was that he could never let routine be routine; why he spent too much time on his lectures, or on his articles, "having difficulty to let it go to press".<sup>127</sup> It seems most likely, this chapter having visited the peculiar world in which he spent most of his creative life, that he had inhaled and ingested the compelling power of the old image of society, the

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<sup>123</sup>Pattison, "Philosophy", 84.

<sup>124</sup>Sparrow, 129.

<sup>125</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 308-9. The lines are claimed to have come from *Gesellige Lieder*, *Generalbeichte*.

<sup>126</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 9.

<sup>127</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 253.

old "ought to" along with the public and oral traditions of Oxford life. Indeed, Pattison's sense of wholeness, could not have sprung from anywhere else. Life outside Oxford was fragmented, pointing to personal reductions and limitations. However, inside the academic's world, the myth of wholeness still found plenty of sustenance: in the seamlessness of the day-to-day, in the overlap of residence and duty, teaching and private time, personal and public identity. Indeed, none of the trustees of the good of society acted ultimately from self-conscious reflection on their disposition but under the power and energy of the myth of the sacred trust of civilization which is also a myth of "oneness", sustained by the intimate and seamless realities of their brotherly lives.

However, it has been seen, the world beyond the Oxford walls also impinged. No one at home inside the Oxford enclave could be insensitive to the fact that the profane world beyond obeyed laws of its own. Pattison was to learn this lesson more than once. There was, first of all, the matter of university reform:

I do not underrate the value of what was done by the Executive Commission of 1854. The abolition of the then close fellowships opened the colleges to the amount of talent and energy hitherto unknown in them...But this sweeping away of local claims was nearly all the good that the Commission of 1854 did. After all the contention about the professorate, what the Commission did in this direction was without method - crude, sporadic.<sup>128</sup>

In other words, Pattison experienced not being in control. There was also the experience made through a passing phase of "literary" activity:

I had in short essays proved to myself that I could write that which attracted attention. I wanted to be doing more of this sort - to be before the world, in fact, as a writer. I shared the vulgar fallacy that a literary life meant a life devoted to the making of books, and that not to be always coming before the public was to be idle.<sup>129</sup>

His literary ambitions also led to a contribution to the infamous *Essays and Reviews*, a publication which created a tempest and of which more will be said in this section.<sup>130</sup> The

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<sup>128</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 304.

<sup>129</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 309.

experience could only further a sense of powerlessness. In any event, it confirmed Pattison's disenchantment with the new authority: the public.

No topic excites the English world more than a religious topic, yet there is no public in this country for a treatment of theology...It is demanded of him by public opinion that he shall be an advocate and not a critic. For myself, I refused to attempt any defence or to enter into controversy with my critics. We were at cross purposes and there was an end. But I resolved to wash my hands of theology and even of Church history, seeing that there existed in England no proper public for either.<sup>131</sup>

In his article for *Mind*, he unequivocally blamed the world of Oxford for having lost momentum, hence power over future events. But the very fact of self-examination showed that he had not fully grasped the actual extent to which the outside world was contesting this power, how much of it had already been transferred by the reforms of 1828-32.

Indeed, within the walls of the Oxford colleges, or for that matter, the world of academe in general, the recognition of powerlessness was nearly impossible. After all, day after day, Pattison could taste a measure of his power over students and fellow minds. No negative experience with the outside world could ever completely undermine this sense and, commensurate with it, his sense of duty and compassion. What Charles Davis said of Balliol teachers, could be said of Victorian Oxford men in general: "They taught because they had ideas to impart, and this was the most obvious opportunity of imparting them; because the College had need of them, and they knew what a power [*Italics Mine*] the College might become". The memorial tablet in the College Chapel of Balliol had this to praise about Jowett:

Desiring neither fame nor influence he won the love of men and was a power in their lives; and seeking no disciples he taught to many the greatness of the world and of man's mind.<sup>132</sup>

This inscription demands some qualification, for no one can deny that Jowett's contribution to *Essays and Reviews* was part of a clerical bid for power and moral supremacy.<sup>133</sup> The bid, however,

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<sup>130</sup>In Ch. 5.

<sup>131</sup>Pattison, *Memoirs*, 317.

<sup>132</sup>Davis, 198.

reflected the attitudes of a traditional intellectual elite which had as yet not grasped its new and more modest position in modern society. The truth was, as a traditional order, it was incapable of perceiving its interests in a narrow individualistic way or even in terms of the modern concept of class-interest. Its aim was, therefore, nothing less than the interests of humankind. In their search for power, the writers were, therefore, also completely disinterested.

The bid for power, it is also known, was unsuccessful. But this did not deter Jowett from seeking influence in other ways. But could it be said that he exercised influence? Faber, for example, claims that as Jowett's "influence strengthened and lengthened, the contribution of Balliol to national life became increasingly pre-eminent", so much so that "the Balliol quota of famous public servants seemed to top the bill".<sup>134</sup> Jowett achieved this influence through the methods of the old regime. Having spent eight days in the company of Gladstone while being a guest of the Earl of Camperdown, a former student, Jowett was able to form an important political alliance. Jowett's election as Balliol's master came through the intervention of Gladstone, who, on the recommendation of Robert Lowe through whom he inquired of Jowett if he could do anything for him, promoted Dr. Robert Scott, the old Master of Balliol, to the Deanery of Rochester, clearing the way for Jowett.

But where political power actually rested became clear from Jowett's engagement with the Indian department. During his entire administration, Jowett struggled to produce a new-type individual: critical, bright, yet disciplined and loyal, in short, a fully rounded character. The prolonged negotiations with the Indian department, requesting the age of candidates to be raised and the probation at Balliol to be prolonged, implies, however, that even the Balliol products were unable to withstand the trials of the Indian service. In short, Jowett had no control over the effects of the university experience. "Efforts to extend

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<sup>133</sup>The periodical was to have been a forum for liberal theological views and to be as intellectual as the academic annuals, *Oxford Essays* or the *Cambridge Essays*.

<sup>134</sup>Faber, 358.

the probation period were in vain", wrote Jowett's biographers, "Lord Cross, while acknowledging the debt due to the universities, and expressing his appreciation of the 'part which Balliol College had taken in training and preparing the students for their Indian career', regarded the 'curtailment of the period of probabation as an inevitable consequence of the recent change in the limits of age". Clearly, the Indian Department, not Jowett, was in control. In 1889, in spite of Jowett's protestations, the time which probationers were to spend at Balliol was reduced to one year.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup>Faber, 353, and Abbott, II, 349-50.



## Chapter 4.

"Loyal to Philosophy's true purpose:  
Pattison, Jowett, and Company -  
in the service of the Transcendent".

## I.

A Powerful Attraction.

The world of Oxford with its oral traditions, its overlapping personal and vocational realms, was not the only enclave resistant to the experience of modern life. There were many areas which were literally worlds apart: the public schools, the country halls, the Church in its many manifestations, the large and often unprivate Victorian home, the Army, in short, the numerous places where domestic and professional life ran into one another seamlessly. Victorian life as a whole was more oral: the scriptures were read out loud, poetry was recited, memoirs and novels were dramatised by the author's voice; sermons were tasted and compared, prices haggled over, melodrama participated in without embarrassment. Dickens, like most other Victorian writers, wrote for the spoken word.<sup>1</sup> Surely, all this must have had its effect on the conscious world of ideas. Virginia Woolf suspected as much when she wrote in 1939 that she was sure that "one's life is not confined to one's body and what one says and does; one is living all the time in relation to certain background rods or conceptions". She felt their power; they made her spend the morning writing, when she might be walking, running a shop, or learning something useful. It was one of those "obscure elements" in life that has never been much discussed.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, it is impossible to prove a cause-effect relationship between the life led by a certain class of people and their idea world. But often the ideas themselves point to a

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<sup>1</sup>Gillian Beer, "The Victorians in Virginia Woolf:1882-1941", *Dickens and Other Victorians*, ed. Joanne Shattock (London: MacMillan, 1989) 214.

<sup>2</sup>Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past", *Virginia Woolf - Moments of Being*. Ed. Jeanne Schulkind (Sussex:The University Press, 1976) 73.

different way of life. They seem like windows on a separate world. This is only too true of a very Victorian invention: criticism. In fact, one of the most controversial works of criticism at the time, *Essays and Reviews*, demonstrates just this point.<sup>3</sup> The self-awareness of being critical pointed not to one but two worlds, not just that world which they wished to change but the world where the critics themselves were at home. This section, concerned with the Victorian intellectual tradition's self-awareness as a "critical" tradition, attempts to demonstrate that *Essays and Reviews* owed its conception and birth to the existence of a class whose image of society was that of the ancien regime. The ideas which this class proposed, although hailed and condemned as "liberal", also held on to a mental image of society which was completely traditional. In this imagined society, the position of the intellectual elite was very near the top of the social pyramid and held commensurate duties and powers.

This conception was not without anchor in reality. It was never a "false consciousness",<sup>4</sup> floating around long after the conditions and functions of its existence had ceased. On the contrary, as the preceding chapter illustrated, these terms of reference were rooted in an actual experience of life. In spite of "government" reform, the personalistic and particularistic world of university life was never completely undermined. Its reality was a fact so powerful that even in 1900, David Watson Rannie, the author of *Oriel College*, felt the need to remark:

Again, the duplex character of many academic phenomena at Oxford and Cambridge, which so incurably puzzles the foreigner, has even for those who are native this constant difficulty, that in the University and the Colleges the personal element is of such unequal strength.<sup>5</sup>

A "foreigner", the geographical metaphor is hardly accidental, might be anyone not initiated into Oxford's mysteries.<sup>6</sup> Merely

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<sup>3</sup>One of the reviewers in the *Saturday Review* (Mar. 2, 1861) did recognize the conservative side of the periodical. Abbott, 296.

<sup>4</sup>Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1968) 50.

<sup>5</sup>Rannie, 154.

describing the scholars' experience invited a different, and an older, language. Contrary to the outside world of industrial and instrumental relationships as decried by Ruskin and Carlyle, the hall, the chapel, the library, the common room, the lecture room of the Oxford College, were constant places, lasting backgrounds to relationships forged between mentor and pupils, patrons and clients.

Men like Jowett and Pattison, it has been seen, were part of a significant contingent of intellectuals, indeed, in many ways still an order in a traditional sense.<sup>7</sup> Their thought is lasting proof of their basic incapability of conceiving a philosophy of individualism, of self-interest, or class-interest.<sup>8</sup> A philosophy as a discipline purely in the service of knowledge, without application to the perfection of society, simply could not be imagined. Such a reduction was contrary to their experience as an elite in the traditional sense. The next two chapters are devoted to illustrating that the experience of life as academics gave rise and sustained a sort of "natural" religion, natural in the sense that it was completely filial and unassailable by intellectual arguments. T.S. Eliot would have called it a "lower" form of religion, springing naturally from day-to-day activities, without extraneous effort, falling completely outside the destructive glance of conscious introspection.<sup>9</sup>

Before I proceed, however, a few remarks about the general outline of this chapter. There is good reason to begin with "the philosophical background", by taking a look at Pattison's and Jowett's defensive definition of an activity that hitherto did not have to establish its legitimacy. Clearly, philosophy as a widely practised activity could no longer be taken for granted. Groping for a definition of philosophy's true

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<sup>6</sup>For a genuine foreigner's immediate recognition that the ancient universities were a world to themselves see Henry James' "Two Excursions" and "English Vignettes", *Portrait of Places* (1883) 240-6, 301-306.

<sup>7</sup>See Intro. and T.S. Eliot, *Notes*, 35-50.

<sup>8</sup>This will become particularly evident from Jowett's introduction to the *Dialogues of Plato*, see below.

<sup>9</sup>T.S. Eliot, *Notes*, 19-22.

nature and purpose, and how it is to be made available to society, led Jowett - and not only Jowett, but many Victorians - to the classics and Plato. Speaking of Jowett's pedagogic attempts at inventing a new national mythology does not go to the heart of his *familial* concern with society itself. Moreover, it ignores the invisible presence of a prior sympathy with the world of antiquity, or the underlying (static) conception of society, and language, which invited such trust in the classics' objective power to form character. What, for example, led Thomas Arnold to claim closer affinity with two civilizations of antiquity than with the eighteenth century,<sup>10</sup> or D.F.Tovey to hear classical simplicity in Beethoven's later works?<sup>11</sup> This territory, has not been mapped. This chapter will demonstrate that underlying Jowett's critical and relational activities was a life-relationship with the past itself, one which he was often quite aware of. He was also aware of the fact that it was only a minority of a minority which felt the classics' magnetic pull. This he hoped to rectify in making the classics available to the new professions, the new-type men around him.

## II.

### The "Philosophical" Background.

Mark Pattison, in his essay entitled "Philosophy at Oxford", in *Mind* (1876), felt that philosophy's duty was to attempt the widest embrace of everything: "It must be the concentrated expression of the life of the period". This assertion was a condemnation of any flights from the currents in liberal society, great as the temptation might be.<sup>12</sup> At the same time it was clear that the new-type society, with its indifference and even hostility to philosophical synthesis, could not really be accepted. It was a threat to philosophy. The translation of the commercial principles of achievement, measured success, and efficiency into education had already led to the

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<sup>10</sup> Frank Turner, *Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven; Yale University, 1981) 27.

<sup>11</sup> Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 173.

<sup>12</sup> Pattison, "Philosophy", 84-5.

deplorable "system of honours and prizes".<sup>13</sup> Philosophy, the creative spirit, the imagination, smarted under such priorities. "Philosophical speculation is not of a nature within the control of commercial cause-effect". But as yet, "Philosophy at Oxford" had kept its unspecialized nature. Pattison felt it was a "temper, a habit of mind, not so much anything per se". It had "no substantive existence of its own":

It is an appendage of our classical training. "Classics" have always been the strength of Oxford's tradition...Even in the feeblest of times we have held on as well as we could to the substance of the classical writers...Thus it has come to pass that of the great encyclopedia of Greek thought which goes under the name of Aristotle, we have never let go our hold on the Logic and the Ethics.<sup>14</sup>

Two recent works by Oxonians had proved this. They were, as if to confirm Pattison's point, not narrowly philosophical but "critical": T.H.Green and T.H.Grose's 300 pages of introductory commentary on *Hume's Philosophical Works* (1875), a book which according to Pattison numbered 560 pages in total; and Benjamin Jowett's translation of *The Dialogues of Plato* (1875), whose "introduction and appendices bring them into our catalogue of philosophical books", among them "the criticism of utilitarianism in the introduction to the *Philebus*".<sup>15</sup> This could be construed as evidence of the plight of philosophy in a reformed university, a sign of speculative depression. Nothing was further from the truth. Looking closer at the background of Jowett's critical interpretation of the *Dialogues*, as well as the critical discussion of utilitarianism which precedes the interpretation of *Philebus* allows, however, important insights into the plight of the metaphysically inclined, that is to say, traditional intellectual.

The classics, as Richard Jenkyns' and Frank Turner's studies confirm,<sup>16</sup> were the characteristic sport of "a minority

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<sup>13</sup>Pattison, "Philosophy", 88.

<sup>14</sup>Pattison, "Philosophy", 83, 90.

<sup>15</sup>Pattison, "Philosophy", 94.

<sup>16</sup>Frank Turner, *Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (1981) and Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (1981) are comprehensive studies of the phenomenon of Victorian Hellenism. The most recent discussion of Hellenism is found in G.W.Clark ed.. *Rediscovering Hellenism: The Hellenic Inheritance and the*  
(Footnote continued)

of a minority", almost all "public men",<sup>17</sup> none of whom pursued the classics for themselves, but with an eye to missionary uses.<sup>18</sup> Jenkyns and Turner both explore the relationship of this minority to the classics in great detail. Turner, in speaking of the "tyranny of the nineteenth-century experience over that of Greek antiquity" against the struggling recognition of the "variety of the Greek experience itself", sums up much of Jenkyns' general line of interpretation.<sup>19</sup> There can be no doubt that both historians considered "Hellenism" a Victorian invention. Turner's refers to a "revival" of Plato, who now had his uses, either as father of reform or of idealism.<sup>20</sup> Such analysis is based on an assumption which James Bowen states openly, namely, that Hellenism served "the need for ideologies which would inform, sustain and guide the new classes".<sup>21</sup> Jowett would not have rejected this interpretation of his activities, although, it will be seen, his concept of class was nearer to that of T.S.Eliot than Marx.<sup>22</sup> As Turner observes:

He saw that the reform of the university would diminish the influence of any Church and that in the future it would be left largely to laymen and secular institutions to set the moral tone of the society. It was into this moral breach that Jowett introduced Plato as a philosopher whose thought could sustain traditional moral values and inculcate a new sense of secular duty among the educated classes of the nation.<sup>23</sup>

Jowett seemed convinced that his own training in the classics had, indirectly, nurtured his moral and philosophical sense, providing as it were two important social virtues: discipline yet critical independence of mind. He was interested in this effect

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<sup>16</sup>(continued)

English Imagination (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989). There is also David Newsome's *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought*, (London: John Murray, 1974), for the finer distinctions between Aristotelians and Platonists, which, it will be seen, appear to be denied by Jowett and Pattison. Indeed, both argue for really one basic, cumulative, philosophical tradition to which each age has added its wisdom.

<sup>17</sup>Jenkyns, 62.

<sup>18</sup>Frank Turner speaks of the "useful past" (15).

<sup>19</sup>Turner, 7.

<sup>20</sup>Turner, 416.

<sup>21</sup>James Bowen, "Education, ideology and the ruling class: Hellenism and English public schools in the nineteenth century", *Rediscovering Hellenism: The Hellenic Inheritance and the English Imagination*, G.W.Clark, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), 161.

<sup>22</sup>See Intro. and Ch.5.

<sup>23</sup>Turner, 415.

of the classics and not in their historical value, although he appreciated that as well. Abbott, who knew Jowett personally, wrote:

His philosophical teaching had a peculiar charm. The course of lectures on the History of Philosophy became from year to year more comprehensive. It had no immediate relation to the examination system as then constituted, but helped to quicken men's intellects, and gave them larger views about the book they were reading.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, Jowett himself must have been aware that Balliol offered more than conscious learning. He surrounded himself year after year with an elect party of students at Askrigg, integrating in microcosm the divergent "classes" found in society:

a 'commanding' young cricketer, whom he obliged to work hard for an honours degree; a Scottish nobleman who repaid his tuition by a first class degree and a life of quiet public service; an Irish nobleman, also persuaded to work for an honours degree, who subsequently filled a long succession of the highest and most onerous offices of State; and a clever hard-working Scot, educated in Glasgow.<sup>25</sup>

As Master of Balliol (1870-1893), Jowett became known for his ambition to make Balliol a presence in national life, a "famous nursery of public men". Michael Holroyd, Strachey's biographer, claims Jowett wished to "inoculate England", that is to say, at least the Civil Service, with "his college alumni", men who had absorbed a moral-critical spirit along with the will to disciplined work.<sup>26</sup> While Jowett felt drawn to the classics himself to the point that they influenced his English prose, the classics, to have impact, required diffusion on a larger scale. Moreover, for his translation of Plato's *Dialogues* to fulfil its ideological purposes, Jowett required, it will be seen, to invent a philosophical tradition. His introduction to the various dialogues were, therefore, not only analytically interpretative but synthetic, integrating the truth of the past with later confluents to this one and only true tradition.

Jowett's work fully kept the pact with his invention: the broad philosophical "tradition". This tradition, it will be

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<sup>24</sup>Abbott, 131.

<sup>25</sup>Faber, 329.

<sup>26</sup>Holroyd also considered him "one of the supreme influences in Victorian England".

seen, was accumulative rather than original, summing up the totality of thought past and present.<sup>27</sup> Nothing, in this tradition, could ever be lost. There could be no displacement of one theory by a better one. Everything groped toward one truth.<sup>28</sup>

The world of knowledge is always dividing more and more. Every truth is at first the enemy of every other truth. Yet without division there can be no truth, nor any complete truth without the reunion of the parts into a whole. And hence the coexistence of opposites in the unity of the idea is regarded by Hegel as the supreme principle<sup>29</sup> of philosophy, to be an ultimate principle of the mind.

In this scheme of things, Hegel produced no new philosophy, only "the perfect self-consciousness of philosophy",<sup>30</sup> although Jowett appreciated his achievement in reconciling all divisions in "the highest conception".<sup>31</sup> Newman, who apparently made a wide circle around German Idealism, groped to say something similar with the concept of the "imperial intellect".<sup>32</sup> He, too, conceived philosophy in broad terms, as a "connecting faculty", not to be confused with knowledge, the end of philosophy, but rather a "Reason exercised upon Knowledge", the "power of referring every thing to its true place in the universal system", making "every thing lead to every thing else".

Philosophy cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be surprised...it discerns the whole in each part, the end in each beginning, the worth of each interruption, the measure of each delay, because it always knows where it is, and how its path lies from one point to another.

He also feared for its breadth:

True philosophy admits of being carried out to any extent; it is its very test, that no knowledge can be submitted to it with which it is not commensurate, and which it cannot annex

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<sup>27</sup>This evidence completely contradicts Frank Turner's argument that Jowett's career as classical scholar was a "surrogate" activity for his theological and philosophical ambitions, thwarted by the negative reception of *Essays and Reviews*. Turner is not wrong about the continuity: both were the result of Jowett's conception of philosophy. (Turner, 416)

<sup>28</sup>Bryan Magee, "Towards The Uncertain", in *The Weekend Guardian* (Sept. 9-10, 1989) 2-3.

<sup>29</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 9.

<sup>30</sup>Abbott, 92. (Letter to A.P. Stanley, 20 Aug. 1856) Like most English critics, Jowett, as will be seen with his reference to the common moral sense, was too much an empiricist to use German Idealism but selectively.

<sup>31</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, 5, I, 120.

<sup>32</sup>Ker, *Life of Newman*, 395-6.



to its territory. But the theory of the narrow or bigoted has already run out within short limits, and a vast anxious region lies beyond, unoccupied and in rebellion.<sup>33</sup>

Jowett shared Newman's apprehensions for the future of true philosophy. Faithful to his own ideal of a "unity in which all time and all existence were gathered up",<sup>34</sup> Jowett not only translated but "interpreted" the *Dialogues* of Plato within the totality which formed present knowledge. The general introduction indeed promised to look at subjects like Utility and Communism, and at the "Kantian and Hegelian philosophies".<sup>35</sup> However, the priority of philosophy was not to interfere with the discovery of truth. Applying historical criticism, Jowett warned of the danger of attributing Platonic thought with the idea of a "philosophical system", when "system had as yet not taken possession of philosophy".<sup>36</sup> Such warnings signalled a desire to get to the original Plato hiding "behind accretions" of later ages, and to interpret Plato "from himself".<sup>37</sup> This approach to the classics was modern. It saw the past as a distant object, to be defined and studied in its own context and for its own sake.

But such an approach was also contrary to "philosophy" as hailed by Pattison and even by Jowett himself. Jowett's blindness to this contradiction provides the key to understanding Jowett's actual relationship with the classics, a relationship which, as will be seen, was typical of a class of Victorians as a whole. The structure of Jowett's argument, it will be seen, as well as the premises on which he based his final appeal, reveal that Jowett's relationship to the classics was really two-fold. On the one hand it was critical: Jowett historified the arguments in *Philebus* by analysing them within the context of the Sophists, the Cyrenaics, the Cynics. But on the other hand, the relationship was instinctive, a matter of felt truth rather than analysis, a consensus not of mind but intuited oneness and agreement with the broader ethical basis and the experience of life contained in the *Dialogues*. It was this side of the

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<sup>33</sup>Ker, Newman, 164-5.

<sup>34</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, i, xvii-xviii.

<sup>35</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, i, xviii.

<sup>36</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, i, viii.

<sup>37</sup>Abbott, 261, 265.

relationship that made Jowett fearless and confident about the powers of critical interpretation and the objective reality of a shared moral sense.

Jowett was ill-disposed towards the Utilitarian philosophers. The introduction to *Philebus* aimed at murder by dissection, an act to be understood as a service to the ideal of philosophy.<sup>38</sup> He began with a denial of utilitarianism's claim to being a philosophy. The idea of evaluating pleasure by its consequences, Jowett pointed out, had been previously undertaken by Socrates. However, unlike Utilitarians, Socrates did not reduce all types of pleasure to one principle.<sup>39</sup> Such a reduction would have been contrary to philosophy's enlarging and speculative purpose. Moreover, with the correct meaning of pleasure and happiness, for example, the question about "whose happiness", requiring so much debate,<sup>40</sup> Jowett wondered why anyone should wish to "make an ambiguous word the corner-stone of a moral philosophy".<sup>41</sup>

These were mere quibbles, compared to Jowett's main grievance: Utilitarianism's inability to fit into the sum of human knowledge, the accumulated wisdom of human experience. Ultimately, the problem was not one of sound logic but of connecting up with society. "Ideas", he claimed, must "also be psychologically true - they must agree with our experience, they must accord with the habits of minds".<sup>42</sup> The belief in the importance for a philosophy to make sense in common experience led Jowett to decline a debate with the actual argument: a futile engagement since utilitarian philosophy, not that he would call it that, was completely outside the "general" experience of society.

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<sup>38</sup>Turner, 416. Turner does not consider this very disinterested scholarship. But it was the present not the past that Jowett examined. Moreover, Jowett bases his final appeal on common experience, not on Plato.

<sup>39</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 29-30.

<sup>40</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 44. This was evident in "the second age" of utilitarians, embodied by John S. Mill's modifications, in Jowett's view, because the paradoxical manner of Bentham had lost its novelty.

<sup>41</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 12, 30.

<sup>42</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 38-9.

There have been many reasons why not only Plato but mankind in general have been unwilling to acknowledge that 'pleasure is the chief good'...To many, the Utilitarian or hedonistic mode of speaking has appeared to be at variance with religion and with any higher conception of politics and morals. It has not satisfied their<sup>43</sup> imagination, it has offended their taste. [Italics Mine]

Philosophy, Socratic or utilitarian, it did not matter, lived or died according to the people whose imagination it could capture.

Jowett's argument that philosophy's true nature was to elevate and lead practice and not vice versa, was similarly based on an appeal to "common" experience:

To elevate pleasure the most fleeting of all things into a general idea seems to them a contradiction. They do not desire to bring down their theory to the level of their practice. The simplicity of the 'greatest happiness' principle has been acceptable to philosophers, but the world in general has been slow to receive it. [Italics Mine]<sup>44</sup>

Common experience formed the linchpin of Jowett's ultimate plea against growing rumours, spread by the utilitarians, of moral uncertainty:

There is no greater uncertainty about the duty of obedience to parents and to the law of the land than about the properties of triangles. Unless we are looking for a new moral world which has no marrying and giving in marriage, there is no greater disagreement in theory about the right relations of the sexes than about the composition of water. To what then is to be attributed this opinion which has been often entertained about the uncertainty of morals. Chiefly to this, - that philosophers have not always distinguished the theoretical and the casuistical uncertainty of morals from their practical certainty.<sup>45</sup>

Unlike his seventeenth and eighteenth-century forebears, Jowett needed to acknowledge this experience. But he was certain that it was objectively present in every member of his audience.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 30.

<sup>44</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv., 30-31. Arguably, Jowett bore homage to the new order of society, making popularity the verdict of truth. Certainly, no one in 1876 could be immune to this new yardstick of measurement. But there is more in the text than an appeal to popular agreement. Jowett argued from the point of society as a whole because philosophy which ignored it was a diminution.

<sup>45</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv., 38.

<sup>46</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 30-31. He saw it as a development in  
(Footnote continued)

All societies had morals. It was the content, the quiddity of his own society's moral ideas that he was interested in. This he found in philosophy and religion.

The schools of ancient philosophy which seem so far from us - Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans, a few modern teachers such as Kant and Bentham have each of them supplied 'moments' of thoughts to the world. The life of Christ has embodied a divine love, wisdom, patience, reasonableness. From his image, however imperfectly handed down to us, the modern world has received a standard more perfect in idea than the societies of ancient times, but also further from practice.<sup>47</sup>

Before Jowett could accept utilitarianism as a philosophy proper, it would have to carry on the mighty stream from the past and gather in it his and civilization's cumulative experience. The "Greatest Happiness Principle" would have to give way to the "Noblest Happiness Principle". The latter principle was nothing if not a manifesto for the Sacred Trust:

Transfer the thought of happiness to another life, dropping the external circumstances which form so large a part of our idea of happiness in this, and the meaning of the word becomes indistinguishable from holiness, harmony, wisdom, love. By the slight addition 'of others', all the associations of the word are altered; we seem to have passed over from one theory of morals to the opposite.<sup>48</sup>

Such a concern for the happiness of others was a truly aristocratic concern, the expression of duty in the form of care for those for whom his order felt deeply responsible. It certainly could not be a principle which was "psychologically true" for those who were being taken care of, or, in the nineteenth century, wanted caring for.<sup>49</sup> But for those whose life had put them in a position of caring, the noblest happiness

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<sup>46</sup>(continued)

which childhood, education, language, conversation, being part of human civilization, unconsciously, effortlessly, implanted such a sense.

<sup>47</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv. 32-3. This maintained not only the complete unity of all philosophy but explained why Jowett, unlike later critics, saw no contradiction between Christianity and Hellenism. Each was but a tributary stream toward the perfection of moral sensibilities. See also Richard Jenkyns, who is greatly puzzled why the study of Greek in the schools and universities was directed to "authors so different from the New Testament in dialect, let alone belief" (68, 199).

<sup>48</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 35.

<sup>49</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 38-9.

principle beckoned with irresistible force. Ruskin, Carlyle, Marx, Arnold - they have all been mentioned before - argued eloquently and vehemently against anything falling short of it.<sup>50</sup>

Although a "class analysis" was light-years from Jowett's mind, it struck him that in matter of morals and behaviour, conscious reflection, philosophy, played only a little role. Morals, he had shown, were not the product of reflection, but unconscious instincts. Reason had no such instantaneous power. Here Jowett pivoted very close to the very mystery which this thesis attempts to solve:

Words such as truth, justice, honesty, virtue, love, have a simple meaning; they have become sacred to us, - 'the word of God', written on the human heart: to no other words can the same associations be attached. We cannot explain them adequately on principles of utility; in attempting to do so we rob them of their true character. We give them a meaning often paradoxical and distorted, and generally weaken their signification in common language, and as words influence men's thoughts, we fear that the hold of morality may also be weakened, and the sense of duty impaired, if virtue and vice are explained only as the qualities which<sup>51</sup> do or do not contribute to the pleasure of the world.

He pointed out that the most radical of the utilitarians, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, had voted for the truth of his propositions with their feet. Was not the conduct of their lives impeccable and thus proof of the power of innate moral convictions and that "the rule of human life is not dependent on the theories of philosophers: we know what our duties are for the most part before we speculate about them".<sup>52</sup>

In short, Jowett recognized that he, and others, acted out of a compulsion, some moral sense that evaporated under

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<sup>50</sup>See Chapter 2.

<sup>51</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 41.

<sup>52</sup>Jowett, *Dialogues*, iv, 38. The logic of Jowett's attitude ultimately led to A.J.Ayer's definition of the purpose of philosophy as "the application and extension of moral standards which are at least nominally accepted" rather than "the security of the standards themselves". A.J.Ayer even suggests "that our present need is not for new principles but rather for the diffusion and wider application of those that we already profess". *Metaphysics and Common Sense* (London: Macmillan, 1969) 7. Newman, too, recognized the lightening-quickness that guided moral acts. (Ker, Newman, 164.)

self-conscious contemplation. Conscious reflection came later, was extraneous to it. In more recent theological language, this unconscious nature of moral action has been ascribed to the power of myth, a power evaporating indeed under conscious reflection. Trying to explain why the theologian continued to respond to the ancient myth of "the universal brotherhood of man", Walter Hollenweger wrote:

We have a "split" relationship with the myth. On the one side of the relationship we stand vis à vis the myth uncomprehendingly, as strangers, estranged. On the other side of this relationship we feel enthusiastic about the beautiful stories told by the myths, without recognizing their truth-content.<sup>53</sup>

More than anything else, it was the intuitive aspect of the relationship, the unarticulated bond with the ideas of the past, that drew Jowett to philosophy, and from there to the classics and religion. Not only Jowett felt this bond. A quick look at Jenkyns' work on *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* will illustrate that the intellectual tradition's bond with the classics originated and was sustained by an instinctual rather than rational unity of experience.<sup>54</sup>

The ranks of classics-lovers knew no parties; it included Newman, Gladstone, Ruskin and Mill in its ranks.<sup>55</sup> This catholicity aside, Jenkyns finds the Victorians' attitude to antiquity often puzzling and paradoxical. Their history of ancient Greece seems a travesty.<sup>56</sup> The conceit of Victorians in comparing themselves to the ancients, bringing Greek gods into their sitting rooms, their correspondence and their poetry is indeed amusing. But the controversy over Ruskin's (correct) insight that the Greeks had no taste for the picturesque in the landscape,<sup>57</sup> was, however, not ridiculous but deeply transparent

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<sup>53</sup>Walter Hollenweger, *Umgang mit Mythen, Interkulturelle Theologie*, 2 vol, II. (Munich, Chr.Kaiser, 1982), 12. "wir haben ein gespaltenes Verhältnis mit dem Mythos. Auf der einen Seite stehen wir der Welt der Mythen fremd und fassungslos gegenüber... Auf der anderen Seite begeistern wir uns für die schönen Geschichten, die der Mythos erzählt, ohne dass wir jedoch ihren Wahrheitsgehalt erkennen".

<sup>54</sup>See Bibliographic Index.

<sup>55</sup>Jenkyns, 16. He considered the classics "subtly pervasive" rather than a movement, or a school.

<sup>56</sup>Jenkyns, 81-6.

of bonds with the past which overrode the separation of time and had nothing to do with history.

Admittedly, the bond was obscured by a sense of alienation, the sensation of being far removed in time, which, to Jenkyns, was the bequest of the Romantics.<sup>58</sup> The emotional swoon of the Romantics reflected a new sense of time, and related to this, the artists' alienation from the artists of antiquity and from society as a whole.<sup>59</sup> The Renaissance received the Greek text and absorbed its contents without historical qualifications, a fact which attests to a natural relationship with the ancient mind. In the Victorian age, however, history was a necessary mediator of a relationship which had become self-conscious. The introduction of history as the new element in this relationship had in fact a striking resemblance to the rise of "affection" in the family - substituting for the unbroken continuity of the household.<sup>60</sup>

Another example of the alienation was the widespread feeling among poets and critics that the modern age could not produce an "epic". No one, not even Jenkyns, asked why they continued to be transported by them, why they shed tears over the death of Priam, and invoked the Olympian gods and demigods with such intimacy. Alienation is, however, as Pattison's case has shown, a matter of having been at home in the world from which one felt estranged. In my hypothesis, men and women like Thomas Arnold, his son Matthew Arnold, George Eliot, John Ruskin, and younger converts to the classics' charm, like T.S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf, found in the past a patria, a familiar landscape of feeling. Their metaphors of youth and childhood betrayed, in the words of contemporary psychologists, a "home valency" which preceded any form of historical analysis.

This side of the relationship was natural, therefore,

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<sup>57</sup>Jenkyns, 165.

<sup>58</sup>Jenkyns, 22.

<sup>59</sup>Jenkyns, 39-52. Jenkyns appropriately associates a sense of history with the alienation which is part of the new self-consciousness.

<sup>60</sup>Turner, 31, 79.

unanalytical.<sup>61</sup> Self-conscious as he was about his affection for the ancients, Ruskin found that his relationship with the classics was really beyond analysis, that the meaning of the classics could not be "interpreted". One actually entered another chamber. The veracity of the ancient texts was such that "no merely historical investigator can understand".<sup>62</sup> The same properties had be shared by ancients and moderns before there would be any communication. "We shall be able to follow [the ancients] into this last circle of their faith only in the degree in which the better parts of our own beings have been also stirred by the aspects of nature, or strengthened by her laws". Using the optical metaphor of a "mirror temper", Ruskin insisted that antiquity reflected something already extant in the modern enquirer. "We can only understand it so far as we have the same perception of the same Truth".<sup>63</sup>

This subconscious affinity, not historical criticism, was the true basis of any understanding of the Greek myths and of their educative power. "You shall be bettered only by them if you are already hard at work in bettering yourself...in a furnace of your own heating". The actual process of causation was elusive. The myths influenced "indirectly, occultly", evaporating under conscious analysis: "When you are bettered by them it shall be partly with a general acceptance of their influence, so constant and subtly that you shall [not] be ...conscious of it". Indeed, when it came to the efficacy of the ancient myths, analysis, or history, were not only powerless but destructive. The identity of the myths was "vital", that is, not in the department of thought but more like "the healthy digestion of food", bringing us full circle to Jowett's arguments against utilitarianism at the beginning of this discussion.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Jowett, as has been seen, reflected on it self-consciously, but stopped short from penetrating the mystery of innate attraction, taking it for an objective and experientially verifiable phenomenon.

<sup>62</sup>John Ruskin, *The Queen of the Air, Being a Study of Greek Myths of Cloud and Storm* 6th Ed. (1869, London: George Allen, 1895), 23.

<sup>63</sup>Ruskin, *Queen of the Air*, 24-5.

<sup>64</sup>Ruskin, *Queen of the Air*, 22-3.



What did the intellectual elite's mirror reflect? Walter Pater saw that "breadth, centrality with blitheness and repose are the marks of Hellenic culture".<sup>65</sup> The word "centrality", in Jenkyns' view somewhat ambiguous, was apparently Pater's own invention. Its positive company, however, allows the interpretation that, to Pater, "centrality" of a civilization was very desirable. Victorians who learned the classics and put them on the school curriculum considered the literature of the ancients "inimitable" and "faultless productions",<sup>66</sup> not because the Greeks had perfect knowledge but because their bards expressed classical culture in its entirety. The Greek epics, unlike Victorian literature, had no need of adjectives to clarify and secure their deepest meaning.

Few could accept that the Homeric myths were not the product of one original mind, yet no one doubted that the epics were the sum expression of the collective spirit of ancient civilization.<sup>67</sup> Arnold admired the religio-moral essence of the ancient state, the way "the idea of beauty...adds to itself a religious and devout energy", how it "conducts to a sentiment of sublime acquiescence in the course of fate, and in the dispensation of human life".<sup>68</sup> The point is, classics-lovers like Arnold stood in awe of a mind, which held in itself the full breadth of its culture.

What held classical Greece together? For the philosophers of the old type, there could be no doubt. It was *εθος*. The specific content of this ethos, as Arnold's remarks revealed, did not really matter.<sup>69</sup> What mattered was the extent to which it was shared. However, no one living in the modern age could cherish any illusions about a return to the blissful state of the childhood of civilization when religion, art and everyday life enhanced one another, when, as Ruskin felt, beliefs were

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<sup>65</sup>Jenkyns, 76.

<sup>66</sup>Jenkyns, 22. Some saw Greek texts as "simpler and bolder" or as "balanced perfection".

<sup>67</sup>Jenkyns, 197. This was the argument held by Wolf in 1795.

<sup>68</sup>Jenkyns, 91.

<sup>69</sup>Henry Bristow Wilson thus felt that "a national church need not, historically speaking, be Christian..." See "The National Church" (*Essays and Reviews*, 173).

truer.<sup>70</sup> Those who took an interest in the new "social history" of the past, knew that the religion of the ancients had sprung from and reflected the ecosystem of the ancient social order, constituting a perfect macrocosm of actual life.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Jenkyns, 183.

<sup>71</sup>Jenkyns, 82. The metaphor of youth described the contrast between the mind of the ancients and those of the present, thus a loss of innocence. (Jenkyns, 55-7, 169)

## Chapter 5.

"The Clerisy's Bid For Power:  
The New Reformation, and Essays and Reviews".

## I.

To a true philosopher, life in 1860 must have seemed chaotic and complex. So also seemed the modern state of religion. The sacred canopy failed to roof over society with its former sense of security, but was tattered and torn by dissent, agnosticism, variety of belief and unbelief.<sup>1</sup> No one with a concern for things sacred could be unaware that society was drifting out of reach. "We look abroad in the world", wrote Henry Bristow Wilson, one of the contributors and editor of *Essays and Reviews*, in his 1851 Bampton lecture, "and regard the neutral character of the multitude".<sup>2</sup> The geographical metaphor revealed that Wilson was speaking from exile. The problem facing the guardians of civilization was how to reconcile the two worlds, their own and that of the multitude. Some looked to the Church, the same (established) Church of which Thomas Arnold had said in 1839: "When I think of the Church I could sit down and pine and die".<sup>3</sup>

Jowett's biographers had full sympathy with Jowett's motives for participating in the production of *Essays and Reviews*:

Penetrated as he was with the conviction that the religion of Christ ought to be the religion of all men...he had overcome the difficulties of his position...He saw the religion of his countrymen dying...'from the top' - losing touch, that is to say, with intellectual and rational life.<sup>4</sup>

Jowett wished to give his speculative abilities, his critical mind, to the service of society. This, he felt was best done through religion which, as his attitude to the classics had

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<sup>1</sup>For a complete picture of the scene see Robert Wolff Gains and Losses, *Novels of Faith and Doubt in Victorian England* (London: J.Murray, 1977), especially his introductory chapter, entitled, "The Victorian Religious Spectrum: An Overview"; also Anthony Symondson, Ed., *The Victorian Crisis of Faith* (London: S.P.C.K., 1970).

<sup>2</sup>Abbott, 273.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Arnold, ed., *Principles of Church Reform* (1843, London: S.P.C.K., 1962), 63.

<sup>4</sup>Abbott, 293-4.

revealed, was to him the power behind the right kind of moral sense.

However, experience was to show that Jowett's efforts were in vain. "The average English layman", Abbott observed, "cared for none of these things. His withers were unwrung".<sup>5</sup> This chapter will present *Essays and Reviews* (1860) as a desperate bid by a traditional intellectual elite to recapture influence over society, and the extent to which this bid reflected an ancient image of the social order.<sup>6</sup> The very activity, it is suggested however, was artificial rather than natural, adaptive rather than purely creative. The new self-consciousness about scriptural language and moral meaning and certainty was suspect and suggested that the clerisy involved in writing *Essays and Reviews* were not in the vanguard of change. They had in fact been overtaken by change. Although the pattern of their own lives went on as much as before, society as a whole seemed completely changed. While wishing to influence this society, they were in fact being influenced by it.

No concept expresses this relegation of the clerisy to a secondary position more than that of the New Reformation. The widely held belief among the liberal clergy that the Church scene was undergoing a similar period of change during the first Reformation, suggested that the Church was faced with a new situation, one not of its making, a situation it had been unable to prevent. It did not even have the power to transform itself in order to meet the new circumstances but needed to be brought along again by those in power. The essays themselves, it will be seen, contain metaphors of powerlessness. Moreover, they contained assumptions about society, religion and the nature of social change that differed from those held by their common-sense predecessors only in their self-conscious and critical re-articulation in the individualistic language of the day. Criticism, it will be seen, was the act of translating, affiliating, certainties still felt deep inside into the new,

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<sup>5</sup>Abbott, 294.

<sup>6</sup>Henry Bristow Wilson, ed. *Essays and Reviews*, (1860, Farnborough, Hants: Gregg, 1970). This volume was first published by John W. Parker, London.

open and uncertain attitudes of the world outside.

Before I begin, I would like to say a few words about the present status of *Essays and Reviews* in the world of Victorian Studies. Modern critics generally find this periodical wanting in critical spirit.<sup>7</sup> To Victorians it seemed the other way around. *Essays and Reviews* was the most widely read and most discussed book of the era, outstripping Darwin by far in controversy. Any references to the Victorian Crisis of Faith cannot fail to mention it. According to Ieuan Ellis, it triggered "the greatest religious crisis of the Victorian age".<sup>8</sup> To Josef Altholz it marked the beginning of "an era of religious doubt".<sup>9</sup> Both statements are, of course, as difficult to prove as suggestions that the book was the first religious response to Darwin's theory of evolution.<sup>10</sup> The essayists all defended the use of "higher criticism", that is to say, the historical and philological interpretation of biblical texts whose exact date had been confirmed by the "lower criticism", mainly by comparing it to contemporary texts. This approach implied the concept of a "homogenous empty time" along which events could take place in temporal succession.<sup>11</sup> It also presupposed the equally widely-accepted idea of "the spirit of the age".<sup>12</sup> All the contributions presumed a progressive and gradualist revelation of God's word in history. This, and the concession that words could have more than one meaning, suggested that a unified worldview was in the process of breaking down. This has been generally recognized.

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<sup>7</sup> Josef L. Altholz, "The Mind of Victorian Orthodoxy: Anglican Responses to 'Essays and Reviews', 1860-1864", *Church History*, 51, 1. (June 1982): 186. To Altholz it was intellectually speaking "the last gasp of an outmoded Coleridgianism".

<sup>8</sup> Ellis, *Seven Against Christ: A Study of 'Essays and Reviews'* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1980) ix.

<sup>9</sup> Altholz, 186.

<sup>10</sup> M.A.Crowther, *Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England* (Devon: David & Charles (Publishers) Ltd., 1970), suggests that evolutionary ideas were in the air long before the publication of Darwin's work (14-9). For a similar point of view see Robert Young, "The Impact of Darwin on Conventional Thought", Symondson Ed. *The Victorian Crisis of Faith*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> B. Anderson, 30.

<sup>12</sup> John S. Mill wrote *The Spirit of the Age* in 1831.

On the whole, looking at scholarship since Basil Willey's *More Nineteenth-Century Controversies* (1956), it must be said that the text has been sacrificed for context.<sup>13</sup> Typical of this situation is Altholz who studied the "responses to" *Essays and Reviews*, only to find evidence of a very strong orthodox "mind" reasoning within the world of deductive logic.<sup>14</sup> As this chapter will show, the same discovery could have been made through an exegesis of the actual text. Each and every contribution contained criticism of the old frame of mind and the insufficiency of its arguments. In spite of the essays' centrality to the understanding of the history of the mid-Victorian period, they are now part of religious or ecclesiastical history. However, it should be kept in mind that this is only true if judged from the powerlessness which resulted from the Catholic Emancipation Act. Seen within the context of this narrow definition, *Essays and Reviews* was an unsuccessful bid to be a professional journal with liberal theological views.<sup>15</sup> To those who wrote it, however, the periodical was a bid to preserve the cultural hegemony of the sacred as it existed in the pre-1832 political context.

Who were the contributors? One of them was a layman: Mr. Charles W. Goodwin, M.A.. His essay on "Mosaic Cosmogeny" served the purpose of introducing the difficulties which the ordinary intellectual had with a literal, orthodox belief, as recommended by the Church. The rest of the contributors had all taken holy orders, although they did not all have parishes. Only two, Rowland Williams and Henry Bristow Wilson, held actual livings. The clerical writers were: Frederick Temple, headmaster of Rugby and future Archbishop of Canterbury (1896), Benjamin Jowett, Regius professor of classics and future master of Balliol; Baden Powell, Savilian professor of geometry at Christ Church; Mark Pattison, senior tutor and future Rector of Lincoln, the *Westminster Review's* quondam editor of the philosophy section who was now handling the history and biography section; Rowland Williams, Vice-Principal and Professor of Hebrew of St. David's

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<sup>13</sup>This is particularly true of Ellis, Crowther, and Altholz.

<sup>14</sup>Altholz, *passim*.

<sup>15</sup>Francis, "Origins", 798.

College, Lampeter, and Henry Bristow Wilson, retired Oxford fellow and since 1850 vicar of Great Staughton, Hunts., a parish belonging to St. John's College and who worked out of retirement as editor of the theological section of the *Westminster Review*.<sup>16</sup> These essayists are of interest because they not only formed the intellectual *crème de la crème* of the old establishment (remembering it continued side by side with the new), but because they were also "critics" and so typical of the intellectual elite as defined by Said and Shils.<sup>17</sup> M.A.Crowther's work shows that the Broad Party, to which these writers supposedly belonged, was not so much a party as a "restless and critical attitude of mind".<sup>18</sup> To call them, however, because of their search for mental freedom, individual thinkers and even individualists, as Hinchliff does, is to misread their essays, all of which were defiantly against the individualism latent in the Protestant principle of Justification by Faith. It is also, as will be seen, a misrepresentation of their campaign against the rampant self-consciousness of their age.

The conception and contents of *Essays and Reviews* throw an important light on the imagined society of the mid-Victorian critic, a society which did not at all correspond with the realities of the 1828-32 Reform acts. Indeed, if J.C.D.Clark's revisionary work is at all taken seriously, it can no longer be assumed that the traditional elite did simply collapse and surrender its task, resigning itself to the circumscribed role dictated by its powerlessness. Indeed, in 1860, there was much of the old yet to be removed.<sup>19</sup> A still large number of Victorians in all walks of life could be found to be rather interdisciplinary in their occupations. Pattison and Jowett were typical generalists, ordained clergymen who taught a variety of academic subjects, none of them particularly religious.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>He was only 47 when he retired from college life.

<sup>17</sup>See Introduction.

<sup>18</sup>Crowther, 9.

<sup>19</sup>Harold Perkins writes: "the effects of the Industrial Revolution, as it is inadequately called, are still working themselves out, not only on the global stage, but in Britain itself..." (*The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 1.

<sup>20</sup>Abbott, 84. Jowett did not wish to discuss his motives for  
(Footnote continued)

The society which the essayists imagined was not one which was organised into competing interest groups. It confirmed a view of society which was, no matter how organized, primarily a sacred and moral, not a material, economic and political unity. Class, in their imagination, was an integrative rather than a divisive force; gentility a synonym for culture. In short, the conception of *Essays and Reviews* failed to read the full implications of the 1832 Reform Act and those later developments which gradually reduced the boundaries of class to economic ones.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, in spite of his advocacy of most reforms, Jowett lived and worked under the belief that there could be no other than a class-based, graduated society, led by the upper and educated classes.<sup>22</sup> The contributors as a whole acted in harmony with the social realities of the ancien regime: their endeavour was a bid for cultural hegemony, conceived in continuity with the confessional, sacri-political unity of society. In bidding, they did their duty for the Sacred Trust which they felt had been given to their ranks.

## II.

### The New Reformation.

Nowhere was the sacred duty so succinctly visible as in a concept which enjoyed wide currency among intellectuals before and after the appearance of *Essays and Reviews*: the concept of a Second or New Reformation. It was a non-partisan term, used by agnostics and theologians alike.<sup>23</sup> A Second or New Reformation

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<sup>20</sup>(continued)

ordination, they were so mundane. To Pattison, the Church represented the best opportunity for increase in wisdom - for its own sake: "It was not without side-glance at the many learned clergymen who the annals of the Church of England can show as having led a life of study and obscurity in the by-ways of England". *Memoirs*, 179.

<sup>21</sup>For a discussion of the ascent of the new meaning of class see Asa Briggs' essay on "The Language of 'Class' in Early Nineteenth-Century England" in *Essays in Labour History*, vi, (London: Macmillan, 1960) 3-47.

<sup>22</sup>Abbott, II, 119. His letter to R.B.D. Morier (14 Mar., 1877) complains that "Gladstone does not appear to me to have gained so much with the mob as he has lost with the upper and educated classes, who after all are still the greater part of politics". [Italics Mine]



was expected to complete the insufficiencies of the First,<sup>24</sup> to bridge the widening gap between national life and the Church, as during the first Reformation. This was again to be accomplished with the help of the State.<sup>25</sup> Jowett wrote to Lingen:

Do you think that the existing state of opinions in morals, theology, &c., will 'break up before we are yet old men'? Looking at the progress of criticism and of physical science, at the plasters we have been applying to theology, I fancy that a<sup>26</sup> second Reformation is not impossible even in our time.

He stated the same belief to Stanley.<sup>27</sup> Pattison spoke about a new "doctrinal development" and excused going along with some more questionable liberal reforms, on the basis that "no one will dispute that we are now [1867-8] in a transitional period of society in this country, i.e. society is not now organized for permanence".<sup>28</sup> Clearly, he could not conceive "change" as a constant condition in society. This perhaps explains why even Newman accepted Hourell Froude's feeling of "the need of a second reformation", taking the issue of a Christian society to the people if must be - as a last resort.<sup>29</sup>

The idea of a Reformation, a national upheaval for the sake of reconciling society with its religious ideals, betrayed an imagined culture in which a society without religion or moral

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<sup>23</sup> P.O.G. White, "Three Victorians and the New Reformartion", *Theology*, 69, 1966, 352-58. The three Victorians were: T.H. Huxley, Francis Power Cobbe, Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

<sup>24</sup> According to Pattison, the original Reformation had been stifled by the compromise between the individualist and priestly principle. (*Essays and Reviews* from here on *E&R*, 290, 301.)

<sup>25</sup> This idea was defended by Thomas Arnold, in his pamphlet on *The Principles of Church Reform*, 1843.

<sup>26</sup> Abbott, 160. (letter dated 21 Aug. 1847)

<sup>27</sup> Part of this letter is quoted in Crowther (36): "A second Reformation is in store for us...the various tendencies of the age are preparing the way for it, I cannot doubt, unless Christianity is doomed to suffer a portentous eclipse".

<sup>28</sup> Sparrow, 139.

<sup>29</sup> Newman, *Apologia*, 40. For his willingness to take to the people see Ker (82). In 1889, Newman said: "I am not so irrational as to despise public opinion, I have no thought of making light of a tribunal established in the conditions and necessities of human nature". This did not make him forget its great imperfection: "Too often it is nothing else than what the whole world opines, and no one in particular". "Rise and Progress of Universities", *Historical Sketches*, 3 vol, iii (London: Longman, Green, & Co., 1889) Intro.

system of some sort could not be conceived to endure for any length of time.<sup>30</sup> The lower unity implied by the Catholic Emancipation Act turned the entire conception upside down. Even if they wished to accept the new order in principle, it is clear that they could never really assimilate the new concept into their world view. The only unity they could envisage was one which was based on agreement on higher principles, and it was their duty to bring this about. Wilson saw a need for "The National Church" to "raise each according to his capacities":

That which is essential to a national Church is, that it should undertake to assist the spiritual progress of the nation and of the individuals of which it is composed, in their several states and stages. (E&R 173)

However, the concept of a New Reformation also admitted that the Church and its leaders were no longer in control over events. As Jowett put it so gently:

The theologian, too, may have peace in the thought that he is subject to the conditions of his age rather than one of its moving powers. When he hears theological inquiry censured as tending to create doubt and confusion, he knows very well that the cause of this is not to be sought in the writings of so-called rationalists or critics...because they unveil the age to itself. (E&R 422-3)

However, saying this and accepting the logical consequences were two different things. Reform meant nothing more than re-capturing the minds of the people who traditionally led society: the educated classes, the intellectual elite, the aristocracy. Wilson made it quite explicit who he supposed his audience was:

How can those who differ from each other intellectually in such variety of degrees as our more educated and our less educated classes be comprehended under the same formularies of one national Church - be supposed to assent to them, in one spirit? (E&R 199)

He proposed the elimination of the Act of Signature to the Thirty-nine Articles so "that able and sincere persons" would be no longer "deterred from entering the ministry of the national Church" (E&R 189). Although most of the essays were about the ethical principles found in scripture, there was a conspicuous

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<sup>30</sup>Of course, there were different views on the shape of this reconciliation and the relative positions of Church and State.

silence on the situation of the "poor",<sup>31</sup> the moral condition of England which outraged Carlyle, Ruskin, and Thomas Arnold, and which inspired the Christian Socialism of F.D.Maurice, Charles Kingsley and others. This gap was not caused by indifference but by the old mental image. In it there could be no other solution to the neglect of the one end of society than a personal, moral, one. Indeed, to Jowett, the traditional conventions seemed wisest:

It will not do to make a great supper, and mingle at the same board the two ends of society, as modern phraseology calls them, fetching in 'the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,' to fill the vacant places of noble guests. That would be eccentric in modern times, and even hurtful. Neither is it suitable for us to wash one another's feet, or to perform any other menial office, because our Lord set us the example. The customs of society do not admit it; no good<sup>32</sup> would be done by it, and singularity is of itself an evil.

The idea of a social re-organization was beyond him and the essayists. They were perhaps not as consciously aristocratic as Newman, but in fact, Jowett's plans for the future were just as ancient, for he said in the same essay that "the healthy tone of religion among the poor depends upon freedom and thought and enquiry among the educated" (E&R 373). A letter to R.R.W.Lingen, written in the 1840s, made Jowett's commitment to the ancient order explicit. It also showed Jowett's gratitude for his own gentrification at Oxford, a model he could only recommend:

The Aristocracy is too long a subject to discuss in a letter. You seem to me to imagine this oligarchy to be a much more narrow thing than it really is. It cannot do without wealth -, it is liable to become a jest: - it cannot do without education for [then] it is robbed of more than half its associations and in this way the Plutocracy and the Aristocracy of talent, the latter probably through the professions, are ever blending with it and it seems to me becoming greatly improved by it...It may sound natural to say 'I value a man at what he really is', but can you separate a man from circumstances in this way...If it were true that there is no sense in which the aristocracy are better than shopkeepers, is it conceivable that in these days they could keep up a merely feudal distinction? Is it not true that the gentlemanly virtues (I do not mean real worth) exist tenfold among the aristocracy for one 'gentleman by nature' you find among the middling classes? A gentleman's mottos ought to be regardless of money except in great things and as a matter of

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<sup>31</sup>The term "working classes" was not used.

<sup>32</sup>Jowett, "Interpretation", *Essays and Reviews*, 362. This passage again expresses Jowett's wish to be comprehensive, that is to say, religion must appeal to common sense.

duty - a tradesman's motto ought to be, 'Take care of the pence and the pounds, &c.' and when one remembers what a hold these principles must get, I do not think we can<sub>33</sub> give up aristocracy as an element in National education.

Change came through the agency of the aristocratic soul. Just how much such social instincts helped Jowett appreciate the classics could be seen from another letter:

What an extravagant value of human life seems to be springing up, seen in Peace Congresses and Rush [a murderer of that name] petitions, such as would have been despised in an ancient state. I don't like<sub>34</sub> to see the military spirit of a people destroyed this way.

This sympathy with military virtues was not accidental: next to the Church, the Victorian army was, not only the other "respectable profession", but sustained and was sustained by similar oral and moral traditions.<sup>35</sup> The unfavourable comparison with antiquity also challenged Jowett to propose practical solutions to the social question. Here, too, Jowett was loyal to ancient instincts. Once the question of discipline and punishment for social deviance had been settled, society needed to ask: "How to raise all up to a certain fair level of morals"? This was the business of none other than the clergy who were "to make the decent intelligent members of society into really high-minded Christians, rising above the ordinary tone and rules of society".<sup>36</sup>

Evidence is thus mounting that *Essays and Reviews'* contribution to change was conceived within a traditional map of society. Change was achieved by gaining the educated ear, yet like Newman, the essayists could not be unaware that 'the talent of the day is against the Church'.<sup>37</sup> It was hoped that the upper classes' interest could be regained by showing sympathy with its difficulties, more precisely, its growing self-consciousness.

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<sup>33</sup>Abbott, 151-2.

<sup>34</sup>Abbott, 164. In the *Queen of the Air*, Ruskin associated High Culture of ancient Greece and Rome with its Militaristic phase<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society: 1815-1914* (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1980), 1. The parallels between Church and Army<sup>36</sup> will be explored in great length in Section Four.

<sup>36</sup>Abbott, 164-5.

<sup>37</sup>Ker ed., *Letters & Diaries of Newman*, ii., 129-31.

Jowett therefore argued for more respect for "criticism", the new habits of the mature (or self-conscious) mind, writing:

Criticism has far more power than it formerly had; it has spread itself over ancient, and even modern, history; it extends to the thoughts and ideas of men as well as to words and facts. (E&R 421-2)

Faithful to his intention not to do "anything rash or irritating to the public or the university",<sup>38</sup> Jowett pushed gently toward a critical interpretation of, that is to say not just speculation on, scripture.

It has to be considered whether the intellectual forms under which Christianity has been described may not also be in a state of transition and resolution, in this respect contrasting with the never-changing truth of Christian life. (E&R 420)

It seemed prudent to follow the social trend and to raise religion from the "tenets of particular men or churches" to "the expression of universal truths" (E&R 420). This argument clearly complemented the transition of particularistic and personalistic England into a universalistic society. Although Jowett's slippery rhetoric never says so right out, the result of biblical criticism would have been Christianity as "ideology" of the modern State, an ideology made up of abstract moral principles confirmed by individuals, independent of their social group and class.

One has to turn to the daring Henry Bristow Wilson, one of the contributors who was to face legal prosecution for views expressed in his essay, to have this consequence spelled out: "The application of ideology to the interpretation of Scripture, may be pushed so far as to leave in the sacred records no historical residue whatever".<sup>39</sup> Liberal clergymen like himself only wanted to apply ideology to the extent that it would enable them to create a higher unity. "The ideologist is...in possession of a principle which will enable him to stand in charitable

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<sup>38</sup>Abbott, 275. This excerpt is taken from his letter to Stanley, dated 15 Aug. 1858, defending his motives for his contribution.

<sup>39</sup>The full story of his prosecution is told in M.Crowther's *Church Embattled*, and also in Ieuan Ellis' *Seven Against Christ*, mentioned earlier in this chapter.

relationship to persons of very different opinions of his own, and of very different opinions mutually" (E&R 200-2).

Such a religious ideology was not the same as a sense of modern nationalism. Nationalism is to a certain extent, as Benedict Anderson pointed out, amorphous, contentless, fitting itself into almost any national configuration or ideology.<sup>40</sup> It is a sentiment requiring further articulation. Religion as a contentless underpinning was not what the essayists had in mind. Ideology, in their view, consisted of the moral and philosophical ideals of culture, lording it over the nation's economic and political machine. Not for a moment could they doubt that the nation would readily recognize the intrinsic merit of the transcendent and the body which was able to create it. Wilson wrote:

Neither as a spiritual society, nor as a national institution need there be any fear that the Church of this country, which has passed through so many ordeals, shall succumb, because we may be on the verge of some political and ecclesiastical changes. (E&R 147)

### III.

#### The Battle Within.

When *Essays and Reviews* appeared in 1860, it created a tempest. The immediate cause for this was Frederic Harrison's article in the *Westminster Review*, entitled "neo-Christianity". Carlyle's remark, that the sentry who deserts his post should be shot, summed up Harrison's indictment of the essayists: they were pretenders who should be defrocked.<sup>41</sup> To the reading public, the most titillating aspect was not "higher criticism" but that the argument for liberal interpretation came from ordained clergymen. Indeed, Carlyle's epigram contained an important truth: in the "common sense" of the people, the idea of modernizing the Church

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<sup>40</sup>B. Anderson, 14-16.

<sup>41</sup>Ellis, 188. Abbott's footnotes to the affair mention that John S. Mill saw nothing dishonest about interpreting the meaning of words. (294-5) Francis argues in "Origins of *Essays and Reviews* - An interpretation of Mark Pattison in the 1850s" that it was probably Pattison who invited Harrison to write this article. (797-801)

and its doctrine, in other words, introducing secular standards of interpretation into the sacred, was a contradiction in terms. Common sense recognized what the essayists would not have as true: the modern world and the Church were two separate, irreconcilable worlds which obeyed different laws. To be a Christian, to confess to being a member of the Church of England, was a synonym for subscribing to its dogma and doctrine. To do otherwise was to step outside this world into another territory, punishable by a loss of citizenship. Indeed, principles widely practised in the secular world, such as individual judgement and toleration, stopped at the gate of the religious order. When clergymen opened their mouths they spoke not as individuals but as members of the world to which they, by virtue of their title, had chosen to belong. Everyone knew this world was organized for eternity, it was sacred and, therefore, there could be no criticism.

There was also, as documented by Josef Altholz, a large part of the public which was not titillated but aggravated by the book. This group requires careful attention, for *Essays and Reviews*'s positive plea for higher criticism was also a negative argument against uncritical forms of believing, namely, against the evidential school of thought, the school of Paley and Natural Theology. Indeed, the 140 replies produced by this segment of the public show that the negative side of the criticism did not go unnoticed. It hit home and hurt deeply. Moreover, those deeply hurt were doubly handicapped: they were unable to defend themselves without injury to their own worldview.

"The Anglican Orthodoxy", as Altholz called it, spanned High and Low Church, Tractarians and Evangelicals. It was, therefore, not a conscious creed or system of beliefs, but a "mind", steeped "in eighteenth-century evidential apologetics". Even in 1860, this mind could not enter into the arguments for individual interpretation, it had no concept for any meaning other than the external and objective form of language. Within its frame of reference, the essayists' transgression was not against faith, but against established forms of logic. It followed that the essayists were not so much "unscriptural" as "unphilosophical".<sup>42</sup> The idea of using history and philology to

enter the "subjective mind" of the people who wrote scripture could not be separated from the writer's personal intentions and beliefs.<sup>43</sup> Without sense of history, of course, the past could not be separated from the actual moment that the essays were written and read.

It is irresistible to draw an analogy with the Salman Rushdie controversy, raging as I write. Here, too, the Islamic orthodoxy seems more a "mind" than an ideology, a mind which cannot enter into dialogue with the individual, historical interpretations behind *The Satanic Verses*. The response is therefore on insults, on Rushdie's personal blasphemy. Rushdie in turn insists on speaking for the Moslem experience, but in interpreting it, in consciously employing symbolism, has completely severed himself from it. He has travelled into another world and speaks another language.

The essayists must have felt much like Rushdie. Even Pattison, who received the least abuse, was completely demoralized:

[My] attempt to present the English public with a philosophical monograph on one special phase of religious thought was singularly unsuccessful. To judge from the review, it never occurred to any of our public instructors that such a conception was possible. Clerical and anti-clerical, from the *Westminster Review* to the *Guardian* they were all busily occupied in finding or making contradictions<sup>44</sup> between the writer's words and the thirty-nine articles.

This was perfectly true. A review appearing in the *Westminster Review* of April 1862, complained of Pattison that he "exhibited as the grounds of faith what were, in truth the causes of its corruption, the character and mental condition of each successive age". The reviewer had approached his article from theological priorities which made it difficult for him to consider religious thought without reference to what "ought to be". History for the sake of knowing "what exactly happened" could not extend into the

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<sup>42</sup> Altholz, 192-4.

<sup>43</sup> Abbott, 101. Jowett wanted to get at the "subjective mind of the Apostles, *historisch-psychologisch dargestellt*".

<sup>44</sup> Pattison, *Memoirs*, 312-3. Mark Francis argues that Pattison escaped any consequences. (810) This is not supported by the facts, as seen here.



sacred sphere.

One thing was clear: before *Essays and Reviews* could ever hope to gain the ear of those outside the consensus of this orthodoxy, it was necessary to demonstrate its failings. This was indeed what the essayists, as one, set out to do. Taken as a whole, the essays were preoccupied with the defeat and eradication of patterns of eighteenth-century thought. The very plea for free thought was one against the circular orbit of Natural Theology, and its "rigidly rational line of argument",<sup>45</sup> and the implicit legalism of the rational position. The extent to which the demolition of the old mind occupied their agenda paid tribute to its strength.

The shape and form of their battle against the old mind and its failings was deeply revelatory. It fully disclosed the two worlds of the critic. It showed that the estrangement from the past was not so much an emancipation but a new self-consciousness of the old world's waning power to hold together, its inability to tie individuals, no longer bound by external compulsions, into one culture. Interpretation, ultimately, only meant translating a language they already knew fluently, into one that could be understood and followed by the modern world. Little did the essayists suspect that their own fluency owed to conditions which could not be translated. Indeed, the fact of their own fluency did not fall under their examination.

It was Pattison who attempted the heaviest blow. Unlike Templ, whose essay was still a universal history working its way from antiquity to the present, Pattison's choice of subject was strikingly narrow in scope. "Tendencies in English Religious Thought" covered only 62 years of history, and even then only one aspect: how society thought about religion.<sup>46</sup> Pattison knew its

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<sup>45</sup>Altholz, 187.

<sup>46</sup>Altholz considered it, reflecting modern values, "perhaps the only essay of lasting value". (186) Owen Chadwick claimed it was "the best single study in the book", even "brilliant", still being used by students a hundred years later. *The Victorian Church*, 2 vols., II. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1970) 76.

novelty. No one hitherto had undertaken the investigation of a past habit of thought.<sup>47</sup> His approach was merciless of traditional attitudes. Indeed, he began by asserting that the present was not only the product of the achievements but also of the errors of the past. Most cunning, however, was the strong family resemblance between the mind of the eighteenth-century rationalists whose insufficiency he exposed and the mind and arguments of the nineteenth-century Anglican orthodoxy.

Pattison's article was the nineteenth-century predecessor of Carl Becker's *Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*.<sup>48</sup> Looking into the past he discovered a mind that seemed very unlike his own. He realized that overly much had been made of the sceptical and atheistical attacks on Christian religion (E&R 254). They were, as he looked closer, but the voices of a few. On the contrary, the hold of religion over the population in Pattison's own time could no longer compare to the pervasiveness it enjoyed in the eighteenth century. Eighteenth-century England was a nation of believers. J.C.D.Clark made a similar discovery, albeit more recently.<sup>49</sup> Of course, they were not believers in the sense that Pattison's own time demanded, but at best adherents to a habit of thought in which religious and rationalist commingled indistinguishably. Natural reason and Natural Religion formed a method of thinking, a habit, which was "an unconscious assumption rather than a principle from which to reason"

Rationalism was not an anti-christian sect outside the Church making war against religion. It was a habit of thought ruling all minds, under conditions of which all alike tried to make good the peculiar opinions they might happen to cherish. (E&R 267)

Anticipating Altholz's discovery of Anglican orthodoxy, Pattison found it was a "mind" rather than a "religion". This mind operated according to different rules than his own. It did not divide external from internal evidence, myth from moral: it seemed content with one literal truth and meaning. Naturally, it

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<sup>47</sup>According to Pattison, the German protestant historian Dorner who attempted a similar history a little later, acknowledged Pattison's pioneer work. (*Memoirs*, 315.)

<sup>48</sup>See Introduction.

<sup>49</sup>See Ch.2.

seemed shallow, knowing so little of "spiritual intuition", receiving all from the common character of life (E&R 259). In short, it was not critical enough, not alienated enough, and thus failed to reach the depth achieved by bridging self-conscious alienation. The age lacked awe, it harassed speakers in the pulpit through "sneers" and "public opprobrium"; canvassed religious topics in the salons of the half-educated; slandered the faith and the clergy in popular songs (E&R 312-6). Still, the central status of the Church and religion remained unchanged.

To Pattison, these were not moral failures. The mind of the past was interesting in itself. The superficiality of eighteenth-century religion taught that in the preceding century persuasion was not necessary, that doubt had not arisen. Natural religion was natural, passed on from generation to generation. Indeed, within the common-sense world of common reason there was no opportunity for a Crisis of Faith. Natural religion was natural for people who believed in the social contract without ever having had proof of its practice:

They treated natural religion, not as an historical dispensation, but as an abstract demonstration. There never was a time, when mankind had realized or established an actual system of natural religion, but it lies always potentially in his reason. It held the same place as the social contract in political history. The 'original contract' had never had historical existence, but it was a hypothesis necessary to explain the existing fact of society. No society had, in fact, arisen on that basis, yet it is the theoretical basis on which all society can be shown to rest. (E&R 272)

The social contract, in other words, was without recourse to actual experience over time, to history. History was the new dimension of the modern world of Pattison. It had discovered the only way out of the circular orb of eighteenth-century logic.<sup>50</sup>

Something must have changed to allow Pattison's mind to stand back from the rationalistic mind. The tight consensus which prevented history's structure from crumbling must have broken down. The arguments put forward by Bishop Butler seem no longer convincing: Pattison needed more than what Butler was able to

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<sup>50</sup> Pattison, "Tendencies", E&R, 163. Pattison felt history was not appreciated until disinterred by the Tractarians.

offer. Butler's theological method in the *Analogy of Religion* (1736) had not been based on an "inward struggle in his own mind" but on the exhaustion of all existing arguments: "He told a friend, his way of writing it had been to endeavour to answer as he went along every possible objection that might occur to any one against any position of his in his books" (E&R 306). This method was to Pattison no better than that which based belief on external evidence. "The mind which occupies itself with the 'external evidences' knows nothing of the spiritual intuition, of which it renounces at once the difficulties and consolations" (E&R 261).

Clearly, Deism was inadequate for the needs of the nineteenth century. It distanced God, inviting at best an objective and impersonal relationship. Modern experience demanded more depth, an affective element, to bind individuals, now outside the comfort and compulsions of a social consensus, to God's law. A theology which based its appeal on proving "that the facts of Christianity are not incredible" and that they "did occur" lacked the power to move individuals to the moral heroism now required to set the age on its proper course. Evidences were "not edged tools; they stir no feeling" (E&R 261). The age needed a "theology", providing personal rather than general bonds to the sacred realm.<sup>51</sup>

The arguments against natural religion were therefore also arguments for a theology suitable for a society unable to pass on its habits and beliefs naturally.

Theology is - 1st, and primarily, the contemplative, speculative habit by means of which the mind places itself already in another world than this; a habit begun here, to be raised to perfect vision hereafter. 2ndly, and in an inferior degree, it is ethical and regulative of our conduct as men, in those relationships which are temporal and transitory. (E&R 264)

In the language of literary criticism: Pattison attempted to

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<sup>51</sup>He argued in "The Present State of Theology in Germany" (Westminster Review, vol.xi, Jan-Apr 1857: 333-4), that "theology" usually only subsisted until roused in critical epochs, as for example, during the Renaissance, or in the Fourth and Fifth Century.

affiliate a filiative orthodoxy, natural religion, to an increasingly pluralistic and atomistic society. His own orthodoxy was basically inviolate. Only the hitherto natural method of reproduction had become self-conscious.

The essayists joined forces against natural religion. Jowett suggested in his essay that scriptural texts alone were no longer enough of a basis for doctrine and that the emphasis on "sturdy orthodoxy" provoked but a smile among the educated.<sup>52</sup> Temple's essay contrasted the mature, that is to say, individual, mind to childish legalism and literalism. He devalued the wrappings of words and doctrinal statements, the visible and audible parts of religion and life, and replaced them with the abstract (inner) moral and ethical principles which had no ultimate reality or authority except on "inward reflection". He wanted his readers to distinguish between "external and internal" laws (*E&R* 33-35). The entire essay could be read as an argument against all external and objective compulsion for faith.

He showed especial displeasure with those still within the (immature) past, who insisted on tradition as a "law", treating it as "enjoined by an absolute binding decree" (*E&R* 34-35). Still, traditions should be tolerated, preferably those with the highest moral value. But in the "manhood" of civilization, affection had to replace coercion. The modern mind cherished, it chose to obey, freely:

The man remembers with affection and keeps up with delight the customs of the home of his childhood; tempted perhaps to over-estimate their value...preferring them because of his familiarity, and because of the memories with which they are associated. So, too, truth often seems to them richer and fuller when expressed in some favourite phrase of his mother's, or some maxim of his father's. He like to go to the same church. He likes to use the same prayers... (*E&R* 39)

Mature society had left behind the childhood of conformity and consensus even if there were still those who, like the Sabbatarians and other groups, wished to impose their moral will

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<sup>52</sup>Jowett, "Interpretation", *E&R*, 421, 427. Stanley, who might almost have become a contributor and who was allegedly a member of the nonexistent Broad Party, devoted a number of his sermons in 1846 to a liberal polemic against Bishop Butler, based on the argument that a new class of difficulties had arisen. (Ellis, 13)

by resorting to the law (E&R 34). Laws, Temple had clearly learned from history, could be changed.

However, the essayists were not as emancipated from the past as they thought. Baden Powell's essay in particular, fully exposed the extent to which the attackers of empirical metaphysics were themselves still steeped in the old rationalism. Powell's title openly acknowledged the main target: "On the Evidences of Christianity". He wished to eradicate evidential apologetics, which, as his choice of topic revealed, enjoyed still too much of a following.<sup>53</sup> His point was simple. Those who continued to argue for Christian beliefs based on objective evidence, made themselves vulnerable by the undemonstrability of the facts: miracles and other myths in the Bible did not stand up to scientific scrutiny, or to modern knowledge of nature (E&R 117). The value of myths and miracles in "our time" was not as evidence but as moral lesson. The truth of a myth or a Bible story was in "the union and combination of the external testimony of miracles, with the internal excellence of the doctrine, thus, in fact, practically making the latter the real test for the admissibility of the former". Only a moral "judgment", based on "preliminary moral convictions", could decide the higher matter of morals (E&R 122-3).

Powell's modernity had great limits, however. True, he did concede that the "same moral argument is of different force to different minds" (E&R 143). But this insight did not worry him enough. His personal experience convinced him of the reality that each individual, like himself, must own preliminary "moral convictions", a higher reason able to discern the moral truths encoded in Scripture. Scripture could only communicate morals which were pre-existing in each and every individual.

Even in the estimation of external evidence, everything depends on our preliminary moral convictions, and upon deciding in the first instance, whether on the one hand, we are to abandon moral conviction at the bidding of a miracle,

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<sup>53</sup>According to Pietro Corsi, Baden Powell's theological leanings were "inherited" rather than conscious: he was born in the ultra-pious Hackney Phalanx. He fought an ongoing battle against the opponents of progressive revelation. *Science and Religion: Baden Powell and the Anglican Debate, 1800-1860*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 4,25,217.

or, on the other, to make conformity with moral principles the sole test of the evidence and of the doctrines of revelation. (E&R 123)

He opted for the latter, claiming that "the spirit of faith discovers continually increasing attestations of the Divine authority of the truths [which the ancient records] include" (E&R 144). There was something as unsatisfactory in Baden Powell's arguments as Pattison had observed in those of Bishop Butler. It was the absence of argument, Powell's oblivion to its necessity, his blindness to the destructive possibilities of his thesis, that revealed him to be in league with his common sense ancestors. Nor was Powell the exception to the rule, In the final analysis, it will be seen, none of the essayists had completely left the Heavenly City of the eighteenth-century philosophers.

#### IV.

#### The "Natural" Religion of the Clerks.

In 1948, T.S.Eliot differentiated higher religion from religion qua religion on grounds which seemed but a resumé of *Essays and Reviews* arguments against natural religion. His higher religion presupposed an internal crisis of faith, and, relatedly, a concept of the individual self:

A higher religion is one which is much more difficult to believe. For the more conscious becomes the belief, so the more conscious becomes unbelief: indifference, doubt and scepticism appear, and the endeavour to adapt the tenets of religion to what people in each age find easiest to believe. In the higher religion, it is more difficult also to make behaviour conform to the moral laws of the religion. A higher religion imposes a conflict, a division, torment and struggle within the individual; a conflict sometimes between the laity and the<sup>54</sup> priesthood; a conflict eventually between Church and state.

Ordinary religion, unselfconscious and nominal, belonged to a more primitive stage, when religion formed part of the total collective package. Modern society, in spite of longing to, could not return to this paradise which was, as Eliot perceptively noted, more than a memory. It was inside the conscious structure:

The identity of religion and culture remains on the

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<sup>54</sup>T.S.Eliot, *Notes*, 67-8.

unconscious level, upon which we have superimposed a conscious structure wherein religion and culture are contrasted and can be opposed.<sup>55</sup>

Speculating on the sources of the new self-consciousness of religion, I suggest the hypothesis that the essayists could no longer consider a natural religion adequate for their age. A stronger adhesive was needed, holding society together in spite of the new political situation and new historical and scientific thinking. This desire was not confined to the essayists. It was also central to the Evangelical and Tractarian movement.

However, the moral principles behind natural religion, its unitary vision of society and the cosmos, its sense of natural order and harmony, were not abandoned. They were given deeper arguments. The older axioms were not abandoned but translated into personally verifiable ones. Indeed, the completely unquestioned substance of inner conscience made it obvious that the essayists' experience of life had given rise to a sort of natural or lower religion, one which was completely outside the pale of their conscious enquiry. This natural religion took on various shapes. In its most obvious sense, it spoke through the concern with religion itself, which was there even in the most "realistic" considerations. It spoke through Jowett's indignation over Froude's "want of earnestness natural to a person who feels what an awful thing it is to disbelieve all he has formerly held and believe something new",<sup>56</sup> or when he wrote to B.C. Brodie: "I feel very deeply that one cannot live without religion". This letter also gave hint of a new self-consciousness: the feelings he himself had about religion could not be taken for granted.

In proportion as we believe less, that little, if it be only an awful [sic] feeling about existence, must be more constantly with us; as faith looses in extent it must<sup>57</sup> gain in intensity, if we do not mean to shipwreck altogether.

This line spoke volumes about the fear of having lost influence, the reason why beliefs had to be transferred to a more general basis of acceptance. When Pattison wrote: "We establish the

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<sup>55</sup>Eliot, Notes, 67-8.

<sup>56</sup>Abbott, 112. (Letter to B.C. Brodie, 24 Nov. 1844)

<sup>57</sup>Abbott, 115 (Letter 23 Dec. 1844)



obligation of morality on independent 'grounds'", he meant that religion based on purely objective criteria, such as the orthodox idea of sanctions, was unsuitable for modern needs. In the context of a tolerant (plural) society, morality had to be the "product or efflux of our character" (E&R 275). He and the essayists put all their stakes on an inner moral sense, whose presence was felt most powerfully.

The essayists' attitude to time was also not consistently modern. When deconstructing classical or biblical myths, the essayists had little trouble with the concept of homogenous empty or deep time. However, the activity failed to produce a modern sense of relativity. My hypothesis has been, that the essayists could relate to the past because their own way of life had not altered significantly enough from that of antiquity. It contained the same experience of hierarchy, personal influence and local and particularistic society. The past did not seem sufficiently exotic. The frequent references to the childhood of reason seems but a metaphor for something which they once, in the unreasoning way of children, had experienced and still did, only now with the super-added sense of mature self-consciousness.<sup>58</sup> The sense of alienation, often giving real pain, bore witness to familial feelings, an organic connection, the older individual containing childhood within.

The conservative attitude to time was most succinct in the spread of the idea of a "Second Reformation". The first Reformation, it must be remembered, was not a transformation into something new but a return to purer principles. Jowett and Stanley were convinced that they recognized the first signs of a movement which would deal with the problems raised and left unsolved since the seventeenth century.<sup>59</sup> Pattison believed that there had been previous epochs of doctrinal development, each of which was "determined by a previous excitement of the speculative

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<sup>58</sup> Jowett spoke of the education of the world as a "growth or development [to] be regarded as a kind of progress from childhood to manhood" (E&R 387). The pervasiveness of the idea of society in its maturity among Victorian thinkers is described in David Newsome's *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought* (London: John Murray, 1972), 25-40. See also Ch. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Crowther, 36.

faculty". The present New Reformation was one of them, allowing religious ideas, dormant since the Renaissance and Reformation to "fecundate".<sup>60</sup> These ideas clearly indicate that Pattison had no concept of a continuous state of change, change as an ongoing and constant phenomenon. If there was such a thing as society, it had to be organized for permanence. Change was but a temporary state of chaos as society passed from one epoch into another.

## V.

### The Folly of Eminent Victorians.

What became of the Victorian intellectual tradition? The next section will attempt to show that its world, and with it, its devotion to the highest virtues and duties of those endowed with knowing, exist well into this present time. Before tracing the tradition's fate after the Victorian era, it seems a good idea to conclude this section with a quick look at a work which seemed to signal the end of the Victorian era: Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1918). Strachey, it could be argued, was still very much a member of the Victorian intellectual tradition. This seems evident in his refusal to divide history from art. The reason for introducing *Eminent Victorians* at this point is, however, that Strachey appeared to recognize the dilemma of the "liberal" Victorians: their folly of hoping that they could control events which in fact swept them along.<sup>61</sup> Strachey confirms my argument that the "eminent" never fully perceived the changes which they were facing and the extent of the incompatibility of their own world with the new outlook, and that, given their background and experience of life, they could never genuinely envisage a society so totally different from the past: a society without personal influence and values, without unifying myths, in short, without their devotion. The Victorian intellectual tradition's relational activities, this section has similarly tried to show, were often not the result of visions of the future, but informed mainly by the past, a past still with

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<sup>60</sup> Mark Pattison, "The Present State of Theology in Germany", *Westminster Review*, vol. xi, (Jan-Apr. 1857): 333-4.

<sup>61</sup> Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (1918, Harm: Penguin, 1948).

this elite in its daily experience of life, tending to hold it firmly within the tradition of the sacred trust of civilization.

In *Eminent Victorians*, it might be argued, Lytton Strachey reduced Victorians to an historical phenomenon, to be studied as a peculiar but extinct type, one represented by people whose claim to eminence can be held up to ridicule. There is, however, just a little too much relish in Strachey's discrediting activity for Michael Holroyd, his biographer, not to suspect that to Strachey the Victorians might have been still very much alive.<sup>62</sup> Phyllis Rose, reading *Eminent Victorians*, more than half a century later, no longer finds Strachey's deed outrageous or impressive, but rather that "of a little boy dropping water bombs out of a second storey window onto the grown-ups below".<sup>63</sup> Perhaps Strachey is still partly a Victorian? There is his love of the classical authors and of the Elizabethans, the latter "for their verbal felicity and dazzling variations upon formal, as opposed to subjective, sentiments". These sympathies with the literature of a period of common sense and consensus suggest that Strachey shared the Victorian intellectual tradition's fear of excessive self-consciousness and its concern with commonly understandable terms of reference, the re-creation of a moral consensus.<sup>64</sup>

There is, however, an even more incriminating sign that Strachey is vitally connected to the people he is writing about. No one reading *Eminent Victorians* can escape concluding that this is parody of an age and its heroes, that *Eminent Victorians* is satire. But a satirist usually has a more ambitious agenda than parody. Strachey's portraits are satirical in the primitive sense, casting out the evil spirits which destroy the community; and satirical in the modern sense, hiding the satirist's true purpose behind a tongue-in-cheek pretense to history and the historian's science.<sup>65</sup> However, they contain the anger and moral

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<sup>62</sup>Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography* (London: Heinemann, 1967), 2 vol, I, 12.

<sup>63</sup>Phyllis Rose, *woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 92.

<sup>64</sup>Holroyd, I, 132.

<sup>65</sup>Alvin B. Kernan, "Satire", *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Philip Wiener Ed. (New York: Scribner, 1973), iv.

indignation of the satirist to whom the past seems but a convenient place from which, in the tradition of *The Persian Letters*, to expose blindness and foolishness that has a strong resemblance to the very similar foibles of his own time.

Most importantly, however: the satirist is able to discern and present biting truths. In *Eminent Victorians*, there is merciless analysis, penetration and exposure of popular legends and myths. Strachey swiftly sums up the truth of the Victorian condition: the relentless, unhaltable progress of the destruction of the old order. The great saints and heroes, the great reformers seem to grope in the dark, trying to direct, stop, channel forces they never fully comprehend. They strike in the wrong direction, at phenomena which are themselves a part of the process of disempowerment. Thomas Arnold struck out at Unitarians. Florence Nightingale dispenses her charity there where the old world can no longer be redeemed: toward the nation-wide evil of irresponsibility, most visible at the Crimean theatre of war:

The origins of this awful failure [the complete breakdown of the medical arrangements at the Crimea] were complex and manifold; they stretched back through long years of peace and carelessness in England; they could be traced through endless ramifications of administrative incapacity - from the inherent faults of confused systems to the petty bunglings of minor officials, from the inevitable ignorance of Cabinet Ministers to the fatal exactitudes of narrow routine. (136)

Responsibility for the welfare of the suffering, Strachey shows, was no longer "personal". It was "the whole system" which "was clearly at fault" (144). Can one be angry, battle, plead with a system? It was the "worst of all evils - one which has been caused by nothing in particular and for which no one in particular is to blame" (136). Florence's sainthood consisted in her unwillingness to accept the reduction of individual responsibility, of insisting on "undivided and unparalleled devotion" (146). Yet, Strachey leaves no doubt that it was her administrative skills - wedded to the much older system of personal contacts, authority, patronage - that brought salvation. She was the modern administrator-saint, who set up a new machine, more elaborate, more efficient, which would work some day with or without her personal intervention. Moved by

charity and kindness, she became part of the de-personalization of charity and kindness. Lines like "it was the business of Miss Nightingale" and "she procured" had a powerful irony. Her portrait swarmed with "regulations" and "ordinances", applications, engagements, transport and supplies, functions, almost burying the human do-gooder (144-57).

There were martyrs for the old order, killed by the engagement with the new machine. Miss Nightingale's gallant knight through whom she, as a woman, had to "work her will", Sidney Herbert, embodies the tragedy of those who really belong to another world, an aristocrat bred for purposes other than controlling a bureaucracy: "a comely, gallant creature, springing through the forest; but the forest is a dangerous place".<sup>66</sup> The old ways fail. Nightingale felt Sidney Herbert was "beaten on his own ground by a bureaucracy", and Strachey implied she, in entering into negotiation with the bureaucracy, had become part of the dragon that killed the beautiful horse.<sup>67</sup>

The list of melodramatic heroes and heroines begins with Cardinal Manning whose irony of fate seems to be that he threw in his lot in with powers that are already on their way out, and ends with General Gordon whose outward discipline and courage seem to belong to another world, whose qualities were still, but just still, useful to the pragmatic barbarities of empire, and the entire tragedy of the *Eminent Victorians*, faced with the disintegration of the world they knew, is summed up in this poignant phrase, which appears in the portrait of Manning: "Yet, it was observed that the modern world proceeded as before"(95).

It is Strachey's caricature of Thomas Arnold, however, that tells the shocking truth about the Victorian intellectual who, openly and willingly, aligned himself with the liberal cause. In the words of Holroyd, Strachey set "out to show that nineteenth-century Liberalism was not based on the principle of progress or enlightened reflection, but rather on the variation of an old and debased routine". The point of Strachey's

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<sup>66</sup>Strachey, 162-3,  
<sup>67</sup>Holroyd, II, 295.

"hideously disproportionate caricature" of the great reformer, is the trenchant analysis that Arnold "didn't want anything new, only a higher moral tone", that he in fact "merely altered aspects in the running of an already well established monastic institution"<sup>68</sup> In other words, Strachey realized the true situation of an elite hitherto charged and empowered with the task of cultural hegemony. Their attempts to regain their old position had to take place according to rules and in a context set by another order, one they consistently misunderstood to be a constructive one. This, however, was not the case. Strachey's insight into the *Eminent Victorians* seems to suggest that they played at best a passive, that is to say, adaptive, role. Indeed, it could be argued, this was the only one the new order allowed them to play.

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<sup>68</sup>Holroyd, II, 301-3.

*Section Three.*

*The Thinning Ranks.*

## Chapter 6.

"A Victorian Intellectual Tradition after the Great War:  
the Poet-Seer and the Theologian".

"Where did Victorian writing go? What happened to those piled sentences of Ruskin's, those Carlylean metaphors, the lyrical grotesqueries of Dickens, aspirated for the speaking voice but lodged between covers?"

Gillian Beer<sup>1</sup>

## I.

"In 1910...human nature changed", wrote Virginia Woolf.<sup>2</sup>

This feeling was not without roots in reality. The world after the Victorians looked so very different. There were developments in the academic world to warrant a sense of a generational chasm, a feeling that a bubble had burst and an illusion dispersed. The change seemed dramatic, in radical defiance of the past. There were new genres in literature: the new realism, the new stream of consciousness, the new symbolism in poetry. These were all breaks from what Victorians considered good and proper: innovations which were summed up in literary history under the term "modernism". There was, to heighten the sense of drama, a new direction in philosophy. Philosophy became a distinct discipline, cutting itself off from the social and moral conflicts of the age.<sup>3</sup> This too seemed justified, a natural reaction to the burst bubble of Victorian verities.<sup>4</sup>

What became of those committed to the sacred trust of the intellectual elite? The answer is simple: they were bereft of their original habitat. They could not dwell in the compounds of philosophy, now a specialized subject taught and researched by academics confessing only an academic, that is to say,

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<sup>1</sup>Gillian Beer, "The Victorians in Virginia Woolf:1882-1941" *Dickens and Other Victorians* ed. Joanne Shattock (London: Macmillan, 1989), 214.

<sup>2</sup>Beer, 215. This view appears to be again the main thesis of a book by Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Bantam Press, 1989.)

<sup>3</sup>A.J.Ayer, *Metaphysics and Common Sense*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1969) 7.

<sup>4</sup>All these trends had their beginning long before World War One. Being part of philosophy's new nature, they have been studied independently from social and political life.



disinterested, interest in the moral and religious concerns of society. Looking back over trends since the turn of the century, A.J.Ayer wrote:

There is now a fair measure of agreement among philosophers that this is what is technically called a second-order subject. They do not set out to describe, or even explain, the world, still less to change it. Their concern is only with the way in which we speak about the world. Philosophy, it has been said, is talk about talk. This conception of philosophy, derived from various sources, in part, it is a legacy of logical positivism, it owes something to the example of G.E. Moore, still more, perhaps to the later teachings of Wittgenstein...

This meant that true philosophy, philosophy true to the service of the sacred trust of civilization was forced to look elsewhere. In my hypothesis, philosophy in the old, insubstantial and broad, sense went to live among some of the very names which were associated with a reaction to the Victorians; D.H.Lawrence, T.S.Eliot, and particularly Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf. None of them were "just" writers but literary critics, and given literature's new importance at the universities, culture critics. Carlyle's and Arnold's prophecy that the poet-seer would be the philosopher of the new age, much protested by John S. Mill, appeared to have come true.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Virginia Woolf appeared to be the very embodiment of the "novelist-proper", the "phenomenologist" who "has always implicitly understood what the philosopher has grasped less clearly, that human reason is not a single unitary gadget the nature of which could be discovered once and for all".<sup>7</sup> Describing the experience of the speculative mind as it moved from breakthrough to breakthrough, Woolf spoke of her task in words strongly reminiscent of the Victorian intellectual tradition:

I feel that I have had a blow, but it is not, as though as a child, simply a blow from an enemy hidden in the cotton wool of daily life; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A.J.Ayer, *The Concept of a Person and other Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1963) 3.

<sup>6</sup> John Gross, *Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life Since 1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 44.

<sup>7</sup> Iris Murdoch, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (London: Collins, 1953), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past", *Virginia Woolf* (Footnote continued)

Her art was an attempt to render whole, to order her discoveries of the real thing beyond into a comprehensive pattern of whose objective existence she was certain:

It is only by putting it into words that I make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me; it gives me, perhaps because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight to put the severed parts together. Perhaps this is the strongest pleasure known to me. It is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mind; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we - I mean all human beings - are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art.

Bloomsbury was not without "official" philosophical background. G.E. Moore was its in-house philosopher,<sup>10</sup> whose traditional position has been pointed out by Ayer:

Moore did try to give a proof that there is an external world, a belief which undoubtedly figures in the common sense view but since his proof consisted merely in deducing that there were external objects from the fact of knowing that he had two hands, it did no more than underline the point that the common sense view of the world could safely be left to justify itself.<sup>11</sup>

Woolf also searched for concepts behind linguistic expressions and moral attitudes and was certain of an ancestral memory.<sup>12</sup> Like Moore, and Jowett who also argued, as shown, from the common sense of cumulative experience, she was oblivious to the implications this might have for philosophy. Ayer, however,

<sup>8</sup>(continued)

Moments of Being, Unpublished Autobiographical Writings, Ed. Jeanne Schulkind (Sussex: The University Press, 1976) 72.

<sup>9</sup>Woolf, "Sketch", 72.

<sup>10</sup>Tom Regan, *Bloomsbury Prophet: G.E. Moore and the development of his moral philosophy*, (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1986), xi. Regan, who wrote about the relationship of G.E. Moore to the Cambridge Apostles and the Bloomsbury group noticed that Moore's autobiographical sketch (which appeared in *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore* 1942) never mentioned these connections. This does not seem important: the question of "influence" is anyway a matter of antecedent sympathies.

<sup>11</sup>Ayer, *Concept of a Person*, 4.

<sup>12</sup>Woolf, "Sketch", 69. She wrote about a common shyness to look into the looking glass and her strong sense of sanctity toward her private parts: "it proves that Virginia Stephen was not born on the 25th January 1882, but was born many thousands of years ago; and had from the very first to encounter instincts already acquired by thousands of ancestresses in the past".

pointed them out ruthlessly:

If [Moore] was right in claiming that he knew for certain that 'the common sense view of the world' was wholly true, it followed that the propositions which comprised it were not vulnerable to philosophy. Since they were known to be true no philosophical argument could show them to be false...<sup>13</sup>

It was the "blind spot" of his philosophy which made Moore's mind, for Ayer at least, out of date.

Literature was not the only world where metaphysical speculation continued to be accepted. One place where the Victorian intellectual tradition lived most unashamedly, openly displaying its filial links with the past, was theology. From the outside, of course, theology showed the rampages of the Great Transformation. Theology was once - and this was not in the middle ages, but only a generation ago - like philosophy, without substantive existence. Pattison said of it: "The speculative spirit in Oxford has always been bound up with theology, and animated by religious interests". Theological discussion was not to be caged but raged in the Common Rooms.<sup>14</sup> This only began to change with Newman's secession, the dramatic moment which forms the hub of every story of Oxford. Theology from here on steadily lost its public.

Inside theology, however, everything stayed the same. Most of its members, especially its most radical critics never accepted the boundaries set by the modern world. To this day, they protest the division: the "theological circle" is dedicated to the "ultimate concern".<sup>15</sup> From whence came such devotion? or as Virginia Woolf wondered about her own nobler instincts, what were "those magnets which attract us this way to be like that, or repel us the other and make us different from that", regretting that these forces had "never been analysed in any of those Lives, which I so much enjoy reading, or very superficially".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Ayer, *Concept*, 4.

<sup>14</sup>Pattison, "Philosophy at Oxford", 86. The religious tone came to a high pitch during the Tractarian period (1830-1848), but "though the terms of the controversy were religious, there was yet a philosophical principle at stake", in this case "reason versus authority".

<sup>15</sup>Both terms come from Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vol. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 23-5.

The task undertaken in this chapter is an illustration of how the Victorian intellectual tradition fared in the first half of this century. Clearly, it never died, nor did it change from its course. The only difference was that its charter now enjoyed a reduced membership; its ranks were thinning.<sup>17</sup> Nor was this the only change. Decades of struggling, swimming against the stream (a metaphor often employed by neo-Victorians), it will be shown, have taken their toll on its outlook. However, the continuities are also there, although obscured by the first generation following the Victorians. This discussion, indeed, begins with a look at one of the creators of "modernism": Virginia Woolf. It is argued that *Between the Acts*, her last novel, could be justly described as satire: a "spell and course" banishing the "dark forces, human and natural, which threaten the well-being of the community", the ghosts of liberal progress and cultural anarchy.<sup>18</sup> It is indeed Woolf's moral indignation as satirist which implicates Woolf as a member of the Victorian intellectual tradition. Modernist literature, however, was not the only place where the intellectual tradition was alive and well. The chapter will therefore conclude with a report on a world in which objective meaning and common sense, that is to say, metaphysical enquiry into the human condition, was alive and well, although much reduced in size and following: the world of the theologian.

## II.

### The Failure of the Past.

Virginia Woolf was mysteriously compelled to respond to an intellectual agenda established long before her. Indeed, her final work, *Between the Acts* (completed in 1941 and published in 1943) gave a strong sense of *déjà vu*, as she decried the loss of

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<sup>16</sup>Woolf, "Sketch", 80.

<sup>17</sup>This seems to be the prominent pattern of "modernisation". The ideals remain the same, only their following, or their importance to society as a whole, changes. J.C.D.Clark observed this about the Established Church at the end of the eighteenth century. (427)

<sup>18</sup>Alvin B. Kernan, "Satire" *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* Philip Wiener Ed. (New York: Scribner), 1973) iv.

common meaning, those shared ideas which are indispensable to the artist-seer, the prophet of her age.<sup>19</sup> All the old instincts seem fully intact. Like the much resented Victorians, her work searched for and found the Heavenly City in the objective world of nature and impersonal objects and beings, the things which are the common property of every individual. The answer to this mystery is that Virginia Woolf "grew up Victorian".<sup>20</sup> To Beer this was mostly a mental process. But Woolf's memoirs also testify to a "life" with all the seamless overspill of personal life and work, thinking and doing, made so vivid by Woolf's own theory of time as "moments of being" which are "embedded in moments of non-being", moments in timelessness, the part of life lived unconsciously.

There is the conspicuous lack of privacy, "other groups impinging upon ourselves", her inability ever to find her mother without being surrounded by a host of other intimates, the self-consciousness of alienation, the longing for the ultimate bond without forfeiture of self, the profound identification with the duty of her class.<sup>21</sup> In short, Woolf shared a great deal of the same "invisible presences" which naturalized her brothers into their class through the public education which she so much envied.<sup>22</sup> She was familiar with Victorian ideas, could relate to them, and carry them forward. Barrett Browning, Harrison, Pater, Ruskin, Froude, Huxley, Darwin, and Carlyle made their debut in her writings without ending up demolished. As Beer says, they were "in" Virginia Woolf.<sup>23</sup> Phyllis Rose, too, noticed continuities: Woolf's fears for the "frailty of culture", imperiled by anarchy, her fear that culture will be lost in civilization's potential for triviality or inability to adapt to

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<sup>19</sup>Virginia Woolf, *Between The Acts* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1941)

<sup>20</sup>Beer, 215.

<sup>21</sup>Woolf, "Sketch", 70,80-1.

<sup>22</sup>Woolf, "Sketch", 80. There is not enough time to discuss the non-specialized sphere of the feminine world, a world also in transformation. But the oral nature, for example the absence of the object/subject dichotomy (self-consciousness) in certain female literature has been observed by John Bayley, in "Where, Exactly, is the Pym World", *The Life and Work of Barbara Pym*, Ed. Dale Salwak (London: Macmillan, 1987) 52-3. Much of Woolf's work mocks extreme self-consciousness.

<sup>23</sup>Beer, 215-6.

the new challenges in any form but a "death wish".<sup>24</sup> Woolf shared the Victorians' fears for the collective experience, she felt, like them, the communications barrier between the generations or between the "elite" and the masses. Yet, in her last novel, *Between The Acts*, she deliberately and consciously, satirized the Victorian icons, using her landscape of banalities and small things to set Victorian pomposity into sharp relief.

*Between the Acts* was Virginia Woolf's last novel, written when "the Battle of Britain was being fought in the skies over her Rodmell cottage". On May 28, 1941, having completed her novel and before giving it the usual final polish, Virginia Woolf drowned herself.<sup>25</sup> According to Rose, *Between The Acts* was Woolf's *Tempest*, the artist's accumulated wisdom and warning to civilization, the "assessment of her own art and her farewell to it".<sup>26</sup> She chose to make her farewell in biting satire. What seemed droll and amusing about *Between the Acts* was nothing less than the sad truth about the human condition.

The scene of the action is Pointz Hall; the time: the day of the annual pageant, performed on the terrace nearby. Before long, the stage and its audience become an allegory of modern civilization. Signs of its troubled state are everywhere. Architecture and landscape form no natural unity, nor are the building and its inhabitants genealogically connected. Sir Bartholomew Oliver, its present occupant, has no connection with the original builders. Mrs. Manresa, the embodiment of idea-less liberalism, a raw energy, is one of the "new-comers", those people who are "bringing the old houses up to date, adding bathrooms" (91). The pageant, put on for the last seven years, is a recent invention, a means for raising funds for the electric illumination for the village church (29). "'All our village festivals' Mr. Oliver snorted turning to Mrs. Mares, 'end with a demand for money'" (208). A newcomer to the village, a woman with a foreign name, Miss LaTrobe, has written the script and taken up the direction.

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<sup>24</sup>Phyllis Rose, *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf*  
130.<sup>25</sup>Rose, 226, 238.  
<sup>26</sup>Rose, 231.

The people who find themselves assembled at this particular time and space on and around "half-past three on a June day in 1939" make every effort to play their parts, although the result is comical (92). Self-consciousness and confusion prevail. Only those who have no business with the pageant, the cook, the nursemaids, the trees, the stream, the swallows, the cows on the meadow, know their roles. Some feel that the audience's role is to be seated, passively. "There was nothing for the audience to do" (74). The "pageant" turns out to be a rather sophisticated affair, a recapitulation of Woolf's own knowledge of (literary) history, totally incongruous with the amateur production. Miss LaTrobe's (Woolf's) chances of being heard are slim. Nature, wind, technology, prejudice, indifference, incapability, incomprehension and disconnectedness conspire against her.

And yet she has so much to say, as is evident from the act entitled "The Victorian age". The Victorians are represented by Budge, the village publican, disguised as a Victorian policeman, "guarding respectability, prosperity and the purity of Victoria's land". His soliloquy is about the "'Ome Sweet 'Ome'":

Budge:...Don't I see fire (he pointed: one window blazed red) blazing even higher? In kitchen, and nursery; drawing-room and library? That's the fire of 'Ome. And see! Our Jane has brought the tea. Now children where's the toys? Mama, you knitting, quick. For here...comes the bread-winner, home from the city, home from the counter, home from the shop. "Mama, a cup o'tea." "Children gather round my knee. I will read aloud. Which shall it be? Sinbad the sailor? Or some simple tale from the Scriptures? And show you the pictures? What none of 'em?. Then out with the bricks. Let's build: A conservatory. A laboratory? A mechanics' institute? Or shall it be a tower; with our flag on top; where our widowed Queen, after tea, calls the Royal orphans round her knee? (200-1)

Some in the audience, those with real memories, are confused: "'Oh but it was beautiful,' Mrs. Lynn Jones protested. Home she meant; the lamplit room; the ruby curtains; and Papa reading aloud..." (201-2). But the home which Mrs. Lynn Jones remembered, was the same home which Ruskin had attacked in *Sesame and Lilies*, and other writings, condemning its deadly "indiscriminate charity - the charity which each household pays to maintain its own private curse".<sup>27</sup> Virginia Woolf clearly carried Ruskin's torch. Her critique of the Victorian home was

that it was a haven apart and that, denying the world beyond its walls, it gave a false sense of permanence. Woolf spoke from personal experience of Hyde Park Gate:

When I look back upon that house it seems to me so crowded with scenes of family life, grotesque, comic and tragic; with violent emotions of youth, revolt, despair, intoxicating happiness, immense boredom, with parties of the famous and the dull; with rages again, George and Gerald; with love scenes with Jack Hills; with passionate affection for my father alternating with passionate hatred of him, all tingling and vibrating in an atmosphere of youthful bewilderment and curiosity - that I feel suffocated by the recollection.<sup>28</sup>

Beer interprets Woolf's modernism as a longing for liberty from emotional warmth and proximity of the family, allowing no separate identity: "loss and freedom became hard to distinguish. Everyday life, whose familiarity makes it seem permanent, vanishes even fecklessly, the heavy furniture more fleeting than the residual forces of emotion". But Budge's monologue reveals that Woolf's protest was not against family life as such but against the illusory nature of its solidity. The family gave a false feeling of permanence. As long as it conceived permanence only within its own narrow circle, as if nothing else existed, it could never last. By withdrawing it failed to address the real problem of permanence: the world outside - a world it excluded from consciousness.

Preoccupied with keeping the world at bay, Victorians maintained intolerable contradictions. Budge's speech took a page out of Strachey's parody:

Budge:...Go to Church on Sunday; on Monday, nine sharp, catch the City Bus. On Tuesday it may be, attend a meeting at the Mission House for the redemption of the sinner; at dinner on Wednesday attend another - turtle soup. Some bother it may be in Ireland; Famine. Fenians. What not. On Thursday it's the natives of Peru require protection and correction; we give 'em what's due. But mark you, our rule don't end there. It's a Christian country, our Empire; under the White Queen Victoria. Over thought and religion; drink; dress; manners; marriage too, I wield my truncheon. Prosperity and respectability always go, as we know, 'and in 'and. The ruler of an Empire must keep his eye on the cot; spy too in the kitchen; drawing-room; library; wherever one or two, me and you, come together. Purity our watchword; prosperity and respectability.

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<sup>27</sup>Ruskin, *The Queen of the Air*, 177.

<sup>28</sup>Woolf, "Old Bloomsbury", *Moments of Being*, Ed. Jeanne Schulkind, 161.



If not, why, let 'em fester in...Cripplegate; St. Giles's; Whitechapel; the Minories. Let 'em sweat at the mines; cough at the looms; rightly endure their lot. That's the price of Empire; that's the white man's burden. And, I can tell you, to direct the traffic orderly, at 'Yde Park Corner, Piccadilly Circus, is a whole-time, white man's job. (190-1)

Some of the spectators feel emotionally tied to the past. Woolf's own ties speak through Mrs. Swithin. "Were they like that?" Isa asks Mrs. Swithin:

"The Victorians," Mrs. Swithin mused. "I don't believe" she said with her odd little smile, "that there ever were such people. Only you and me and William dressed differently." "You don't believe in history," said William. (203)

Mrs. Swithin cannot believe in history, because she is, like Woolf, a "one-maker", making sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves, all one (204). Born in the Victorian age, Lucy Swithin should be extinct. But Woolf has to borrow Lucy's ways of seeing, time and again, moving things into perspective in relation to the old-age of earth, watching permanence and impermanence coexist. In her unified view of all things there is no past or present, all things are but repetitions of the same, over and over. History was only for historians and nation-makers:

*Gentles and simples, I address you all...*

*...Come hither for our festival...*

*This is a pageant, all may see*

*Drawn from our island history.*

*England am I...*

*...A child new born...*

*Sprung from the sea*

*Whose billows blown by mighty storm*

*Cut off from France and Germany*

*This isle.*

*England am I...*

*Now weak and small*

*A child, as all may see... (94-5)*

Truth seemed more in the rawness of nature, the things that need no putting into words, irrelevant to history, history is irrelevant to them: the swallows annual return, the nest building, the everchanging sea and clouds and the constancy of their permeability. It was here that Woolf was able to solve the problem of permanence by lifting her eyes to the things beyond the solipses of intimate relations, to the natural and public realm. "She works", Beer writes, "through what is communal: architecture, clouds, cows, street-scenes".<sup>29</sup>

The climax of both, novel and the pageant, was the final act, entitled "The Present - Ourselves". It takes some time before the hitherto passive audience realizes that it is being involved in Miss La Trope's "little game", that they themselves, sitting on this hot summer day on rows of chairs and indigenous garden seats looking at the terrace, the birch trees, the meadows with the cows, the bushes behind which the actors were changing, are part of the scene. The discomfort of the audience rises when the cast brings out various sizes of mirrors and darts into the audience to allow it to see itself. The point is hammered home by a voice coming over the loudspeaker:

*Look at ourselves, ladies and gentlemen! Then at the wall; and ask how's this wall, the great wall [some of the cast were unrolling a wall which was to allude to the rebuilding of civilisation], which we call, perhaps miscall, civilization, to be built by (here the mirrors flicked and flashed) orts, scraps and fragments like ourselves? (219)*

The message of the mirrors, showing the audience in orts, scraps and fragments, is obvious. Yet, the final irony is that an audience consisting of orts, scraps and fragments has none of the sacramental unity, none of that commonality of inborn and innate ideas to share the message. It could not understand, it was not used to getting involved.

The scene epitomised the artist's dilemma in a society in which the common meaning of things had broken down, in which the artist no longer spoke from the centre. Confused by the artist's message, the audience requires someone to explain the last act, to interpret it to them (222). This task is assumed by the vicar, Rev. G.W. Streatfield, although "the whole lot of them, gentles and simples, felt embarrassed for him, for themselves". He says: "I have been asking myself..what meaning, or message, this pageant was meant to convey?" (223). In answering, he produces Woolf's point with unpoetical authority.<sup>30</sup>

"To me at least it was indicated that we are members one of another. Each is part of the whole. Yes that occurred to me, sitting among you in the audience..."

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<sup>29</sup>Beer, 218.

<sup>30</sup>Rose, 233 "The questions she raises do not concern art's utility - no puritan attack lurks at the back of her mind to be answered - but its efficiency. How does art convey meaning? Does it convey meaning at all?"

I speak only as one of the audience, one of ourselves. I caught myself too reflected, as it happened in my own mirror...." (Laughter) "Scraps, orts and fragments! Surely, we should unite?" (224-5)

But his interpretation can be little more than a pale photocopy of the direct experience of art.

This was art's dilemma. Ultimately, art could not be interpreted without losing its own nature. It was not a new dilemma but, as has been seen, the dilemma of Victorian "criticism", trying to interpret the classics, or religion, without destroying the direct experience itself. There was a subtle change, however. The Victorian critic's high tone of hope has been lowered an octave, there seemed a capitulation to powerlessness: Woolf no longer believed that art had the power of changing the state of the arts.<sup>31</sup> *Art, Between the Acts* made clear, was ultimately dependent on shared symbols. Without them, it was impotent, powerless to bring consensus about. Civilization, culture, could not be invented by the artist. This realization gave Woolf her "realism", a tone easily mistaken for disinterestedness. But the flat note of her satire did not sever her from the Victorian intellectual tradition. On the contrary, *Between the Acts* showed that she was conscious of society's need for shared meaning, for connectedness - to the past, to nature, to art, to other individuals. She was, it will be seen, not the only one who was concerned with the fate of civilization.

### III.

#### Matters of Ultimate Concern.

Even before the Great War, it has been seen, English philosophy went into an eclipse.<sup>32</sup> Since time immemorial, philosophy's task was unambiguously the pursuit of wisdom in the most total sense, a quest for comprehensive explanation of external (meta) nature (physics). With the new philosophy this was no longer so. The word remained, but the activity changed.

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<sup>31</sup>Rose thus notices that her tone is no longer hortatory. Woolf<sup>32</sup> abstains from prescription. (235)  
<sup>32</sup>See Ch. 4.

The significance of this change was not that philosophy altered its character, but that in altering its character it ceased in its traditional role in the academic world and society as a whole. This cessation was of extreme consequence for the Victorian intellectual tradition.

In 1924, A.L. Rowse, a Cornishman at Oxford, marked down in his diary Russell's and the new philosophical wind's effect on him:

Russell gave us a very good time, 'his speech a marvel of lucidity and insight'. One remark at the outset gave me some pause. 'He had been asked, he said, to speak on the Philosophic Basis of Socialism. But he had a certain respect for philosophy, and wasn't willing to force it into contact with things of everyday life.' I perceive now how revealing that disjunction was, the fatal weakness of having one's philosophical position on one side, and one's view of human affairs on the other: they should be brought into relation with each other, in one coherent frame of thought. The youth's instinct, at twenty, brought up short by this disjunction, was not wrong, though I did not know how to deal with it at the time: there was something fundamentally unsatisfactory in Russell's position.<sup>33</sup>

Rowse had come to the insight that "there is a connection between being so clever at mathematics and logic and so fatuous about people and politics".<sup>34</sup> But the point is, Russell was a part of a cultural phenomenon. He reflected a general narrowing and reduction of all disciplines. Hitherto it could be said that the Victorian intellectual tradition as a whole had worked toward some credible and unifying image of the world, society and the individual. T.H. Green, F.W. Bradley, Benjamin Jowett, Walter Pater, to name only a few of the philosophers and philosophisers of the preceding generation, all concerned themselves with questions of "ultimate concern". Their minds held the discoveries of science and of the human spirit together in one grand synthesis.

Such a metaphysical outlook had, by the twenties, as Rowse memoirs recalled, become academically suspect, a legacy of

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<sup>33</sup>A.L. Rowse *A Cornishman At Oxford* (London: Cape, 1965), 127.

<sup>34</sup>Rowse, 125. Strachey made a similar connection about Newman in Manning's portrait. [See Ch.6] Paul Tillich wrote in 1951, as if in defiance of Russell, that pure reason is a place which is no place. *Systematic Theology*, i, 26.

the infantile past. "Disinterestedness" was the new catchword and *de-rigueur*. The reaction to metaphysics spread like an epidemic into all disciplines:

We can see this process going on with great rapidity, and immense extension of knowledge being made, in the new physics and astronomy, as also in anthropology and psychology. This outlook of mine which, transposed into other terms, hold good of historical method, has its parallels and developments in all subjects that I think about.<sup>35</sup>

The end of metaphysics became manifest, trusting Rowse's testimony, "under the aegis of my junior at Christ Church, A.J. Ayer" and the school of "analytical philosophy".<sup>36</sup>

But the death of metaphysics was greatly exaggerated. Rowse could always satisfy his metaphysical needs in another discipline: modern literature. Indeed, there was yet another area where metaphysics was alive and well, but he did not want to go there. Reading Edwyn Bevan's *Hellenism and Christianity*, Rowse was appalled by the "awful sentimentality" of the chapter "Christianity and the Modern World". The suggestions about a "love between God and man" seemed to him repulsive. "Perhaps it's my own fault, though, I am coming not to be able to read books about God and Christ and religion: the atmosphere is so strained and unreal, the tone so vulgar".<sup>37</sup>

Anything even remotely resembling metaphysics gave heartburn. Rowse's hostility was curiously similar to that of Mark Pattison to the eighteenth century.

The gist of my objection to the philosophy of religion is its method. Granted the two elements of the known and the unknown, out of these the religious compound a whole, which they call ultimate Reality = God. In the light of this hypothesis they turn back and re-interpret what is already known to our experience, investing it with a significance not properly its own. They make the equation  $a+b=x$ , when we only know what  $a$  is. They not only lend an interpretation to  $b$ , but give a new and unwarranted interpretation to  $a$ , in the light of  $x$ .  $x$  is really pure invention; we don't really know any more than what we began with,  $a$ . It is both impertinent and dishonest to lend a new interpretation to what we know already in the light of the concocted hypothesis. The more honest method is the anti-metaphysical: taking one's stand on known experience and

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<sup>35</sup>Rowse, 234-5

<sup>36</sup>Rowse, 235.

<sup>37</sup>Rowse, 234-5.

knowledge to explore into the region of the unknown, continually pressing to expand a at the expense of b.<sup>38</sup>

What really troubled Rowse about the "philosophy of religion" was the *frame of mind* behind it, a logic which from his point of view seemed inaccessible to modern science. Liberal theology, while venturing to interpret God as some ultimate reality, was in fact not moving along with new, existentially oriented, thinking at all. It seemed "intellectually" dishonest.<sup>39</sup> Rowse's account of the situation made one thing very clear: the road of theology and philosophy had to part. Philosophy proposed a disinterested "isolation" of problems, a scientific exclusion of the human factor, theology the exact opposite. This made it useless to theology. From here on, metaphysical speculation dwelled only in the rooms of theology. Indeed, aware of an elemental difference, Tillich was to define the theologians as if they were part of a sacred brotherhood. "The theologian, in short, is determined by his faith. Every theology presupposes that the theologian is in the theological circle".<sup>40</sup> Clearly, Tillich did not mean a club formed on shared interests. To Tillich, it was an intrinsic condition, an attitude, an assent of mind, present long before any discourse took place, an instinctive and almost inarticulable identification with the ultimate concern. Membership in the inner theological circle was spontaneous, instant, permanently disabling its followers from entering the limited playground of modern philosophy.

The theologian has no right whatsoever to argue for a philosophical opinion in the name of his ultimate concern or on the basis of the theological circle. He is obliged to argue for a philosophical decision in the name of universal logos and from a place which is no place: pure reason.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Rowse, 235.

<sup>39</sup>A.N.Wilson's review article of Iris Murdoch's latest book, *Message to the Planet* retells how Murdoch found herself at Oxford "in a world where the only people who shared her interests were theologians, figures, that is to say, with radically different assumptions than her own about the ways in which we can usefully discuss our moral and spiritual predicament. "On the Novel's far Horizons", *Weekend Guardian*, (Sep.30-Oct. 1, 1989):

3. <sup>40</sup>Tillich, 23.  
<sup>41</sup>Tillich, 26.

In other words, philosophy and theology were of separate worlds.

In spite of the separation, trends in "secular thought" had not been without effect on theology. In 1922, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York set up a commission to bring down a definitive report on the *Doctrine in The Church of England*, as "tensions between different schools of thought" imperiled its unity and impaired its effectiveness. It met regularly for 13 years and published its report in 1938, setting out how far believers could go to meet the modern world and where they had to draw a line. It was clear that the real peril was without:

Our Report must be read in the context of the thought of our time and with regard to its constant changes. Even during the period of our labours great fluctuations of mental habit have been apparent in the spheres of secular science and philosophy. An astonished public has been made aware that some leading students of physics consider that the knowledge gained by their<sup>42</sup> studies is schematic only and not a knowledge of Reality.

The news of these developments in science were a heavy blow to metaphysics. Science's confession to a limited and "schematic" knowledge even in physics undermined its rational foundations; the edifice of the eighteenth-century philosopher lost its objective basis. Theologians reacted in different ways. Karl Barth dismissed human logic and knowledge altogether; his concept of the ineffable nature of God was to have a great if not total following among the British theologians, especially at Edinburgh.<sup>43</sup> The American theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, equally influential in Britain, struck a compromise by speaking of a Kingdom whose ethics were still in the process of being defined, forever coming, never here. William Temple's introduction of the report, loyal to its commission by the Heavenly City, cautiously acknowledged these developments:

In the political world the ideas of freedom and fellowship are passing through readjustment and re-evaluation. And in our sphere, that of Theology, the work of such writers as Karl Barth in Europe and Reinhold Niebuhr in America has set many problems in a new perspective.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine, appt. by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922, *Doctrine in the Church of England* (1938, S.P.C.K., 1962) 4-6.

<sup>43</sup>For a theological and political discussion of the appeal of Barthianism in the thirties John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 17-8.

To discuss them, it was felt, was not the task of the commission. Its desire was to "set forth the Everlasting Gospel unchanged in substance".

Indeed, we believe that its permanence amidst the welter of modern theories, which seem to succeed each other with kaleidoscopic inconsequence, may be one of its chief means of drawing to itself the attention of a bewildered generation.<sup>45</sup>

Theology, and this was not only true of English theology, with its nineteenth-century homage to the Greek Fathers, could never be satisfied with only schematic truths. It had to hold on to lasting truths of consequence. In 1929, John Baillie, a Scottish theologian of international fame, published what could be called a definition of theology in the light of modern knowledge. *The Interpretation of Religion*, a volume of stupendous philosophical breadth, looked at almost all the intellectual developments since the end of the seventeenth century, including psychology, sociology and anthropology. In the end Baillie declared himself a full disciple of the last philosopher: Emmanuel Kant.<sup>46</sup>

The reasons for Baillie's preference of Kant were not surprising. Kant's critical philosophy, concerned itself not only with moral philosophy but with its objective foundations. In short, Baillie desired a basis for morality which did not conflict with reason. The authority of religion had to rest in a consensual and universal, therefore "objective", moral sense of society. Kant, like all the philosophers before him reaching as far back as Plato, had worked "with" certain givens: the preliminary necessities without which there could be no debate. In Baillie's own words:

There was a danger of faith being crowded out by natural science, and Kant felt that it could only be rehabilitated by means of a thoroughgoing examination and nice readjustments of the rights of the two claimants. It was the task which Socrates and Plato had set for themselves more than two thousand years before, and ever since it had been the

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<sup>44</sup>Report, Doctrine, 6.

<sup>45</sup>Report, Doctrine, 6.

<sup>46</sup>John Baillie, *The Interpretation of Religion* (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1929) This work was brought to my attention by F.W.Dillistone, who remembers its welcome by theologians the world over and widely used well beyond World War Two. The work has been completely overlooked by Hastings, perhaps because Baillie was a Scottish theologian. (Personal Interview, 6 Feb. 1989)



fundamental task with which philosophy had occupied itself - the task of Aquinas and the Middle Ages, the task of Descartes and all his modern following.<sup>47</sup>

It was a task Baillie himself could never willingly abandon. His work was, therefore, a defiant dismissal of Schleiermacher's subjective religion of feeling, William James' psychology of religion, Ritschl's religion of sense impression, and Frazer's anthropology of religion in *The Golden Bough*. These interpretations made religion not only an *Urdummheit* but a content-less "experience". Like Jowett, he believed in the broad stream which connected all wisdom into one movement beginning with the classical tradition. There was nothing static about that: even Kant denied the possibility of knowing dogmatically.<sup>48</sup>

Baillie required no new basis for metaphysics. He could count on English theologians to have that special "unknown residual factor", that ability to hear the whisper of their values. Even those who resided ostensibly outside the theological circle seemed to hear it, the only difference being that they preferred another terminology:

Moralists of the present day very commonly prefer to speak of values instead of goods [in the Platonic sense], and to distinguish between values which are "instrumental" and values which are "intrinsic."<sup>49</sup>

Theologians like himself were not going to be side-tracked by anthropological theories of the origin of these values. There was nothing that the theologian could learn from them,<sup>50</sup> even if it was "undeniable that our consciousness of moral obligation of the Good to which we are obliged to conform has an evolutionary history behind it".<sup>51</sup>

The general contention [is] that our awareness of value cannot be explained in terms of its more earthy antecedents but only as a progressive participation in a higher world of being whose organising principle is the Good, [which] goes back to

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<sup>47</sup>Baillie, 260.

<sup>48</sup>Baillie, 172, 212-5.

<sup>49</sup>Baillie, 259.

<sup>50</sup>Bultmann's invitation to sociology was not considered in England until Bishop Robinson wrote *Honest to God*, and even then it found few visitors. Henriette Donner, "25 Years On: Looking back to Radical Theology and Radical Ministry in Britain (Part 1)", *Modern Churchman*, New Series xxxi, 1 (1989): 33-4.

<sup>51</sup>Baillie, 461-2.

the teaching of Plato, and forms indeed the central thought of his Theory of Ideas as well as the esoteric meaning of this famous Myth of Recollection.<sup>52</sup>

These words could have come straight from Jowett's pages on Philebus. Responding to modern day moralists, Baillie felt:

[We] shall understand that to place the roots of our religious faith in our moral nature is the same as to say that such faith is grounded in our knowledge of good and evil, and again the same as to say that it is born out of our insight into ultimate values.<sup>53</sup>

He could indeed speak for most theologians. They had remained completely loyal to the ultimate values. When William Temple confirmed in the Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine that the philosophical underpinnings of Anglicanism were and continued to be platonic, he alluded to a certain speculative method and more: a vessel through which the moral goods and truths of Christian civilization were transmitted from one generation to the next. His opinion that "the Church of England has no official Philosophy and it certainly was not our desire to provide one for it", was not contradictory.<sup>54</sup> Philosophizing with the ancient rules was so natural it did not seem official. Indeed, when Temple proclaimed an official philosophy a *monstrum horrendum*", he meant every word he said. Philosophy was not a doctrine or system of ideas but the ongoing speculation about transcendent things. Life without this habit would have been much worse than a *monstrum horrendum*. For the members of the Victorian intellectual tradition, it has been seen, it would be hell itself.

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<sup>52</sup>Baillie, 462.

<sup>53</sup>Baillie, 259.

<sup>54</sup>Report, *Doctrine the Church of England*, 10.

Section Four.

Worlds Apart:  
Ancient Orders in Modern Days.

## Chapter 7.

"One Hundred Years On:  
Culture in the Classless Sixties".

## I.

In the fifties and sixties the British nation experienced another phase of "nationalization", even of "internationalization", of society. These changes took place so swiftly that books as for example *The Uses of Literacy* looked back to the era before the second World War as if as to another world.<sup>1</sup> The most noticeable change in the sixties was in living standards. The new generation enjoyed amenities and amusement "we never had" and refused to put up with those hardships "we never thought anything of". The new way of life was not inherently evil. Why should the lower classes not enjoy motorcars, why should juke-box boys not have a good time with their skiffle, what was wrong with "harshly-lighted milk-bars;<sup>2</sup> or, the exploration and enjoyment of sex.<sup>3</sup> Why should the roles of men and women be locked to age-old customs? At the end of his army years in 1946, Richard Hoggart was pleased to notice that the idea of deference was on its way out.<sup>4</sup> But not everyone was happy, that the mores which had led the parents to the altar were scorned. There seemed a lack of self-discipline. According to David Thomson, the historian, there was an "alarming increase in juvenile offenders, illegitimacy and prostitution".

It was precisely among teenagers, whose income had risen most spectacularly that there appeared gang warfare, vice, and the propensity to commit violent crimes. Of 182,217 offences in England and Wales in 1961, 54,284 were committed by youngsters under the age of seventeen.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 1959)

<sup>2</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 202.

<sup>3</sup>A.C. Carstairs, *This Island Now* (Harm: Penguin, 1964) 20.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning: Life And Times - 1940-59* (to be pub. by Chatto, 1990) 4:28-9. The following excerpts come from the author's manuscript, paginated by chapter and page no., quoted from with permission by the author and publisher.

<sup>5</sup>David Thomson, *England in the Twentieth Century (1914-79)*, Pelican History of England, 2nd. Ed. 9 vol. (1965, Harm: Penguin) 276.

The sixties were therefore greatly concerned with youth. The "Youth service" came into being because that body which since 1945 shaped the mind and body of young males into a national image, the National Service, was about to be dismantled. 200,000 young men between the ages of 18 and 20, who had hitherto received the formative influence of military training, would now become the wards of ordinary society. The situation looked alarming enough to create the Committee on the Youth Service in England and Wales, chaired by the Countess of Albemarle, a guardian with a record of "service" to the public.<sup>6</sup> In 1960, the report was brought before parliament and the House of Lords.<sup>7</sup> In it, the Committee summed up the situation. After the war the birthrate had increased drastically. Now the "bulge", as it was called, was entering adolescence and its energies needed to be channelled.<sup>8</sup>

But there was also a problem of different values and attitudes. It blamed also the preceding generation, adult Britain, for failing to bring the young along. There was an admission of guilt: perhaps they themselves had no longer the right faith to hand over?

It does seem true, however, that society does not know to ask the best of the young, that as a whole it is not more concerned with them than to ask them to earn and consume. It is necessary no doubt to do both, but man's deepest needs are not satisfied by a mechanical participation in an economic process. We do not think it is easy or wise to speak glibly of a delinquent younger generation and a law abiding older generation. This is only half the story. What, to a person of forty or fifty, may show itself as a general malaise, a sense of emptiness, a quiet rejection of social responsibilities or a cautiously controlled cynicism may show itself in an adolescent as an act of wanton violence, a bout of histrionic drunkenness or a grasping at promiscuous sexual experience.

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<sup>6</sup>Richard Hoggart, Personal Interview 4 April 1989.

<sup>7</sup>Ministry of Ed., *The Youth Service of England and Wales, Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education, in Nov. 1958, Presented by the Minister of Education by Command of Her Majesty, Feb. 1960.* (London: HMSO, Cmnd.929 - Reports Commissioners, xxi). According to Hoggart, one of the Bishops expressed his concern that the proposals wrestled youth work from the offices of the Church. (Hoggart, Personal Interview, 4 Apr. 1989) This is also confirmed in the content of the report: not a word about the past involvement of the churches, indeed, one line says that the Youth Service "must provide opportunities for young people of all classes and groups to meet on common ground, to talk and to get to know one another, without the necessity of further obligation".(54)[*Italics Mine*]

<sup>8</sup>Report, Youth Service, 17.

There does not seem to be at the heart of society a courageous and exciting struggle for a particular moral and spiritual life - only a passive, neutral commitment to things as they are. One cannot, in fact indict the young for the growth of delinquency without also indicting the older generations for apathy and indifference to the deeper things of the heart. [*Italics Mine*].

The report really revealed their own anxieties: the depressing anonymity of the acres of monotonous housing estates, youth's lack of interest in a national life, the demise of the idea of service and duty. They reported their own unhappiness, their disorientation in an "open", hence disorderly, society. The transfiguration of society had, however, not come overnight. This chapter, while attempting a fresh sketch of the sixties, will also look at some of the processes since the nineteenth century that brought with them a new experience of life and thus new attitudes, attitudes which cut off sharply the old generation, the generation who presented the Albemarle report, from the new.

How wide the generational chasm was could be seen from the 1962 Reith Lectures. The BBC had invited G.M. Carstairs, Professor of Psychological Medicine in Edinburgh, to review the state of the nation. In *This Island Now* he presented what was, in effect, an eulogy to the "faceless culture" of "imperfectly literate masses".<sup>10</sup> It was not just that the "middle-class society of the 1920's" had gone and with it the "solid bourgeois virtues". He, like everyone else, did not miss them. It was the post-war educational system that caused his estrangement. True, more people were receiving an "education" (not that he would call it that) than at any time in the nation's history. Nevertheless, the idea of education as a utility, and the broad and even spreading of the utility, had replaced education's true purpose with a commodity. He quoted from *The Uses of Literacy*:

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<sup>9</sup> Report, *Youth Service*, 18. On the request of Lady Albemarle, the report was written jointly by Hoggart and a Church of England minister, Leslie Paul, the Anglican minister known for the Woodcraft Movement (*The Republic of Children*, 1938) thus having satisfied the need to represent both classes. It is easy to identify who had written what, Leslie sounding usually a bit more spiritual. But the final product showed that both men, despite their divergent backgrounds and vocations, shared a congenial world.

<sup>10</sup> Carstairs, 79-80.

Elementary schooling has taught our population to read, but it falls short of imparting an appreciation of literature or art; it develops a dim awareness of ordinary man with the wish, or the ability, to go on learning himself. As a result he vacillates between total scepticism towards all values which are not crudely materialistic and extreme credulity for assertions which invoke the name of science. Hoggart reports the withering away of verbal traditions, of local activities in which working people used to take part. In their place he sees the spread of a faceless culture whose members passively imbibe the endless stream of trivial, intellectually enervating entertainments offered to them by the mass media.<sup>11</sup>

The Reith lectures focused inordinately on youth. Here, as the Lady Albemarle report had shown, he was not alone. In the sixties, John F. Kennedy's platitudes about "youth" and the "future" found wide circulation spread quickly all over Europe and were eagerly greeted in Britain.<sup>12</sup> Youth Service trained workers to help youth move beyond destruction and consumption toward the higher ends of public life.<sup>13</sup> At Coventry Cathedral, it will be seen, the concern with youth grew in proportion with the new generation's indifference to service.<sup>14</sup>

All this disclosed two tragic facts about the sixties. (1) The older generation tried desperately to make contact with the younger but was separated by a gulf of experience. (2) The younger generation's difference indexed attitudes to society which the old generation had no hand in shaping. The "social malaise" referred to by the guardians described not only a decline of "standards", but the experience of incommunication between various segments of society in general and between parents and children in particular. The high pitch of worry signalled a break-down of the traditional means of transmission. The past "order" seemed to have lost its cultural-educational

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<sup>11</sup>Carstairs, 79-80

<sup>12</sup>Lesslie Newbigin, "Living With Change", an address given to a Conference at Coventry Cathedral on 5th June, 1972.

<sup>13</sup>There were for example the programmes developed and training set up by in 1961 the National College for the Training of the Youth Leaders; the Blenheim Project - a counselling and support project for young drifters in London, the Contact project - a three-year detached youth work project in an area of high social need in Liverpool, and so on. Owen Watkins, *Professional Training for Youth Work* (Leicester: Youth Service Information Centre, Report 4, 1971).

<sup>14</sup>See Ch. 16.

role, or, connected to this, any real means of enforcing its "standards" on its offspring. The experience life had changed so drastically that the generations eyed one another from separate orbs. Looking back in anger, art, if anything, reflected the gap.<sup>15</sup>

The generation gap was, however, only one preoccupation among others. Another worry was mass culture. Observers of this new culture spoke of a lowered plane of consciousness, of masses anaesthetized from thinking by material comforts and distractions. When post-war statistics showed alarming increases in suicide it seemed to Carstairs proof that something was lacking.<sup>16</sup> He worried about those who, although not seriously depressed, led "a lack-lustre existence, 'living and partly living'". The majority of people appeared unaware of their affliction. It was Carstairs rather than average citizen who self-consciously felt the lack of a "supra-personal system of values, which would lend significance both to the existence of our species, and to our individual lives".<sup>17</sup>

The new-type citizens appeared to be lacking an "inner conscience", that deeply embedded sense of the "ought to", sending moral signals.

David Riesman [the American sociologist] has contrasted three types of moral systems - those which are tradition-centred (as in the Middle Ages, when religious and autocratic authority were unchallenged); those which are inner-directed, each man obeying his own conscience and claiming direct access to his God (as in the Protestant ethic); and thirdly those which are other-directed, in which the individual subordinates his own values to the expectations of the other people who surround him. The state of other-direction, which Riesman finds increasingly common in modern society, encourages feelings of individual insignificance; it also causes spiritual emptiness which leaves men susceptible to irrational demagogic ideologies. Other-directedness reflects an impoverishment of the personality.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>There was for example John Osborne's play: *Look Back in Anger* (London: Evans Bros, 1968) Hoggart complained about the new amoral genre, as exemplified in Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim*. *The Uses of Literature*, 239.

<sup>16</sup>He expected 5000 suicides and 30,000 attempted suicides to take place in 1963.

<sup>17</sup>Carstairs, 80-1.

<sup>18</sup>Carstairs, 78-9. The reference was to David Riesman (in (Footnote continued)



Riesman's notion of "other-direction", so reminiscent of Pattison's observation about the product of reformed education at Oxford, was in the sixties widely accepted as an accurate description of modern collective behaviour. It enhanced the "silly" view of the people which Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams protested as a misrepresentation of the masses as a mindless herd.<sup>19</sup> However, what Riesman had in mind with "other-direction" was the growing loss of individuality. Society, in spite of multiple choices, in spite of their growing narcissism, grew alarmingly formless rather than uniform.

## II.

### Neither Class Nor Culture.

The trends toward a uniform culture, the first section of this thesis has shown, had been observed for some time. Watching developments around him, T.S.Eliot warned in 1939 about the incipient "puritanism of a hygienic morality in the interest of efficiency, uniformity of opinion through propaganda".<sup>20</sup> But in the 'sixties these trends were more difficult to isolate. True, the forces which guided modern destiny seemed neutral, bearing such names as "technological advance", "centralization of services", mass "communications". But these profanations of personal and local life also had a pleasant side: entertaining commercials, a friendly if undemanding morning press, visions of upward mobility and openness. The new did not seem strange. The mass media appealed through traditional images: country looks and manners, loving children and spouses, working men and friendly

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<sup>18</sup>(continued)

collab. with Reuel Denney and Nathan Glazer) *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950)

<sup>19</sup>Richard Hoggart, Personal Interview April 4, 1989. Williams said in *Culture and Society: Coleridge to Orwell*, that "there are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses. (300) A contemporary version of the more typical view is described by Michael D. Biddiss in *The Age of the Masses: Ideas and Society in Europe since 1870*, when he speaks of the intellectual's ambivalence toward mass mediocrity and "herd values", something which reveals the "frailty of reason and the scope of dynamic passion". (Harm: Penguin Books, 1977), 14-15.

<sup>20</sup>T.S.Eliot *The Idea of A Christian Society*, 55.

neighbourhood pubs. <sup>21</sup> The sixties were becoming a world in which the "classes" could not be clearly identified. There were many more people who enjoyed the amenities formerly only available to the middle classes. But the new middle classes, assessed as such on their economic strength, appeared to renege on former duties and roles. Fewer and fewer people appeared to be carrying the burden of exemplary citizenship, of standards, of culture. High ideals were suspect of hypocrisy. <sup>22</sup>

Richard Hoggart's concern was reminiscent of T.S.Eliot:  
What kinds of outlook will a technological, commercial, mass-communications society encourage? What qualities will the new class of consumers, embracing the large majority of the 37,000,000 adults in this compact and literate country be urged to exemplify? <sup>23</sup>

To Hoggart, real diversity was, in spite of the constant assertion of multiple choices, an illusion. This was evident from new reading habits. The *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Express*, were once the organs of two distinct classes. They still "like to think of themselves as distinct...but the kinds of life each promotes are tending to merge". On the one hand society interested in undivisive and banal things was bound to be more "open" and "unaggressive". Although this seemed for the better, it might be for the worse.

Worse, because it may become what the Americans call, speaking of trends in their own environment, 'bland'. 'Blandness', which is a sort of imaginative boiled milk, will be lying in wait for all classes, not only for those we are used to calling working people. <sup>24</sup>

These words were more than a conservative reflex. Hoggart had collected the evidence methodically, listing signs which testified to real changes in the experience of life, hence people's outlook and interest. <sup>25</sup> *The Uses of Literacy* no more than Hoggart's Charles Carter Lecture (Lancaster 88-89), *Mushy Peas*,

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<sup>21</sup> Richard Hoggart, *Speaking To Each Other: Essays By Richard Hoggart*, 2 vol (London: Chatto, 1970) i, 145. He mentions the "classless society" on p.33 and throughout his essays.

<sup>22</sup> Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 233.

<sup>23</sup> Hoggart, *Speaking to each Other*, i, 30.

<sup>24</sup> Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 29-30.

<sup>25</sup> Hoggart, Personal Interview 4 Apr. 1989. Hoggart described this as his method, described in the preface to the French edition of *The Uses of Literacy*, as "English phenomenology".

*Theme Parks & Channel Four*, contained plain descriptions of the changes which had been accepted without question. The latter, for example, began with an inventory of what Hoggart found on the magazine shelves inside a W.H.Smith Bookstore.<sup>26</sup> While the moralists measured changes in "attitudes", Hoggart drew a direct line between modern aspects of living and those whose attitudes were being discussed, people who had no hand in bringing them about:

As the outer world becomes more and more streamlined, so the family and neighbourhood come to be regarded, even more than formerly, as something that is real and recognizable. It would be difficult to overrate the centralization of modern life: it is easy to overrate the sense of anonymity which so far visits most individuals. Home is carved out under the shadow of the giant abstractions, inside the home one need be no more aware of those outer forces...<sup>27</sup>

The "public order" as it presented itself to the people through the dole, through processes of production, commerce, through work, transport, through shopping outlets and through the media could be used and perused but it was not to be entered into fully and personally. No one could actually "live" in these places - they formed a no-mans land to withdraw from as soon as possible. Indeed, the more the rationalized realm impinged, the smaller the spheres of what was personal and thus "real". Hoggart had seen this happen in working-class life before the second World War, then "a life whose main stress [was] on the intimate, the sensory, the detailed, and the personal..." Existence had to be divided into two planes, with the plane of work denied all significance. One needed only to observe the shop floor:

The conversation which goes on connectedly and continually across the din of the machines, between girls on routine jobs in factories, is so local, so personal and intimate that it makes the girls a close, embracing group. It is almost always elemental, sometimes rough, and often generous; its main themes are among the great themes of existence - marriage, children, relations with others, sex...<sup>28</sup>

The point is: what were in the late thirties peculiarly working-class trends became by the sixties the norm for the

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<sup>26</sup>Richard Hoggart, *Mushy Peas, Theme Parks, Channel Four*, Charles Carter Lecture, (Lancaster: University of Lancaster, 1989) Inside Front Cover.

<sup>27</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 81.

<sup>28</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 81-2.

majority of employed people. De-skilling at the work place was and is a progressive reality for more and more people. Loss of interest in work has spread rapidly to "white-collar" departments.<sup>29</sup> Attitudes to work had their corollary in attitudes toward politics or toward education.<sup>30</sup> In the sixties it was no longer just the working classes which "put most emphasis on relationships within the family"<sup>31</sup> The contracting out from anything larger than immediate concerns had become the norm.<sup>32</sup> The adjectives "unprogrammable and unpolitical", used by Hoggart to describe the attitudes of the prewar working class could now be applied to the majority.<sup>33</sup>

Was all society becoming working class? Hoggart could not even allow this form of class-memberships, for it was based on the myth of the "large immobile and unexpectant working classes".<sup>34</sup> To be truly working class meant to have a distinct culture, with a distinct consciousness arising from life shared over time and place, with concretely local and class-based values. Such a culture could not be found in the classless vacuum as it emerged after the war.<sup>35</sup> To Hoggart the new-type culture appeared to have no "class" in both meanings of the word. He might have substituted for classlessness culturelessness.

He observed that society was most classless then when it

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<sup>29</sup>Paul Thompson, *The Nature of Work: an introduction to debates on the labour process* (London: Macmillan, 1983) 1-3. This is now magnified through the microprocessor technology which "brings the techniques of the assembly line - standardization, speeded up, task-fragmentation in the office on a large scale"..

<sup>30</sup>Almost all working class men and women, interviewed by Elisabeth Roberts and by Paul Thompson concerning the impact of education on their lives denied it any significance at all. Both papers, "The Socialization of [Lancaster] Working Class Girls:1890-1940", and "Family, Education, and Culture in two industrial cities: Twentieth-Century Coventry and Turin" were given at The Oral History of Childhood and Schooling Conference, Faculty of Education, University of Birmingham. (6 May 1989)

<sup>31</sup>Richard Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, 51-2.

<sup>32</sup>See Ch. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Richard Hoggart, *A Local Habitation: Life and Times Vol. I; 1918-40* (London: Chatto, 1988) 128.

<sup>34</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking*, i, 63. He would not allow the word class-less to mean working class. Personal Interview, 4 Apr. 1989

<sup>35</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 28.

was engaged in trivial pursuits, most unified on those occasions when it ceased to think, or found some commonality on the lowest denominator: hobbies, recreation. People were classless in their buying power, their restaurant going, their daily papers and their television viewing. Indeed, classlessness meant almost always a diminution: of individual identity, of collective and personal values, of depth, of unique and identifiable culture content. Classless men or women spent their lives in search of status, depending on the media to tell them what was "in" or "out". Those who should have led them suffered from "nervous awareness of the audience" as "head-counting is all important".<sup>36</sup>

Class culture was supplanted by "thinner" consumer culture. As a result

the intricate social pattern which produced among much else, 'high culture' as it is normally recognized, is being changed...In a changed society the best qualities which inform 'high culture' may have to find other ways of expressing themselves; so will the best qualities in the old local and oral life of people who were not<sup>37</sup> in a position to make much contribution to 'high culture'.

Never was the demand for "individual" commitment greater, now that the old transmitters of culture, class and locality, were disappearing.<sup>38</sup> The postwar years, however, saw an increase in voyeurism rather than involvement: pop-stars, rock-idols, playboys, royalty were "personalities" (rather than persons) chased for private details with which the spectator could identify.<sup>39</sup> They were years when political science spoke of silent majorities, election apathy and election behaviour, election techniques and voter manipulation. But return to a public society was not a matter of choice. The public or national order, as Hoggart's correlation of phenomena showed, encouraged involvement only on a limited scale. It was not a matter of opting out, but of being opted out by a public realm which invited only on-and-off, partial, specified and specific kind of relationship.

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<sup>36</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 57 and 34-5.

<sup>37</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 151.

<sup>38</sup>Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 57.

<sup>39</sup>See Ch. 2. Tom Nairn describes popular attitudes to the Royal family in *The Enchanted Glass: Britain and its Monarchy*, 26-7.

## III.

The Last of Local England.

Such attitudes to the public realm were the cumulative result of experience, of processes steadily underway since the Victorian age, processes which gradually deprived the Victorian intellectual tradition of its traditional infrastructure of influence. The Jubilees at the end of the nineteenth century form a convenient starting point, although they were not the beginning.<sup>40</sup> They serve merely as an example of similar occasions, too many to mention them all. The Victoria Jubilees of 1887 and 1897, celebrating the Queen's accession, not only in Britain but also in the Commonwealth nations, were a "rehearsed" mass event. They were an early example of mass culture, initiated by the centre for the nation. However, in my hypothesis, it could be carried off only because of the still strong identity of local life.<sup>41</sup> This was also true of other unnatural, and often national, implants on local life: the many associations and societies, whose proliferation must be one of the most conspicuous features of the turn of the century. They cannot be all mentioned. Some have completely disappeared: the Student Volunteer Movement, the Laymen's Movement. Many live a frail existence still: the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Mother's Union, the Women's Institute, the Shopkeepers and the hundreds of other Associations.

These societies were formed, like enterprises, on the primary basis of shared interests and made class and local habitation incidental considerations. Chris Hosgood notes that "associational activity led to the disappearance of shopkeepers from the municipal political stage" and so to a divestment from national cultural life, making them, like other professions, a "subculture". "Whereas in the mid-Victorian period shopkeepers drew their social identity from their participation in community activities, by the early twentieth century they drew [it] from

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas Richard, "The Image of Victoria in the Year of Jubilee" *Victorian Studies*, vol 31, 1, (Autumn 1987): 1-32.

<sup>41</sup> Richard, 1. Prior to 1887 most of Victoria's ceremonial appearances had been completely "unrehearsed", hence, natural.

their association with their trade".<sup>42</sup> Ironically, in most cases it was exactly the buoyancy of local life which granted associations like these their initial success.

The strength of regional and local Britain as it neared World War One could be seen in the attraction of the "Pal's Battalions". These battalions consisted of young men who had wanted the benefit of Kitchener's guarantee that those who "joined together would serve together". Class and region played a decisive role in the success of the scheme:

Perhaps no story of the First World War is as poignant as that of the pals. It is a story of a spontaneous and genuinely popular mass movement which has no counterpart in the modern English speaking world and perhaps could have none out of its own time and place: a time of intense, almost mystical patriotism and of the inarticulate elitism of an imperial power's working classes; a place of vigorous urban life, rich in differences and in a sense of belonging - to work-places, to factories, to unions, to churches, chapels, charitable organizations, benefit clubs, Boy Scouts, Boys' Brigades, Sunday Schools, cricket, football, rugby, skittle clubs, old boys's societies, city offices, municipal departments, craft guilds, - to any one of those hundreds of bodies from which the Edwardian Briton drew his security and sense of identity.<sup>43</sup>

Local consensus must have been strong and coercive. Its full power came to play in the success and final tragedy of the pal system:

The Pals idea at once caught hold of the imagination of communities much smaller, less self-confident, less commercially dominant than Liverpool. Accrington, the little East Lancashire cotton town, and Grimsby, the North Sea fishing port, shortly produced their Pals; Llandudno and Blaenaw Festiniog, the Welsh holiday resorts another, the London slum borough of Shoreditch, Islington, West Ham and Bermondsey theirs. Artillery brigades were raised in Camberwell,<sup>44</sup> Wearside, Burnley, Lee Green, Lytham St. Anne's...

The loss of one battalion wiped out one entire male generation of a community to the extent that the experiment could not be repeated during the second World War. Of course, the phenomenon

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<sup>42</sup>Chris Hosgood, "Trade Associations and the Structure of the Shopkeeping Community in England, 1860-1916", a paper presented to the North West Conference British Studies (Oct. 1988) 1,3.

<sup>43</sup>John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Cape, 1976) 217-8.

<sup>44</sup>Keegan, *Face of Battle*, 218-9.

of associationism was itself a symptom of the steady loss of local consensus and continuity. The decline of many of these societies allow the conclusion that they could, ironically, only thrive as long as there was still a local Britain.

The Great Depression before World War Two and decisions made by the central Government in its wake, not only wrecked local economies and self-esteem, but interfered in a fine web of community relationships. In 1934, the until then locally administered unemployment assistance was transferred to a national body, the statutory committee of the Unemployment Assistance Board.<sup>45</sup> How sensitive the national administrators were to local and extended family fabric of life emerged from the Means Testing Act, whose economic and political wisdom seems today debatable.<sup>46</sup> This act not only opened private economic arrangements to public scrutiny, but became soon hateful for its tendency to wreck homes, since young peoples' contributions to the family budget counted against the payment of relief. It communicated on another level that whatever was government and public was niggardly and heartless, a thing devoid of feeling. It revealed the nation as a sour dispenser of gifts: "The Government repeatedly tinkered with legislation to try to relieve the unemployed as thriftily as possible".<sup>47</sup> Such national assistance did not inspire gratitude.

Relief had no real face and poverty no direct witnesses. "The indignities and humiliations of unemployment were remote from the experience of the majority of the nation", with distress visible among the distressed; Jarrow having 67% unemployed, High Wycombe only 3%.<sup>48</sup> The remoteness affected national policy. The

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<sup>45</sup>Thomson, *Twentieth-Century*, 147.

<sup>46</sup>In Thomson's retrospective analysis "the burden of economic recovery was carried unduly by the unemployed, and by those foreign producers [the third world?] whose goods Britain imported more cheaply than ever. (*Twentieth-Century*, 146)

<sup>47</sup>Thomson, *Twentieth-Century*, 147. According to Derek Fraser, the inter-war governments navigated an impossible course "between the social and political impossibility to let the unemployed survive on private charity" and bankrupting the nation. Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the Welfare State, A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution*, 2nd Ed. (1973, London: Macmillan, 1984) 185.

<sup>48</sup>Fraser, 195.



Special Areas Act, moving workers to more prosperous areas effectively removed people from places where they had lived for generations. The transformation took place with a minimum of "public" protest, the dislocation of entire communities through the removal of the breadwinner, almost soundless. As Thomson wrote:

That it did not cause more political disruption was due partly to the impermanent status of the 'unemployed', partly due to the system of relief. For all the criticism levied against it and the occasional severities and injustices in its administration, the 'dole' did much to prevent real destitution.<sup>49</sup>

But the point is, it could not do so without an acute reduction of a positive and affirmative relationship between working-class families and neighbourhoods and the "public" and "national" realm, without discrediting the idea of a "national life". Experience rallied against the identification with "them" which Hoggart and people like him desired above all things.

Logical and chronological progression of the story of the gradual destruction of local England, it might be thought, should lead directly to World War Two as key-dislocator of local culture. But the role played by the last World War and the militarization of English life was more ambiguous, more complex than meets the eye. When this thesis turns to the world of Richard Hoggart, it will be seen that many of the structures adopted during the last World War were similar to those of the ancien regime. The War effort led to the creation of local bodies of rule which in turn interlinked with a total yet personal national system.<sup>50</sup> As during the ancien regime, local and national interests worked in tandem, especially as the state of emergency encouraged a greater amount of local self-help, greater organisation of local groups.

The centre was sustained by a charismatic rather than official commitment which its leaders were able and willing to

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<sup>49</sup>Fraser, 145.

<sup>50</sup>Stephen Spender, *Citizens in War and after* (London, George G. Harrop & Co.Ltd., 1945), gives a splendid, nostalgic picture of the vertical, cooperative hierarchy in operation during war time.

mobilize from all classes and the remotest corners of the country. The nation's intellectual elite and the nation's working classes were in real communion with one another.<sup>51</sup> These years demonstrated the meaning of a positive nation-building as an integrating rather than disconnecting process, providing conditions which enhanced rather than reduced the sense of local autonomy and spontaneity. For almost a decade, the State was a sacred and confessed entity. Indeed, the war experience was, latently and belatedly, fulfilling what George V had recommended to Lloyd George in 1921, and to Ramsay MacDonald in 1931: to tackle unemployment as though it were a crisis of war proportion. As Fraser put it: "The Second World War did in fact generate the political and social determination to overcome enormous difficulties, and in its wake the spirit and practice of universalism affect the course of national policy".<sup>52</sup> It was no accident that people remembered the Blitz as bliss and referred to their army days as "the best times of our lives".

However, the era of positive nation-building was not to last much beyond the war years. Instead, it left behind a new rationalized industrial and administrative structure without the personal factors which made it work and work well for the duration. This is not to say that no attempt had been made to sustain the creative transformation demonstrated as possible by the war-time experiments. It was the reason why people voted Labour, or why they turned against Churchill.<sup>53</sup> However, once the sacred purpose absented itself, once the local emergency groups were allowed to dissolve, Britain faced the future more de-localized than ever.

No one wishes to dip the past into a golden glow and deny that the patterns of communal life which evolved from lack of anonymity in the back-to-backs were the result of neglect of national responsibility; or that working class culture was narrow, private, suspicious of the outside, misinformed, abused, and easily misled.<sup>54</sup> Hoggart would have been the first person to

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<sup>51</sup>See Ch. 11.

<sup>52</sup>Fraser, 207.

<sup>53</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4:31.

admit this. Deprivation, however, also kept at bay influences which threatened local spontaneity. The problem of post-war improvements in living standards was that they offered their pleasures only at the price of destroying the fine web of local interrelation.

We shall not assess the possible effects of this process unless we have a firmer knowledge of 'ordinary' people's lives, of the interaction of family, neighbourhood and workplace relationships, of older and newer attitudes in those local areas now being flooded with centralized goods and ideas.<sup>55</sup>

But the late sixties decay and dereliction of housing projects which had only been built in the fifties were visible community problems; responded to by further development. This period saw indeed the explosion of the concept of neighbourhood and community, community work and community services, and community centres.<sup>56</sup>

For those deeply concerned with "culture" - classless, universal or other - the most urgent task seemed to be the restoration of a sense of connectedness. Some of the guardians of society pinned their hopes on the symbol of the age par excellence: public broadcasting.<sup>57</sup> It was the "public service" which the original governors, especially David Cecil, had given the function of unifying the nation, which, no matter how debatable its means and its achievement, was believed to connect the nation's people with each other in a "larger" sense and a consistent way.<sup>58</sup> Observing the medium at close range, however,

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<sup>54</sup> In *A Local Habitation* Hoggart makes exactly this point.

(140) <sup>55</sup> Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other* 38.

<sup>56</sup> Here are just some of the books dealing with community that were published around then: Michael Young and Peter Wilmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957, Harm: Penguin, 1971) Ronald Frankenberg, *Communities in Britain: social Life in Town and Country* (Harm: Penguin, 1966), and Ronald Blythe's well-known *Aikenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (Harm: Penguin, 1969) According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "community" became first prominent among American social scientists in the fifties and sixties.

<sup>57</sup> The cover of the latest edition of the *Pelican History of Modern England* shows an anniversary stamp issued by the Post Office in 1975 with a BBC Television Camera.

<sup>58</sup> In Ch.15 the role of public broadcasting will be considered more closely.

forbade too much faith in its powers. The subliminal message beamed across was one which invited a type of citizen-voyeur rather than a citizen-participator. Television seemed capable of undermining oral culture in its local and spontaneous sense even further. To Hoggart, placing one's hope in the media, the greatest of temptations to all neo-Victorians, was to act contrary to the conclusions pressed home by the evidence:

It is true that never in human history were so many people so often and so much exposed to so many intimations about societies, forms of life, attitudes other than those which obtain in their own local societies...Yet in itself such an exposure does not bring those developments...The mass media cannot build the cathedral, and their way of showing the stones does not always prompt others to build. The stones are presented within a self-contained and self-sufficient world in which it is implied, simply to look at them, to observe - fleetingly - individually interesting points of difference...<sup>59</sup>

This did not mean that Hoggart was rejecting television as "an important educator".<sup>60</sup> No one in the late 'fifties could or wanted to. In fact he went on to produce some television programmes himself, one as late as 1988 - still to be aired by ITV.<sup>61</sup> However, he correctly believed that "in and of itself" it could achieve little. This, it will be seen, most of the guardians of the sacred trust of civilization suspected to be true, but could not accept.

#### IV.

#### Neo Victorians: The Thinning Ranks.

What became of the Victorian intellectual tradition? My hypothesis is that it was a strong enough force to raise alarm. But it cannot be doubted, given the foregoing process of universalization of society, that it had steadily lost more and more of its power of influence.<sup>62</sup> The modernization of many

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<sup>59</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 146.

<sup>60</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, 157.

<sup>61</sup>Richard Hoggart, Personal Interview 4 April, 1989. The programme is about primitive forms of religion in pre-war Working Class in Leeds.

<sup>62</sup>For reasons outlined further below this group is not amenable to statistics. The intellectual elite does not consist  
(Footnote continued)

walks of life had not only made the oral experience which sustained its thoughtworld more precious, but made fewer people predisposed to hear them. The engaged intellectuals were an endangered species, and this could not but affect their outlook. This minority position is what made their thinning ranks neo-Victorians and not Victorians.

The educated elite has of course always been a minority. But in the sixties its actual position in society in no way corresponded to the expectations and duties which the experience of belonging to an elite inspired. The members of this tradition, it is suggested, could no longer be considered to belong to such a class (or order) in the absolute sense. As T.S.Eliot said: an elite can only be an elite if society consents to be governed by an elite. Such a society would have to be not only class-structured, but hierarchically-ordered along vertical scale of authority. It would have to be noncompetitive, personalistic, particularistic, corporate, and local - in short, everything modern society is not. Moreover, it would have to give its elite powers commensurate with its authority, which is impossible in Eliot's view, without appropriate network a traditional social order through which the elite could make its effects felt through personalistic and particularistic contacts.

In 1948, Eliot described this situation as one of academic and social isolation.<sup>63</sup> To him the blame for this exile belonged to none other than the moral, or amoral, idea of the liberal state. One could not even speak of a service of the intellectual to this state: it was in fact impossible for the intellectual to be in its service. He saw liberalism as a raw force, nothing but an energy. "We have today a culture which is mainly negative".<sup>64</sup> Approaching the same subject from a completely different interest in 1985, J.C.D.Clark came to very similar conclusions. He observed about the fall of the old regime in

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<sup>62</sup>(continued)

of the national number of academics, or the national number of people with the highest income which, according to Hoggart, constitute 15-25% of the population. *Mushy Peas*, 4.

<sup>63</sup>Eliot, *Notes*, 38. See Introduction.

<sup>64</sup>Eliot, *Ideal of Christian State*, 47.

1828-32 that it was merely replaced by an absence of ideology.

The next section will show what being a member of the traditional intellectual elite meant in actual practice, that is to say, what it was like to belong to an order charged with responsibility for other classes in an increasingly class-less or competitive society.<sup>65</sup> Since this enquiry attempts to study the experience and expression of an order, the usual techniques of studying the modern phenomenon of "class" were not appropriate. As said in the introduction, sorting intellectuals by income, profession and other "affiliations", revealed too little of the natural habitat and the means of regeneration of this group. Research selecting evidence according to economic or political structures only succeeded in trimming the experience of its complexity and variety. To get "behind" the mystery of an ancient order, the military elite, in modern times, Corelli Barnett, for example, relied strongly on sociological studies which classified the experience of military training and its product in concepts like "professional ethos", or "behavioural code", "institutionalization", "educational training" and "indoctrination".<sup>66</sup> However, in terms of capturing the actual experience of the military way of life these concepts failed to convey the actual experience of those who had made it their vocation. The point is, the experience of belonging to a traditional order is highly particular and personal and therefore induplicable, refusing abstraction.

This does not mean, however, that there is no overall pattern of cohesion. Hegemony seems however too strong a term and I have, as mentioned in the introduction, preferred to speak of shared myths, in this case and peculiar to this cohort, the myth of the sacred trust of civilization. Its power manifests itself more in the shape of a sympathy rather than an ideological conformity and cohesion. It displayed itself in intuited

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<sup>65</sup>I am deliberately avoiding the adjective "pluralistic". The old order was also pluralistic although unified on a deeper level. See Ch. 2.

<sup>66</sup>Corelli Barnett, "The Education of Military Elites" *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (July 1967): 21. (He compared the military academies and their methods in Germany, France, England, America.)

affinities and predilections felt prior to being critical or to taking action. This thesis attempts to bring these out into the open, highlighting assumptions of moral duties and services which are in place long before any word is written or spoken, guiding the direction of argument taken and positions defended. This does not mean that the arguments chosen by neo-Victorians are not logical. All that is suggested is that these arguments, cohesive and brilliant as they might be, originate from a distinct attitudinal stance. In short, the sympathy is not the product of reflection but rather instantaneous, much like the mythical and inarticulable moral sense which Jowett wrote about in the *Dialogues*, or Ruskin's idea of the mirror temper, the *vorverständnis* which united him with the ancient mind.<sup>67</sup> "What were the magnets", Virginia Woolf asked, "which attract us this way", regretting that these forces had never been analysed, and fearing that it might be impossible.<sup>68</sup> The only way by which the methodological problems hinted at by Virginia Woolf could be overcome seemed to me by presenting a series of profiles of environments and the people in them, that is to say, trying to reconstruct through the experience of individual lives those, to them invisible, presences which they shared together with other members of their order.

My two main protagonists are: Richard Hoggart, literary critic and educationalist, who has already been introduced through his reflections on the post-war world, and Bishop John A.T. Robinson, the bishop who achieved notoriety through his testimony at the *Lady Chatterley Trial* (1957) and his controversial book, *Honest To God* (1962). It could be argued that there might be more typical examples of neo-Victorians, of men and women who were appalled by, and concerned with, the relentless, swift and irreversible destruction of the old ways and those things they considered part of the essential inheritance of culture: D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, F.R. Leavis, Iris Murdoch are some of the names that come to mind. In the context of this thesis it is indeed interesting that all these neo-Victorians were emphatically against any duality

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<sup>67</sup>See Ch. 4.

<sup>68</sup>Woolf, "Sketch", 80.

separating the text and signification, working vigorously against any trends toward a subjective solipsism. Hoggart's and Robinson's profiles will provide practical criteria for recognizing the neo-Victorian in our midst, and beyond that, the source of their identity. It will be seen that although neo-Victorians may have come from ostensibly different social backgrounds, moreover, although they tend to feel that their mental development had been shaped by specific spiritual and intellectual experiences, they reveal moral sympathies and details of experience which are astonishingly similar.

Indeed, one of the most exciting historical discoveries which I made during my research happened when I noticed how much both Bishop Robinson and Richard Hoggart fought against all forms of reductionism, particularly against anything that would reduce human relationships and personal horizons. Hoggart was thus concerned with the diminution implied by the divorce between "Us" and "Them".

Behind all this is a problem of which we are acutely conscious today - that everyone is expected to have a double eye, one for his duties as an individual persona, and another for those as a citizen in a democracy...Most of us, even the more-or-less intellectual, find it difficult to relate these worlds to each other. Working-class people, with their roots so strongly in the homely and personal and local, and with little training in more general thinking, are even less likely to be able to bring the two worlds into focus. [*Italics Mine*]<sup>69</sup>

Bishop Robinson expressed the same concern in religious language. For him it was a matter of bringing the "I" into relationship with the "Thou", manifest in "Others", thus transforming what threatened to be just "functional".<sup>70</sup> He also had a habit of constantly referring to two worlds.

Indeed, with a large part of one's being one lives outside of oneself. For if one is a man of one's times one has one foot in a world to which the traditional Christian categories are increasingly alien. One has to live in this overlap emotionally and spiritually. And the strain of it can be very exhausting. The temptation of the churchman (as I know only too well) is to live in only one world - to remain with the tradition and to operate as best as one can...<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 57.

<sup>70</sup>John A.T. Robinson, *The New Reformation* (London: SCM, 1965) 116-7.



In both cases, the other-world metaphor was no accident: it was transparent, it will be seen, of a genuine experience of living somewhere else.

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<sup>71</sup>John A.T. Robinson, *The New Reformation* (London, SCM, 1965)  
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Section Four.

Worlds Apart:  
Ancient Orders in Modern Days.

## Chapter 8.

## "A Local Habitation:

## The Oral Traditions of Richard Hoggart's Childhood".

"Richard Hoggart was born in Leeds in 1918. He graduated by scholarships from a Council School and a Local Authority Secondary School to Leeds University, where in 1939 he gained First Class Honours in English, and was awarded a research scholarship.

During the War he served as an officer with the Royal Artillery in North Africa, Pantelleria, and Italy. While in Italy he founded the Three Arts Club for Allied Forces, edited four anthologies of services' writing, and did part-time lecturing at the University of Naples.

Mr. Hoggart's present post is Senior Staff Tutor in Literature, Department of Adult Education, University of Hull. In 1951 his full-length critical work, *Auden*, was published. He has written articles and reviews, chiefly on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature and on aims and methods in teaching, particularly of adults. During 1956-7 he was in the United States as visiting professor of English at the University of Rochester".

Biographical Review from the back cover of the 1959 Penguin Edition of *The Uses of Literacy*.

## I.

These few paragraphs do not make Richard Hoggart a straight-forward neo-Victorian. He is after all of working class origin. Yet, as far as his ideas and his equations of class and culture are concerned, Hoggart's word echoed the concerns of the Victorians. Hoggart has moved up and away from his working-class milieu (he lives at the moment in Surrey) and claims time and again to sit on a fence, between two worlds.<sup>1</sup> This very reference to two worlds identifies him at once as a possible member of the Victorian intellectual tradition. Pattison, Jowett, Newman, Ruskin, Carlyle, to name only the most representative, also spoke of modern society as if it was a culture observed from abroad. In Hoggart's case the perception was not unjustified. He was born into and grew up in a world which belonged not only to a different class but to another era than the one from which he looked down and back: "We belonged mentally not only to a

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Hoggart, *A Local Habitation: Life and Times Volume I: 1918-40* (London: Chatto, 1988) 182.

different world but to a different era".<sup>2</sup> He travelled alone, leaving his class to go its own way. Contrary to his own opinion, however, Hoggart did not move forward but backward in time, back to an even older world than that of prewar Hunslet in Leeds.

## II.

### Switching Classes.

Richard Hoggart rose to prominence around the same time as Bishop John A.T. Robinson. Both appeared as witnesses for the defence at the Lady Chatterley trial.<sup>3</sup> The furore over the Bishop's defence of the book is now history. Hoggart, there to testify for the defence as literary critic and expert on working-class culture, raised quite a few eyebrows. He had called Lawrence's intentions in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* "highly virtuous, if not puritanical". Mr. Griffith-Jones, who prosecuted this case, pretended not to believe his ears and read several passages from the book, and then picked out certain words, only to ask again and again: "Is that puritanical?". Hoggart replied in the affirmative each and every time. "Puritanical", Hoggart felt, was "an intense sense of responsibility of one's conscience". Below D.H. Lawrence expletives were the deepest stirrings of the puritanical conscience: a violent burst of moral indignation over the degradation of a physical act meant to relate "to the whole being; in other words, back to God".<sup>4</sup>

It took one puritan to know another.<sup>5</sup> As anyone who had read Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) knew, inside Hoggart also burnt a conscience. Like Lawrence, Hoggart belonged to the Victorian intellectual tradition, and was thus worried about the growing division of modern life, particularly between the "Them" and the "Us", to him a "metaphysical" question, one that had dominated him since his army years.<sup>6</sup> *The Uses of Literacy* probed

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<sup>2</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 38.

<sup>3</sup>This trial was to establish the moral value of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley* which Penguin wished to publish in Britain under the amended Obscenity Act. C.H. Rolph Ed. *The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v. Penguin Books Limited*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961.

<sup>4</sup>Rolph, 100-102.

<sup>5</sup>Personal Interview, 4 April 1989. Hoggart confirmed this.

into the reasons of this division. It was also an indignant correction of the traditional view of the working classes. Hitherto the epithet had the meaning of a non-class, people defined by their labour, without culture, imbued with a negative class consciousness at best. The time had come to demonstrate that the working class deserved to be considered a class in its own right. It was a culture, albeit an oral one.<sup>7</sup>

His study summed up the values of the working-class culture in pithy sayings, proverb-like snippets of the collective mind, passed on from generation to generation, confirmed daily in the actual experience of working-class life. This was coupled with a liturgy of working-class life, coming from and going to work on crowded trams, scrubbing door steps, yellowed with scouring stone (donkey-stoning), houses "bottomed" once a week, staying home with the family: "there is no place like home".<sup>8</sup> It was a list of habits shaped by the environment: keeping up appearances, looking after one's kin, being a good neighbour, sending children to Sunday school, buying on tick. The values of this culture were related to an inability to plan long into the future: self-reliance, hedonism, generosity, gentleness. These values also made it vulnerable to culturally erosive trends. However, in the landscape of Hoggart's memory, it was still a culture with deeply local colours that had sprung from and was lived in the narrow niche of life left over after time served at the factory.

However, there was but one catch. The culture which Hoggart defended was in fact already on its way out. His experiences came from the pre-war era. The book was indeed divided into two parts, one capturing the essence of working-class culture, one listing the symptoms of its destruction, the obliteration of its identity. Hoggart listed not only "the assumptions, attitudes and morals of working-class

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<sup>6</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 56-7.

<sup>7</sup>For the impact of the *Uses of Literacy* on historians' interest in the concept and fact of working class culture see John Clarke, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson, *Working Class Culture: Studies in history and theory*. (London: Hutchinson, 1980) 17-20.

<sup>8</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 20-1. and throughout the work.

people" but also "the way in which magazines, films, and other mass media are likely to influence them".<sup>9</sup> Hoggart's first-hand knowledge of working-class life was becoming history as he wrote. Even in 1957, his Hunslet neighbourhood in Leeds was a different country which lay in the recent past.

*The Uses of Literacy* was itself a sign of this world's disappearance. It was fêted like the first work by Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1981),<sup>10</sup> that is to say, as if it were the work of a member of an ethnic minority; now, in 1957 welcomed belatedly into the bosom of national life and thus on its way to national absorption. Hoggart symbolized the effects of the "silent revolution", proof that the system had "opened" up. He was the token scholarship boy, product of pre-war educational reforms which, in G.M. Trevelyan's eyes, were of greater consequence to modern society than the Battle of Britain.<sup>11</sup> But, as Hoggart's autobiography revealed, the impact of the scholarship plan was more national myth than reality.

The City gave Senior City scholarships to university each year; Leeds University records 47 in 1936. The population of Leeds was then about 490,000; assume that 7,000 to 8,000 of those were eighteen years old in 1936; then between one in 150 and one in 170 got scholarships. Add the disparities in opportunities by social class, the number of extra hoops working-class children had to jump through, the increasing height and decreasing diameter of those hoops at each stage, the loading<sup>12</sup> against our kind of people by geography as well as by class.

It was the occasional individual, the exception, who climbed the ladder. How could this tiny minority of scholarship boys who slipped through the door, opened but a crack, affect the future of the nation?

One more individual, like a more than usually tenacious tadpole heading for the surface, tail working like mad, driven by a mixture of social and personal pressures, had worked his way up the system to this next point of entry... When I think of all those good intelligence left behind stage by stage I feel like echoing Granville-Barker: 'Oh, the waste of [them]...oh, the waste...the waste!' Or even more strongly, Empson: 'The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.'<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, Front Cover.

<sup>10</sup>Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*. (London: Cape, 1981)

<sup>11</sup>Thomson, *Twentieth-Century*, 189.

<sup>12</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 181.

<sup>13</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 181.

Hoggart did arrive on the other side, but, as he himself admitted, transformed. *The Uses of Literacy* was a work of translation. Hoggart described a world of which the more literate classes had certain myths and theories prompted by statistics, reports and studies. The concepts of "two nations", or the "how the other half lives" were part of the modern map of society, drawn by people who were observers rather than participants of working class life.<sup>14</sup> But *The Uses of Literacy* could not solve the paradox of speaking for a working class culture. Since this culture was only negatively aware of anyone beyond its borders, it did not care to send news of itself. Unselfconscious, oral culture had no news to tell. Had Hoggart remained inside the working class, *The Uses Of Literacy* (just like Salman Rushdie's first work) could never have been written. Nor were working class people very likely to read it.<sup>15</sup>

This did not mean that the oral culture of the working classes was only the product of his, late, imagination. But Hoggart was not only making comparisons, but had to be in a position to make them. He was, at the same time, not unaware of the judgemental quality of his work. Only, he was wrong about the position from whence he made his judgement.

In both halves of the book I discovered a tendency in myself, because the subject is so much part of my origins and growth, to be unwarrantably sharp towards those features in working-class life of which I disapprove.<sup>16</sup>

His gaze was firmly fixed on working-class culture. His own, present, environment felt so natural that it was to Hoggart featureless.

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<sup>14</sup>Some poets with working class background had made the working class experience available, but the minute they picked up the pen, they were no longer working class, for example, D.H. Lawrence, Charles Causley, Philip Larkin.

<sup>15</sup>The poet Causley, who loved the working class "smell" of the book did not think his childhood working-class friends would ever think of buying it. Charles Causley, "Richard Hoggart: The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life", *The London Magazine* Vol. 4, 6 (June 1957): 70-3.

<sup>16</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 7.

## III.

Another World.

In Hoggart's recently published autobiography, *A Local Habitation*, the other-world metaphor surfaced time and again. Earliest childhood in Potternewton (Leeds) was remembered as a world far removed from others:

At the far side of it was one of those almost out-of-place clusters of privately owned cheap housing. That too was a foreign world and we never expected to set foot in one of its dwellings... We belonged mentally not only to a different world but to a different era.<sup>17</sup>

More than 70 years on, it was Richard Hoggart II, looking from the outside in, who wrote:

We and our neighbours were the very poor and the very old, a tiny forgotten group tucked into a forgotten corner of one of the bigger cities in one of the richest continents on earth.<sup>18</sup>

In this corner all attitudes and assumptions were necessary and conditioned; even the turning away, the inward-direction of these people, was not from choice. There were no lines outward" "We were intensely solitary. We had hardly any visitors". Neighbours would drop in "for a minute" sometimes with something they could spare. "We did not take a newspaper and nor did our immediate neighbours since they were most of them living on what they still referred to as 'the Lloyd George pension'".

It was like sharing with a few other denizens a small hole in the lower part of the bole of a big and busy tree. Leaving the bole, going out that yard, you entered a different world and could just hear the hum of Leeds.<sup>19</sup>

Looking back, he reflected that his mother would have been astounded to hear about socialism or of the possibility of a political and moral dimension to her life, dimensions which Hoggart II clearly values. Being orphaned at the age of nine and taken in by his grandmother did not change Hoggart's situation dramatically. The "inwardness and privacy" of the grandmaternal household was typical of working-class life. "It was plain after

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<sup>17</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 38.  
<sup>18</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 38.  
<sup>19</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 37.



a few years that I was leaving their world".<sup>20</sup> He was leaving the miniature world of "crampedness", "lines", "borders" and built-in limitations, limited personalities like the "copperplate" or "Five Pound [a-week] man".<sup>21</sup> The outward journey was by a one-way ticket.

After a break like that you never again sit entirely or wholly at ease in your local culture, whatever the level of that culture may be - slum, semi, detached Tudor, Great House. You can make your peace with your native culture, can learn to be to some degree easy with it, may come to respect it; but you cannot again be an integral part of it,<sup>22</sup> and that is not to be regretted; you have bitten the fruit.<sup>23</sup>

Breaking away had not been easy, one culture is not the best preparation for another. And yet it could be argued that Hoggart had more help from below than from above, help in the form of oral elements in working-class life which could interlock with those of the older order which he was to join - spurs in a rockface. Far more than the "opening" up of the upper heavens, it was the oral tradition from below, the personal and particular sacrifices and gestures of the pre-war Hunslet working-class culture, which lifted Hoggart upward toward another, seemingly brighter, life. The push from below came in a direct form from the women into whose care he was given. They pushed him, against their inclination, away from the "ethos of the hearth", acting on the faith of comforts which they had, perhaps remotely, glimpsed from their "betters". Education seemed to lead to the "reduction of numerous troubles". Most importantly, he benefited from an ethos of self-reliance, ancestral pride and will to a family history and identity which, for example, had kept him out of the orphanage.

This is not to deny that much in working-class life worked toward the reduction of horizons. Plans could not extend into those many years ahead needed for the child's full education and development. Budgets were daily reckonings (as in the case of the gas-heating), food bought in small quantities and on tick, moderate luxuries like bacon and tinned salmon.<sup>23</sup> However, within

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<sup>20</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 47, 72-3.

<sup>21</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 45-47.

<sup>22</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 182.

<sup>23</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 58.

this short-term, narrowly-spaced world there were important elements of a collective experience, the "oral tradition" (also a moral tradition) which to Hoggart elevated working-class life to culture, which gave it some resiliency, preserving a humane existence under hostile conditions. Indeed, to some extent the culture sprung from neglect: financial dearth, restricted movement and access to places beyond and above its means, were the negative conditions which kept the working class a class. "The East was an unknown area to us", and the trams brought workers back home, going through a no-man's land. The oral tradition also lived because working-class life in the thirties was local and static. There was little movement of families. People tended to live in one place all their lives. "Tick" could be put into practice because everybody could be expected to stay on.<sup>24</sup>

Unless he gets a council-house, a working-class man is likely to live in his local area, perhaps even in the house he 'got the keys for' the night before his wedding, all his life. He has little call to move if he is a general labourer, and perhaps hardly more if he is skilled...He is more likely to change his place of work than his place of living; he belongs to a district more than to one work.<sup>25</sup>

As a result, the topography of the neighbourhood left a detailed imprint in the consciousness. What looked to the eye of the outsider monotonous, formed a finely graded landscape, subtly coloured with its own emotional variety:

The life of those streets was, then, a matter of multiple fine gradings. Any child above the age of four or five knew its own area and that area was usually no more than five or six streets. How were the boundaries decided? By types of people and by street furniture.<sup>26</sup>

There was only limited penetration by commerce; the working classes were not yet a market. Indeed, for the really poor money did not represent anything real. Here again, working-class life was in a world apart, persuading Hoggart to draw parallels with another pre-modern country: that of the members of the Royal Family:

It is said that members of the Royal Family, living not in the world of day-by-day getting and spending, carry no money. In

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<sup>24</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 32, 45, 44.

<sup>25</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 44.

<sup>26</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 126.

our moneyless isolation we were nearer the feel of the Royal Family than that of the tradesman's or skilled workman's family down the road. We inhabited our own world... Where others did differently - going on holidays, getting fish-and-chips from the local corner shop on the evening, or most exotic of all, at Friday teatime, going to a Saturday matinee at the pictures in town - these were in our early years less activities to be envied than outlandish deviations to be ignored. [*Italics Mine*]<sup>27</sup>

In the country of the poor things were simple and basic, and certainly simpler than they would be for future generations. Hoggart regretted the post-war world substitution of manufactured culture for local life. The local pubs and working-class clubs were elemental and rough, this was true, but they were genuinely working class and therefore real.<sup>28</sup>

The language of this world was a key to its orthodoxy, defining who was in and who was not. Its pejoratives described the obverse of what was of value. Many of these values were contrary to the dictates of modern economy and efficiency:

'Mean' was used, backed up by 'near', 'keen', 'close', 'tight', 'stingy', 'cheese-paring', 'skin-flint' and 'close-fisted'. These words are used by people in other groups, the difference is that they are used very frequently and with great force; and used by people who are poor and might have been expected to feel sympathetic to the need for cheese-paring. The reverse seems to operate. If you are so poor, since you are so poor, then you must not allow yourself because of that condition to decline into a mean-minded joyless attitude; you must remain able to be generous. And that too is caught in epigrams, as is the bouncy: 'Oh, we're all right. We're short of nowt we've<sup>29</sup> got', a cock-snooting at their own congenital hard-up'edness.

These collective morals came from Hoggart's own apprenticeship at the grandmaternal hearth which, as all feminine worlds, was largely oral:

The boy sits in the women's world. Perhaps this partly explains why many authors from the working class, when they write about their childhood, give the women in it so tender and central a place. There is bound to be occasional friction, of course - then they wonder whether the boy is 'getting above himself', or when he feels a reluctance to break off and do one of the odd jobs a boy is expected to do. but predominantly the atmosphere is likely to be intimate, gentle and attractive. With one ear he hears the women discussing their

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<sup>27</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 40.

<sup>28</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 204.

<sup>29</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 126.

worries and ailments and hopes, and he tells them at intervals about his school and the work and what the master said. He usually receives boundless uncomprehending sympathy: he knows they do not understand, but still he tells them; he would like to link the two environments.<sup>30</sup>

Instead of appreciating the liturgical value of being within the sound of the voice and going through the motions of speech - no matter what the level of understanding - Hoggart considered these oral elements an obstacle to his movement away. The warmth of this tradition tempted him to stay:

He has to be more and more alone, if he is going to 'get on'. He will have, probably unconsciously, to oppose the ethos of the hearth, the intense gregariousness of the working-class family group<sup>31</sup>...

Hoggart made a mental division between home and grammar school, learning different accents, picking up a foreign currency which is valueless at home. Scholarship boys were "cashiers in new brain currency".<sup>32</sup> The whole process of relocation, the rubbing together of two forms of seeing and being, led to a Victorian-type Crisis of Faith.

Cockburn, [his Grammar school] gave me, along with much else, the beginning of this basic insight: that the great majority of us carry round in our heads for good our three-dimensional pattern and picture, our slightly individual but largely socially given sense, of time and space and possibility - virtually untouched from when they first took shape. A thousand television series about different worlds and different ways of seeing the world apparently hardly penetrate; the cohesive power of the lived-into and the day-by-day is too great.<sup>33</sup>

It was, however, only the orthodoxy of other classes which was visible to him. As a matter of fact, the spotting of orthodoxies became Hoggart's life-long past-time, a sort of bird-watching, for example, that of the Cockburn teachers, the "conformists" who "accepted too easily the frames of references handed to them".<sup>34</sup> By the time he joined the army in 1939, he had a fine repertoire of class-orthodoxies at his command, able to detect public-school accents and perspectives, living up to their type-casting in

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<sup>30</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 245.

<sup>31</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 244.

<sup>32</sup>Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 246.

<sup>33</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 181-2.

<sup>34</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 170.

breathily staccato and unfinished sentences, those with drawls, those with the posture of their class even when silent, those who are prim and proper but socially insecure, the aspiring lower middle ranks like the "uneducated West Riding spinster with a voice to match, except that her voice had that drapery-assistant's semi-genteel overlay which to her and to us made all the difference".<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile and unobserved, Hoggart's own orthodoxy was steadily in the making. He must have suspected this to be the case, since he could observe around him that "cultural change is more like unconscious genetic engineering than simple grafting".<sup>36</sup> In his case, too, it was the "day-by-day" and the "lived-in", exerting its influence all the while he was immersing himself in the literature which he believed to have changed him. His orthodoxy had been cultivated long before he picked up any book: through the money-lessness and simplicity of local Hunslet, through the liturgy around the family hearth, with two maiden aunts, a grandmother and an uncle, a cousin staying some of the time, not a nuclear family by any means. It was nurtured by the unchangingness of the people making up the neighbourhood, through the regular commitment to and by the Methodist Sunday School no less than by the constant presence of the corner grocer and the Irish doctor.

#### IV.

##### A Local Habitation.

Not only Hoggart, but a whole generation of people was exposed to these influences. What became of them? When Hoggart began writing his memoirs in the early eighties, one of the two maiden aunts who shared his life with his grandmother lay dying in the St. James hospital complex and the entire space which once formed his neighbourhood had become a tangle of motorways and a construction sites. Where did all the people go? They have not disappeared. Nor have they become re-programmed. The war did not change them, to the contrary. Speaking of modern cynicism toward

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<sup>35</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 74.

<sup>36</sup>Hoggart, *Local Habitation*, 177.

community and service, Hoggart reflected in 1957:

It may be that this attitude is stronger among those under thirty than among older people, since most older people have memories of the thirties and the war, of sacrifice and co-operation and neighbourliness: the later forties and the fifties have not given such scope for rediscovery of these virtues.<sup>37</sup>

Like Aunt Annie, the "older people" lived on into the post-war era, moved into new districts, but much aware of change around them. They were cut off from the next generations by their thinking habits. In 1987 I had the opportunity of taking part in an experiment in oral history project in Leicester. The participants had all been adults when World War Two broke out.<sup>38</sup> What did they remember of life before the war? There was hardship, yes, but the inter-war years were recalled as a *kinderland*, the enchanted topography of the place of childhood.<sup>39</sup> Its topography could be recalled with the crispness of colour slides. The *kinderland* was an all powerful and everlasting knowledge of locality and identity. In short, it was the mythic world imprinted by the oral traditions of childhood, not the tradition itself, but its impress on the imagination.

The mental eye revisited the street furniture: palisaded and passaged terraces, two-ups and two-downs, or worse, the one-up and two-downs. The interior of these homes was also in vivid memory: the cold thrall in the pantry, the sandstone sink, the black-leaded grate, the white-washed kitchen ceiling, the clean but cold front room, the galvanized bathtub hanging on a rail in the yard when not in use, the hand-pegged rug, the toasting fork, sash windows, bedsteads, linoleum floors, dolly pegs in the washing shed. There was the only warm room, the place where all met, loaded with human friction and closeness. It might

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<sup>37</sup>Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 236-7.

<sup>38</sup>Oral history project. Dr. James L. Salter, Dir. "War-Time Leicester", Fosse Centre, Leicester (Jan-Apr.1987). This project was attended by six men and eight women over 65. Some of the comments come from unpublished transcripts of memories of life before the war, compiled by Dr.Salter. All but one of the participants, judging by their educational background but not by their present economic situation, came from working class and lower middle class backgrounds.

<sup>39</sup>This word comes from a German folksong but is generally used in the conceptual sense above.

be argued that things were different in Leeds. But Hoggart's world seems almost identical:

The physical focus was the coal fire which burnt all day and almost every day except when the weather was really hot; it was needed to supply hot water through the back boiler. And people seemed to feel that, when there was no flickering fire in the grate, the household couldn't come together; and since the streets did not get much sun the room would be chill most days of the year without a fire; more, a fireless grate looked 'cheerless', unwelcoming, a thought you were getting ready to flit.<sup>40</sup>

The kinderland remembered during the oral history project spread beyond the home into the public space of the road. Mrs. W. recalled:

Our street was a wonderful playground with the long stretch of cobbled road made for playing marbles, tip-tap, ball games and skipping. I remember the joy of getting the new rope from an orange box delivered to the corner shop... There were very few cars, just tradesmen with horses and carts, the greengrocer with hooks along the top with rabbits hanging there, 9d each, skinned while you wait. There was the barrel organ with small monkey. The organ grinder would stop at the pub and probably the off licence. The scissor and knife grinder pushed a contraption something like a wood bike... In the winter the lamp-lighter would be coming round when we came from school.<sup>41</sup>

Commerce came almost to the doorstep: the bread car, the milk lorry, hearses moved by horses, hand-barrows for heavy loads.

The weekly rhythm of local life included Church or Chapel. "I went to Sunday School with my sister and brother every weekend. We were given text cards for attendance and at the end of the year... We always had a Sunday outfit and shoes and on anniversary day we had a new dress, hat and shoes, and I felt quite 'posh'".<sup>42</sup> Sunday School was also part of the weekly rhythm of Hoggart's Hunslet-Leeds childhood. The local Primitive Methodists had him attend Sunday School and the evening service and most of their recreational events right to his teens.<sup>43</sup> What permitted such constancy, such a regular showing at gatherings? Hoggart felt that the Primitive Methodists provided him with a sense of right and wrong. Their mission to working class Hunslet

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<sup>40</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 72.

<sup>41</sup>Oral History Project, "War-Time Leicester" (Jan-Apr. 87)

<sup>42</sup>Oral History Project, "War-Time Leicester" (Jan-Apr. 1987)

<sup>43</sup>Hoggart, *Local Habitation*, 124.

had been to provide recipes for good working class habits.<sup>44</sup> This was no doubt the case. But the fact is that the same Sunday School programme has been unable to coerce later generations of children to the Sunday discipline. Clearly, Chapel and Church could graft onto a deeper, communal, discipline.

In the Leicester oldtimers' memory, Sunday was a public not private day. There was much going out to the parks, an activity for which a "female cousin would take what seemed like hours to make up in front of the mirror" and morning visits across town. There were "crowds who made it a point of being at the Clock Tower in order to listen to the Salvation Army Band". "As a teenager I still went to Sunday School twice a day and church at 6 o'clock. "During the summer months a band would play in one of the parks and a good crowd gathered when the weather was fine".<sup>45</sup>

Those whose *kinderland* was in the twenties, thirties and forties are, like Hoggart, sensitive to the transformation around them. They feel the generation gap keenly. Asked to make a list of changes which they found most noticeable they reiterated cliches: "We are having a higher living standard". When they were asked to state their observations about people around them they were most affected about the moral changes: young people had no respect for authority, they lacked discipline. They would not accept hardship, make sacrifices, wait patiently.<sup>46</sup> There was a list of possible culprits for this change: the Welfare State, the NHS, the BBC. "It all started with the war". What they meant was that the government was taking greater charge.

These were the people whom Hoggart left behind in 1939 in order to join the academic order. Their world, their class, has disappeared, although they have remained in many ways loyal to it. Their habits of thinking, their morals, their belief in "standards" are different from the next generation. They are

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<sup>44</sup>Hoggart, *Local Habitation*, 109, and Personal Interview 4 April 1989.

<sup>45</sup>Oral History Project, "War-Time Leicester" (Jan-Apr. 1987)

<sup>46</sup>The line "We thought nothing of it then" became a constant refrain with reference to changes since "then".



"old-fashioned", set in their ways, carrying on patterns which are no longer sustained in the world around them. By contrast, the order which Hoggart joined is still around and much more than an empty vestige of a previous way of life.

## V.

In his *Notes on the Definition of Culture*, T.S. Eliot insisted that culture is very much a matter of region, of local habitation, that "a man should feel himself to be, not merely a citizen of a particular nation, but a citizen of a particular part of his country, with local loyalties". A cultural environment must be "home", a place which is familiar, natural, and, therefore, invisible to its inhabitants. To Eliot, the loyalty to a place "like loyalty to class, arises out of loyalty to the family".

I think there would be something artificial, something a little too conscious, about a community of people with strong local feeling, all of whom had come from somewhere else. I think we should say that we must wait for a generation or two for a loyalty which the inhabitants had inherited, and which was not the result of a conscious choice.<sup>47</sup>

Hoggart's childhood memoirs revealed his identity as inseparable from the experience of the *Local Habitation*. Indeed, any identity worthy of the name, even a national one, required local roots. However, in the end Hoggart did indeed leave the bosom of his family and the Hunslet *kinderland*, moving literally from one class-identity into another in a way that T.S. Eliot would have hardly believed possible. What T.S. Eliot had not looked at, even though he obtained some of his education from Oxford, was the powerful role of Britain's ancient orders, the university, the school, the army, not only in the perpetuation of class culture, but in their ability to "naturalize" members from other positions in society. It will be seen that Hoggart too could become a full-fledged, that is to say, unconscious member of the intellectual order. Leeds University, no less than the ancient universities, multiplied and magnified the good vibrations experienced in his own class, family, and local habitation and brought them into connection with, as the word "university"

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<sup>47</sup>T.S. Eliot, *Notes*, 52.

implied, humanity at large.

## Chapter 9.

"The Academic Order:  
Richard Hoggart's and A.L.Rowse's University Life".

## I.

When Hoggart came to Leeds University in 1936, he had a feeling of progress. He sensed he was moving to a more literate, enlightened world. Leeds was a relatively new university in an industrial city - built in response to growing industrial needs:

Leeds University developed from the Yorkshire College of Science which was founded in 1874. One of the main impulses behind the establishment at Leeds was the realisation by local manufacturers in the textile industry that in that industry and its associates Germany was going ahead faster. It is a familiar nineteenth-century story.<sup>1</sup>

With 1,700 students, most of them local, Leeds University reflected a nation-wide process of professionalization of the university system. The opening of universities to "students of all religious denomination", making them "more productive and useful...and to convert them into research establishments", was expected to reduce the caprice of class and regional idiosyncrasy to a standardized national product. "In new and old universities alike", Heyck claims, "triumphed a new idea of a university - an institution that was national, secular, professional, and devoted in large measure to research". Heyck is forced to admit, however, that the change was not total: "At the same time, many of the old styles and forms of Oxford and Cambridge were retained, as well as the goal of providing a liberal education to the sons of professional men and the governing Elite". These seem mere vestiges. He is positive that the university's substance has been transformed:

Yet for the most part, the substance changed while the style remained the same: the character of the university was altered, particularly in regard to the status, function, and career patterns of tutors and professors.<sup>2</sup>

However, it is my hypothesis that the style held much more substance and power than Heyck suspected. It will be seen that

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<sup>1</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 184.  
<sup>2</sup>Heyck, 155.

more than half a century after the 1854 and subsequent string of university reforms,<sup>3</sup> the "style" of university life was as central to the natural reproduction of the academic order as it had been in the time of Pattison.

Hoggart was one of the very few working-class lads who made it into higher education. He was, however, not the first "working-class" academic. In 1927, All Souls celebrated the exciting novelty of having elected its own first fellow from the working classes: A.L.Rowse. The event was praised as a sign of the new flexibility of the old order: All Soul's willingness to be democratic.<sup>4</sup> But Oxford, as Jowett's gentrification had shown, had a long tradition of openness.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, there was really nothing to celebrate. By the time he attempted the All Souls examinations, Rowse was already a full-fledged member of the order of the intellectual elite, as will be seen, a complete convert to its orthodoxy. There was hardly a trace of the Cornish working class child of the past.

Indeed, this chapter will turn to Rowse's Oxford days for several reasons. (1) To demonstrate the incomplete nature of the transformation of academic life as presumed by Heyck, Engel and other commentators on the nineteenth-century university scene, and (2) to use Rowse's "life" as an illustration of the fact that the academic order as an experience was not dislodged by modern changes. In 1922, Bernard Shaw seemed to be fully aware of the hidden powers still in residence for he recommended that Eton and Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge should be "razed to the ground and their sites sown with salt". How right he was could be seen from Rowse's reaction more than forty years later: "Really what an ass Shaw was, in addition to being a man of genius".<sup>6</sup>

A warning about the scope of this chapter seems in order, however. The following profile of a university as an ancient order has nothing to do with ideas swirling around at the time, or the curriculum in general. All I wish to do is to

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<sup>3</sup>See ch. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Rowse, 247.

<sup>5</sup>See Ch. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Rowse, 41-2.

highlight the experience of living inside and being part of the academic life and to draw attention to the effects of its oral liturgies on its initiates. Rowse's own personal history and ideas are in the long run only incidental. What follows is a profile of his surroundings, the setting as it was before his time and after and as it carried on, for some time to come.<sup>7</sup>

Why Rowse, it might legitimately be asked. Admittedly, his observations are petulant and arrogant, he is a misogynist and on top of that, a misanthrope. These vices are virtues, however, for Rowse's unsubtlety and lack of poetic economy make him an excellent guide into the inner life of his order. But there is no shortage of testimony as the library shelves are filled with Oxbridge books: Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, Stephen Spender's *Worlds Within Worlds*, Brian Aldiss' *Forgotten Lives*, Philip Larkin's *Jill*, or Simon Gray's play about his Cambridge days, *Butley*. The list can be extended by the reader, for the school and university novel is unique to English literature.

## II.

### Profile of the University as an Ancient Order.

In 1889, John Henry Newman wrote an essay on the "Rise and Progress of Universities" which appeared in *Historical Sketches*. In it he answered the question "What is a University?" as follows:

In its simple and rudimental form, it is a school of knowledge of every kind, consisting of teachers and learners from every quarter... A University seems to be in its essence, a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse, through a wide extent of country.  
[Italics Mine]

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<sup>7</sup>In his recollection of Oxford in the late sixties, Martin Amis notices how much his experience differs from those who told of an earlier Oxford. His experiences seem to reflect the impact of the exponential transformation of society, described in Chapter 8. The ranks are indeed thinning in proportion to the reduction of the oral traditions. ed., *My Oxford: Martin Amis et.al.*, Ed. Ann Thwaite (London: Robson Books, 1977) 203-213.

<sup>8</sup>John H. Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 3 vol (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1889) iii, 6.

The university is in theory the place where the universal and local minds of the country were kept in creative equipoise. Before one could know the essence of the University, however, it was necessary to know what was true education. To Newman, it was not a matter of information:

Our seats are strewn, our pavements are powdered, with swarms of little tracts; and the very brick of our city walls spread wisdom, by informing<sup>9</sup> us by their placards where we can at once cheaply purchase it.

True education, in his view, went back to something almost primordial, to the "oral tradition", as old as the Gospels which, after all, had summarized stories hitherto transmitted orally.<sup>10</sup>

As far as the conditions for a genuine education were concerned, nothing could change:

Whenever men are really serious about getting what, in the language of trade, is called "a good article", when they aim at something precise, something refined, something really luminous, something really large, something choice, they go to another market, they avail themselves, in some shape or other, of the rival method, the ancient method of oral instruction, of present communication between man and man, of teachers instead of learning, of personal influence of a master, and the humble imitation of a disciple...<sup>11</sup>

Education took place there where the situation transcended the premeditated and the organised. The sympathy of mind with mind, through the eyes, the look, the accent, and the manner, in casual expressions thrown off at the moment, and the unstudied turns of familiar conversation.<sup>12</sup>

The sympathy of mind with mind, through the eyes, the look, the accent, and the manner, in casual expressions thrown off at the moment,<sup>13</sup> and the unstudied turns of familiar conversation.

It was not the encounter itself that led to education but the epiphany which sprung from and transcended the total situation.

Truth, a subtle, invisible, manifold spirit, is poured into the mind of the scholar by his eyes and ears, through his

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<sup>9</sup>Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 7.

<sup>10</sup>Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 14. It is interesting that in 1889, the assumptions behind the critical interpreting advocated by *Essays and Reviews*, have Newman's open approval.

<sup>11</sup>Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 7-8.

<sup>12</sup>Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 9.

<sup>13</sup>Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 9.

affections, imagination, and reason; it is poured into his mind and is sealed up there in perpetuity...<sup>14</sup>

Education could not happen in isolation. "You may learn by books at home, but the detail, the colour, the tone, the air, the life which make it live in us, you must catch all these from those in whom it lives already".

Someone arriving from elsewhere, as A.L. Rowse did in 1922, was very sensitive to the presence of the oral tradition. It seemed sufficiently exotic to record. However, these elements struck him not as oral but as eternal, that is to say, they seemed an intrinsic part of university life. Oxford was a place, but it was also an "atmosphere", the flavour from all things being considered together. Routine and rhythm, ordinary life and exciting events, blended into moments which had great similarity with others. The new became familiar, and at the same time distinct: the bells across the Meadows, or those of New College with "their mnemonic appeal", bells from the Cathedral, from St. Mary's.<sup>15</sup> They rang for Newman, for Pattison, for Betjeman, as they do now for Rowse.<sup>16</sup> Everything happen over and over, undergraduates, ceremonies, examinations, all recurred.<sup>17</sup> So do the formal and informal traditions. No one remembers their beginning. One of them is dinner in the Hall:

I could hardly wait to tell my mother and father about the grandeur of Christ Church, especially of dinner in the Hall: the blazing fires on either side not far from the dais, the dons in evening dress warming themselves at the fire not far from the Scholars' table where we sat. There were the shaded lamps along the tables the whole length of Wolsey's great Hall, the cardinal himself looking down upon the festive scene, raising his hand in blessing, his cardinal's hat upon everything, plates, tureens, dishes, silver, the wash-basins in our rooms.<sup>18</sup>

The spectacle was strictly for itself. Spectators were also participants, each affirming each other's formal importance in the unfolding of the rite of dinner, night after night.

But - it was time for one of the Scholars to say grace: that long Latin grace every syllable of which I can still repeat,

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<sup>14</sup>Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 14.

<sup>15</sup>Rowse, 256, 227, 263.

<sup>16</sup>Thwaite, 64, and Rowse, 19-62.

<sup>17</sup>Rowse, 288.

<sup>18</sup>Rowse, 40.

so deeply are those nights engraved in my memory, forty years after.<sup>19</sup>

The formality of "eating" took place in the presence of portraits whose names and biographies were connected to this hallowed room:

All round the lights gleamed the glazed portraits of the men who had once been here, even as we - men of talent, men of genius, above all men of power. Here were Christ Church Prime Ministers, Peel, Canning, Rosebery, the formidable eye of Mr. Gladstone; here was the lean, gaunt face of John Locke, prime man of genius among them all, whom the House rejected; here were the inseparable Fell and Aldrich, men of music and good cheer; here Ruskin, and there, at the bottom of the Hall, holy John Wesley and the pale, drawn, tortured features of Lewis Carroll. On the opposite wall, among the bewigged, ballooning bishops, lawn sleeves and robes of the Garter, was a fellow-Cornishman to encourage me, Bishop Trelawny.<sup>20</sup>

Names indeed were all important. They were the central force behind the old order's promulgation of power and influence, of politics and government, and this was also so in Rowse's Oxford. A Cornishman in Oxford is a who-is-who of important people, personalities. Rowse's identity depended on being known and confirmed by knowing and confirming others. The tables, the lights, the elegant setting were an enabling atmosphere in which strangers became acquaintances, mentors, pickers of future talents. Observers, sponsors, patrons, clients, all met here.

Patronage was and is the indispensable "way" or convention of the academic order's perpetuation, regeneration, remembering an order is not a system. Rowse's memoirs reveal that patronage was neither conspiratorial nor clubby, but possessed due dignity, proceeding from direct personal judgement and recommendation. Completely conventional, it was without thought to kindness and favour. Rowse, too, was completely unselfconscious. Although the old order once excluded him, it now, from within, seemed natural. Sounding just like Pattison, he wrote:

All these people that I was now meeting, young as they were, were years ahead of me in experience, sophistication, maturity, from their Public Schools, their social background in the middle and upper class, life in London, about Britain,

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<sup>19</sup>Rowse, 41.

<sup>20</sup>Rowse, 40-41.



on the Continent or in America. I must have been a great innocent to them - as indeed I was. They also had their backers, their literary acquaintances in London, who set the standards, could provide them with models, advice, openings. Acton had the Sitwells - but he knew everybody; Cyril Connolly had Desmond McCarthy, as he tells us; Quennell and Waugh had their fanciers, their literary acquaintances in London; David Cecil, the formidable Mrs. Woolf and Bloomsbury<sup>21</sup>, I had no one and so in consequence had to learn everything.

This was not exactly true. Oxford was there to provide someone, and did, many times over. The Cornishman in the portrait, Bishop Trelawny, had a real life counterpart in Rowse's own patron, the Cornish poet and anthologist Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. "Q" was a mixture of mentor and patron whose personal influence went way over and beyond the odd contribution of financial assistance:

A letter came from Q., noblest of men to put things right...It is the first letter I ever received from him who was so much my hero and a living inspiration to me always; I treasured it and often pored over the deliberate, careful phrases of the conscious artist. 'I have been asked by three friends to make myself the conduit of the accompanying three five pound notes, and risk the rebuff which, if you are as generous as I believe, you will not hurt me. I suppose they chose me for the risk of knowing that I had once on a time been at Oxford and not too affluent, and guessing that it might come with the less chance of rejection if offered by an elder brother (so to speak) who has been through the noble mill and known the pinch, at times of the machinery.'<sup>22</sup>

Rowse's arrival in All Souls as a first working-class recruit has all the feeling of patronage.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, all appointments to All Souls could be called a form of patronage. Academic performance could not be ignored and was important. However, the electors were elders who considered the candidates in terms of their background, their "personality", their potential, and, in terms of the best interest of All Souls. The publicity surrounding a "first" working-class junior fellow was an indication that the governors of All Souls felt the time had come to make a concession to the winds of change - in their own

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<sup>21</sup>Rowse, 69. (See also Ch. 3)

<sup>22</sup>Rowse, 96.

<sup>23</sup>Clive Dewey (Ec.&Soc.History Dept. University of Leicester), *The Passing of Barchester* describes how patronage succeeded at Colchester in recruiting radicals like William Lyall, men not born into the upper classes, into the Establishment. (London: Hambledon Press, to be pub. 1990)

traditional way.

That evening I dined at the guest-table in Hall with Godfrey Elton and Aikin-Sneath. Elton wrote up this first election of an All Souls Fellow from the working class in an article in the *Daily Herald* - symptom of the social transformation of our time, etc. So my election was news and there followed a hail of congratulations - 'votes from the Cornwall County Council (so niggardly in its university scholarships) [*italics mine*] from Truro City Council (very good of them), from the St. Austell Urban Council (which felt it ought to follow suit)' and so on...<sup>24</sup>

Rowse was convinced that it could have only been his personal achievement which led to this election. Nor was he wrong. Patronage did not mean a corrupt choice. Patronage in the old order had no fixed dimensions, it worked informally. Direct sponsorship and personal interest and influence formed an exciting basis of introduction into the established order. David Cecil figured prominently. He just so happened to introduce himself to the bright young man and happened to be available when needed and interested in Rowse's future. Who told him about Rowse? Rowse only reveals Cecil's abiding presence, especially as Rowse fidgeted over the All Souls election:

At this juncture in my fortunes David Cecil was kindness itself: he helped me and spent a good deal of time with me. I find that<sup>25</sup> I dined with him the night after the ordeal at All Souls...

Indeed, Rowse's memoirs conjure up a picture straight out of Victorian Oxford with pairs of scholars like Jowett and Stanley going on their daily walks. Only the reading matter has changed.

While in this state of suspense and thought, curiously enough, I was not even considering any other prospect than that of All Souls - I was up and about again, going for walks and talks<sup>26</sup> with David Cecil, reading *Tom Jones* and *Tawney* and *Trotsky*.

Through Cecil, Rowse met others, among them Lady Ottoline Morell whose circle would have led to further networks of personal influence, had he felt comfortable with it.<sup>27</sup> But even without Lady Ottoline and her circle of important people, there was no shortage of personal influences and contacts. The names pour ceaselessly from Rowse's pen. The following passage

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<sup>24</sup>Rowse, 247.

<sup>25</sup>Rowse, 243, 245.

<sup>26</sup>Rowse, 145.

<sup>27</sup>Rowse, 254, 306, 307.

has its counterparts all over the book.

The senior classical Scholar of our year, who became chief of my friends - at any rate, he occupied a special place in my mind - was Henry Julian Wadleigh, from Marlborough...Beside him were A.J. Tunnard from the Perse School at Cambridge, J.H. Whitehead from Manchester Grammar School, and L.H. Scott as Exhibitioner from Mill Hill School. For History Scholar there was P.W.P.Gee from Wellington, a rather sluggish fellow with an immense mop of plasted hair, and R.C. Langdon-Davies from St. George's Harpenden.<sup>28</sup>

People and personalities were complete ends in themselves, enjoyment and work. "Since I have settled in [All Souls], I have been re-creating myself by talk and listening to talk, lunching and dining out and meeting all sorts of people", or, "there was plenty of social intercourse, friends one ran into at every turn".<sup>29</sup> In this setting, the idea of the "personal" clearly had a different meaning from the modern one. When Rowse considered the "upper-class mode of life" of All Souls "intimate and gregarious" he meant that his life was completely open to those who lived and worked there. Such a public life was emotionally charged. When the college's principal, F.Y. Edgeworth, died, Rowse was filled with grief:

The college without him is empty and almost unimaginable. How I have missed him during the few days he has been ill. We were very much together, as we were by far the most regular residents...I respected and venerated him.<sup>30</sup>

The old abbot had died, and with him, another ancient custom: Edgeworth was in the habit of writing a daily letter to Keynes.<sup>31</sup> What happened to the members of the academic community was known, and discussed openly. Rowse felt as self-conscious as Pattison so long ago.<sup>32</sup> The oral tradition operated everywhere where two or more were gathered: in "endless discussion", in essays "read" to the Pandemonium or the Hypocrite club, on Speech Day, in Rowse's "personal" recruitment campaign for new members for the Labour Club, in the ongoing but serious debates there about human nature and the nature of society.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Rowse, 22.

<sup>29</sup>Rowse, 249, 62.

<sup>30</sup>Rowse, 247, 270

<sup>31</sup>Rowse, 271.

<sup>32</sup>Rowse, 46, 49. He felt, for example, that his tutors might have had the impression he was not working.

<sup>33</sup>Rowse, 51, 67, 30.

## III.

A Victorian Environment.

The temptation is great to call Rowse's Oxford a medieval order. But this would be incorrect. Oxford in the twenties and thirties was really a Victorian environment, sharing all the contrasts this implied. At Oxford no less than at the newly created universities, there were countless signs of the modern world, signs of much adapting. There were on campus, as Rowse recollected, numerous societies based on some singular national, professional or personal interest uniting diverse people: the Labour Club, the Oxford Student Christian Union, The Workers' Educational Union, naming only some of them.<sup>34</sup> Party leaders, member of parliaments, heads of associations, the representatives of the new order, came and went. They were messengers from the outside world of the popular vote, election slogans and mass rallies, representatives of workers and unions. The impact of these developments is difficult to assess because the academic experience did not only favour the resilience of the old but, ironically, spurred a ready embrace of progressive movements, public commitments and involvement in noble issues, many of them sponsored, organised and espoused by political parties and philanthropic associations. Often, and this will become strikingly clear in the next few chapters, the secureness of personal identity encouraged a welcome of changes that were actually destructive of the old ways. It was not perceived that there might be a conflict of interest.

Conflict, however, came with the very personalities of the academics. Kenneth Bell still gave his life to teaching, whereas Sir Charles Firth was shunned and not given any students because he blasphemed against the old order by calling for unhampered research.<sup>35</sup> In Rowse, the conflict between old and new produced the Victorian malady par excellence: self-consciousness. During his gradual separation from his working-class past Rowse

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<sup>34</sup>Rowse, 26. Their success at the time could be contributed to the fact that those who joined were not such a heterogeneous group after all.

<sup>35</sup>Rowse, 261,272.

had established a faith in his own "inner" self as the ultimate reality. The following words could have been spoken by Mark Pattison: "My own inner life...mattered much more to me". This was understandable, after all, his Cornish parents "didn't live in the same realm of discourse". At Oxford he soon had a little crisis of faith in reverse, converting his isolated inner sense to an embracing one.

The basic reason for my happiness at Oxford was that there I found my true nature; in spite of my social inexperience, my restricted opportunities, self-consciousness and lack of confidence (where other people were<sup>36</sup> concerned) this environment was more natural to me.

He lost his fear of public speaking as soon the outer realm became familiar. The oral world drew him out; he had to articulate, externalise and describe his feelings about things. Still, the self-consciousness remained:

There was the oddity: fanatic and proselytiser outside, very far from fanatic, indeed a sceptic, within. It was, indeed, a lucky thing that, underneath all the pressures, I kept my writing going...But it wasn't luck or chance, for the inner thing was my real life: I see now: I was meant for a writer. But the dichotomy between my inner and my outer life, the life of reflection and the impulse towards action, lasted right through the 'thirties.<sup>37</sup>

This was part of the Victorian legacy: the sensitivity to the unfashionable authority of the external, the already known and transmitted moral or intellectual truths. At the same time he felt a kinship with the old. He reflected: "I'd have done much better to have been a Victorian or an Elizabethan - theirs were values that I respect" - by which he meant his personal drive to do his best, to fulfil himself through his work. He might have done better to respect the power which once allowed the hegemony of these values. However, typical of the order which shaped his thinking, the certainty of power to influence was never questioned.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Rowse, 27, 38.

<sup>37</sup>Rowse, 140.

<sup>38</sup>T.S. Eliot was also aware of this Victorian tendency to consider individuals as shapers of culture, especially Arnold: "Arnold is concerned primarily with the individual and the 'perfection' at which he should aim...The effect, therefore, is to exhort the individual who would attain the peculiar kind of 'perfection' which Arnold calls 'culture', to rise superior to  
(Footnote continued)

It must strike anyone who saw the subtle influences, Woolf's "invisible presences", at work in Rowse's academic life, funny to hear him say:

No doors were ever opened to me by my fellow-men, not one. If I have achieved anything it has been by myself alone; I can now, in my sixtieth year, claim that if I am depending on myself I can accomplish what I wish, produce the goods; if I have to depend on others, it is always withheld. I<sup>39</sup> know why, and it does not put me in love with my fellow men.

Without doubt, he meant it. It only shows how unconscious his formation into the old order was. Exploring Rowse's idea of his inner sense fully confirms this:

And thereby comes a curious sensation, the subconscious feeling that one's life has been guided, particularly in the regard to the many, the regular, the invariable defeats that I have suffered at the hands of my fellow man.<sup>40</sup>

Rowse's words could have been those of Mark Pattison.

<sup>41</sup>Rowse even described the presence of a "genius", almost implying an external force:

A curious woman once said to me that every man of genius struggles against his genius, tries to run away from it. Every time I have tried to run away, or even to deviate, I have been haled back and kept on the course. It is a definite feeling, even if a subconscious one, that I am aware of - as if guided, almost directed, drawn along the course. And I know well the explanation the religious would give of it. No reason to suppose anything of the sort - quite superfluous explanation. It is, quite simply,<sup>42</sup> of the nature of genius to be in one's essential self...

This essential self was so inseparable from Rowse's inner identity, however, that he had trouble keeping it apart from social commitments:

I would do anything to please [my tutors] 'if only it were not opposed to my inclinations.' *O sancta simplicitas*: I have put that saving clause into italics - it is such a clue to so much in my life: ready to do anything<sup>43</sup> to please, provided it does not conflict with what I please!

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<sup>38</sup>(continued)  
the limitations of any class, rather than to realise its highest attainable ideals. Notes, 22.

<sup>39</sup>Rowse, 283.

<sup>40</sup>Rowse, 282.

<sup>41</sup>See Ch. 3.

<sup>42</sup>Rowse, 283-4.

<sup>43</sup>Rowse, 146, 129.

The constant confessions to egotism were part of Rowse's contempt of the middle-class virtue of "ethical highmindedness".<sup>44</sup> But the rest of his memoirs do not allow this to be taken too seriously. Rowse's cynicism of "human interestedness" and other "humbug" had hardly any effect on his conduct.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, his undergraduate years were consumed by a quest for an intellectual and moral position vis à vis human society. Rowse worked on a very large canvas, probing the best minds of the past, trying to work out his own creed. Sounding again like his Victorian ancestor, he said: "Having a mind of my own, I did not swallow what they said".<sup>46</sup> He was so attracted to Russell's "Free Man's Worship" that he copied it into his notebook in full. Here is a part of it:

The life of Man is a long march through the Night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long. One by one as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent Death. Very brief is the time in which we can help them, in which their happiness or misery is decided. Be it ours to shed sunshine on their path, to lighten their sorrows by the balm of sympathy, to give them the pure joy of a never-tiring affection...Be it ours to feel, that, where they suffered, where they failed, no deed of ours was the cause...

Hardly an egotistical prayer, but a creed fit for guardians who wished to do their duty to others. Indeed, Rowse was quite unambiguous as to his growing elitist sensibilities. They spoke through his distaste for "collective idiocy", the squandering of power on those easily swayed by rumours, false alarms, misinformation. "Burke's view of society is roughly right...for people are not rational and we know it".<sup>48</sup>

By the end of his Oxford days he portrayed himself as a Conservative in Labour overalls, wearing them simply out of what he considered to be class loyalty.<sup>49</sup>

Why bother to resist temptations..It's all the same thing in

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<sup>44</sup>Rowse, 268.

<sup>45</sup>Rowse, 161.

<sup>46</sup>Rowse, 99, 175. Pattison claimed never to accept any knowledge second hand. See Ch.3.

<sup>47</sup>Rowse, 147.

<sup>48</sup>Rowse, 204.

<sup>49</sup>Rowse, 208. He felt the Conservative Party had the correct view of human nature.

the long run. Why become enthusiastic about any political party or its aims? - The world goes on unchanged, or if it does change, it does so independently of any efforts we may put forth. The purpose of everything has become so questionable...<sup>50</sup>

This was the "core of historical relativism". But in spite of his misanthropy, he had no love for utilitarian pleasure/pain calculators.<sup>51</sup> In fact, however, Rowse could not leave the subject of public irrationality and irresponsibility alone, no matter how great the temptation to cross the Rubicon to amoral and apolitical scholarship. No self-respecting neo-Victorian could turn his back on the fate of civilisation. "Underneath the downrightness and straightforwardness of my political views" there was something that did not bend. "My heart was backward looking".<sup>52</sup> It is there in spite of his sceptical distance from religion, his conviction of the "basic heartlessness of things". Like any member of the Victorian intellectual tradition, he was incapable of a final apostasy.

In company I always decry the stuff written about the modern malaise and inquietude; but I know in myself, no one better, what are the roots of this disquiet. But the gospel that I preach to others must serve for myself: it isn't enough to sit and enjoy the disquiet. Some solution must be found.<sup>53</sup>

The academic order had its way with Rowse and was to have its way for some time to come in prewar Britain. True, at the newer universities, created with an eye to widening the base of research and development in proportion to the expanding modern nation, not all the traditions that were hallowed at Cambridge and Oxford were duplicated. But the rudimentary outlines of the oral traditions had to be maintained: the academic order's attitude to time and to relationships, the dynamics of personal interaction and vertical interference and responsibility. The teaching and learning experience was not to be divorced from the oral tradition and the order which supported it. So when Hoggart came to Leeds, he too was to experience part of its mythic powers.

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<sup>50</sup>Rowse, 162.

<sup>51</sup>Rowse, 236. He meant Herbert Spencer.

<sup>52</sup>Rowse, 162, 210.

<sup>53</sup>Rowse, 288.



## IV.

A Modern University.

The oral traditions of the working class neighbourhoods look feeble in comparison to those found on the Leeds Campus. We meet it early on, when Hoggart's desperate need for residence accommodation is looked after without strict obedience to the anonymous and impartial waiting list, by one of the Wardens: "That sort of personal response was assumed then and for another thirty years to be part of an academic's work, his pastoral duty".<sup>54</sup> The "system" had thus from the beginning the personal and particular configuration of an "order". The hierarchy in the university was, although not without inner tension, not competing with other classes, but serving them. Even at Leeds University there was a feel of the old "ranks" and "degrees", of "duty" and "personality".<sup>55</sup> The place had its own atmosphere, its own ethos, its own sense of time and space, its personalities, to be known and to be known by. The faces of the educators and mentors were recognised and significant to those who put themselves under their authority and care; their eccentricities endeared and repelled. Familiarity came from daily encounters, in the halls, on the paths between the buildings, in the hallways and classrooms. Hoggart recalled:

The atmosphere at Devonshire hall was above all amiable. Not socially sophisticated in the ways some Vice-Chancellors might have wished, in no way genteel; but not brutish or hearty either; civil and friendly rather. Frank Smith, the Johnsonian plump Professor of Education who ran it, must have been largely responsible for establishing the atmosphere. He ate with us at the High Table of the large Dining Hall each weekday evening; I do not remember his ever treating us to disquisitions and admonitions on the nature of the civilised life; he seemed in his quiet way to exhibit aspects of such a life himself. He knew his residents more closely than we always guessed. At supper one night in 1940 I told him that I didn't yet know whether I would be drafted into the armed forces or into the pits. Smith said, with his usual dry mildness: 'if it's the pits, heaven help the miners. He'll talk their heads off'.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 31.

<sup>55</sup>Heyck writes: "As the industrial revolution transformed English society, altering a hierarchical social structure into one of antagonistic social classes, so the language referring to social stratification changed from words like 'order', 'ranks' and 'degrees' to terms like 'aristocracy', 'middle class' and 'working class'". (15)

The academic "order" of Leeds was complete with figures reminiscent of the patronage of the ancien regime. In Hoggart's life it was the paternal interest of Bonamy Dobrée which initiated him into the enchanted world of the past's personalism.

Each year Dobrée picked one or perhaps two students like me to keep an eye on. Other members of staff gave an eye to other students according to their own interests and the students' particular talents. He did not encourage what others - and he too for that matter - would have called a sloppy individualism; you could dress as you wanted but you had to try to keep your mind in good trim, whether you wanted to be a critic or a poet or a journalist or a diplomat... He was consistently something of a disciplinarian.<sup>57</sup>

Dobrée soldiered "on with acts of unsolicited kindnesses":

At about 8:15 one morning, early in the second year, there was a knock on the door of my room in the Hall of Residence. I was still in pyjamas, unshaved and dreary from a very late night's reading. Dobrée came in, looking and smelling freshly as usual..He had turned off the road and sought me out to say there were hopes of an extra<sup>58</sup> grant...I had not known he was doing anything on my behalf.

This was not the first time that Hoggart had experienced personal fate-making. His working class suspicion of public authority led to him to play down the nature behind such human interventions:

"I was thin-skinned, raw, uncertain and resentful of the slightest hint of patronage".<sup>59</sup> However, it was a fact that his acceptance into Cockburn grammar school only happened because his talents were discovered and recommended by the Jack Lane headmaster.<sup>60</sup> The Dobrée-Hoggart relationship corresponded exactly to the nineteenth-century definition of patronage: "Many of these kindness involved some sacrifice by him as well as consistency, a steady keeping in mind of certain people's needs".<sup>61</sup>

In Dobrée's case, his particular interests in Hoggart's life bore equally particular fruit. More than forty years on, Hoggart remembered with chagrin having been among the students

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<sup>56</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 188.

<sup>57</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 211.

<sup>58</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 211-2.

<sup>59</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 211.

<sup>60</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 153-4.

<sup>61</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 217. Patronage in its traditional sense is also discussed in Ch. 3.

who were criticised by Dobrée for failure to attend a public lecture, recalling the details of the event and the speaker which he missed, as if it happened yesterday.<sup>62</sup> Dobrée's voice still followed him around in later years.<sup>63</sup> Something of Dobrée reminded of the regular army officers. "He kept the relationship taut, well-brushed and not indulgent. This too I liked: here working-class Nonconformity, self-respect chimed in with upper-middle-class military proprieties". In any event, Dobrée's abiding influence had severely shaken Hoggart's working class identity. His old outlook seemed modified by a new one: "We might sneer at the public schools and professional soldiering but from what countervailing strength within ourselves".<sup>64</sup>

Before long Britain was at war and Hoggart himself was to be an army officer, taking on the immediate charge of men. The next seven years would ground Hoggart even more in the conditions which would transform him into a neo-Victorian. However, the years at Leeds University were a good preparation for what was to follow.

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<sup>62</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 212.

<sup>63</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:15.

<sup>64</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 217, 212.

## Chapter 10.

"The Military Order:  
Richard Hoggart and Armed Life".

## I.

The two World Wars of this century are imprinted in the popular consciousness as moments of great change.<sup>1</sup> However, Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* is conspicuously silent in this matter, referring only briefly to the war experience, and then positively.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this appears to be that although the war ultimately hastened the nationalization of modern Britain, it could not be said that classless and centralized Britain was the inevitable consequence of the war. True, the war did mean the massive relocation of vast numbers of people, the total intervention of the state in all areas of life, work, home and travel. But the way this came about was a local as well as a national process, working in both directions. The position taken in this chapter is that for many people the war experience, and especially the experience of armed life, meant a return to an older social structure. The mobilization of the nation had a deeply traditional side: the positive acceptance of a vertical responsibility, the direct and personal chain of command, concern and service - ranging from education to feeding, clothing and housing of dependents, even the total rearrangement of people's living habits and activities. The war effort produced a state of positive dependency, that is to say, an inter-dependency. It differed from the dependency possible in the welfare state in that the latter evolved from pragmatic rather than ideological considerations. The government responded only to the problems created by disruption of older chains of caring by industry, providing a minimum material standard of living.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Examples are the references to the Lost Generation. Woolf says in *Mrs. Dalloway* that the war "threw out many of Mr. Brewer's [of Sibleys and Arrowsmiths, auctioneers] calculations, took away his ablest young fellows...", (London: Grafton Books, 1989, first pub. 1925), 77.

<sup>2</sup>Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 237. The passage is quoted in chapter viii.

<sup>3</sup>Fraser, *The Evolution of the Welfare State*, 9.

The dependency during war was much more directly personal and embracing, reaching into emotional recesses of life which now are generally considered "one's own business". World War One and World War Two were national wars.<sup>4</sup> In this national context, morale was not only a matter of army discipline, but a matter of positive assent by everyone on aims and means. To produce this kind of morale, alias consensus, the war-time government did a veritable feat of wedding the personal and intimate economies of the past, the type of overseeable reality which Risking demanded for his Bishops, to the conditions of a vast and modern state.<sup>5</sup> During the second World War, the State "oversaw" its citizens. For those who joined active combat, the integration into national life was at a degree never experienced before, and never to be repeated. How the nation did its "overseeing" in practice was completely dependent on local group efforts and regional responses. In other words, national government had an immediate face: factory foremen, the men in the Fire Brigade, the Air-Raid Wardens, Heavy Rescue Worker, the Building Squad, Billeting Officers, the women in the Women's Voluntary Service, the Queen's Messengers, the Mobile Canteen workers were all interconnected and accountable through a vertical chain of direct command.<sup>6</sup>

In 1940, H.V. Morton, reflecting about the immediate experience of England at war - Belgium fallen, Italy in the War, France collapsed and the British Army "brought home from Dunkirk" wrote:

My own point of view, and, indeed, it is that of all the farmers, the farm labourers and the cowmen who compose our Home Guard, is that should the rest of England fall, our own parish would hold out to the last man. The responsibility of defending our own village has given to that village a gigantic significance in our eyes. To us it seems the main objective of

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<sup>4</sup>I am not denying that the Crimean could also be called "national" war - Olive Anderson points to the days of "public" fasting and feasting during its duration and the first instance of public interest as means of improvement of warfare. (*A Liberal State At War*, 70, 180-1, and *passim*.) But there seems a big difference in the degree of "mobilization" of the population as a whole for war preparations and defense. In this sense the two World Wars were unprecedented and the Second World War stands apart in the degree to which this took place.

<sup>5</sup>See Ch. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Stephen Spender, *Citizens In War*, *passim*.

any invader. When I look at the map, I am sometimes amazed to see how small and unimportant it must appear to anyone not in our Platoon. but if all villages throughout England think as we do, what a hedge of opposition they present... England has ceased to be country or even a county for many of us, and has become a parish. All over our land, villages once proclaimed dead and done for have awakened to arms. People scarcely on speaking terms have come together to organise defence...I, who once thought of England as a whole, and was in the habit of going to Cornwall or Cumberland on the spur of the moment, have not left my parish for months. Neither do I wish to do so; my parish has become England.

The point is: the experience of war at the local level was not alienating but the opposite. Most people remember the war years as good years which brought out the best in neighbourliness and communal self-reliance.

## II.

### A Different Order.

Admittedly, the war was also a great re-locator of all times, unprecedented in its manipulative force. At Oswestry, where Hoggart began his life in the army, the local girls had "so many boys to pick from and boys with strange accents from places the girls' geographic knowledge had not before comprehended and hardly did now". He felt that "the Army introduced us, as no other body could have, to the landscapes and the people of the United Kingdom".<sup>8</sup> The total mobilization of able men and putting them into uniform and bringing them up to standards on which depended Victory or Defeat, could not possibly be accomplished without damage to traditional "standards" of the military academy. The world of order and command, of tradition and convention with their memorized gestures and meanings, finely tuned personal interdependence rooted in face-to-face relationships, had to falter at speed, movement, mass organization, all those things implied by the word "mobilization".

Observing the military order from within, which this

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<sup>7</sup>H.V.Morton, *I saw Two Englands: the Record of A Journey Before the War, and After the Outbreak of War, in the Year of 1939* (1942, Methuen, 1943) 253,288.

<sup>8</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:5, 2:8..

chapter does by considering Hoggart's years as army officer, it will be found that at close range the modern mechanized look recedes. Indeed, at the most basic level there is no machinery at all. In its essence, army life is small scale, personal, and personable - especially there where it is considered at its best, at the hour of its glory. Considered on its own, this order is a close replica of the political culture of the ancien regime in modern days. Hoggart's army years will show that even the massive inflation of the army for the war effort did not alter this basic structure. Army life continued to be governed by rules which were much older than those which governed the modern nation.<sup>9</sup>

Before becoming involved in Hoggart's army life, it seemed a good idea to go to the place where the essence of militarism is continually defined: Sandhurst. The academy, too, has the features of a separate world: another ethic, another language, different priorities, different images of the world reign here. John Keegan, who lectured there as military historian, thought of it as a "genuine social organism, governed by its own social laws".<sup>10</sup> In this world, people speak of order, obedience, discipline and sacrifice. As at Oxford, the spatial setting communicates refinement, a special atmosphere. The appearance of the students contradicts the technical and utilitarian image of militarism.

[The officer cadets] unfailingly remind me, with their tidy hair and tweed jackets, of the undergraduate throng I joined when I went up to Oxford in 1953. It is a reminder which strikes all the more vividly those who teach in universities today. 'They look' exclaimed an Oxford professor whom I had brought down to lecture, 'like the people I was in college with before the war'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> It is frequently argued that during World War One the army "life" derived from the public school from where the recently recruited officers came. This argument overlooks the much older antecedents of the military and the public school. Morris Janowitz who studied the modern American military elite, trendsetting in modern military training, found that it harkened back to pre-revolutionary aristocratic forms. Morris Janowitz, (in collab. with Roger W. Little) *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1965), 127.

<sup>10</sup> Keegan, 71. Keegan attributed this insight to the American historian, Colonel S.L.A. Marshall, whose work dealt with the experience rather than strategy of battle, and refers to "the body of an army's thought". *Men Against Fire* (New York, William Morrow & Co, 1947) 158.

<sup>11</sup> Keegan, 19.

There is indeed a conspicuous lack of the generation gap. The majority of the young men at Sandhurst are "the sons, the grandsons and the great-grandsons of soldiers at Sandhurst"<sup>12</sup> The ultimate goal of education too is very unlike that of the ordinary world. Indeed, the military establishment is at a loss defining the exact end of military training.<sup>13</sup> It is, avoiding reductive words like "organisational behaviour" or "institutional role", what Keegan calls, borrowing from the French concept, *formation*. How *formation* comes about cannot be known exactly. Keegan can only list the ingredients that go into the process.

The most obvious manifestation of the procedural approach to war is in the rote-learning and repeated practice of standard drills, by which one does not only mean the manual of arms practised by warriors since time immemorial to perfect their individual skills, but a very much more extended range of procedures which have as their object the assimilation of almost all of an officer's professional activities to a corporate standard and a common form...<sup>14</sup>

Before this can happen, however, one must be able to make soldiers and officers comply in this aim. The military order is not satisfied with a corporate identity based on reduced personality: it desires bright rather than dull conformity. It is for this reason that student officers are "simultaneously undergoing two processes of education, each with a dissimilar object",<sup>15</sup> that is to say, a liberal arts program which, contrary to the oral and consensual military model is universal, expansive in outlook, inviting a variety of angles of vision.<sup>16</sup> Within the larger ideal of the military order there is no contradiction in this. Universality and particularity are twin aspects of the

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<sup>12</sup>Keegan, 19.

<sup>13</sup>Keegan's American counterparts usually speak of "indoctrination" into the military ethos. Words like these obscure the subtlety of the process as is evident of the lengthy definition which follows them. Janowitz, 127.

<sup>14</sup>Keegan, 20-1.

<sup>15</sup>Keegan, 24.

<sup>16</sup>Correlli Barnett, "The Education of Military Elites" *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 July 1967, 16, 21. Barnett stressed the neo-feudal (rearguard) qualities that went into the training of the officers in the English, American and French Armies and considers the modern superimposition on the old an aspect of the tug-of-war between the traditional and modernizing qualities of the military elite. Keegan seems to see the process seems to have a much better understanding of the indispensability of a traditional element to the aims of the military order. (34)



whole, even complementary to one another. The national-in-the-local model is, like much of the military order, an inheritance of the ancien regime. Keegan cannot say exactly how these contrary parts contribute to make the whole, but must judge its effectiveness by its results.

One of the pleasures of mixing in military society is the certainty that one will meet there no representatives of most of these categories [zealots, monomaniacs, hypochondriacs, etc.]. The military zealot is, in particular, a rare bird, at least among British officers, who deliberately cultivate a relaxed and undogmatic attitude to the life of grandeur and servitude. Indeed the frankness and lack of hypocrisy with which they, having as it were declared by their choice of career, where they stand over the ethics of violence and the role of force, are able to discuss these questions makes much mess conversation a great deal more incisive, direct and ultimately illuminating than that of club bars or university common rooms.

If there is one word which encapsulates the military ethos it would have to be: humaneness. Keegan uses the word many times, not as a law, or a doctrine, or a "professional code" but a quality which fits itself into myriad situations: looming behind decisions, as for example, the exclusion of emotion from battle.<sup>18</sup> It is usually a bottom line, a minimum of cruelty in the conduct of war, a minimum dignity for comrades in arms, for subordinates, for civilians, for prisoners. Indeed, a special part of military training must counteract this ethos, must arouse the will to kill: there are few "natural fighters". S.L.A. Marshall, the American journalist, attributed this resistance to the "killer instinct", to a religious and cultural upbringing which stressed non-aggressive values.<sup>19</sup> But the answer lay much closer to hand: humaneness is an instinct developed in the experience of army life itself. The ritual of foot-inspection, practised during the Great War seems an especially vivid example of how face to face contacts, life together, inevitably brought with them a moral dimension:

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<sup>17</sup>Keegan, 25.

<sup>18</sup>This is not captured in the idea of a "professional code", nor is it satisfactory to speak of "duty, honour, country", as Janowitz does. [Moritz Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier, A Social and Political Portrait* (1960, Glencoe: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964) 219.] It will be seen that such platitudes are not confessed and their reality is played down.

<sup>19</sup>Marshall, 78. He noticed that 75 per cent will not fire or will not persist in firing against the enemy and his works.(50)

Many of the Kitchener Tommies were to perceive in their officers' display of fellow-feeling an authenticity which made attendance on that transformation tolerable. But by what strange communion did these feelings transmit themselves! Siegfried Sassoon has described how his own life was changed by the expression of total trust and self-surrender visible in the faces of his men, looking up at him as they squatted cross-legged, while he inspected their feet after a route march.<sup>20</sup>

### III.

#### The Best Years Of Our Lives.

There was no foot inspection by the time Hoggart joins the army. But even in 1939 the dissimilarity from anything known in civilian life was great, perhaps even greater. Without doubt the army experience itself had changed, reflecting the social transformation which had taken place in between the two wars. The Pal battalions were gone.

The British army of 1939-45 put officer selection on to a scientific basis, making all applicants for commissions submit to tests of their intelligence, stability, companionability, leadership potential and the like, considerations which favoured the middle-class over the working-class candidate.<sup>21</sup>

But army life in 1939 had more similarities with 1914 than might be assumed. On the surface, looking at hardware, strategy and training, much seemed altered. But in some essentials army life could never really afford to deviate much from its ancient model.

Referring to the Great War, Keegan called the British regiment a "complex and highly individual accretion of traditions, local affinities, annual rituals, inter-company rivalries, fierce autonomy and distinctive names - King's Shropshire Light Infantry, Loyal North Lancashire, Duke of Wellington's Royal Fusiliers".<sup>22</sup> True, in 1939, methods of recruitment were counteractive to such regional sentiments. The world in which Hoggart found himself was very unlike that of the other local groups he had hitherto belonged to: his school, his grammar school, his university, all groups defined by locality or

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<sup>20</sup>Keegan, 221-2.  
<sup>21</sup>Keegan, 272.  
<sup>22</sup>Keegan, 274.

interest, very likely both. The members of this group, however, "came from all over the country, their social backgrounds were as diverse as could be and their levels of ability". The heavy Artillery, which he joined, contained "a widely-based demographic and cultural sample".<sup>23</sup>

But the motivation to join had great continuity with 1914. For the men even more than for Hoggart perhaps, the decision to join beckoned to a gigantic switch from the usual and typical. The very decision (it was possible but socially difficult to play the role of conscientious objector) was a surrender of personal life to the forces of history, to the "idea" of a larger group, the nation. This was a decision which broke with typical attitudes to government and "Them". It was therefore all the more significant.

We knew about militarism as a powerful part of British culture, a large-continuing, historic part; and now, for as long as we could foresee, it was to be for us the mainspring of our daily lives. But at bottom it remained an aspect of the country we had not known or wanted to know or had ever expected to expect in emergencies such as the present.  
[Italics Mine].<sup>24</sup>

Another type of reality, a reality with a moral dimension, was thus there from the very beginning. It accompanied Hoggart's earliest moments of training and was carried into the actual "carrying out of orders".

The first encounter between the ordinary recruit and potential officer bore great similarities with that of officers who in 1914 were brought face to face with the "other nation" of the Durham miners, Yorkshire furnacemen, Clydeside riveters, men who looked strange and had a different speech.<sup>25</sup> Hoggart's conscience, too, was outraged at the sight of his fellow-man, how a "wealthy and in many respects civilised country did shamefully and smugly little for most of its people".<sup>26</sup> The army experience was always immediate and personal, and therefore, could hardly escape being a moral one. Machinery receded into the

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<sup>23</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:3.

<sup>24</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:2.

<sup>25</sup>Keegan, 221.

<sup>26</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:5.

background. It was operated by the men. The newest technology still depended on small group ethics. The cooperation around heavy artillery might have been similar from that necessary in the engineering or car repair shop. Yet it differed in a vital and moral respect: at the front the whole endeavour had much higher stakes. Something more than skill was required: an emotional and moral interest in the overall operation. No one named these extras, especially not while carrying out duties. Hoggart could not get himself to articulate them but speaks modestly of "unexciting inevitability".<sup>27</sup> But this too was part of the army ethos, allowing no artificiality, no self-conscious contemplation. In spite of the nonchalant exterior, the sober reflection, this extra was there and absolutely necessary for the war effort to succeed.

Once the recruits crossed the threshold into the armed world, life switched to a different frequency. The tempo slowed down. There was a marked absence of drama and novelty; leaving time to take in details - surrounding men and places. The "haunting enclosed atmosphere" of Llandrindod is engraved on Hoggart's memory with the intensity of a still-life painting. Weeks there have been "distilled" into a timeless moment.<sup>28</sup> This upset of ordinary life was dominated by one, omnipresent, feature of the new "order": hierarchy. Hierarchy was no stranger, this one however differed from that outside. It was blatant, spelled out, assented to, confirmed and believed in. It was deliberately and explicitly paternal, interfering and commanding without apology, arranging all ranks in a vertically ascending-descending and interlocking order. Each and everyone was under the direct and immediate tutelage of one superior or another. Individual authority decreased and increased in proportion and relation to others on the ladder. All were moved around, ordered about, all obey; everyone was accountable. In 1939 there might have been less overt deference,<sup>29</sup> but there was acceptance of superiority and inferiority. Orders were carried out.

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<sup>27</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:9.  
<sup>28</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:10.  
<sup>29</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:6.

The effect was not always ideal. Hoggart suspected the conspiracy of the lower ranks "sticking together versus power".<sup>30</sup> But the hierarchy was not negative. It could not have worked without being bilateral, without compensating by becoming directly responsible, familial and intimate with those under orders. Indeed, it failed only when the reciprocal nature was neglected, when "impersonal" and amorphous, unconnected to the human and the familiar, as in this instance in Hoggart's early training:

The rules of 'Man Management' seemed to have been drawn from a similar correspondence course to those on the giving of talks. They were almost useless because they were abstract, culturally rootless, inhuman or - more accurately - non-human, amateurishly and mildly Pavlovian, not connected to any social or geographic sense of the sorts of men we would have charge of. They could not make much impact on most in the units we eventually joined...they wholly ignored class differences and all the indicators of those differences which divide - accent, poise, forms of speech, gestures - so only those officers-to-be- wholly encased in the ways and rules of a fairly privileged level of class could accept them at face value...

The hierarchy worked best when it moved beyond the text book into the human and cultural realm of real personal context:

But the O.R.'s were shrewd enough, since so much of the comfort and due regulation of their lives now depended on these young men above them, to respect more an officer who was conscientious and hard-working, who could be told about problems at home and relied on to give thoughtful advice. We had a small-town solicitor who filled that role best of all of us. He also had a courageous but unflamboyant sense of responsibility when he made difficult decisions.<sup>32</sup>

Nor did the hierarchy always fit comfortably. Hoggart was outraged when he and fellow officers were served by waiters in the ship's dining room, or when he thought about how the fate of the lower orders depended on the authorities above them: it led him to quote the line "Oh God, what some men do whilst others leave to do".<sup>33</sup> It was painful and awkward in relation to those on top as well as to those below. Hoggart learned the meaning of a paternal relationship through practice of direct and immediate pastoral care:

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<sup>30</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:6.

<sup>31</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:17-8.

<sup>32</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:18.

<sup>33</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 2:23, 3:17.

I was wholly unqualified to deal anything like adequately with such knotted problems but listened and then wrote letter after letter,<sup>34</sup> especially to bodies in Britain who might be able to help.

All this could not leave Hoggart unaffected. When he mentioned a "brother officer" it was not clear if it was a fraternity with military life or with a particular class and its responsibilities that was speaking. The lack of distinction was in a way appropriate, for within the military order the outside distinctions of class did not apply. There was a family feeling within the corporate organization. All belonged to (rather than worked for) one regiment, one army, one nation. It was a hierarchy whose ideal was based on consent rather than competition.<sup>35</sup> The hierarchy became so natural that it was at times invisible to Hoggart:

I had to make the decision about where to stop for meals and for the night or what to do in any unexpected emergency; that apart, there was no sense of differences in rank.

The collective sense was strongest where words were absent; it was an experience rather than acquired attitude or knowledge.<sup>36</sup> Time and again Hoggart tried to communicate the essence of an incommunicable consensus:

Out of the dark swirl and glare and teeth-wrenching clatter there emerged at head-height a rough, arrow-shaped sign, scrawled 'To Tunis'; and beside it, waving huge torches towards Tunis, with the no-nonsense insistence of policemen clearing a difficult football crowd, were large, red-eyed Military Policemen...Once again, we had the sense of our whole generation on the move, caught up, sharing a heightened sense of life, of the common and the public life, living for once in history and with meaning - though if you had asked what the meaning<sup>37</sup> was we would have been unable to answer. [*Italics Mine*]

The collective sense was also part of moments of waiting:

But we were alone and free of the unit's daily routine, and it soon became clear that we were all enjoying ourselves very much...Time out, again; unfretted; and a complete unspoken assumption on all sides that normal routines and styles would

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<sup>34</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4:32.

<sup>35</sup>Medal, promotions, which might be a cause for competition were awarded for duty and service to King and country and to the regiment. An officer's commission in 1936 addressed the recipient as "our beloved and trusty".

<sup>36</sup>This is implied by the word: "indoctrination".

<sup>37</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 3-18.

be resumed the moment we got back to camp.<sup>38</sup>

It inhibited the acknowledgement of individual bravado. Modern society with its virtuosos and inactive and silent spectators had no place here:

Not a heroic phase for me or those I was with most of the time. Why did we not choose more heroic roles? With a rare exception my colleagues were capable of courage when that was called for, as it was, once or twice. I met no one who had deliberately chosen Ack Ack as a relatively safe arm...More men habitually go along the grain of life's offerings than strike out.<sup>39</sup>

Words like "courage" and "cowardice" only existed abroad, in official language, in broadcasting. On the front, they were knit together: the staying at the scene of battle was a mixture of both.<sup>40</sup> The term "humane" belonged to the realm of unwritten codes.<sup>41</sup> Although it emerged from close contact it was not the same as what Keegan calls "small-unit" morale, although this too was an important aspect of army life:<sup>42</sup> the "secret, unarticulated club of those who were not going to climb over anyone else's back to early promotion" was part of it.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, such a day-to-day "morale" was difficult to separate from a deeper ethos. No real distinction seemed possible or necessary.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 3:7.

<sup>39</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4-39.

<sup>40</sup>Keegan never quite solves the question why soldiers fight on. At times, as observed during World War One, it seemed simply because it is impossible to return without being caught by the covering barrage. (72-75, 113-120)

<sup>41</sup>Hoggart, *A Kind of Clowning* 1:21.

<sup>42</sup>Keegan, 24.

<sup>43</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 2:6.

<sup>44</sup>Marshall thus wrote: "morale is the thinking of an army. It is the whole complex body of an army's thought: The way it feels about the soil and about their cause and their politics as compared with other causes and politics. The way that it feels about its friends and allies, as well as its enemies. About its commanders and goldbricks. About food and shelter. Duty and Leisure. Payday and sex. Militarism and civilianism. Freedom and slavery. Work and want. Weapons and comradeship. Bunk fatigue and drill. Discipline and disorder. Life and death. God and the devil". (158)

## IV.

Cultivating the Multitude.

What might be the overall effect of almost seven years of living in this world? As the war neared its end, Hoggart seemed possessed by one question: could that kernel of good living, that sense of positive and creative nationalism which he experienced during the war be carried over into peace time? Could people be made an active and thinking part of national life? This was typical. Fraser writes: "Britain in 1942 viewed the Beveridge report as a sort of Utopia [not in the derogatory sense] and it helped to swell the euphoria engendered a few weeks earlier by the Victory at El Alamein".<sup>45</sup> In Hoggart's words: "There had been a sea-change among men who had been, most of them, ill-educated, not encouraged to have many expectations or to look forward to any change for the better, to progress to movement". He did not attribute this to having seen more of the world, although he thought it also played a role:

Their war-time changes in attitudes and expectations had come about internally from their years and months with others like them, separated from home and for the first time able to see it and its inhibitions from a distance.<sup>46</sup>

Deference could no longer be taken for granted:

The tones of propaganda had changed during the war but most remained patronising: the *de haut en bas* tones had yielded to the self-consciously pally, that was all... The War Office still issued material of the 'simple souls but hearts of oak' variety, materials most of which assumed that people knew and accepted their places within the hierarchies and were one and all nationalists and royalists. The breathily urgent, loyalist newsreels, with thousands cheering Church or the King as he walked through the East End, captured that set of assumptions exactly... But most of the gunners I knew, and I do not think they were untypical, had this pattern of attitudes: they were chauvinistic - that was deeply ingrained by education and most later persuasion; very few were politically aware but those few were almost all socialists; very few, though they followed the army's rules where they had to, were deferential to rank.<sup>47</sup>

The hope for something better, something that might

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<sup>45</sup>Fraser, 218.

<sup>46</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4:24-5.

<sup>47</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning* 4:24-5.



mediate the positive things experienced in the army to civilian life seemed irresistible. Other people too had worried about ways of preparing "their" soldiers for taking a responsible part in the political life of the nation - as enriched rather than diminished equals. Hoggart saw his hopes realized in the birth of ABCA, the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, an experiment in citizen education among the troops:

So ABCA was born and the pamphlets dispatched regularly. It may have been them which turned my own interests towards adult education, for they seemed to my inexperienced eye models of exposition for adults who had little background to the issues they treated but were assumed to be intelligent enough to grasp an argument clearly presented. They did not talk down, and underestimated neither the subject nor the capacity of the readers...<sup>48</sup>

Hoggart memoirs mentioned awareness of the "Beveridge Report" (1942), but not that ABCA had issued a summary of it only to be withdrawn two days later on orders from the War Office. Churchill feared that it might raise expectations.<sup>49</sup> One thing was clear. While many of the nation's citizens were still in the army, ABCA had a much better chance of shaping opinions than later on.

Each Troop had to designate one officer to introduce the men to the subject of each pamphlet, working from the text which only he had and using a blackboard if he had one...There they all sat month after month, being introduced not only to the main issues in Social Security policy or Educational planning or Industrial prospects or Trade Unionism, but - more important - being introduced also to the idea that these things concerned them and they could have<sup>50</sup> should have, a say in the discussion and resolution of them.

Hardly the same chance given to the pamphlet dropped through the front door. Hoggart ascribed the success of the ABCA pamphlets to their tone which, for the first time in his memory, reflected a new respect for their audience:

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<sup>48</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4:25-6. He suspected that Philip Morris, "one of the pro-consuls of the time, who was Director General of Education from 1944-5" to have put his weight behind the idea. According to Correlli Barnett, its director in 1943 was W.E.Williams. Barnett also called ABCA the "potent organ of the 'enlightened Establishment'". (*The Audit of War*, 34).

<sup>49</sup>Fraser, 215-218. The report called, among others, for a maximum unemployment figure of 3.5%, anything over being immoral and demoralizing to a nation, as implied by his identification of the five giants of: want, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness.

<sup>50</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4:27-8.

'They', insofar as the ABCA pamphlets were assumed to have come from 'them', had not talked to ordinary soldiers so directly and tonelessly before. The tones they had known had moved on a short line between the bossy and the wheedling, the tones of<sup>51</sup> pushing around or of persuading to buy, or to deliver a vote.

The 'They' and the 'Them' was to concern Hoggart inordinately in the years to come. The war experience had furthered his sense of unholy divisions in civilian life. But the experience in the army had also pointed to ways in which the disconnectedness could be overcome.<sup>52</sup> There was much work to be done if ordinary men were to have the fruits of 'High Culture', before they would all be "cultured"<sup>53</sup>.

The simple but awe-ful [sic] thought struck me that these men had virtually never in their lives listened to a writer trying to talk objectively, honestly, about life and its problems; that never to have met the works of Jane Austen or George Eliot or Thomas Hardy or all the rest was a huge limitation, to be regretted not because it indicated that they had not had access to some socially-defined (and, to some who felt they had that access, socially-confined) High Culture, but because they had been denied entry to one of the most important of all liberating experiences - the opportunity to recognise that it is possible to try disinterestedly to look at and give some sort of meaning to your life, not to move only between<sup>54</sup> prejudice and gossip, disconnectedly and repetitively.

Hoggart's sense of betrayal was to sharpen and intensify in the years during which the battle for "culture" was to be fought on more hostile territory. Already he was a visitor from another country, who was concerned with questions which did not seem to trouble the multitude. From now on, Hoggart's intellectual life would return time and again to the problem of how to bring culture into some relationship with each and every member of his nation.

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<sup>51</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4:27.

<sup>52</sup>The Beveridge Report noted that in war "unemployment disappears and all men have value when the State sets up unlimited demand for a common purpose. By the spectacular achievement of its planned economy, war shows also how great is the waste of unemployment". *Full Employment in the Free Society, A Report by William H. Beveridge*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1944)<sup>53</sup>

Hoggart's earliest essay at Cockburn Grammar School which aroused his Headmaster's interest was on Hardy as a truly "cultured" man. Hoggart, (*A Local Habitation*, 179)

<sup>54</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 4:27.

## Chapter 11.

"Richard Hoggart: Neo-Victorian".

Gentlemen of England, if ever you would have your country breathe the pure breath of heaven again, and receive again a soul into her body, instead of rotting into a carcase, blown up in the belly with carbonic acid (and great that way), you must think, and feel, for your England, as well as fight for her: you must teach her that all the true greatness she ever had, she won while her fields were green and her faces ruddy; and that greatness is still possible for Englishmen, even though the ground be not hollow under their feet, nor the sky black over their heads.

Ruskin on "War".<sup>1</sup>

## I.

Striking Affinities.

Already at the beginning of his army career Richard Hoggart showed great promise of becoming a neo-Victorian. His memoirs recall his feelings at the sight of the new recruits coming into Oswestry:

There were working-class lads from all over Britain who had left school at fourteen; some had landed in and stayed in dead-end jobs, others had been apprenticed to a craft and been now pulled away just as they knew their trades; there were all levels of middle class boys of the sort who used to go (and whose grandchildren now go again) to fee-paying day-schools; there were public school boys...; and there was a small group of graduates...One saw again, and from a new angle how a wealthy and in many respects civilized country did shamefully and smugly little for most of its people...Pulling up and away from Hunslet and Jack Lane had shown me something of the stringent selective processes by which only the very gifted among the poor were given much educational opportunity...Oswestry showed that this process was repeated horizontally right across the country, that there was a huge layer spread over all the counties, who, whatever their difference in accents and geographical settings, were brothers of the Hunslet boys, because they all shared this lack of opportunity. Above them and better treated, was the thinner horizontal layer of the various ranks of the middling classes and above again wafer-thin and privileged, ranks of the upper group. A basic training camp was a microcosm of British society in both its decencies and its gross imperfections; and its meaning was not lost, emotionally, even on many of those

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<sup>1</sup>Lectures on War presented to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in 1865, published first under the title *The Crown of Wild Olive* in 1866, (Kent: George Allen, 1889) 159.

who would have been unable to grasp that meaning analytically.<sup>2</sup>

What this passage shared with Ruskin was its outrage over a nation which spread its cultural fruits so niggardly. Ruskin, too, considered the "poverty" of national "life" the worst sin of the day, not a sin by the "nation" - he was not going to unload responsibility onto this amorphous thing, the "nation", but by the individuals, who were, collectively, the "great nation".<sup>3</sup> He wondered, tongue in cheek, how it could be that "a great nation [would] allow the lives of its innocent poor to be parched out of them by fog fever, and rotted out of them by dunghill plague, for the sake of sixpence a life extra per week to its landlords..."<sup>4</sup> The same "great" nation which in war time elicited the most heroic of sacrifices, the best in human nature was able to win only the most minimal acknowledgment of the needs of its people in peacetime.<sup>5</sup> "It is very strange to me to discover this", he wrote in 1870, "and very dreadful - but I saw it to be a quite an undeniable fact".<sup>6</sup> The army captains who showed great dedication to their men under their command lost interest when it came to being dedicated to the multitude.

For observe, if there had been indeed in the hearts of the rulers of great multitudes of men any such conception of work for the good as those under their command, as there is in the good and thoughtful masters of any small company of men, not only wars for the sake of mere increase of power could never take place, but our idea of power itself would be entirely altered. Do you suppose that to think and act even for a million of men, to hear their complaints, watch their weaknesses, restrain their vices, make laws for them, lead them,<sup>7</sup> day by day, to purer life, is not enough for one man's work?

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<sup>2</sup>Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, 1:5.

<sup>3</sup>Ruskin measured poverty as an absence of life: "It has been the madness of economists to seek for gold instead of life..." (*Queen of the Air*, 158)

<sup>4</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 39. Derrick Leon, Ruskin's unsurpassed biographer, points out that Ruskin considered *Sesame and Lilies* his finest work "as is within my power..to plead with all over whom I have any influence to do according to their means". Ruskin, *the Great Victorian* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), 375.

<sup>5</sup>See Ch. 8 - Another aristocrat, George V, it has been seen, was to make the same discovery during the Depression.

<sup>6</sup>Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive*, 123-4.

<sup>7</sup>Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive*, 145-6.

Being removed from the scene of suffering and joy seemed to remove personal obligations:

If any of us were absolute lord only of a district of a hundred miles square and were resolved on doing our utmost for it; making it feed as large a number of people as possible; making every clod productive, and every rock defensive, and every human being<sup>8</sup> happy; should we not have enough on our hands, think you?

In Hoggart's time the modern organisation of life provided for the material needs of the nation. However, it removed the objects of care even further from direct involvement: the "great" nation had a complexity of services which Ruskin never dreamed of. St. James Hospital of Leeds typical example of institutionalized "national" care:

St. James is still, in its central bulk, a great loveless and graceless-looking mass, though now it has some large modern additions whose architecture says 'function' rather than 'public charity'... By all sorts of large acts and small touches it's been made to seem more powerful and important yet less to be dreaded, less a patronage for the poor, brighter... the blocks have been given conventionally and locally imposing name: 'The Princess Royal Wing' and 'The Chancellor's Wing' (presumably in honour of the Duchess of Kent, a Yorkshire landowner's daughter and the present Chancellor of the University).

Hoggart's autobiography began with Aunt Annie's death. Her death symbolised the end of an era. Working-class culture was dying, unconscious and anaesthetized, in the arms of a new order, its technological superiority providing for the health and for the passing away of its citizens in its own impersonal way.

The "national health service" meant wards with personal names like "Chancellor's Ward", humanizing what was known to everyone as ward number 45, for geriatrics. The nurses, although Hoggart understood their predicament, were part of a chain of national intrusion. They represented the "semi-detached culture", unable to get truly involved, who meant well but had to save a part of themselves for the demands of their "private lives".<sup>10</sup>

Inside, the atmosphere gives a new and better than usual meaning to the word 'cheerleader'; a determined cheerfulness, a sustained feat of walking on the emotional water - since to

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<sup>8</sup>Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive*, 146.

<sup>9</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 2.

<sup>10</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 5-6.

do otherwise would be to give way to grief and that is unthinkable - pervades the room and is handed from shift to shift. As we always say, and mean it, the staff do their best for all. Is it a mask which is taken off when the shift ends and they meet their husbands and boy-friends? In a way and not necessarily discreditable way, this must be so.<sup>11</sup>

## II.

### National Policy.

A hospital was no doubt an extreme place to begin with unmasking the hurtful impersonality of the modern state. But to Hoggart, no less than to Ruskin, the unaccountability of the nation was an ubiquitous menace. Already the child Richard had been aware of the breaking in of national policy in the person of health visitors, strangers to the area with no natural connection to Hunslet. Their commitment was off and on and task-specific. The child's personality diminished as the health visitors talked about him in the third person: "What is the boy having for breakfast?" Little Richard noticed something "odd about the tone of the whole operation", The shoes handed out at camp were the wrong colour and size.<sup>12</sup> The services had no follow up and were, therefore, heedless of consequences. The worst of this heedlessness could be seen in the activities of the "means test inspectors" who, in the thirties, often earned their reputation as "home destroyers".<sup>13</sup>

Decades of development did not reverse the pattern of indifference; in the eighties, if anything, government and people were further apart. Public planning and assistance not only continued to bring local and individual losses but losses on an even larger scale.

The history of the area all around, which included our Newport Street, is a microcosm of typical errors and re-tries in public housing over the last thirty years. The streets were cleared in 1971 to make way for the 'Hunslet Grange' development, some of the worst, most crass and inhumane public housing I have seen in any developed country: industrial-unit building in concrete blocks of several storeys...Who would relax there, in that almost sunless square frowned on by flats on four sides...<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Richard Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 5.

<sup>12</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 85, 148.

<sup>13</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 26.

<sup>14</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 139.

Whatever trickled down to the individual lost something on the way. The shelves of Hoggart's nearest public library carried only the books which those in charge decided the public should get, vicariously chosen by assumptions about public interest and frequency-of-borrowing statistics rather than what was once considered the basic stock of good English literature.<sup>15</sup> The result was an automatic dilution, a fulfilment of T.S.Eliot's prediction that "those who claim to give the public what the public want begin by underestimating public taste. They end by debauching it".<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the spontaneity of learning, so dependent on the unpredictable, on idiosyncrasy, and accidental discovery, so much a part of Hoggart's and before him Pattison's process of self-education, have all been edited out.<sup>17</sup>

The absence of any vital relationship between the "nation" and people was communicated through signs like "No Person is allowed", their "curtly peremptory" and "diffusely interdictory" tone.<sup>18</sup> But signs like these were honest enough: stating the facts of life: the nation was a reality that did not invite a personal relationship. They maintained a wall between 'Them' and 'Us'.<sup>19</sup> Resentment, still a form of connectedness, gave way to an absence of emotion. In 1957, Hoggart observed that young people had

contracted out from any belief of [the Nation's] importance; they've gone into their own worlds, supported now by a greater body of entertaining and flattering provision than their parents knew. When they have to meet the other world sharply...they often do their best to go on ignoring it,<sup>20</sup> or draw upon attitudes similar to those of their parents.

Nothing about these worries was exactly new. Almost a hundred years earlier, Ruskin was just as troubled about the exclusive nature of national life. He saw the working classes as

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<sup>15</sup>Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, 174.

<sup>16</sup>Hoggart, *Mushy Peas*, 9. Hoggart remembers hearing Eliot use these words for his testimony for the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting.

<sup>17</sup>Ruskin, aware of this, felt that the erratic style of his *Fors Clavigera*, the letters to the Workers and Labourers of Great Britain, was the best medium for the capricious nature of teaching and learning. *Leon*, 442-3.

<sup>18</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 51.

<sup>19</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 53-6.

<sup>20</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 56-7.

people who were opted out and deprived of a position in it.

This past system of misgovernment, especially during the last three hundred years, has prepared, by its neglect, a class among the lower orders which is now peculiarly difficult to govern. It deservedly lost their respect - but that was the least part of the mischief. The deadly part of it was, that the lower orders lost their habit, and at last their faculty, of respect; - lost the very capability of reverence, which is the most precious part of the human soul...If you could live always in the presence of archangels, you would be happier than in that of men; but even if only in the company of admirable knights and beautiful ladies, the more noble and bright they were, and the more you could reverence their virtue, the happier you would be.<sup>21</sup>

Ruskin considered such classlessness the equivalent of hell: a social anonymity akin to a cultural no-place with nowhere to go.

On the contrary, if you were condemned to live among a multitude of idiots, dumb, distorted and malicious, you would not be happy in the constant sense of your own superiority...Now, by general misgovernment, I repeat, we have created in Europe a vast populace, and out of Europe a still vaster one, which has lost even the power and conception of reverence; - which exists only in the worship of itself - which can neither see anything beautiful around it, nor has, towards all goodness and greatness, no other feelings than<sup>22</sup> those of the lowest creatures - fear, hatred, or hunger...

Ruskin directed his venom at people who abdicated their traditional class roles, that is to say, who ignored the moral denominators of their position, who no longer measured importance by traditional yardstick of education, responsibility and other, non-material, refinements. These changes in measurement appeared to him related to a wider crisis:

We are on the verge of a great political crisis, if not of political change. That a struggle is approaching between the newly-risen power of democracy and the apparently departing power of feudalism; and another struggle, no less imminent, and far more dangerous, between wealth and pauperism.[*Italics Mine*]<sup>23</sup>

Feeling the essential superiority of the old order in his bones, Ruskin was still hopeful that it only "appeared to be departing"; nothing could yet convince him its powers were gone. Indeed, he cleanly separated the struggle between wealth and pauperism from the political struggle, between the feudal classes and democracy.

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<sup>21</sup>Ruskin, *The Crown of Wild Olive*, 177.

<sup>22</sup>Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive*, 177-8.

<sup>23</sup>Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive*, 173.



These two quarrels are constantly thought of as the same. They are being fought together, and an apparently common interest unites for the most part the millionaire with the noble, in resistance to a multitude, crying, part of it for bread and part of it for liberty. - And yet no two quarrels can be more distinct. Riches - so far from being necessary to noblesse - are adverse to it. So utterly adverse, that the first character of all the Nobilities which have founded great dynasties in the world is <sup>24</sup>to be poor; - often poor by oath - always poor by generosity.

He clung obstinately to an image of society in which power and class could never be based on material wealth. Class and politics belonged together, money and class, or, money and politics, from his prophetic perspective not only should not but could not ever fuse without the destruction of the latter. The reduction of class to an economic power constituted nothing less than a total breach with the class system as his inner mind knew it. Whatever was happening could therefore only be an economic and not a class struggle.

### III.

#### Class and Culture.

A hundred years on, Hoggart had to modify Ruskin's concept of the working class as a class without class. Total classlessness, as Ruskin would have had it, never existed. But he admitted: working-class culture was a sickly culture at best, a plain flower on the thick wall which guarded wealth, growing in the small spaces untouched by work and state. But the identification of class with culture gave Hoggart and Ruskin a shared grievance. The world of the sixties no longer knew the conditions which produced "fear, hatred and hunger".<sup>25</sup> Instead of want, Hoggart's class-trained eyes beheld a bland hell of instant gratification without sense of occasion.<sup>26</sup> Remembering prewar working-class culture, he wrote:

It is right to remind ourselves of the strength in traditional class-groups, the fidelity and gentleness of face-to-face working-class communities at their best, the devotion and unself-seeking responsibility which the best upper-class

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<sup>24</sup>Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive*, 173.

<sup>25</sup>Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive*, 178.

<sup>26</sup>See Ch. 8.

training could produce.<sup>27</sup>

True to the Ruskinian tradition, however, Hoggart located class and culture in those spaces where money and material things were not: in the moral realm of values and attitudes. His gaze, too was fixed on the eternal goods. He accepted for real what Ruskin, and later T.S.Eliot, could never concede: that the classes, the old orders had been deposed from political power. Class culture lived in those niches of life where politics and economics did not: in shared experiences, in the sense of class solidarity, in a personal identity obtained within a class and this class's position in society as a whole. This was not an ideal situation, it was, however, the situation as he found it. In short, Hoggart had resigned himself to a much more reduced concept of class than Ruskin. Yet, even this reduced entity was in danger of becoming extinct.

The open society threatened regional and class-based distinctiveness. Living standards were higher but the national wealth had little background in local or individual struggle for its achievements. Could such a prefabricated life-style deserve the label culture? A "modest diffused prosperity" seemed to go hand in hand with a diffused modest culture.<sup>28</sup> Personality, Hoggart proposed, depended on "working relationships" in four areas: with "our own personality, with our family, with our immediate neighbours and locality and - last - with some larger groups".<sup>29</sup> However, in 1957, he noted that

the old sense of the personal is graduating from the backyard fence to the larger-than-life personalisation of the soap-operas or the 'national personalities' thrown up as a classless substitute - 'Royalty as it is treated today, the ubiquitous TV pals and all the other friendly persuaders. When local detail is no longer usable you are thrown on to the artificially projected.<sup>30</sup>

The cult of personalities was at best a public life by proxy. But even this was an illusion, for no real connection existed. People in the late fifties cherished private fantasies about public

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<sup>27</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 30.

<sup>28</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, 28.

<sup>29</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other* 51-2.

<sup>30</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 34.

figures, yet contributed little to affect the course of public life. They, no less than people in the eighties, were already living in the "Marshmallow State".<sup>31</sup>

None of this was actually new. But Hoggart was surprised that John S. Mill had observed a similar dissipation of variety and colour around him, writing in 1840:

One man is forcibly stuck by the multiplication of physical comforts; the advancement and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners...Another fixes his attention, not upon the value of these advantages, but upon the high price which is paid for them; the relaxation of individual energy and courage, the loss of proud and self-relying independence; the slavery of so large a portion of mankind to artificial wants...the dull unexciting monotony of their lives, and the passionless insipidity, and absence of any marked individuality in their characters...<sup>32</sup>

Newman, too, perceived the unreality of excessive communication, literature becoming more and more a massive substitute for direct feeling and acting.<sup>33</sup> Ruskin noticed that thinking was done for the people, while they lacked discernment between the "just and unjust stewards of men's ideas" who moved people to

fight for, live for, or even die for, fancying they meant this, or that, or the other of things dear to them: for such words wear chameleon cloaks...of the colour of the ground of any man's fancy: on that ground they lie in wait, and rend him with a spring from it.<sup>34</sup>

#### IV.

#### The Wish to be Heard.

Seven years in the army heightened Hoggart's desire for some shared objective reality, the concrete possibility of unity. He placed his hopes on education. Neo-Victorians cannot be cynics about education: they have felt its power and influence. In Hoggart's own experience, the ABCA concept which appealed so much

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<sup>31</sup>Hoggart, *Mushy Peas*, 8.

<sup>32</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, 106. The quote came from Mill's essay on Coleridge. Instead of "man" the original said "observer". J.M. Robson ed., *Essays, Religion and Society*, by John Stuart Mill (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 123.

<sup>33</sup>Ker, *Newman*, 98.

<sup>34</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*.

to him, had been a litmus test of how the national could connect positively with the personal. But in fact, ABCA was only a modern version of the Victorian idea of adult education, not at all unlike the Christian Socialists' Working Men's College, which was according to Derrick Leon

the first serious attempt made in England to help working men to attain a full and satisfactory life, not by following the great social illusion of rising into a different class, but by simply fulfilling the most urgent needs of intellect and spirit.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, no one in the forties would have gone so far as to propose that ABCA was an "affectional link between the master and labouring classes", but it was clear that ABCA also tried to raise the general level of culture.<sup>36</sup> The pamphlets had even more in common with *Fors Clavigera*, Ruskin's "letters to the Workers and Labourers", giving these classless people the gifts of his own class, its appreciation of art, politics, ethics, yet treating his audience as equals-to-be. He hoped to avoid the pitfalls of pamphleteering and mass-publication by employing the erratic style of an intimate correspondent.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, all this was part of resisting the growing notion that the thoughts of ordinary people, the masses, were insignificant. The truth was the other way around: ultimately it did not matter what Milton thought but what readers thought and understood of Milton's words. He wrote:

You will begin to perceive that what you thought was a matter of no serious importance; - that your thoughts on any subject are not perhaps the clearest and wisest that could be arrived at thereupon: - in fact that unless you are a very singular person, you cannot be said to have any "thoughts" at all; that you have no materials for them, in any serious matters; - no right to "think," but only to try to learn more of the facts.<sup>38</sup>

The "many" thus required to be raised to a level of understanding from which they might distinguish between the "words" of public

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<sup>35</sup>Leon, Ruskin, 226.

<sup>36</sup>Leon, 226.

<sup>37</sup>The Works of John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, Letter Lxxxviii, (New York, John B. Alden, 1885), iii, 278. "All this effort, or play, of personal imagination is utterly distinct from the teaching of *Fors*, though I thought at the time its confession innocent..."

<sup>38</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 33.

people as mere words and the reality of these words. Their true meaning would reveal them as words from a mere man of words and letters or a man of books.<sup>39</sup>

Hoggart's interest in adult education came from the same sacred commission. He longed to free the many from gossip, opinion and prejudice, giving them the light with which to govern their future wisely.<sup>40</sup> The opinions of the many mattered. His conscience, therefore, demanded that the utopia of an open society be accompanied with the proper cultural conditions. "To live in so much more open a society requires a degree of self-awareness, of critical choice-making, greater than we have been accustomed to, and from many more people".<sup>41</sup> The challenge of the present, no less than in Ruskin's time, was to replace class-consciousness with some sort of national consciousness that was as powerfully real as the consciousness of neighbourhood, family and self. But powerful as this need was, it faced almost insurmountable difficulties. The problem was that the dominant experience destroyed such an identification with the wider, national, realm.

National education, rather than reverse this experience, enhanced it. Planned with a view to the entire nation, its offerings had to be by definition universal and classless. In Hoggart's view it was one of those "vicious" systems which encouraged, as Herbert Spencer had said, "submissive receptivity instead of independent activity."<sup>42</sup> Representing the world as limited, ordered and "centrally heated", teaching "marked and ticketed success" and so missed its basic purpose: social integration.<sup>43</sup> It doomed the scholarship boys to a cultural vacuum:

He begins to see life...as a series of hurdle-jumps, the hurdles of scholarships which are won by learning how to amass and manipulate the new currency. He tends to over-stress the importance of examinations, of the piling-up of knowledge and of received opinions...He becomes an expert imbiber and doler-out; his competence will vary, but will rarely be

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<sup>39</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 22.

<sup>40</sup>See Ch. 11.

<sup>41</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 60.

<sup>42</sup>As quoted in Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 247,

<sup>43</sup>Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 248.

accompanied by genuine enthusiasms.<sup>44</sup>

Here too, he had re-discovered a Victorian insight. He echoed Mark Pattison's unhappiness over examination-oriented Oxford,<sup>45</sup> and Ruskin's sensitivity to the latent effects of liberal education. In *The Crown of Wild Olive*, the latter had warned:

All that you can depend upon in a boy...is his will to work for the works's sake, not his desire to surpass his schoolfellows; and the aim of the teaching you give him ought to be, to prove to him and strengthen in him his own separate gift, not to puff him into swollen rivalry...still less ought you to hang favours and ribands about the neck of the creature who is the greatest, to make the rest envy him. Try to make them love him and follow him, not struggle with him.<sup>46</sup>

Of course, Ruskin defended education as a vehicle for class culture in the traditional sense, an education for one's place in society. Anything else was a "diabolic" system of provoking disintegration of the social fabric:<sup>47</sup>

In 1937 the Oxford Conference on Church Community,<sup>48</sup> produced a pamphlet entitled, "The Churches Survey Their Task", in which it was said:

Education is the process by which the community seeks to open its life to all the individuals within it and enable them to take their parts in it. It attempts to pass on to them its culture,<sup>49</sup> including the standards by which it would have them live.

Responding to this scenario for an "open" community, T.S.Eliot replied:

The purpose of education, it seems, is to transmit culture: so culture (which has not been defined) is likely to be limited to what can be transmitted by education. While 'education' is perhaps allowed to be more comprehensive than 'the educational system', we must observe that the assumption that culture can be summed up as skills and interpretations controverts the

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<sup>44</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 246.

<sup>45</sup>Ch. 3.

<sup>46</sup>In teaching at the Working Men's College, founded by F.D.Maurice in 1854, Ruskin followed no system but adapted his Methods to each student according to his capacities. (Leon, 229)

<sup>47</sup>Letter CXV of *Fors* Ruskin similarly condemns classless education as "diabolic", only able to create vast dissatisfactions. *Fors Clavigera*, The Works of John Ruskin, N.Y. John B. Alden, vol.iii, 1885.

<sup>48</sup>It met 12-26 July, 1937. Hastings, *History of English Christianity*, 303-7.

<sup>49</sup>T.S. Eliot, *Notes*, 96.

more comprehensive view of culture which I have endeavoured to take.<sup>50</sup>

Education as the source of mere skills and aptitudes, cleansed from all regional and class values, shy of introducing anything but value-free information, was class-less, or national, education. Sterilized thus, it was unable to transmit any culture, or to give the gift of "personality".

In 1937, no one worried as yet, or had hopes about the other "national educator" and culture-provider: the television set. To Hoggart it offered no improved chance of cultivating society:

So some people say that television reinforces the family. But what does this mean? The old family hearth was a gregarious and garrulous place...it was all-embracing and assumed that people hardly ever wanted to be alone or silent. You heard all night the gossip of work and neighbourhood and school...<sup>51</sup>

The dawning of the television era inspired Hoggart to a bleak prevision: he feared a future in which "millions of disparate individuals" would be umbilically linked to the one quasi-personal centre, a poor substitute for the complex network of "relationships within the locality or neighbourhood and its face-to-face relationships outside the family".

Hoggart longed to warn people of these dangers, but there appeared really no way. He could not help but realize that for someone like him "meshing" with the new classless society was difficult.

The voices from the older order - the public and 'establishment' voices, the voices of the Guardians - find it increasingly difficult to make themselves heard. The new voices of the mass persuaders are more friendly and gregarious and consumer-conscious; in many respects they are more attractive than the old, slightly hierarchical voices.<sup>52</sup>

Those new voices were also "very often, callow and cheap". Their messages, shallow and dissipated,<sup>53</sup> were the modern incarnations of Newman's "unreal words" which made the whole "structure of

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<sup>50</sup>Eliot, Notes, 96.

<sup>51</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 53.

<sup>52</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, 59.

<sup>53</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 59, 204.

society...artificial".<sup>54</sup> Yet, what could intellectuals do: the classless were willing to settled for second best, denying culture-creating function of the educated "class" at every turn. Indeed, the process of de-classing affected everyone. The neo-Victorians too were caught in the sorting process. They now had to ask about the use of their work, about the efficacy of their words. As a result they were, like their Victorian predecessors, torn between acceptance of reduced standards and the need to raise them. They had to decide between the necessity of "low brow levelling and bandwagon progressivism" or remaining true to what they knew or used to know as important,<sup>55</sup> and to insist, as Ruskin did: "If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you".<sup>56</sup> Awareness of an audience or lack thereof made sticking to one's guns not only difficult but seemingly futile. It was a no-win situation.

In the sixties, Hoggart warned about the appeal of arguments for "technological rationality", and the acceptance that it brought with it "its own life patterns values" and functional "morality", gave the appearance that technology not society was in control.<sup>57</sup> The modern world appeared to proceed almost on its own momentum, as if "technological necessity" was without human direction. No one seemed to pause and ask which end it would serve: "We welcome the erosion of old stratification so as to erect new - 'more efficient' - ones".<sup>58</sup>

Such arguments as well as their rejection had a familiar ring. A hundred years earlier Ruskin had summed up political economy's, the nineteenth-century equivalent of technological necessity, barrenness as a cultural creed:

The final object of political economy, therefore, is to get good method of consumption, and great quantity of consumption: in other words, to use everything and to use it nobly; whether it be substance, service, or service-perfecting substance.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Ker, Newman, 97-8.

<sup>55</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, i, 33, 148.

<sup>56</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 20.

<sup>57</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking To Each Other*, i, 110-1. "If it works it is, within its own field, good".

<sup>58</sup>Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, 106, 66-7.

<sup>59</sup>Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, 187.



Taking issue with Mill's assertion that a demand for commodities was not the same as a demand for labour, that it did not matter if labourers prepared a pleasure ground or manufactured velvet, since they would receive money for either activity, Ruskin vituperated:

It will, indeed, make a difference to the labourer whether we bid him swing his scythe in the spring winds, or drive the loom in pestilent air; but, so far as his pocket is concerned, it makes to him absolutely no difference whether we order him to make green velvet, with seed and a scythe, or red velvet, with silk and scissors. Neither does it anyway concern him whether, when the velvet is made, we consume it by walking on it, or wearing it, so long as our consumption of it is wholly selfish. But if our consumption is to be in anyway unselfish, not only our mode of consuming the articles we require interests him, but also the kind of article we require with a view to consumption.<sup>60</sup>

Political economy removed class and, therefore, morals from the sphere of work and consumption, and this reduction, no genuine member of the Victorian intellectual tradition, thinning as their ranks might be, could accept. A hundred years on, Hoggart could not have agreed more. Ironically, or perhaps quite appropriately, considering the title of this chapter, he perused the insights of another Victorian, William Morris, to make his point.

It is quite true, and very sad to say, that if anyone nowadays wants a piece of ordinary work done by gardener, carpenter, mason, dyer, weaver, smith, what you will, he will be a lucky rarity if he gets it well done. He will, on the contrary, meet on every side with evasion of plain duties, and disregard of other men's rights; yet I cannot see how the 'British Working Man' is to be made to bear the whole burden of this blame, or indeed the chief part of it. I doubt if it be possible for a whole mass of men to do work to which they are driven, and in which there is no hope, and no pleasure, without trying to shirk it - at any rate, shirked it has always been under such circumstances.<sup>61</sup>

As said, Hoggart was himself a Victorian.

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<sup>60</sup>Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, 187-8.

<sup>61</sup>Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 236. The excerpt came from "The Art of the People" in *Hopes and Fears for Art*. Collected Works, vol.xxii, London: Longman, Green, 1914), 44.

## Chapter 12.

"Bishop John A. T. Robinson:  
The Two Worlds of the Critic".

## I.

The Radical Bishop of Woolwich.

In 1960 the Suffragan Bishop of Woolwich, John A.T. Robinson achieved public notoriety through his role in the "Lady Chatterley Trial".<sup>1</sup> What was he doing at what Bernard Levin called "the prosecution and acquittal of Lady Chatterley"?<sup>2</sup> The trial had come about because a recent amendment to the Obscene Publications Act had given rise to hopes that D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) could be, finally, published in Britain. The Penguin Publishing House printed and distributed copies of the book and when, in Levin's phrase, "Serjeant Monahan, the literary bloodhound of the Metropolitan Police" had his inspector seize them from the bookshelves and when the Director of Public Prosecutions decided to prosecute, it was ready with a long list of expert witnesses who would testify that "the publication of the article in question is justified as being for the public good on the ground that it is in the interest of science, literature, art or learning, or of other objects of general concern".<sup>3</sup>

It turned out to be one of the most titillating trials in Britain's history. The press followed the testimonies with great eagerness. There was Dame Rebecca West, who admitted to enjoying Lawrence in spite of his depraved language; Raymond Williams who felt that most people had a too specialized view of sex; and Richard Hoggart who insisted, over and over, prodded on

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<sup>1</sup>C.H. Rolph Ed. *The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v. Penguin Books Limited* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961), 72-3.

<sup>2</sup>Levin insightfully notices in *The Pendulum Years: Britain in the Sixties* that the trial seemed as if "the people in the book had real existence outside its pages". In his view, the trial cut the hedge for a "healthy freedom of expression", but also for the sale of four million copies of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. (287, 293-5) (London: Cape, 1970)

<sup>3</sup>Eric James, *A Life of Bishop Robinson*, (Collins, 1987)

by the prosecution who could not believe his ears, that D.H. Lawrence was puritanical.<sup>4</sup> When the Bishop's turn came to testify, he went so far as to say that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was a book which Christians ought to read.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, he felt he had to agree with D.H. Lawrence's portrayal of sex as a sacred act; even an "act of holy communion".<sup>6</sup>

A great furore ensued. He later claimed that he had added "with a small c".<sup>7</sup> But no one appeared to have heard. It seemed that when secular figures like Rebecca West and Richard Hoggart gave their expert opinions, no one was unduly alarmed. People were curious but not outraged. People expected intellectuals to think differently from the majority. As intellectuals they were, as Hobsbawm has put it in *Primitive Rebels*, "declared out of bounds"; it seemed right that they "stood for values, ideas and activities that transcend and interfere with the collective weight imposed by Nation State and Culture".<sup>8</sup>

But when a Bishop stepped into the witness box all this was reversed. He spoke as a Bishop, and as a religious man. The principle of "toleration" which so far guided the public attitudes to the intellectual order, could not be extended to him. Whenever he opened his mouth he spoke for the entire community of Christians, for the Diocese, for the Bishopric, for the Anglican Church. When he did not do so, he was big news. This showed that even the religion-less majority of the sixties had opinions about the Church. In popular conception, obviously, the Church belonged to another order of social reality, with its own laws and codes of behaviour. Someone comporting himself in the manner of Robinson could not, logically, belong to this order. The Bishop was thus highly suspect.

The "common sense" of the public sprung from an

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<sup>4</sup>See Ch. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Rolph, 72-3.

<sup>6</sup>Rolph, 71. Lord Hailsham (Quintin Hogg) was never able to forgive him for that statement. (Levin, 104, 294).

<sup>7</sup>Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, (SCM, 1980) 47.

<sup>8</sup>As quoted in Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, 14.

instinctive recognition of an actual situation, one which was, however, hidden from the Bishop: Robinson really did belong to another realm. Indeed, that realm revealed itself each time he dared step outside its circle. The Archbishop of Canterbury (Geoffrey Fisher, an ex-public school headmaster) issued these words on rights and wrongs for Bishops from Lambeth Palace:

You said that some other distinguished ecclesiastics had been willing to join with you in the witness box. I hope that you might add, in order to get a right balance, that it is known certainly to me, and probably to you, that some other distinguished ecclesiastics...had declined an invitation to give evidence. It is this pastoral question that is important; indeed, I think somewhere in your opening paragraphs you said that under the conditions of the witness box you were unable to say all that you wanted to say. No doubt it was partly consideration of<sup>9</sup> that fact which deterred some others from giving evidence.

He spoke with all the gravity of his position. Had he been consulted, he could have warned the "green young" Bishop that the world outside obeyed different laws.<sup>10</sup> Explaining the Robinson matter at the Diocesan Conference, the Archbishop spoke as if of another era:

Anyone must know that in this sexually self-conscious and chaotic age, to speak of pastoral wisdom on particular questions is extremely dangerous. The Bishop exposes himself to this danger.<sup>11</sup>

Such words depicted a patristic, platonic, society where some saints sat close to the truth and its fire and who guarded - through the proper myths - what was in the best interest of the ordinary mortals under their care. A very different society indeed. Common sense was right in its judgment of this order.<sup>12</sup> Instead of returning penitently to the fold, however, Robinson added insult to injury by publishing in 1962 the most controversial theological works since *Essays and Reviews*. With Robinson already a household name, *Honest to God* immediately became a best-seller. Soon a situation developed which shared

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<sup>9</sup>James, 99-100

<sup>10</sup>Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, 47. Robinson refers to himself as a "green young Bishop". He was also known as "unreliable Robinson".

<sup>11</sup>James, 99-100.

<sup>12</sup>For a full discussion of the controversy see Eric James biography of Bishop Robinson, 85-108. His exact testimony is reproduced in the Penguin special. C.H.Rolph, 72-3.

many parallels with that of the appearance of *Essays and Reviews*. Robinson's audacity drew further chastisement from the Archbishop. The Primate did not object to what Robinson said, after all, it had all been said before,<sup>13</sup> but how he said it:

I was specially grieved at the method chosen by the Bishop for presenting his ideas to the public. We are asked to think that the enterprise was a matter of being 'tentative', 'thinking aloud', 'raising questions' and the like. But the initial method chosen was a newspaper article, crystal clear in its argument, and provocative in its shape and statement, to tell the public that the concept of a personal God as held in popular Christianity and in orthodox doctrine is outmoded, and that atheists and agnostics are right to reject it. Of course the association of this thesis with a Bishop of the Church caused public sensation and much damage.<sup>14</sup>

Robinson's sin was that he had succumbed to the chimera of publicity. Again, the Archbishop alluded to another age.

As to the book, I repeat that the questions discussed in it are real questions and the effort to open up new modes of contact between our faith and a secular age is one with which I feel much sympathy. [*Italics Mine*]<sup>15</sup>

But other-worldliness was not confined to conservative quarters. References to another world and another age had a way of slipping into almost any attempt by Church people of articulating the Church's nature. Robinson was especially prone to use it. When he confessed having "difficulty getting through" to an undergraduate considering confirmation at Trinity College, the other world was there by inference. It was there when he proposed that involvement rather than withdrawal led to the Holy; or, in his life-long obsession with the "thrust of the sacred into the secular", and with "the divine imperative to pass on the Truth which he had made his own".<sup>16</sup> In fact, the existence of his own world, its shape and experience could be only deduced from his negative references to the secular world, a place where opposite realities reigned. In fact, his own world exposed itself especially in those moments when he vigorously denied its separate existence. Eric James thus wrote of Robinson:

John, although recognizing the need for... 'periods of transfiguration', of 'withdrawal with intent to return', and

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<sup>13</sup> There was, for example, Teilhard De Chardin's work, *The Phenomenon of Man* (1958). Hastings, 521.

<sup>14</sup> James, 121.

<sup>15</sup> James, 121.

<sup>16</sup> James, 46, 59.

valuing times of 'retreat', was always quick to condemn the too easy identification of the place and time of withdrawal with 'the Holy' - not least because for him temperamentally the characteristic way to 'the Holy'<sup>17</sup> was not through withdrawal but through involvement.

Clearly, the exhortation to involvement could not come from someone already inside the situation. Involvement, "thrusting into", "getting through" suggested not one but two worlds. Indeed, the gap seemed so wide that it prompted him to desperate measures. He felt he had to break "through the crust of clericalism", unable to stand "the Church's standing in society - or lack of it".<sup>18</sup> Of course, Robinson was a complex theological thinker. This enquiry permits only a brief look at the radical arguments he developed in order to bridge the gap between the sacred and the secular. At the heart of my agenda is, however, the priority of showing that Robinson's radicalism, just like that of his Victorian forebears, was enabled by a natural orthodoxy containing many unquestioned, even invisible, inheritances from the past. The strength of this orthodoxy completely protected him from perceiving where his radicalism might lead to.

Looking out at the sixties, it was very difficult not to wish for radical change. Not only Robinson, but a group of "critical" minds in the Church, this time mostly at Cambridge, suffered from an inescapable sense of losing touch with the "real" world, and prepared themselves to face "real" questions. Before long, looking at works like *Honest to God*, *Soundings* (1963), and *Objections to Christian Belief* (1963), and to the recently consecrated new Cathedral of Coventry, David Edwards, coined the label, "Christian Radicalism".<sup>19</sup> The first part of this chapter will show that there were striking parallels between this radical movement of the sixties and *Essays and Reviews*: parallels found in the implicit references to two worlds and in the dual citizenship of the critic, orthodox yet endeavouring to unite conflicting experiences. A sense of *déjà vu* is irresistible. It

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<sup>17</sup>James, 39.

<sup>18</sup>James, 86, 90.

<sup>19</sup>David L. Edwards and John A.T. Robinson "A New Story in English Christianity" in *The Honest To God Debate* (London: SCM Press, 1963) 20-1.

will be seen that like the essayists in *Essays and Reviews*, the writers of *Soundings* and Bishop Robinson were "interpreters" who carried on their arguments on two fronts: arguing positively for access to the "secular" world, negatively for reform of the world which held them back from re-unification. The latter world, their own, they found, had still not grasped what it was all about. It had never exited from the narrow bubble of natural theology. It was as if a hundred years had passed and nothing had changed. And, indeed, looking at Robinson's actual life, the second half of this chapter confirms that there was much that was the same.

## II.

### The Explorers from another World.

The small group of eminent scholars, who made up Christian Radicalism, mostly from Cambridge, were the Church's intellectual elite. They personified Said's definition of the modern critic: they were not only "critics" in the sense that they practised "criticism" of their own orthodoxy, but had arrived at their critical position because they were orthodox.<sup>20</sup> It was their inside-position which drove them to "a nodal point of sensitivity".<sup>21</sup> Men like Alec Vidler, John S. Habgood (now the Archbishop of York), Harry Abbott Williams, David L. Edwards, H.E. Root, Ninian Smart, and many others dared to disturb their own world with radical new ideas, new questions, new priorities for the Church. The language and tone of their contributions to *Soundings* and to *Objections to Christian Belief* was unmistakably theological. That they were called radical was indicative of the intrinsic conservatism of their order.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, from the inside *Soundings* seemed a high-risk venture, persuading its editor, Alec Vidler, to write:

Metaphors can be treacherous if they are pressed too hard, but we can say in terms of our title that we are thankful all to be in the same ship; whatever we do not know, we know that the ship is afloat; and the fact that we make these soundings is evidence of our conviction that there is a bottom to the sea.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>See Introduction.

<sup>21</sup>Said, 15.

<sup>22</sup>Edwards, 22.

Being on the open ocean was a fine analogy for the critic's situation. It was also a familiar one. The idea of taking soundings was implied by Strachey.<sup>24</sup> But the ocean-going metaphor had even older ancestors. Newman felt about his Radicalism that he had nothing but the stars to steer by, a feeling confirmed by Jowett who looked back to Newmanism as a revolt which cut the mind "from its traditional moorings" and "launched them in a sea of speculations".<sup>25</sup> As for himself and his friends, Jowett could say: "We must act boldly and feel the world around us as a swimmer feels the resisting stream".<sup>26</sup> Here now was another ship filled with Radical Theologians ready to make a journey to another world and to see where it would take them.

This journey was not part of the general euphoria nowadays ascribed to the sixties. Plans had sprung from a two-fold despair: despair at the growing narcissism and materialism of modern culture and despair at the Church's growing irrelevance to this self-centred world. The time had come for the Church, for theology, to take soundings in the world which it had failed to face. Nor was it the first journey abroad. Vidler's introduction to *Soundings* listed the volume's predecessors: *Essays and Reviews* (1860), *Lux Mundi* (1889), *Foundations* (1912), *Essays Catholic and Critical* (1926). But he said the group of contributors felt especially close to the writers of *Essays and Reviews*. Then too the situation was so desperate the theologians could not wait until such a time that a consistent theology had coagulated.<sup>27</sup> Then too, the essayists belonged, it has been seen, to the intellectual *crème de la crème* of the Established Church: they were its earliest critics. The trouble was, as Jowett observed in his essay in 1860, that their order had no precedent for criticism:

Other walks of literature have peace and pleasure and profit;

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<sup>23</sup>Alec Vidler, Ed. *Introd. Soundings* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963), xii.

<sup>24</sup>See Ch. 7.

<sup>25</sup>Abbott, 177. According to Abbott, Jowett's retrospective on "Newmanism" was written 1894.

<sup>26</sup>Abbott, 167, from Jowett's letter to A.P. Stanley, 23 Oct., 1949

<sup>27</sup>*Soundings*, xi. This was a fine insight. The rash nature of *Essays and Reviews* earned it the wrath of Altholz and other specialists who have condemned its deficiencies.



the path of the critical Interpreter of Scripture is almost always a thorny one in England. It is not worth while for any one to enter upon it who is not supported by a sense that he has a Christian or moral object. (E&R 376)

The radicals of the 1960s, especially Bishop Robinson, would have readily agreed on both points. The strength of their faith made them overlook the fact that their order still had not and never could have a precedent for criticism.

Jowett was driven by a "desire for the moral improvement" of contemporary society, ready to put forward truths in such a way "as to find a way to the hearts of men", even if "it may put us at variance with a party or section of Christians in our own neighbourhood" (E&R 431). Given the novelty of criticism in 1860, its introduction into the old order seemed dizzying:

If any one who is about to become a clergyman feels or thinks that he feels that some of the preceding statements cast a shade of trouble or suspicion on his future walk of life, who either from the influence of a stronger mind than his own, or from some natural tendency in himself, has been led to examine those great questions which lie on the threshold of the higher study of theology, and experiences a sort of shrinking or dizziness at the prospect which is opening upon him; let him lay to heart the following considerations: - First, that he may not possibly be the person who is called upon to pursue such inquiries. No man should busy himself with them who has not clearness of mind enough to see things as they are, and a faith strong enough to rest in that degree of knowledge which God has really given; or who is unable to separate the truth from his own religious wants and experiences. (E&R 432)

In short, the critical mind demanded a cognitive awareness of both worlds. The inborn "degree of knowledge which God has really given" was to be troubled by an awareness to outside developments, that "the times are changing, and we are changing too". Criticism, he realized, sprung from contradictions between received truths and newer experiences.

Without criticism it would be impossible to reconcile History and Science with Revealed Religion, they must remain forever in a hostile and defiant attitude...Scripture would be regarded on the one side as the work of organic Inspiration, and as a lying imposition on another. (E&R 411)

Such awareness troubled only a minority and "criticism [was] not for the multitude".

Edward Said articulates similar "causes" behind the critical impulse:

A knowledge of history, a recognition of the importance of social circumstance, an analytical capacity for making distinctions: these trouble the quasi-religious authority of being comfortably at home among one's people, supported by known powers and acceptable values, protected against the outside world.<sup>28</sup>

Jowett, however, also understood the critic's dilemma. The mythic force of the moral values which the critic wished to interpret were indifferent to interpretation. In other words, "to analyse the trichotomy of St. Paul...has nothing to do with the religion of Christ". Still, analysis was an activity he urged, with utmost caution and tact, to the critic who was burned by moral desire to reach the hearts of "men". But, ultimately it did not matter:

How is religion possible when modes of thinking are shifting? The answer seems to be that the Christian faith is not dependent on the fixedness of modes of thought...Morality and social life still go on, as in the body digestion is uninterrupted. That is not an illustration only; it is a fact. Though we had no words for mind, matter, soul, body, and the like, Christianity would remain the same. (E&R 402-3)

A hundred years on, "criticism" faced identical problems. Troubled by the condition of the world "outside" the theologians felt compelled to bring the emergency to the attention of minds inside the Church. This meant, however that, as was true of Jowett and the essayists, they had to acknowledge an uncritical mind inside the family, steeped in the common moral sense which was the underpinning of traditional Christianity. Indeed, *Soundings*, came into being when Howard Root, then Fellow and Dean of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, felt the atmosphere of biblical theology at Cambridge (a theology still heavily indebted to natural theology) too stifling to put up with much longer.<sup>29</sup> Not inappropriately then, Root's essay was entitled "Beginning All Over Again" and drew attention to the present situation of natural theology. Still, in the light of a hundred-year old history of advocacy of criticism this was a strange article to begin with, indeed. Moreover, the article was not even a

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<sup>28</sup>Said, 15-6.

<sup>29</sup>Hugh W. Montefiore, Personal Letter, 11 March 1987. Montefiore was also a contributor to *Soundings*. Root is now with the Anglican Centre in Rome.

dismissal of natural theology but only an attempt to adapt and reform it: to update it from being only "a series of exercises in causal argument", divorced from the modern imagination.

Root wished natural theology, and the metaphysics on which it rested, to become a completely inclusive explanation. The "Christian faith has been an ark of retreat", Root argue, using the proverbial ocean-going metaphor once more.<sup>30</sup> It knew nothing of the "natural world"; theologians wrote "love poems without having been "in love". He almost rejoiced over the fact that the old metaphysic's "arguments have fallen to pieces" but did not wish the same fate on metaphysic itself. Christianity without metaphysics was an illusion, without philosophy it would be reduced to the "most illiterate variety of fundamentalism".<sup>31</sup> In other words, Root, while attacking the limitations of natural theology, carried forward the broad philosophical tradition as defended by Jowett and Pattison.<sup>32</sup> He desired philosophy to be at the service of society as a whole. It was for this reason that he invited fellow philosophers "to contemplate and absorb the disturbing visions of human nature which find expression in serious modern literature".<sup>33</sup>

The essay contributed by Harry Abbott Williams, then Fellow and Dean of Trinity College, Cambridge, was in a very similar vein. Writing about "Theology and Self-Awareness", Williams felt it was high time for his order to reckon with a world which, many decades since, organized its knowledge and perceptions of reality in scientific and individualistic rather than religio-cultural concepts. This world preferred to look to explanations of reality without recourse to the God hypothesis. The credit for this change, Williams felt, had to go to Freud who had substituted the "unknown self" for God and "analysis" for prayer.<sup>34</sup> From the birds-eye-view of the eternal, Freud offered an explanation so partial and reduced that it could not be the

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<sup>30</sup> H.E. Root, "Beginning All Over Again", *Soundings*, Ed. Alec Vidler (1963)

<sup>31</sup> Root, 13-9.

<sup>32</sup> Chapter 4.

<sup>33</sup> Root, 19.

<sup>34</sup> Harry Abbott Williams, "Theology and Self-Awareness", *Soundings*, Ed. Alec Vidler (1963) 71.

"material of theology". Yet, if theology embraced modern society, there was no choice: Freud's conclusions had to become the material of theology. Theology could not dwell in a world of different truths which took no account of modern insights. It had to accept the "psychological identification [of the mind] with the neurotic and psychotic", even if it was "an identification based on an actual psychological equation between ourselves and the mentally ill". That old noble and ordering faculty which was the seat of the pure reason and moral inspiration, had to make room for a physiologically determined organism, analogous to an irrational and compulsive child: "It is painfully terrifying to acknowledge this child and to receive him into awareness, for it looks as though, once acknowledged thus, he will make havoc of me altogether".<sup>35</sup>

What was peculiar about these arguments was their necessity: more than a hundred years after *Essays and Reviews'* attack on the insufficient power of common sense arguments, Root and Williams still had to plead against the limitations of natural theology. Nor had *Essays and Reviews* been the only attempt. There was, for example, *Lux Mundi* (1889), generally conceded as the official acceptance of modern individualistic and gradualistic (critical) thinking by the Church. But in 1963, the attempt to dislocate natural theology seemed a daring venture. So strange was the world to which Williams beckoned that it invited travel metaphors:

It is only by actually making the journey that we can perceive the nature of the country. There is a type of thinking which remains safely at home, merely receiving reports, maps, and photographs of what lies beyond the garden wall, and speculates, often with great cleverness, on the basis of such dispatches received.<sup>36</sup>

The real problem was that Freud's ideas as a whole also rested on a philosophical framework, one which was, however, inimical to the foundations of theology.<sup>37</sup> Placing God in the blanks of the Freudian hypothesis did not really affect either territory. The

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<sup>35</sup>Williams, 73-4.

<sup>36</sup>Williams, 73.

<sup>37</sup>John S. Habgood spelled out this uncompromising difference in his contribution to *Soundings*: "The Uneasy Truce Between Religion and Science", 23-42.

point, however, is, that Williams had tried to unify two separate worlds. Among radical theologians, such attempts at unifying were typical.

Unifying produced great intellectual variety. With a little help from German theologians like Tillich and Bonhoeffer,<sup>38</sup> many claimed to find the holy in the slime of life and death, in the chaos of time and history, in short, in what Tillich called the "situation", the situation not as it ideally should be but as it was in this year of our Lord of 1963. As a result, they twinned their theology with adjectives that served to unify opposites: "contextual" theology, "existential" theology, "secular" theology, "liberal" theology. A chapter in *Honest To God* was entitled "Worldly Holiness" and matched concepts which more conservative Christians and the common sense of the population at large kept apart. It said, for example:

The Holy is the 'depth' of the common, just as the 'secular' is not a (godless) section of life but the world (God's world, for which Christ died) cut off and alienated from its true depth. The purpose of worship is not to retire from the secular into the department of the religious, let alone to escape from 'this world' into 'the other world', but<sup>39</sup> to open oneself to the meeting of the Christ in the common.

This careful balancing of two languages revealed Robinson as a bilingual insider of two worlds. Like his Victorian predecessors, Robinson was a "critical" synthesizer, self-consciously aware that others felt differently, yet confident that his world could be interpreted without ever once considering how he had been blessed with religious certainties that were inaccessible to the post-religious majority. The truth was that deep down Robinson was as orthodox as they come. And this, a closer look at his life will reveal, was more than an act of grace.

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<sup>38</sup>See Ch. 13.

<sup>39</sup>Robinson, *Honest to God*, 87.

## III.

Life of a First-Born Churchman.

Robinson was literally born into the "heart of the ecclesiastical 'establishment' - the Precincts of Canterbury".<sup>40</sup> His maternal grandfather had been Dean of Canterbury. Robinson's mother, Mary Beatrice Moore had run her father's household "with a retinue of half a dozen servants" until his death.<sup>41</sup> Robinson's father, Arthur Robinson, contrary to Victorian society's discovery of sentimental marriage and cosy family, seemed to have eschewed family life for as long as possible, remaining celibate until his sixty-second year. Evidently young John's family was not one which celebrated childhood or nurtured it in the typical Victorian or modern fashion. When his father died (2 Dec. 1928), John was at preparatory school. On that occasion he was recorded to have said: "We don't have to be quiet any more". This family was obviously not a place where Robinson might have discovered subjective emotions. Asked by his son "What do you do with feelings you don't know what to do with?" Robinson was said to have responded, "I don't have them". Without the slightest self-consciousness he replied to his daughter's anxieties about growing up: "I have always thought of childhood as a necessary evil one has to go through before one really starts living".<sup>42</sup>

Robinson instinctively knew about the circumstantial nature of his identity, quoting the psalmist who said "Thou hast set my feet in a large room".<sup>43</sup> He was baptized in the presence of a large crowd "including 2 Bishops 1 Dean 2 Archdeacons and 2 other Canons". The family ethos, Robinson claimed, came from the family motto (of earlier origin): "Non nobis solum, sed toti mundo nati: Not for ourselves alone but for the whole world are we born".<sup>44</sup> His life was destined to be lived in full view of others, in dormitories, on playing fields, in rooms and dining halls of a series of residential schools and colleges.

Robinson went to Marlborough, then to Jesus College in

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<sup>40</sup> Robinson, *Honest to God*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> James, 5, 9.

<sup>42</sup> James, 169-70

<sup>43</sup> James, 5. It was also his father's favourite saying.

<sup>44</sup> James, 3, 8.

Cambridge, followed by the three-year residency course for future clergy at Westcott House in Cambridge. The "residency" requirement was insisted on by the theological order as one of the most important elements in the clergy's formation. For the average person, this residential requirement demanded more than just a personal sacrifice of individual freedom. It meant a foregoing of the family-centred and job-centred world of modern life and suspension of its economic pressures in favour of a life flavoured with medieval monasticism. Bishop Robinson recognized its incompatibility with modern life:

Men in established jobs who wished to become ordained to a full-time ministry, but who for family or financial reasons found it impossible or impracticable to go away for a full residential<sup>45</sup> course at a theological college [would be deterred].

He himself, however, had no trouble with the requirement: there was no family bliss to remember or to forego.

The "large room" in which he moved about, graced his life in subtle ways, as for example through the titles and rooms bestowed on him at Trinity in Cambridge, or through his appointment to a holy office dating back to Henry VIII, which made Robinson one of the Six Preachers at Canterbury. It was said of him that he served Clare College "pastorally well", his superiors assessing his work along pre-capitalist and moral associations. James records: "there is no doubt that in his eight years as Dean of Clare John was 'found faithful'". When there was hope for a Bishopric, the appointment went through the custom of patronage, the old regime's ways of governing. He owed his instalment to the personal intercession of his close friend and former Vicar and Bishop-to-be, Mervyn Stockwood. Before the appointment became a reality, there was much enquiry if Robinson possessed enough "personal gravitas" for the dignity of this high office.<sup>46</sup>

The bombshell of *Honest To God* catapulted Robinson's life into the focus of the "world". But Eric James, his biographer, hastened to show that Robinson remained tuned to the

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<sup>45</sup>James, 77.

<sup>46</sup>James, 55, 57, 61.

"normal" rhythm of the ecclesiastical life.

Everything in John's life did not suddenly stop for *Honest To God*...The next day he gave his weekly lecture to the Southward Ordination Course. The following day he conducted a confirmation at Felbridge, and on the Sunday he baptized, confirmed and celebrated the Holy Communion at St. George's, Camberwell. Maunday Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easterday -- in the third week after *Honest To God* was published -- John spent at Roehampton, a vast parish containing the largest post-war housing estates to be built by the London County Council. John preached there...

Indeed, after *Honest To God*, his life bore more and more parallels with Thomas Mann's *Königliche Hoheit*,<sup>48</sup> Mann's Royal Highness, who experiences daily those things which happen to others but once a year, or once in a life-time. Everybody is always in Sunday best. He is constantly introduced to people, yet everyone knows who he is. In his world walks are flowerstrewn, banners wave, candles are lit, uniforms polished, people are devout, devoted, pious and kind, smiling, streaming, expectant.<sup>49</sup>

This celebratory and ceremonial world was particularly visible when Robinson went on "in journeying", often to distant places. Ruth, his wife, wrote in her diary:

Oct. 2nd Sunday Johannes Rakale, the parish priest, came to fetch us for the service in Soweto at 10 a.m... We had a tremendous welcome -- warm hand-shakes and wide smiles from everyone. It was a large church and there were about 600 in the congregation, including lots of children who came up to be blessed by John after the service in what seemed an unending stream. The service, including baptisms, took two hours. Hymns and service were sung in several languages simultaneously and the sermon was translated into two African languages. During the 'Peace', when everyone moved around shaking hands, people were pushing towards me from all directions to reach my hand. It was wonderful to be one white person in such a crowd and welcomed with such delight.<sup>50</sup>

Like in the medieval past, Robinson could find the international community of the ordained and their supporters almost all over the world, obeying familiar customs and traditions. This order had even its own ancient economy: Robinson's wellbeing was often looked after through the channels of unpaid services, his

<sup>47</sup>James, 129.

<sup>48</sup>Thomas Mann, *Königliche Hoheit*, (1952, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Bücherei, 1954)

<sup>49</sup>Mann, 33-77.

<sup>50</sup>James, 195, 245.



physical comforts were provided for through acts of kindness by the congregations and clergy everywhere.

For Robinson there was no special space and time called home and work. As Eric James said:

John was often to refer to "the base at Cambridge" and to the "base at Reigate", but in reality he had two bases at Cambridge. In addition to Marlborough Court, he had the Dean of Chapel's rooms in Great Court, Trinity, - with the possibility and often the obligation, of lunching and of dining in Hall. For him there was again, as there had been at Clare, virtually a second 'domestic' Cambridge set--up.<sup>51</sup>

The pre-industrial nature of his vocation was also manifest in having to learn his "craft" as a priest. The variety of situations and diversity of relationships and communication this implied can be seen from his diary, covering a normal week at St. Matthew, Moorfields (Bristol):

Rover Scouts, teaching, whist drive, beetle drive, catechism party, old people's party, neighbourhood brains trust, scouts' dance, cider supper, Blundell's School... The pages of the diary are, of course, mostly full of visits to individual parishioners.<sup>52</sup>

Before long Robinson also joined the Redfield United Front - an ecumenical team serving the city. The "Front" certainly seemed to be coined with an unadmitted recognition as to which side of the world Robinson really lived on. Life lived with such flexibility and need to give one's services led to a sermon entitled "The Master of Time", one not likely to be preached by someone whose time is controlled by someone or something else.<sup>53</sup> It showed that Robinson and not some other master was managing the decisions of what was to be done and when and where, even if it was a "punishing time table".. Most importantly, the sermon did not recognize "time off":

A car should always be charging its battery as it runs. If it simply uses up without putting back, it has to go into dock to be re-charged. It is not a sign that we are running particularly well if we are constantly needing to go into dock. Jesus is never recorded as taking a holiday. He retired for the purposes of his mission, not from it...He was busier than anyone, the multitudes were always at him - yet he had time for everything and everyone.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>James, 193.  
<sup>52</sup>James, 33.  
<sup>53</sup>James, 109.

I wonder how a group of business men might feel about such platitudes, or other people of the work force for whom the weekend is a time to recuperate from the week spent on the job, catching up on sleep and family needs.

Robinson seemed oblivious of the possibility that his own experience of life differed fundamentally from the people he wished to embrace, love, help, and convert to his way of seeing. Of course, he did contemplate his "roots", slightly self-conscious of his Anglican difference from other denominations, however, without making the connection that the majority did not share these experiences. He never doubted that he lived inside the modern world. This was, it has been seen, not true. He belonged to another order, not just a mental counterworld but a real one, with its own sacri-political and religio-social rationale and organisation, based on a conception of society and corresponding laws and conditions of cohesion which were moral rather than legal and structural, sacred rather than expedient, interested rather than scientific or disinterested, personal rather than impersonal. His order was based on harmony rather than competition, responsibility and vertical interestedness rather than antagonism, made for endurance, its commitments long-term even eternal rather than temporary or instrumental, on and off. To Robinson, this order was a natural habitat, albeit so colourless that it did not fall under his surveillance.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>James, 110.

<sup>55</sup>Newman called natural faith "colourless". (Ker, Newman, 156)

## Chapter 13.

## "John A.T. Robinson as neo-Victorian".

## I.

The Orthodox Bishop of Woolwich.

In the sixties, it has been seen, the Bishop of Woolwich made a name for himself for his unorthodox views. But how unorthodox was Robinson really? Arnold T. Ehrhardt, a retired Professor of Church History felt that he had heard all the arguments which Robinson used in *Honest To God* before.<sup>1</sup> It was the title, however, which bothered him.<sup>2</sup> What did the Bishop mean by "Honest?" Did Robinson suggest that those who did not follow his example with a mass-produced version of their views were dishonest?<sup>3</sup> For the second time since the Lady Chatterley Trial, Robinson had betrayed his collective order, confessing that he, like most people living in the aftermath of quantum theory and Einstein, had trouble accepting a faith based on a triple-decker universe with God, the Father, somewhere "up" there. Writing in the first person singular, he claimed to grope for a new image of God. This claim to individualism was not to be taken too seriously. Robinson's "I", it will be seen, was not an "I" in the ordinary sense. Robinson's entire life was devoted to erasing the distinction between the "I" and the "We". He, and a number of equally radical theologians saw this as a matter of authenticating and re-authorizing the "We" inside the "I".<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Robinson was more than sensitive to the norms and

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson himself did not claim originality. He merely brought together Tillich, Bonhoeffer, C.S. Lewis, Bultmann, Temple and put them before the laity.

<sup>2</sup>It angered him to such an extent that he wrote an article for the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 17, 1964 (431-448), entitled "In Common Honesty (Polemics Mainly about a Title)". Ehrhardt, as Church historian, located arguments similar to those of Robinson deep in the Renaissance and even pre-Renaissance past rather than in contemporary German theology.

<sup>3</sup>Ehrhardt, 432.

<sup>4</sup>This was particularly true of existential theologian's, for example Bultmann, who spoke about self-understanding, as something which included wider dimensions. John Macquarrie sees this matter differently. *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1966) 121-2.

values of "modern" society. He knew that to modern ears the voice of the "we" had the ring of hypocrisy. Like Hoggart he had found out that the modern world suspected "collective" words: class, culture, ideals, morals, religion.<sup>5</sup>

The controversy created by *Honest to God* bore striking parallels with the popular reaction to *Essays and Reviews*.<sup>6</sup> Most people believed that the Bishop was really an atheist in disguise, that he could not honestly believe the things he did and be a Bishop.<sup>7</sup> It seemed contradictory that the Bishop with these outrageous concepts about God, and by implication, humanity, was also a Bishop who had accepted the system of patronage which led to his appointment, and who accepted the authority of ecclesiastical hierarchy and its structure and position in society. The Bishop who found God in darkness and suffering and in the world's very godlessness was also the Bishop at home in the world of vestments, offices, orders, honours, liturgies and pastoral duties.<sup>8</sup> He even said, once the controversy had passed: "the Episcopacy belongs to the fullness of the Church".<sup>9</sup>

Robinson, however, appeared completely oblivious to these contradictions, a fact which prompted Bernard Levin to call him "naive".<sup>10</sup> James challenged any suspicions surrounding the Bishop's honesty: "There was an extraordinary innocence" about him.<sup>11</sup> Strachey had once defended Newman's honesty on similar grounds, declaring his confidence in his perfect sincerity.<sup>12</sup> It is true that in their response to modernisation Newman and Robinson were far apart. Newman's principle of "economy" was basically hostile to de-mythologizing: a dissection for analysis

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<sup>5</sup>Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 233.

<sup>6</sup>Indeed, a letter to the Archbishop expressed fears that it might become a similar tempest. (James, 120)

<sup>7</sup>For a complete reconstruction of the debate see John A.T. Robinson and David L. Edwards, *The Honest to God Debate* (London: SCM, 1963, 45-81).

<sup>8</sup>Owen Chadwick writes thus about *Essays and Reviews*: "they could not understand...how clergymen could consistently hold such opinions and honestly subscribe the articles of the Church of England". (i, 79)

<sup>9</sup>James, 109.

<sup>10</sup>Levin, 126.

<sup>11</sup>James, 90.

<sup>12</sup>Strachey, 37.

and self-conscious contemplation could only sterilize the text's potential for broader meaning. Although he eventually accepted biblical criticism, it could only be practised for and by the clerical circle, "not in front of the children".<sup>13</sup> Robinson's decision to go public, in 300,000 copies broadcasting the select fruits of theological speculation, could only mean inflation and so devaluation. But Newman's protectiveness also revealed that he was far more self-conscious of his orthodoxy than Robinson.<sup>14</sup> The latter was totally unworried about the dangers of de-mythologization. Echoing Frederick Temple's contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, he wrote about biblical language:

Taste in these matters appears very arbitrary and it takes time for someone brought up on the rhythms and periods of the old to appreciate the equally valid rhythms of the new, which are more like those of poetry.<sup>15</sup>

He wished his knowledge of eternal things to be "in the language of the majority".<sup>16</sup> One of his former students, Sarah Coakley, remembered his contextual-historical approach to the Acts account of the Ascension as so secular that it left her "both excited and shocked". But she also recognized Robinson was protected from drawing atheistical conclusions.

He was not wholly hide-bound by the historical Jesus. None the less this was his basic starting point where christology was concerned, and I don't think he really ever understood the objections to it.<sup>17</sup>

A hundred years after *Essays and Reviews* thus, one meets again that strange capsule of a mind, invulnerable to contradictions from outside. My hypothesis is that below all the radicalism, and perhaps even necessary to Robinson's radicalism, Robinson was "naturally" orthodox, an identity he fully recognized when he said that he considered himself "once-born" rather than a "twice-born" Christian, and that he never really doubted.<sup>18</sup> I wish to show in this chapter that although he, like in his radical Victorian predecessors, attacked the arguments of

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<sup>13</sup>Pattison, *Memoir*, 316. "[Newman] had no word of censure for the latitude of theological speculation assumed by [my] essay, provided it had been addressed ad clerum.

<sup>14</sup>For the ancient meaning of economy see Ch. 3.

<sup>15</sup>James, 207.

<sup>16</sup>James, 207.

<sup>17</sup>James, 217-9.

<sup>18</sup>Robinson, *Honest to God*, 27.

natural theology, he never bent his gaze from the ends which these arguments served. When Robinson described himself radical, he implied a deep rootedness in the centre of his tradition:

A radical has to be a person of roots and deep roots, with the freedom and courage, as Jesus did, to go to source and speak from the centre... I believe in the centre, both biblically and doctrinally because I am convinced there is every reason to do so on critical and historical grounds. [*Italics Mine*]<sup>19</sup>

Most importantly, he believed that his ideas rested on objective grounds, convinced of the common rationality of his position as William Temple, John Baillie, Frederick Temple, Benjamin Jowett and Mark Pattison had been before him.<sup>20</sup> True, he wrote these lines in his maturer years, however, even in 1962, he found it impossible to be anything but orthodox.<sup>21</sup> Heresy, he would have agreed with Newman, could only be a diminution of the total body of belief.<sup>22</sup> Robinson's orthodoxy clearly should not be mistaken for simplicity and literalness. The orthodox mind is a phenomenon from world governed according to rules peculiar to itself and its expressions are as infinite and varied as the possibility of individual examples. Indeed, this portrait of Robinson's orthodoxy can only reproduce a fraction of the orthodox mind's complexity.

Speaking as a Christian meant to Robinson, speaking from the centre of Christian beliefs. He was an "insider", and wanted this to be known.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, he was so "naturally" at home, he did not have to insist on literal beliefs or protect the mystery of faith. His roots were Anglican, and the Anglican church, he said, was never good at being a sect.<sup>24</sup>

His orthodoxy was most powerful in his tenacious insistence on the God-hypothesis. Dr. Robert Towler, who studied the replies to *Honest To God*, noticed that Robinson had accepted the God premise as an *a priori* truth, so axiomatic that in the

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<sup>19</sup> Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapters 5 and 7.

<sup>21</sup> Robinson's introduction to *Honest To God* fought the equation of "orthodoxy" with a conservative position. (8)

<sup>22</sup> Ker, Newman, 266-8.

<sup>23</sup> Robinson, *Honest To God*, 27.

<sup>24</sup> Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, 13. "The parish church was the church for the parish - even for those who rejected it"

final run no objections could challenge it. Robinson was "not asking whether God exists but what it/He is like".<sup>25</sup> All he could offer to the sceptic were deductive arguments for the God hypothesis: "We must start the other way round. God is, by definition, ultimate reality and one cannot argue whether ultimate reality exists".<sup>26</sup> *Honest To God* began with these words: "All I can do is try to be honest - honest to God and about God - and to follow the argument wherever it leads".<sup>27</sup>

His orthodoxy was inbred rather than consciously acquired. It had seemed to him so natural to become a Bishop. Speaking of his critical relationship to the Church he wrote:

We must try to be at one and the same time for the Church and against the Church. They alone can serve her faithfully whose consciences are continually exercised as to whether they ought not, for Christ's sake, to leave her... As one who knows in his bones that he could not put himself outside, I want to plead for those who feel they must.<sup>28</sup>

Robinson failed to see, however, that the God hypothesis itself pointed to another experience of life. Throughout his life, Robinson had the continuing sensation that he was in the intimate presence of something "Other". Like Manning, he felt accountable to the "Thou" who in turn confirmed his being.

The need to speak of 'God' derives from the awareness that in and through and under very finite 'Thou' comes, if we are open to it, the grace and claim of an eternal unconditional 'Thou' who cannot be fully evaded by being turned into an 'It'.<sup>29</sup>

Robinson's relationship with his personal God was much more like that of the Renaissance monk Savonarola, of whom Sennett writes that a part of his personality was reserved for God.<sup>30</sup> Like Ruskin, Jowett and Newman before him, he marvelled at his bondage, which was, ultimately, experienced rather than understood:

The truth as the Christian knows it, is always a relationship a person must be 'in' if he is to understand it aright, as a subject in response to a 'Thou'. It can never, without

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<sup>25</sup>James, 133.

<sup>26</sup>Robinson, *Honest to God*, 29.

<sup>27</sup>Robinson, *Honest to God*., p.28

<sup>28</sup>James, 135. According to Eric James, the first sentence of this statement was apparently borrowed from one of his students.

<sup>29</sup>James, 17.

<sup>30</sup>Sennett, *Fall*, 235. See also Ch. 6

distortion, be stated objectively or propositionally.<sup>31</sup>

Rudolf Bultmann, the German theologian to whom Robinson was indebted for his de-mythologizing of religious language, was fully aware of this pre-bondage, which facilitated Robinson's access to the ancient text. He had called it a *vorverständnis*, literally a pre-understanding, a something which predisposed and readied long before the text was read.<sup>32</sup> Although the philosophical tradition hitherto had been satisfied to leave it at that (for example, at the categorical imperative, or the common moral sense), Bultmann sought to penetrate deeper, although theologians still have trouble hearing him. He connected the *vorverständnis* with "life relationship", that is to say, the ability to recognize in the text, in spite of its ancient language and metaphor, truths which also apply to life as it is experienced at present. The myths, no more than the God-hypothesis, were really "analogies" of actual, objective, human relationships in actual existence. What Bultmann did not fully realize, however, is that only a certain class of people was pre-equipped with both the *vorverständnis* and the necessary life-relationship.<sup>33</sup> Since he belonged to this category he, like Robinson, presumed the life-relationship universal.

## II.

### The Making of an Orthodox Bishop.

The making of Robinson's orthodoxy, it has been seen, began early enough. He moved from preparatory to public school and from there into the ministry without crisis, without protest, without feeling the conflict of a generation gap. All happened almost without "individual" sense of choice. There seemed none of the inner struggles, exploration of alternatives, pubescent defiance normal for others. The idea of ordination needed no dramatic decision. Robinson "could not remember a time when it

<sup>31</sup>James, 149-50.

<sup>32</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Myth* (London: SCM, 1966)

50-1<sup>33</sup>cf. Macquarrie, 121-2. Bultmann used the word "existential", by which he meant "experiential", that is life experienced in concrete history.



did not seem right for him to follow in his father's, and in so many of his uncles', footsteps".<sup>34</sup> Robinson explained this instance of cultural reproduction from one generation to the next in highly mythical language. It was not just "intuition" but a sense of a power beyond him: "large souls do not try to impose themselves upon us... In their presence we spread, and feel strangely at home." He felt as bereaved by the death of Archbishop William Temple (Oct. 1944) as if by a personal death, remembering the funeral in every detail, including where, in the choir stalls, he sat. It was to be "one of the most moving occasions I can recall".<sup>35</sup> Falling in love with Ruth Grace was a powerful sense of being in tune, through her, with something larger than the two of them:

Again, it has come, with the same constricting and exhausting effect that makes you want to clutch your head and bit your lips. It is impossible to analyse - but the author of Psalm knew it - 'Thou hast laid thine hand upon me'. It is being locked and chained by the claims of another [*Italics Mine*]...<sup>36</sup>

To such a mind, dismissive of the smaller paradise of private pleasures, celibacy was no sacrifice. For many years he adopted a single life in Cambridge rooms, imposing grass-widowhood on Ruth as readily as accepting his own calls to service. Hardly surprising then, that the modern artform, the novel, was not really enjoyed but was endured by Robinson as a "discipline". He would sometimes set himself the task of reading a novel in Lent.<sup>37</sup> Considering that modern prose, the aesthetic form of the modern novel, celebrates individuals, divulging the secrets of their private and inner consciousness, of ordinary lives, the orthodox (which is a collectively tuned) mind's revulsion seems only natural.<sup>38</sup> Happiness for Robinson was being able to read out loud, and with a fellow clergyman, the Prologue to the gospel of St. John in Greek, as he did one Christmas eve.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>James, 11.

<sup>35</sup>James, 5, 21.

<sup>36</sup>James, 21. They were married in 1942 in Zurich, Switzerland.

<sup>37</sup>James, 193, 149

<sup>38</sup>Jenkyns chapter on "The Death of Poetry" brings together various arguments, for example by Proust, Byron and Ruskin, in support of this view. *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 21-38.

It seemed rather odd that someone as dedicated to freeing the world from rigid and literal thinking about God and Christian beliefs would dedicate so much effort and time to prove that the writer of the Fourth Gospel was St. John, the disciple of Jesus and so a contemporary of the other Gospel writers. To some, such causes seemed "frivolous donnish antics".<sup>40</sup> To others, he had always been the "champion of the conservative cause. *The Priority of John* only proved what they had suspected all along: his image as a "thrillingly shocking radical" was a "misconception".<sup>41</sup> But Robinson's efforts at authenticating the Fourth Gospel were neither conservative nor frivolous to the orthodox mind which is, as Altholz argued, rooted in evidential logic and apologetics.<sup>42</sup> In any event, Robinson had denied all along that there was any inconsistency: his radicalism had always been based on objective grounds. An obstinate voice was heard in *Roots of a Radical*: "Yes, indeed, on the Fourth Gospel I am so square as to be almost indecent among my fellow academics".<sup>43</sup> To allow him to be "so square", Robinson required to establish its authenticity by *Redating the New Testament* (1976), using the evidence of the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls to dismiss the contemporary *Redaktionsgeschichte* of modern biblical scholarship as merely "fashionable".<sup>44</sup>

Before long Robinson tuned into the Shroud of Turin controversy. For a radical bishop, his letter to Father Peter Rinaldi seemed rather naive, showing once more the same uncanny insistence on evidence which so puzzled Strachey about Newman's belief in the liquifaction of martyr blood:

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<sup>39</sup>James, 28.

<sup>40</sup>James, 236 - as taken from a review in the *Listener* by Don Cupitt.

<sup>41</sup>J.L. Houlden *Times Literary Supplement* (4 Oct. 1985). In his review he almost stated my thesis: "those who [like himself] have seen Bishop Robinson as a late Victorian radical born out of due time are perhaps the most discerning". Hugh Montefiore, retired Bishop of Birmingham and contributor to *Soundings*, felt that before *Honest to God*, Robinson advocacy of biblical theology was contributing to the stifling atmosphere in Cambridge theology. No one in 1962 would have thought him to be really radical. Hugh Montefiore, Personal letter, 11 Mar. 1987.

<sup>42</sup>See Ch. 5.

<sup>43</sup>Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, 5.

<sup>44</sup>C.H. Dodd's "Envoi" published in the back of John A.T. Robinson, *Re-Dating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976).

You won't know me, though you may know me by name as the notorious bishop who wrote *Honest To God* and therefore about the last person to be a *believer* in the Shroud, if that is the right word! But for a long time I have been very much impressed by the evidence, and your book *The Man in The Shroud* confirmed my conviction that there is here something that cannot be easily explained away, and when I talk to scholars at Cambridge, I find a surprising agreement. The trouble is that first-hand scientific examination (as opposed to press reports) seems so hard to come by...

It was thus only natural that Robinson would affirm his evidential faith again in 1980: "although it may be unfashionable, I would want to contend both for the need of the quest for the historical Jesus and for its real possibility".<sup>46</sup> Eric James was also struck by another extraversion: Robinson's verbal mind. Considering that the oral tradition loomed so prominently in the formation of the orthodox mind, the word "verbal" seemed doubly significant: it described the public nature of Robinson's private thinking.

John needed no incitement to talk on the interrelation of 'root' and 'radical'! He had been doing it publicly since 1963, certainly when he broadcast on the BBC 'On Being a Radical'. He had such a 'verbal' mind that once he had noted the connection he was unlikely to leave it alone.

In *Honest To God*, Robinson claimed to be just trying "to think this process aloud and help to articulate it for others".<sup>47</sup>

Is it at all surprising that Robinson died the death of a Saint? Like the ancient patriarchs of the Church, he died in the company of fellow travellers and by the standards they had set, his thoughts continuously on them, recording his reflections for future pilgrims.

Elizabeth Lampe, - whose husband Geoffrey was diagnosed as having cancer about the time that he gave his Bampton Lecture, and died quite superbly, leaving an example to us all - was a splendid person to be able to share it all with, and full of hope.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>James, 240.

<sup>46</sup>Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, 69.

<sup>47</sup>Robinson, *Honest to God*, 21.

<sup>48</sup>James, 287. Robinson was also dying of cancer. According to Hastings, Geoffrey Lampe initiated the New Reformation of the sixties with his outspoken letter to the Archbishop suggesting "intercommunion". [Hastings, 538-9]

He would have been pleased that a former colleague, David Reindorp, would one day say: "I loved him also for the manner of his dying". For to die well was not only the Bishop's goal but duty. The public nature of his dying is captured in a journal he kept during his illness:

I have woken up, quite comfortable, and at this early hour have been reflecting on something of what this has taught me about preparing for death. I suppose one's initial reaction is to feel that 'to make a good death' in the classical sense is to give up thoughts of and preoccupation with 'worldly things' and go into the full-time business of becoming a saint in the time available... At some time, of course, I should love to do this; but Bonhoeffer's distinction keeps coming back to me, that to be a Christian is not to be 'religious in a particular way but to be a 'man' - in Christ. So far from being less interested in things that go on around me in the world, whether it be at this moment politics or cricket, this doesn't seem to be distracting, but simply trying to live life better to the full. This is the sort of thing that encourages me about Eric James' remark when I said I was reading Owen Chadwick<sup>49</sup> on Hensley Henson, 'Well, you've got your priorities right'.

Robinson's plans for a good death included considerations how his dying would be perceived by others, how it would be remembered. His dependence on Eric James' approval was both touching and revealing.

One journal entry said: "I am not in the least afraid. In fact I am not quite sure what people mean by fear of death". The nature of Robinson's personality and identity did not tie itself to a self-conscious and self-preserving individuality. He was, therefore, the beneficiary of all the comforts which come out of the social consensus. I fully believe Robinson when he wrote into his journal: "I have said to several people that I can hardly recollect a happier time in my whole life".<sup>50</sup> He died on 5 December, 1983 in his home in the village of Arncliffe, Yorkshire, not long after having gone to bed and having said with Ruth the prayer which they had prayed each night since their engagement, "the Collect for what used to be Trinity IV":

O God, the protector of all that trust thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the

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<sup>49</sup>James, 288.

<sup>50</sup>James, 286, 291.

things eternal; Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ sake".<sup>51</sup>

The same day, Robinson had still whispered instructions concerning the Preface of his posthumous work into his son Stephen's ear. Not even for a moment had he lost sight of "the things eternal".

### III.

#### Robinson as neo-Victorian.

Robinson's peculiar situation, being an orthodox member of one world, yet challenged by another, was responsible for the peculiar "corporate, liturgical and political theology" which was his own.<sup>52</sup> He often spoke of his Canterbury and Church of England "root and sap", especially as he got older.<sup>53</sup> However, he considered it mainly a matter of mind. Aware of being "intellectually-speaking" a member of a minority, he worked in intellectual and pastoral practice toward the very negation of the roots of his religion, as seen, employing the methods of communication and organization which were hostile to the experience of communal, small-scale and identity-giving life. In other words, Robinson inadvertently furthered the very processes which alienated the world from his message.

This raises the question of whether Robinson, as is suspected of the intellectual elite, served the (godless and worldly) status quo.<sup>54</sup> However, the question really should be, considering the transformed position of the intellectual elite in the modern state, did Robinson have the power to commit such a treason? Robinson's idea-life, it will be seen, reflected the same realities, the same contradictions and frustrations as his Victorian forebears: he had received their bequest of duty along with their powerlessness to fulfil it. The Victorian legacy emboldened him to raise matters of "ultimate concern" and blinded

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<sup>51</sup>James, 311-2.

<sup>52</sup>James, 49. His theology was thus described by his former teacher C.F.D. "Charlie" Moule.

<sup>53</sup>Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, 10 and passim.

<sup>54</sup>Such a role is implied by Lukasc. (48)

him to his inability to lay them to rest.

Robinson was much shaken by and yet attracted to Bonhoeffer's insight that in this world, by which Bonhoeffer did not mean the Church world, "the uplifting experience of genuine Christian community can be no more than a pious extra".<sup>55</sup> Many modern Churches, especially in Germany,<sup>56</sup> offered little more than a spiritual *crème* topping to relationships otherwise contrary to the personal, emotional and moral order or household (economy) of the Church.<sup>57</sup> The Church as it found itself in the sixties, so Robinson had to concede, was a "religious organisation with a limited purpose".<sup>58</sup> Taking the consequences, led Bonhoeffer to give up the spiritual aspect, religion, the existing version of the Church altogether,<sup>59</sup> confining the "mysteries of the Christian faith" to a worldly brotherhood of a few who would practice an arcane discipline among themselves to preserve it from "profanities", sensing the insidious powers of the "world" which took over almost any activity.<sup>60</sup> These insights bore profound similarities with Newman's.<sup>61</sup>

But for Robinson, no such conclusion, or admission of weakness, was possible. Although he quoted Bonhoeffer's theory of the powerless and suffering God extensively, his actions betrayed that he could not tolerate a situation where the Church would be "edged" out of the world, and thus unable to influence society.<sup>62</sup> Robinson's continued yearning for the social improvement of others expressed itself in his belief in the "divine imperative

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<sup>55</sup>James, 71.

<sup>56</sup>Among Lutherans, a "confessional church" had largely replaced the parishional structure.

<sup>57</sup>Since the seventies and the failure of community work, Bonhoeffer's insights are now applied to other so-called communities, not only to the "modern Church".

<sup>58</sup>Robinson was paraphrasing Bonhoeffer. (*Honest to God*, 134).

<sup>59</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers From Prison*, 166, 8-9. (1953, London: Collins, 1969) 166, and Intro. 8-9.

<sup>60</sup>Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Theologian. Christian. Contemporary*, transl. ed. Edwin Robertson (London:Collins, 1970) 585.

<sup>61</sup>See Ch. 3.

<sup>62</sup>Bonhoeffer had called for exactly that. (166) To Bonhoeffer "What is the place of worship in an entire absence of religion", could only be a rhetorical question. See Robinson *Honest to God*, 85.

to communicate", and in his indignation over the political world's conception of theology:

Some years ago Mr. Gaitskell proposed revising the famous Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution (on nationalization). Those who opposed him dubbed it all 'theology' - theoretical statements about things that make no practical difference. Such is the name that 'theology' has gained.<sup>63</sup>

Reversing this peripherality became a life-long obsession. It figured behind his decision to take the witness stand in the Lady Chatterley trial - an opportunity to "get across to the world".<sup>64</sup> The publicity of the trial paved the way for the reception of *Honest To God* whose missionary purpose he readily admitted.<sup>65</sup>

For a little while it seemed that theology was again relevant.

Up till now the Press took notice of clergymen only if they spoke on morals or politics. What they said on God and the Gospel was ignored. Archbishop Temple constantly complained of this. But now 'God' is news. My book seems to have touched people at a point.<sup>66</sup>

Two decades down the road Robinson had to concede, however, that there was still "a tremendous barrier to break".<sup>67</sup> He seemed to have progressed no further than when he spoke, during his curacy in Bristol, of the "eight roadblocks" which impede "the mission to urban society" and when he had planned some "rescue" work.<sup>68</sup> The God-hypothesis, on which he had pinned his hopes, had made no come-back. Strachey's comment in his portrait of Cardinal Manning now also applied for Robinson: "Yet, it was observed that the modern world proceeded as before".<sup>69</sup>

The God hypothesis was Robinson's dynamic behind social reform. If people could be persuaded to make God an intimate part of their lives, the way he did, all would be well. Not just a God, however, especially not God in the traditional sense who

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<sup>63</sup>Edwards and Robinson, *Honest To God Debate*, 276.

<sup>64</sup>James, 80.

<sup>65</sup>James, 122.

<sup>66</sup>Edwards, ed. *Honest To God Debate*, 276.

<sup>67</sup>James, 109.

<sup>68</sup>James, 42.

<sup>69</sup>Strachey, 95.

would be a divine father far removed from life and the individual's actual concerns. Such an "image of God had to go". It was, from the reformer's point of view, useless. Only a "personal" God could elicit the emotional response necessary to make the Christian ethic, an ethic of collective love, work. Similar considerations had motivated the essayists in 1860, when they attacked the common sense God, who, removed from the concerns of humankind, could not stir any feelings.<sup>70</sup> Jowett preferred a "more immediate relationship to Christ", allowing followers to see the Atonement as "the greatest moral act ever done in this world", in this way correcting "the silences of thought" in the attributes of God.<sup>71</sup> To Robinson the "personal" God hypothesis was the solution to the reduction of public life to instrumental relationships.

In dealing with other people it is possible for us to treat them simply as things...We can relate ourselves to them in...the functional relationship, of co-operation with them. This is the most common relationship we have with others, in which we treat them often as means to an end but never merely as means. But..we can give ourselves to them in pure personal relationship, responding to them in love and trust for their own sakes...

The man who finds himself compelled to acknowledge the reality of God, whatever he may call him or however he may image him, is the man who, through the mathematical regularities and through the functional values, is met by the same grace and the same claim that he recognizes in the I-Thou relation with another person.<sup>72</sup>

The only problem was the first premise: "the man who finds himself compelled to acknowledge the reality of God". Robinson did everything in his power to compel. As James put it:

[To] John the first and fundamental question which needed interpreting to the people of the world which now surrounded him was the question of God himself. Many of those inside 'the ark' might not - and did not - see it that way; but to John this truth was shouting at him, and shouting again 'with a Divine imperative to pass it on'.<sup>73</sup>

Robinson's singular obsession with a personal God made itself manifest quite early. His Ph.D. thesis (1944) was entitled "The notion of Personality and its Relation to Christian theology,

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<sup>70</sup>See Ch. 5.

<sup>71</sup>Ellis, 16-18.

<sup>72</sup>Robinson, *New Reformation*, 117.

<sup>73</sup>James, 109.



with particular Reference to the Contemporary 'I-Thou' philosophy, and the Doctrine of the Trinity and the Person of Christ".<sup>74</sup> The ideas behind his thesis resurfaced in the prologue to *Exploration into God*:

All my deepest concerns both in thought and in action - and I cannot separate the theological, the pastoral and the political - find their centre in a single, continuing quest. This is to give expression, embodiment, to the overmastering, yet elusive, conviction of the "Thou" at the heart of everything. It is a quest for the form of the personal as the ultimate reality in life, as the deepest truth about all one's relationships and commitments.<sup>75</sup>

A personal God, however, for His own sake, still was not enough. The relationship needed to reach beyond God into life, into the world. To embrace God should mean to embrace everyone and everything with the fervour of personal love. To think of God as the "transcendent" was a concept so far and wide, so laden with infinity that it was almost meaningless. In *Honest To God*, Robinson attempted to re-present the transcendent in immediate terms grounding God in the midst of the secular world, in the familiar landscape of modern complexity.

In this endeavour, *Honest To God* was as radical as it could be inside the theological circle.<sup>76</sup> He ruthlessly supplanted the cosy God of the pious with Tillich's equivocal God

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<sup>74</sup>Within theological circles it would have been known that the "I-Thou" philosophy referred to Martin Buber's seminal volume with the same title.

<sup>75</sup>James, 148.

<sup>76</sup>I find it difficult to agree with Adrian Hastings, who makes out Robinson's role more benign than it was. "He was at heart not unconservative yet with a penchant for appearing a little naughtily radical. In *Honest To God*, which he wrote in hospital in rather a hurry, he picked out some of the most startling themes of the leading radical theologians of the preceding decades - Tillich, Bonhoeffer and Bultmann - and melted them down into a brief 140-page book which almost anyone could read. At other times it might have been disregarded. In 1963 it became a best seller". [Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity* (London: Collins, 1986) 537] In fact, the replies to the book revealed that many lay-people never actually read the book. (James, 126 and Fenton Morley "Reactions in the Church of England" in David L. Edwards ed. *The Honest To God Debate*, 45-6) Many admitted to not understanding it at all as the subsequent book by Robinson, entitled *But That I Can't Believe*, dedicated "to Elizabeth and Judith who didn't get *Honest To God*", confirmed. (London: Fontana Books, 1967.)

in whom demonic perversion and goodness were all mixed up. He replaced the "saviour" concept of Christ with the image of a suffering and powerless Jesus, as the "man for others".

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Such radicalism was justified by the end: eliminating the gap between the "I" and the world and its needs. Like his Victorian forerunners, he could not bear any diminished responsibility, any specialization, any disinterestedness. Everything had to be moral and holy. The barrier between the human and the divine had to come down. There was no refuge from the demands of the holy.

The temptation of Western man is to seek salvation by exalting the individual against such collectives or by seeking withdrawal from the body of socio-historical existence...Solidarity is the divinely ordained structure in which personal life is to be lived. Man's freedom does not lie in the fact that he is not bound, nor his individuality in the fact that he is not social. Both derive from an unconditional and inalienable responsibility to God which is not denied by the solidarities of the body and can indeed be discharged only in and through them. Christians should be the last people to be found clinging to the wrecks of an<sup>78</sup>atomic individualism which has no foundation in the Bible.

The "divinely ordained structure" embraced not only the Christian community (wherever it may be) but the "vast solidarity of historical existence".<sup>79</sup> The Christian "community" had to embrace more than a religious or even a national community, and, most importantly, be more than a community of like ideas. What attracted Robinson to the *Litany of the Ghetto*, written by the episcopal American priest Robert Castle, was that it, in words and in theory, expanded the meaning of God to almost a "breaking point".

The identification between God and the city is such that grammar is strained to breaking point in bringing together the 'Thou' addressed and the third person indicative of those who are in the city:

O God, who lives in tenements, who goes to segregated schools, who is beaten in precincts, who is unemployed---Help us to know you.<sup>80</sup>

Such a broadening of the individual's relation to God was behind the Robinson's idea of a New Reformation. Where the

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<sup>77</sup>Robinson, *Honest To God*, 54-55, 75, 82-3.

<sup>78</sup>James, 50.

<sup>79</sup>James, 50.

<sup>80</sup>James, 151-2.

New Reformation of the Victorians only hoped to make the individual's relationship to the nation again a moral one, Robinson's New Reformation went further: stretching the individual's moral embrace to global dimensions. Robinson claimed to have a strong wind blowing behind him:

On a world scale, such as we are forced to use today, the Old Reformation cannot but look a rather provincial quarrel within the confines of the Christian West. It is certain that any theological revolution that will match our hour cannot be a purely Western product...Christians can no longer indulge in domestic discussion<sup>81</sup> as though the other world-religions scarcely existed.

Such ecumenicism was an expansion of what his Victorian predecessor called "latitudinarianism" to the global realities of the sixties. Because latitudinarianism was associated with the Broad party and so with liberalism, it tended to be mistaken for indifference.<sup>82</sup> But when Henry Bristow Wilson in 1860 advocated a national Church it was to be nothing less than an embodiment of the highest ideals of English Christian civilization. Robinson's ecumenicism similarly embraced the "eternal things", enlarging Wilson's national to a global household, holiness world-wide. An ecumenical Christianity had just about the width, depth and breadth that Robinson required. It also revealed the inexhaustibility of his sense of duty.

Robinson's unshakable belief in his power to influence spoke most loudly through his attitude to language. Language allowed him to synthesize the incompatible, join the antithetical and inimical realities of the world. He loved the unities which a paradoxical phrase could, putatively, project. Appositions like "the joy and pain of Anglicanism" or "the humanizing of God" abound in his writing.<sup>83</sup> The love of connecting what was adrift also drew Robinson to "the Religion of the Incarnation". It was a Victorian and Anglican innovation, putting Newman's insights into the principle of economy, containing the invisible in visible

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<sup>81</sup>Robinson, *The New Reformation*, (London: SCM, 1965) 12. There certainly was something in the air: the year that *Honest To God* came out was also the year that the Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church met (11 Oct. 1961) under Pope John xxiii. (Annual Register 1962)

<sup>82</sup>Ellis, 12.

<sup>83</sup>Robinson, *Roots of a Radical* 61-3, 53.

sacraments, into practice.<sup>84</sup> Its appeal to Robinson was that it moved the emphasis from what God said to the "What God Did".<sup>85</sup> It allowed him to speak of the "irreducibility of the incarnation" since it posited the "life" of Jesus rather than abstract principles. Best of all, the incarnation suggested to him involvement in the world:

One of the characteristics has been to see the church, the body of Christ, as "the extension of the Incarnation" filling up in its flesh his sufferings and completing his fullness, the pledge and instrument of the redemption of all Humanity in the totus Christus. It is a doctrine for the Church which refuses to isolate it from the redemption of the whole human race, and indeed of nature and the cosmos.<sup>86</sup>

This was a veritable feat of synthesis. Nothing had been left out: it covered the gamut of human history, the church, nature and the cosmos. It was, it must be remembered, not an actual synthesis, but a theological one.

The desire to see it become reality, spawned tireless experiments to bring together, to bridge and connect. During his Woolwich years (1959-68) and beyond, nothing fell out of the extensivity of his embrace. There could be no reduction of the meaning of "Christian", no specialization of Christian service and witness. It meant the laicization of the ministry in ways the Parish and People movement, founded in 1949, had hinted at with too much moderation. It meant the "abolition of the Parson's Freehold and the patronage system" and

a radical re-structuring of the ministry, including its de-professionalization, which reformers believed necessary if the progressive decay of the Church, throttled by its traditional clerical structures, was to be averted.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> John A.T. Robinson, *Roots of A Radical*, 44. The Religion of Incarnation's chief advocates were the Christian Socialists which formed the Holy Party. It is "explained" in Charles Gore ed. *Lux Mundi: a Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*. (London: John Murray, 1890.)

<sup>85</sup> Peter d'A. Jones *Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914, Religion, Class and Social Concern in Late-Victorian England* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968) 28. The sacramentalists felt that "the best profession and witness of the socialism of Christ is in the Holy Sacraments of the Church - especially Baptism and Mass".

<sup>86</sup> Robinson, *Roots of a Radical*, 45.

<sup>87</sup> Hastings, 538-40.

He wished to tear down the clerical and the sex lines.<sup>88</sup> At St. Mary's, a parish in Robinson's diocese, many of the pastoral reforms urged by Robinson were put into practice. Its Rector, Nicolas Stacey

transformed the church, enclosing the galleries to create a social centre with a coffee bar and lunch counter, opened a discotheque in the crypt and housed the offices of the local Council of Social Service...created an ecumenical team ministry, founded a successful housing association, engaged a professional sociologist, [became] the first Borough Dean, watched over the birth of the new town of Thamesmead.<sup>89</sup>

All this proved that the Church cared and reached out. But if these changes had been made with an eye to influence there was no measurable impact. Stacey felt that his work, and the work of the Church was irrelevant to at least 98 per cent of the people who lived in the Diocese.<sup>90</sup> This was in accordance with the findings of Leslie Paul, whose survey disclosed that in the Southwark deanery of Battersea less than one per cent of the population visited an Anglican church during a normal Sunday.<sup>91</sup> These activities, it will be seen when this thesis turns to the experience of Coventry Cathedral, never replaced but ran alongside the pre-modern environment of Church life.

The duplex, or neo-Victorian, identity of the order revealed itself most succinctly in Robinson's interest in Church liturgy, particularly the central altar and the Eucharist. Since the Liturgical Revival of the late forties and fifties, the Church of England had in practice become a mainly "eucharistic church".<sup>92</sup> Of course, Robinson had to explain how the rite worked:

Not only is the body of Christ a crucial link between the corporal and the corporate, incarnation and the church, but it is the link also between the chuggh and the Eucharist that constantly recreates the church.<sup>93</sup>

To the uninitiated these conclusions do not seem obvious. But for

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<sup>88</sup>James, 163-4

<sup>89</sup>James, 163-4.

<sup>90</sup>James, 163-4.

<sup>91</sup>Adrian Hastings quotes from Leslie Paul *A Church by*

*Daylight* (1973), 178.

<sup>92</sup>Paul A. Welsby, *A History of the Church of England: 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 71.

<sup>93</sup>Roots, 46.

Robinson, who found in the almost daily celebration of communion a renewing confirmation of his own corporate life-style, these words were truth itself. "Making the Eucharist central", he wrote, was "making society central". However, it has been seen, Robinson had made society central long before he lifted the cup. A similar *vorverständnis*, based on a life-relationship with a rite of the oral past, had once drawn him to Bonhoeffer's challenge "to participate in the sufferings of God at the hands of the godless world".<sup>94</sup>

But it was not only God that was suffering. Clearly, the image of God held by Robinson, or Bonhoeffer, could not be the same as that which was known to those who functioned without the God-hypothesis.<sup>95</sup> Robinson's idea of God reflected the own pain of alienation of his order. The image of a "suffering God" attested to the agony of being condemned to - contrary to his inheritance, his faith, his habitual nature - the irresponsibility of belonging to class in the reduced modern sense. Indeed, nothing was more revealing of the involuntary exile than Bonhoeffer's sense of an ultimate home and its familial brotherliness, which Robinson quoted in *Honest to God*.

The Christian is one who in that situation still knows that 'home' is in Christ and that to be 'in him' is to lay himself open, not to the benign indifference, but to the divine agape, of the Universe, to feel it so like himself, so brotherly.<sup>96</sup>

Bonhoeffer's life-relationship with this "home" was his own concrete experience of brotherhood, for example, at the Home of the Brethren at Finkenwalde.<sup>97</sup> Robinson's entire life brought him, it has been seen, into intimate intercourse with kindred men and women. Both theologians belonged to the theological circle.

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<sup>94</sup> Robinson, *Honest to God*, 82, quoted from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison* Ed. E. Bethge, (1953, 2nd Ed. Collins, 1956), 166..

<sup>95</sup> Robinson, *Honest to God*, 36-7.

<sup>96</sup> Robinson *Honest To God*, 129.

<sup>97</sup> Bethge, 387-8.

## IV.

The foregoing evidence does not necessarily challenge the theory that the intellectual elite has put its mind at the disposal of the ascendant power. The list of activities leaves no doubt that Robinson played his part to further the destruction of the very "economy", local and oral, which allowed religion to survive into the second World War. Indeed, his ecumenical theology could be seen as a sacred canopy for the new international economy.<sup>98</sup> His parishional reforms implied but a further destructing of small-scale hierarchic and consensual bodies, the mainstay of oral life.

There was only one redeeming factor, and this factor is fundamental: it so happened that Robinson's endeavours, like many neo-Victorian undertakings, were ultimately a failure. They had to fail because he and his order no longer had the power to influence, the power that, as Eliot had observed in his *Notes on the Definition of Culture*, should by rights have been commensurate with their commitment. Robinson embodied the tragedy of the Victorian intellectual tradition. Over the past hundred years the conditions of its survival have become more precarious, often because of the intellectuals' very advocacy of adaptation to the secular order. The gap between their ultimate concern and the actual result of their endeavours must make anyone pause before speaking of treason. Before speaking of the critic's role and function in the hegemony of the State (or even the international economic order), and participation in power relations, it is important to consider that within the modern structure of society the ideas of the critic, of Robinson, had to compete for the ear of a plural society and with a plurality of opinions. The new order stipulated that it was to this society and not to the eternal they had to look for power.

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<sup>98</sup>This is the argument underlying Peter L. Berger's sociological theory of religion in *The Sacred Canopy* (New York: Doubleday, 1969).

*Section Five.*

*Old Order in Crisis:  
Coventry Cathdedral and the Sacred Trust.*



## Chapter 14.

"To Serve the World:  
A Cathedral for All Seasons"

And always there is our busyness [sic], and indeed our proper business in maintaining the Church and her customary work, and more than enough to do without worrying about impossible things we may have left undone.

E.R.Wickham, Bishop of Middleton,  
formerly Canon Residentiary of Sheffield.  
Industrial Missioner.  
(from *Church and People In An Industrial City*, 1957)

## I.

To those old enough to remember its Consecration in 1962, an event of a magnitude that could only be compared to the Coronation, Coventry Cathedral is a familiar concept. The event was completely televised, bringing the ceremony into the homes of the nation. Millions watched the Queen, the two Archbishops, aristocrats, dignitaries and the Church hierarchy, the representatives of the old world, take part in a celebration of unrivalled pomp and circumstance. Long before the actual event, Coventry had been ceaselessly in the news. A steady stream of dignitaries, artists, ensembles, and celebrities had made their way to the Cathedral, adding to the climate of expectancy which was there ever since the excitement surrounding the architectural competition and the controversy over Basil Spence's prize-winning design.<sup>1</sup> The Festival of Consecration which followed kept the nation's focus, via the BBC, for weeks to come. Even before the consecration, and for years after, visitors came in droves "drawn by worship or artistic interest or TV publicity, no one seemed quite sure which".<sup>2</sup>

All this was not just a stroke of luck but the result of careful planning, the gradual recognition and acceptance of the importance and potential of Coventry Cathedral as a symbol of spiritual hope, not only for the Church but for the English

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<sup>1</sup>This is described in Sir Basil Spence, *Phoenix at Coventry* (London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd., 1962)

<sup>2</sup>Annual Register, 1962.

people as a whole. On 6 May, 1954, the Minister of Works granted the rebuilding licence with the following words:

The Cathedral is not a building which concerns Coventry and Coventry alone. The echo of the bombs which destroyed your city was heard round the world. We cannot tell how many people are waiting in this country and abroad for this church to rise and prove that English traditions live again after the Blitz. The threat of far worse destruction is with us to-day, demoralising and corrupting our<sup>3</sup> thoughts. We have never had a greater need for acts of faith.

On hindsight the need for a new Cathedral in the middle of one of Britain's most industrial cities during one of its most secular of ages in history, does not nearly seem so clear. For most people looking back, it seemed an act typical of the optimism of the sixties, of the era when Harold Macmillan could evince agreement when he claimed "You've never had it so good".<sup>4</sup>

Twenty-five years on, during the Cathedral's Silver Jubilee, the mood had changed significantly. The Archbishop of York, this time the highest dignitary present, said in his sermon: "On the whole the situation which faces the Cathedral, the city, the Diocese and the nation in 1987 has grimmer features than in those heady days of 1962".<sup>5</sup> His celebratory mood was subdued by experience:

Thank God for the far sighted people through whose vision and enterprise this Cathedral was built, thank God for all who have served and worshipped here during this quarter century in which so much has happened. But pray now for the qualities needed to meet the demands of a different age and to a journey at a different pace. In this great<sup>6</sup> act of worship we wait upon the Lord for strength to walk on.

The Archbishop's travel metaphor described the experience of change, change of such magnitude that it made the event which preceded his sermon by only twenty-five years seem like something that had happened in another country. At this moment in 1987, the people assembled looked across with disbelief to events in which they themselves had played a part.<sup>7</sup> Levin's prediction in 1970

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<sup>3</sup>The passage is quoted in *The Cathedral Church of St. Michael, Coventry*. (Stockport: The Cloister Press, Ltd. 1962) 31.

<sup>4</sup>Levin, *Pendulum Years*, 210.

<sup>5</sup>John S. Habgood, "Coventry Silver Jubilee", Sermon, 25 May, 1987.

<sup>6</sup>Habgood, Sermon, 25 May 1987.

that the building would be the last of its kind to be built on such a scale in Britain, and that it would stand for future ages "like a boundary stone that marks the divide between one age and another" seemed to have come true.

And yet - had the celebrants a chance to re-live those times, they would have been astonished to see that much of the Archbishop's anxieties concerning the modern world, Cumbrian hill farmers bankrupted by Chernobyl, the violence of Sri Lanka, and the impact Japanese business on Coventry's economy, differed from the anxieties facing the Cathedral in the sixties only in content and in response, not in degree. The modernistic Cathedral, grandiose and daring, lavishly filled with modern art treasures from the world over, indeed reflected the size of that anxiety. Coventry was the product of one of the most desperate attempts in the nation's history of the guardians to do their duty to society, to keep their sacred trust.

For more than twenty-five years, it will be seen, the cathedral harboured a special class of people, people burdened with the inheritance of duty that far outweighed their power to perform it. When H.C.N. William's first letter as new Provost of Coventry Cathedral mentioned the word duty as many as four times, he assumed he was speaking to a class of men and women, who like himself, had appropriated responsibility for the well-being of others (Coventry Cathedral News, hereafter, CCN Nov. 1960). The size of the Coventry enterprise reflected the extent of the sense of duty. From the beginning, the Cathedral was conceived with an eye to "mission". This purpose was never disguised: in 1959 Bishop Bardsley appointed Stephen Verney as the Diocesan Missioner.<sup>8</sup> Mission meant really "influence", achieved through a massive re-education of modern society in the Christian way of life, through leadership, example, and importantly, through modern means of communication. The Annual Register for 1962 felt that Coventry had "lit a brave candle in an increasingly dark land".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This is much the tone of Bernard Levin's *The Pendulum Years: Britain and the Sixties*, who begins his book with "It was a credulous age". (9)

<sup>8</sup> Coventry Cathedral Chronicle, 1959.

It will be seen that the question of influence (mission) inevitably raised the question of authority. Facing the modern situation meant facing modern standards and modern definitions of what was authoritative and important. By these standards, local and parochial concerns clearly were not. This chapter will show that the Cathedral was pressed into a super-role, to serve large numbers and large causes, to radiate its message world-wide and tying international connections. However, keeping up with this image left everyone breathless. The world set an exacting pace. The public had to be fed bigger and more newsworthy events as well as professional standards in staging them.<sup>10</sup> Eventually, the struggle was given up. In 1974 the Cathedral stopped its press clipping service. When Colin Semper took over as Provost of the Cathedral in 1982, he also took on its deficit and fulfilled his plans to make it a cathedral with a small "c"<sup>11</sup> It may be said that at that time Coventry Cathedral became, again, a local cathedral. This made some people rather glad. From the beginning, a cathedral in the national spotlight with international pretensions was not only perceived as a natural threat to the local struggle for adherents but feared to further the very processes which undermined local Church-going and long-term commitment. However, my hypothesis is that the local Cathedral was never very far away. The true identity of the Cathedral could never be international nor even national, nor could it ever be for that matter "modern".

This profile of the Cathedral and its team of ministers will illustrate that below the radical exterior and promise of controversy, the Cathedral proved not to be very radical at all. Like radical theology, from which the team ministry drew its inspiration, it was in a living dialogue with a much older tradition: that of the ancient regime. Although it was impossible for the team to remain oblivious to the vast contradictions between their thoughts and those of the outside, their own order, oral and local, remained veiled from their eyes.

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<sup>9</sup>Annual Register, 1962.

<sup>10</sup>To Gerald Priestland religious programmes "stands in direct comparison to other programmes". *Who Needs The Church?* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1983) 46.

<sup>11</sup>Colin Semper, Personal Interview, 1 April, 1987.

St. Michael's history, as it changed from a parish Church into a Collegiate and then into Coventry Cathedral, can be said to represent the fate and situation of the ancien regime. The Cathedral, it is suggested here, is traditional, aristocratic England, as it survives into the present, in microcosm; it carries its magnificent social ambition, as well as its political weakness. This concluding section looks to Coventry Cathedral as a living manifestation of the old order engulfed by modern life, the modern industrial city, modern society.

## II.

### The Quest for Authority.

Coventry Cathedral was the bequest of Victorian Cathedral Reform. Although the Cathedral staff was attracted to the idea of having once had monastic forebears in Coventry,<sup>12</sup> it was not until 1908 that the parish Church of St. Michael became a Collegiate Church, and not until 1918 that it became the Cathedral Church for the newly formed Diocese of Coventry and "seat" of a newly created Bishop.<sup>13</sup> Even in 1918, the creation of

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<sup>12</sup>The ruins of a Benedictine Abbey were discovered near the new Cathedral.

<sup>13</sup>Bishop Yeatman Biggs died in 1922. - Since 1918, the Cathedral had four Provosts, each bringing his own style to his ministry, without, however, affecting the heart of the old order. Richard T. Howard, appointed by Bishop Mervyn Haigh in 1933, departed significantly from the nineteenth-century spirit of reform when he declared the inherent contradiction between the secular State and its affairs and the ideal of a Christian society. It will be seen, that Howard's call for forgiveness and "for a simpler, more Christ-like world" after the fatal night of 1940 when Coventry was bombed and the Cathedral burnt, sprang from an echo of Newman's simpler economy. There was a generational difference when Provost H.C.N. Williams and his team took over in 1958. Howard's small-scale vision was buried under the Juggernaut of the new Cathedral and the size of its mission and ministry. Ill health forced Williams to retire in 1981 and after an interregnum under Peter Berry (now Provost of Birmingham Cathedral) the Cathedral and a large deficit became the responsibility of Provost Colin Semper. Semper was a man for the eighties, he brought with him the experience as religious programme producer at BBC and so a national rather than regional outlook. In 1987 Semper resigned and returned to his work at BBC, holding a Canonry at Westminster Abbey. The present Provost is the Very Reverend John Petty, who came to the Cathedral in

(Footnote continued)

a new diocese and cathedral seemed a rather peculiar solution to the problems of the day: the growing alienation of society and the industrial population of Coventry in particular. Yet, Coventry was part of an overall strategy of the established Church's mission to the industrial world and has its counterparts in other demographically needful areas. Birmingham, Sheffield, and Liverpool were some earlier examples of attempts to organize the Church to meet the challenge of England's demographic redistribution.<sup>14</sup> Like the mushrooming of theological colleges, they embodied the drive to professionalization, providing a better organisational framework and training to back a more co-ordinated ministry to the un-churched industrial population, albeit the ideal function of the cathedral's remained the exemplary refinement of worship and the choir tradition.<sup>15</sup>

These enlargements coincided, however, with the visible decline and fall of the Churches in England,<sup>16</sup> and were in part a response to "secularization", the religious counterpart to "modernization".<sup>17</sup> All in all, these reforms "standardized" Church services offered throughout the country - paying attention to availability, uniformity and frequency.<sup>18</sup> By 1938, the self-confidence of the nineteenth-century Reformers, as manifest in the Student Volunteer Movement, the Missionary Movement, the Laymen movement, all the enterprises bringing together large

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<sup>13</sup>(continued)

January 1988. See also: Kenneth Richardson, *Twentieth-Century Coventry* (Coventry: City of Coventry, 1972)

<sup>14</sup>Chadwick, 383. Many new sees were being created in the first two decades of the twentieth century, mainly in large urban centres: Birmingham (1902). Chelmsford (1914), St. Edmundsbury (1914). Coventry (1918), Guildford (1921), Leicester (1924), Derby (1927). Portsmouth (1927). The see of Manchester was created as early as 1848, and Liverpool in 1880. [*Handbook of British Chronology*] Also, under some very progressive Deans and Bishops the Cathedrals were gradually regenerated from the impoverishment created by the reductions of the 1840 Act which deprived them of 382 cathedral offices and significant funds.

<sup>15</sup>Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, 7-9, 46.

<sup>16</sup>E.R. Wickham, *Church and People In an Industrial City* (London: Lutterworth Press Ltd, 1957), 166-213.

<sup>17</sup>Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society, Lambeth: 1870-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 10.

"Secularization is the religious counterpart to the theory of modernization".

<sup>18</sup>Russell, 71.

numbers of people, could no longer be found in the same strength. At least at Coventry, there seemed a more critical view of how the Church, or the Cathedral, might be serving society. Coventry Cathedral's Provost, Richard T. Howard and five Anglican Clergymen, one Anglican layman, five Free Church Ministers and one Roman Catholic Priest, all of whom made up the Coventry Christian Social Council, drew up a joint declaration on "The Christian Church and Social Duty". In it, they expressed disturbing views, for example: "We are in part the perpetrators, in part the victims of social sin" and begged to withdraw their approval from the government and leadership of the day:

Widespread poverty in an age of plenty, the inability of great nations to find employment for thousands of their citizens, except when they are preparing for war, are major symptoms of the general disorder. The present revival of prosperity is in great part the result of re-armament, and therefore, far from constituting the solution of the problem, represents a new and sinister aspect of it.<sup>19</sup>

The Council had arrived at the same conclusions as T.S.Eliot in his 1939 *The Idea of a Christian Society*: the Christian and the modern way of life were essentially incompatible.<sup>20</sup> These conclusions prompted Provost Howard to place responsibility for the Second World War firmly in the lap of the secular nation, going so far as to speak into the hurricane of public opinion, that "God did not want war to happen", and that "our grief is but a pale reflection of the divine grief and shame at the crime and horror of war". Howard invited Christians to pray for "the establishment of a God-fearing and Christian civilization".<sup>21</sup> When, during that fateful night of 14 November 1940, the Cathedral was almost completely destroyed by the German bomb-attack of the city's centre, Howard's ideal remained unshaken. The result was the epiphany which still moves the heart, almost fifty years later:

We are trying - hard as it may be - to banish all thoughts of revenge...we are going to try to make a kinder, simpler, a more Christ-like sort of world, in the days beyond this strife.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>The Coventry Christian Social Council, "The Christian Church and Social Duty", Pamphlet: 1938.

<sup>20</sup>T.S.Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, 44-5.

<sup>21</sup>Coventry Cathedral Magazine, 1939.

<sup>22</sup>BBC Broadcast (15 Nov. 1940)

These words, broadcast over the BBC in the wake of and in spite of the destruction, made history. However, things were going to happen that made Howard's hope for a "kinder, simpler" and "more Christ-like sort of world" even less likely of fulfilment than before the war. Most of the change happened outside the Cathedral. But even inside the Cathedral there were developments that were inimical to Howard's vision of a simpler, more Christian way of life.

Soon it was discovered that the Ruins, the altar of rubble, the charred beams of the cross, and the emblazoned words "Father Forgive" worked together to have a miraculous effect on the people who came to see it. On November 14, 1945, *Coventry Cathedral Chronicle* was pleased to report, crowds numbering 5000 people were present.<sup>23</sup> At his retirement in 1958, Howard felt he had experienced nothing so important as "the astonishing and ever increasing influence of Coventry Cathedral, old and new, during these post-war years". He added: "I write with no reserve because I am as certain as I am alive that it is the Almighty God Himself and no man who is responsible for what has happened and is happening".<sup>24</sup> However, in fact it was not only the Almighty God who helped to bring the Cathedral to the attention of the nation.

No one could deny this: Coventry had been blessed among Cathedrals. When Williams took over from Howard, he referred to having "inherited a situation" (*Coventry Cathedral Review*, hereafter CCR Jan. 61).<sup>25</sup> It was clear what he meant. Coventry was news. In an age impressed by statistical success, public interest could not but make an impression on the Church. Here was a great opportunity for influence. However, the question of influence was closely tied to authority and power. Who possessed authority - the Church, the Cathedral, or the people? The conduct

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<sup>23</sup> Cathedrals as a whole began attracting more attention around 1945 and were gradually appreciated for their missionary value, resulting in the Cathedrals Measure of 1963, which allowed for better staffing and funding of programmes. Paul A. Welsby, *A History of the Church of England: 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 161-5.

<sup>24</sup> *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, - an article published on Howard's retirement in 1958.

<sup>25</sup> For a description of Cathedral Publications see Bibliographic Notes.



of the team at the Cathedral revealed that it was not used to asking such questions. No one wondered, as for example Asa Briggs did when considering the "authority" of the BBC if the Church held authority or if it merely was an authority?<sup>26</sup>

The absence of such self-consciousness revealed the image which those who represented the Church had of their order. An order is not in the habit of defending its authority: the authority and power accorded to its situation in a traditional social scheme. Even in the sixties, when a definition would have led the team at Coventry to discover the difference between holding authority *de facto* and *de jure* and that in the modern scheme of things the two did not coincide, authority remained an unquestioned assumption. The question might have been deliberately avoided. Definition, as Newman re-discovered in the principle of economy, would have meant limitation. Classification of spheres of influence and objectives could only mean a reduction. The keepers of the trust at Coventry Cathedral could never accept such a limitation and so instinctively avoided it. Their inner voice ordered that they "play up and play the game".<sup>27</sup>

Coventry's gamble for authority within the modern social arrangement was thus at a disadvantage long before it chose to do anything. This is not to say that the Church in the sixties was oblivious to the changed distribution of authority. E.R. Wickham, for example, probed into the history behind the diminished role of the church.<sup>28</sup> In *Twentieth-Century Cathedrals*, Provost Williams blamed the Church's present weakness on missed opportunities: past failures to adapt to the new needs of the complex and specialized modern "community".<sup>29</sup> In this Church-centric narrative it was not the world but the Church that was responsible. This, Coventry Cathedral was to set to remedy.

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<sup>26</sup>Asa Briggs on "The Future of Broadcasting" in Richard Hoggart ed. *The Future of Broadcasting: Essays on authority, style, and choice*. (London: Macmillan, 1960) vi, 26, 36.

<sup>27</sup>Sir Henry Newbolt, *Vitai Lampada* (1879) a Tableau usually performed by Public School boys.

<sup>28</sup>Wickham, 166.

<sup>29</sup>H.C.N. Williams *Twentieth-Century Cathedral* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964), 4-8.

While uncertainty reigned about Coventry's effect on modern society, modern society proceeded to make its imprint on Coventry Cathedral. To begin with, it influenced the scale of Coventry Cathedral's ministry and the events through which it hoped to stir up public consciousness. The Cathedral could not be a local heaven and retreat and, at the same time, be important.<sup>30</sup> It followed that the ministry, the organization and administration had to be on impressive scale. Inflation began with hiring policy. The eye to the media led willy nilly to the appointment of high profile men - men articulate and interesting, men with a "name", in short, personalities. But in addition to personality, the Cathedral required professional authority. Since the nineteenth century the theological seminaries increasingly produced experts on church and spiritual questions. From this it followed that the clergy in general had to be amateurs when it came to questions outside church fields: non-ecclesiastical history, economics and politics. At Coventry, the escape from this "spiritual" straightjacket was of paramount importance.

Simon Phipps, the team's industrial chaplain (now the retired Bishop of Lincoln), brought to the Cathedral his experience as a worker-priest under the alias of material handler; having worked alongside workers of an air craft factory in Coventry, and lived on "Ivy Walk", a community block in a Coventry Council housing estate. He was a man with inside knowledge of the dynamics of working-class life and union and management politics.<sup>31</sup> Stephen Verney, the Diocesan Missioner, had a special interest in socio-political questions and proved to be as fully at home with theories of urban and foreign development as with social work. Edward H. Patey (later to be the Dean of Liverpool Cathedral), in charge of education of the laity, brought with him his experience as Secretary of the Youth Department of the British Council of Churches.<sup>32</sup> Peter Berry, who is now Provost of Birmingham Cathedral, having spent 25 years at Coventry Cathedral, was an expert on an inter-racial and

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<sup>30</sup> Chadwick describes this as the prevalent image of Cathedrals until a new trend emerged with the reforms. *The Victorian Church*, ii, 373.

<sup>31</sup> Simon Phipps, Personal Interview, 3 Nov. 1987

<sup>32</sup> Coventry Cathedral Chronicle, 1958.

inter-cultural dialogue with Britain's most recent immigrants.<sup>33</sup> Even during the moderate present, Canon Paul Oestreicher carries on as high-profile director of the International Ministry of Coventry Cathedral, conducting a sort of counter diplomacy shuttle to the Thatcher government. These are but a few examples of the high calibre staff at Coventry. What these names shared was that the authority of their ministry and therefore desirability to the Cathedral derived less from their theological know-how or religious correctness than from their "specialized activity" in outside territory (*Coventry Cathedral Network*, hereafter CCN Oct.68).

It was Provost Williams who co-ordinated these extra-ordinary talents to make Coventry an exciting place. There can be no doubt that Williams was hired with this in mind. He had come to the Diocesan authorities' attention because of his transformation of St. Mary's Church in Winchester, "with a ministry in the docks and with the Trade Unions", from a "snobbish shell" to a thriving congregation numbering more than 2000 people, forcing surrounding mission churches, built "to palm off Southampton docklanders", to shut down.<sup>34</sup> At Coventry, he did not disappoint the authorities. Under his leadership the Cathedral did things in great style. A recording studio and television lighting were incorporated into the plans for the new building. The press, radio and television producers were welcomed aboard, the better to follow the excitement taking place here. The opening of the BBC studio inside the Cathedral was celebrated in the presence of the Honourable Kenneth Lamb, Head of Religious Broadcasting (CCR Mar. 64). Communications had become the central idea behind William's scenario for the "backward" Church, part of the make-good operation for past sins of omission. The Cathedral team was therefore strongly predisposed to avail itself of any platform which increased the church's chances of nationwide communication. Williams let it be known early that his chief role at Coventry was "to bring to life a new Cathedral...to re-present

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<sup>33</sup>Peter Barry, Personal Interview 6 July, 1987. See also *The [Coventry Cathedral] Review*, July 65, and

<sup>34</sup>H.C.N. Williams, Personal Interview 2 April, 1987. It was in fact Williams work in the Southampton docks which brought him to the attention of the new Bishop in Coventry.

convincingly its message in a materialistic and divided society". Yet, how could it, speaking a language no-one understood: "The Church's means of communication is completely out of step with, and very far behind, the means of communication and the consequent power which is in the hands of those who influence society to other ends" (CCR Dec.1960).

With a fine instinct for the dynamics of the modern mass media, Williams condensed the message of Coventry to fit the "three-minute culture".<sup>35</sup> Howard's dramatic story of the bombing, the clergy in the rubble, the charred beams and the ruins, became the three R's of Coventry: Reconciliation, Renewal and Resurrection (CCR Jan.61). Reconciliation in particular became the key concept, or borrowing a media term, the signature tune, around which clustered the events and the mission outposts, the centres of reconciliation in America, Ireland and Israel; landmarks that gave the image of Coventry meaning and substance. Indeed, Reconciliation had such a wide appeal it could cover anything: labour relations, police protection, international exchanges, ecumenical ventures, a new Europe.

The press clipping service hired by the Cathedral from 1958 to the early years of the 1970s tells of the importance attached to publicity during those years. As Berry commented:

Without the media our work would have been meaningless. We needed the media to make an impact, to show the world what we were doing. We knew that we alone could not change the world. We were confined to symbolic actions, models which told a parable. These could only reach the nation through the BBC or the press.<sup>36</sup>

The Festival of Consecration was created with an eye to the media. Williams had wanted "every effort of publicity" for this once-in-a-life-time event (CCR Feb.62). The agenda called for famous orchestras and conductors and singers - all to be broadcast by the BBC; a sports festival with Coventry Cathedral Gold, Silver and Bronze medals to be won, a complete county fair, with processions by the clergy of the Coventry

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<sup>35</sup>Michael Ignatieff's term.

<sup>36</sup>Berry, Interview 6 July, 1987. BBC let him down though during the 1984 Peace Festival. (Network 1984)

<sup>37</sup>Birmingham Post, 21 Mar. 1962.

Diocese.<sup>37</sup> "Imagine" wrote the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, "a three-week event which is at once an Edinburgh arts festival, a county fair, a mammoth sports gala, an agricultural show, and a Three Choirs religious festival, and you just begin to appreciate its scope".<sup>38</sup> The Festival was an event to rival the Coronation. The media could not stay away. The public repaid the investment. The Festival drew 300,000 participants. What happened after that is reflected in the leaflet handed to the visitors during the first few years.

We welcome you to Coventry Cathedral, wherever you come from, whoever you are, and whatever your faith. During the summer months visitors come in large numbers, and pass through the Cathedral at the rate of 2,000 in every hour. You may have to queue for a long time. We ask you to be patient. The notice-boards will tell you when the Cathedral is open to visitors and when services are being held<sup>39</sup>.

The early crowds helped pay for the cost of building the Cathedral, estimated at over one and a half million pounds, within the first two years of its Consecration.<sup>40</sup>

However, the struggle for publicity consumed more strength than the Cathedral could sustain. It soon became evident that the Cathedral's battle for public awareness could not go on at this rate. Already during the preparations certain artists complained of parochialism and amateurism.<sup>41</sup> There were cancellations, hasty changes in programme.<sup>42</sup> Graham Whettam, a composer, was quoted as having said:

For if parochialism is to dominate artistic enterprise in Coventry, the possibilities for the future inherent in the Cathedral festival will bear no fruit, and artistically Coventry will slide necessarily into a fossilised condition until perhaps another disaster to the city will awaken artistic vision, energy and hope.<sup>43</sup>

It must have dawned on the Cathedral staff that their energies might be swallowed up by the sheer creation of publicity. The festival had not yet begun when the Cathedral let it be known

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<sup>38</sup> *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 4 April, 1962.

<sup>39</sup> From the leaflet distributed at the time by the Cathedral authorities.

<sup>40</sup> Williams, Personal Interview 2 April, 1987.

<sup>41</sup> *Birmingham Post*, 20 Mar. 1962.

<sup>42</sup> *Coventry Evening Telegraph* 28 Mar. 62

<sup>43</sup> *Birmingham Post*, 20 Mar. 62.

that there would be no future festivals of this type.<sup>44</sup> The time had come to choose priorities.

There were plenty of signs that keeping abreast was impossible. One intractable problem was Coventry's message to the world. Whatever it was it had to say, it had to reach a vast variety of people. This ruled out depth. Canon Purcell, an honorary member of the team, wrote: "operating as [Broadcasting] does in a mass medium, [it] can never afford to confine its attention to the faithful. It has a responsibility to all and sundry" - the vast bulk of Christians who entered a Church building only "for baptisms, marriages and funerals" (CCR May, 1964). When it came to broadcasting, it was this vast bulk of indifferent Christians who held authority and not the Church.

Broadcasters claimed it was not they but their audience who decided what was to go on the air. As Gerald Priestland, producer of a popular radio religious commentary, observed: "The religious broadcaster has to be extremely careful about how he practises his trade...[he] has to stand in direct comparison with the other programmes surrounding [him]..." This made religious programmes seem incongruous, squeezed in between the news and a political commentary.<sup>45</sup> Was it the public or was it religion that was being converted? Priestland's praise that religious broadcasting in the U.K. was as professional as drama, sport or light entertainment, was cold comfort. Roy McKay, another religious broadcaster, was similarly unable to clear up the ambiguity of the whole concept of competing for attention. Could the "impartiality" which was "the essence of the public service broadcasting of the BBC" and which meant a "balance of opposing points of view", be applied to religion?<sup>46</sup> It did not occur to anyone that the entire 92 per cent of normal, non-religious programming rivalled religious interests.

The question of authority and influence was also tied to

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<sup>44</sup>"There will never be another festival", *Coventry Evening Telegraph* (23 Apr. 1962)

<sup>45</sup>Priestland, 46.

<sup>46</sup>Roy McKay *Take Care of the Sense, Reflection on Religious Broadcasting* (London: SCM, 1964) 29-32.

what the Church realistically could and did do. Coventry wanted to do everything. This was not only for the sake of keeping the Cathedral in the spotlight, although this consideration was never far away. The Cathedral, like the Church in general, could not confine itself to specific tasks: it served the world. Coventry found literally a thousand needs. It served as a place where public figures met - from the city or from far away, experts from within the Church and without: it was a place for concerts, for drama, for conferences, speeches, processions, protests, vigils, fairs, rallies and exhibits. The list can never be complete. No-one at the Cathedral can recall all that happened there. Some events were momentous and stuck to the memory: the Festival of Consecration, the rebuilding of the Ruin's tower.<sup>47</sup> There were conferences which were topical and conferences which were not, there were public lectures; Cathedral lectures - the "Coventry Conversations" (7-11 Nov. 1963); study programmes whose content and outcome was often significant for those who went. One young seminarian from Lincoln Theological college, Trevor Cooper, who participated in one of the study weekends at the Cathedral, was to return years later to work alongside Simon Phipps, the industrial Chaplain.<sup>48</sup> A woman, now in her eighties and hazy on things past, remembers her first time in the new Cathedral.<sup>49</sup>

The Cathedral hosted the first Conference of Deans and Provosts of Cathedrals in Britain - modelled after the Conference of American Deans - which also took place at Coventry (1965 and 1966). It also put on the Peoples and Cities conference in 1968.<sup>50</sup> Then there were the symbolic action events at the International Centre, which have become Cathedral lore. Williams and many members of the staff and congregation were infected with the "working spirit" of "Aktion Sühnezeichen", young Germans who put their faith in mortar and brick (1961). The International Centre which they helped build was opened 15 April 1962.<sup>51</sup> The men and women from the Cathedral returned the favour, going to

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<sup>47</sup> Stephen Smalley, Personal Interview 16 Mar, 1987. He found it strange that one would repair a Ruin.

<sup>48</sup> Trevor Cooper, Personal Interview 16 May 87.

<sup>49</sup> Barbara Aspell, Secretary at the Cathedral, Personal Interview, 21 May, 1987 told me this about her 87 year old mother in law who also remembers the Consecration.

<sup>50</sup> Peoples and Cities Conference (Coventry, 1968)

Dresden to reconstruct a wing of the Diakonissinnen Hospital. The ties have lasted, letters and exchange visits kept the international connection alive, at least with Pat Holmes, the Provost's social secretary and matron of the undercroft, and Connie Downes, the Cathedral's information officer who calls herself in spite of her years with Churchpeople and Church issues a "laywoman". There still are letters from Dresden, written with a dictionary by German deaconesses whose lives are mysteriously connected with this Midland town destroyed by their forebears.<sup>52</sup>

Many people remember the excitement of particular happenings: sending a charred cross to the New York Fair;<sup>53</sup> the opening of Kennedy House with Willy Brandt as special guest,<sup>54</sup> motorcars shown in the nave, praised in 1972 and thoroughly misunderstood and criticised in 1986;<sup>55</sup> the celebrity events bringing Glenda Jackson, Princess Margaret, actor-singer Ian Wallace and raising thousands of pounds;<sup>56</sup> clowns during Sunday worship; porchplays; drama groups from Valparaiso; the Coventry Mystery Plays; exhibits in the Ruins, in the undercroft; the opening of the refectory - "food for the pilgrims"; the "foyers", the Coventry Cathedral Rose (1972) grown by Sam McGredy of the Royal Nurseries in Portadown, Northern Ireland;<sup>57</sup> the Consecrations of Bishops and installations of the Companions of the Order of the Community of the Cross of Nails, and the opening of its centres of "inter-parochial renewal" in Ireland (Corrymeela), America (Chicago),<sup>58</sup> the local Hillfield project.<sup>59</sup> the 1984 Peace Festival.

There were the political events: union and management meeting on neutral ground; peace festivals; inter-racial

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<sup>51</sup>Ansgar Skrivner, *Aktion Sühnezeichen: Brücken über Blut und Asche* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1962)

<sup>52</sup>Pat Holmes, the Cathedral's Social Secretary has permitted a look at these letters.

<sup>53</sup>Connie Downes, Publicity Officer, Personal Interview 18 Mar. 1987.

<sup>54</sup>CCR June 65.

<sup>55</sup>Trevor Cooper, Industrial Chaplain, Personal Interview, May 1987.

<sup>56</sup>[Coventry] Network, (Feb. 73)

<sup>57</sup>[Coventry] Network, (Apr. 72)

<sup>58</sup>[Coventry] Network (Sept. 71 and July 72)

<sup>59</sup>[Coventry] Network (Summer 1968)



interchanges and other encounters whose politics did not seem obvious: the Judges Service,<sup>60</sup> the laying down of the colours, the prayers at Council House. The list goes on and on, even today new ventures are added, while busload after busload of pilgrims arrive, while year after year hundreds of school parties bring thousands of "pupil-pilgrims". The Cathedral wants them young, when they are impressionable; it "interprets" to them the symbols and the meanings through audio-visual presentation and educational staff.<sup>61</sup> All this is part of the undying hope of bringing to bear the influence of the Church on the modern way of life, of restoring the Church's authority, of projecting its image as one of life and power.

Project after project, it must be remembered, was initiated without practical assessment of what the Church in modern times could realistically dream to achieve, without any question about its actual power to initiate and sustain its duty. Williams of course noticed that the "1944 Welfare State Act had taken from the church much of its responsibility of Social Service" and that this meant "that the church during the past 15 years has lived through a phase of rediscovery of its role in society" (CCN Jan.71). But looking out into the world, the team also saw that humanity was served impersonally, routinely and, most importantly, insufficiently. The needs of the world were limitless, infinite in their variety and magnitude and multiplying. The modern problems of alienation, isolation, de-personalisation, not to speak of the stark phenomena of third World urbanization and famine were on a scale so intractable that it seems almost absurd that Coventry Cathedral (or anyone) would entertain hopes of making an impact. Yet, given the image it had of itself, given the impulses of duty it felt so deep inside, it was impossible for Coventry not to get involved in every opportunity of mission and service that came along. All this work, therefore, was undertaken in faith and in faith alone, without the means with which realistically to assuage the hurts of modern life.

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<sup>60</sup>[Coventry] Network (1986)

<sup>61</sup>CCR Dec. 63, and Anne Gorham, Educ. Officer at the Cathedral, Personal Interview, 18 June 1987.

As the new Cathedral began its second decade, signs of strain began to show. Growth required greater and greater outlay of resources in order to be sustained. Williams was forced to appeal for more funds. In 1970, Coventry's image was no longer as easy to sustain as in 1962. Using the business metaphor he appealed for "shareholders" in his "restless" enterprise. Loyal to the standards of the business world, he promised growth. Donations would be "money used for venture not for standing still". The matter did not fit too comfortably, for he wrote:

So the alternatives to an appeal for money are to stop or to retrench and both mean stagnation and death, which we are not prepared to accept. (Network 1970)

Already the supporters of the Cathedral were receiving good value for their investment:

The Cathedral...developed a ministry of about 80 people within a budget of a mere £70,000 a year for all the work that is done here. If eleven years ago we had set out to reproduce an image of a Cathedral as it has been generally accepted in Britain...we would have had enough money to build another Coventry Cathedral. (Network 1970)

By the time Colin Semper took over in 1982, the Cathedral faced a deficit of £100,000. Semper called in the help of Price Waterhouse, who had offered their accountancy services free of charge.<sup>62</sup> Accountants replaced the Church people and visionaries who had in the post-war years planned for the future of Coventry - and not only for Coventry, but Britain and the World. The results were accordingly. Coventry, like most other Cathedrals would be turning toward the needs of those which were nearest its outreach, toward those problems which in the city of Coventry in 1982 seemed most pressing. But if Semper thought that this was a change from the past, he was badly mistaken. Coventry Cathedral, as it emerges from the next chapter, had never been anything but a local Cathedral.

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<sup>62</sup>Coventry Evening Telegraph (21 Sept. 1982)

## Chapter 15.

## "Profile of a Cathedral as an Ancient Order".

## I.

Two Needs.

"There was no choice", Williams said, "where there was a national, international or local possibility, we became involved".<sup>1</sup> Typical of such a possibility to get involved were the needs of the village of Lefkas, Greece. It was relatively easy and at the same time satisfying to collect funds and donate a tractor to the villagers (CCR Oct. 1963). Although it was only a small contribution to foreign aid, the whole affair had the aura of optimism which we now associate with the sixties. It was the typical gesture of the "Development Decade", a donation by the well-developed part of the world for the under-developed.<sup>2</sup>

To Stephen Verney, then the Diocesan missionary of Coventry, who could speak Greek and who helped carry out the scheme, the project had a mission to fulfil at home and abroad. The Lefkas project helped Greek villagers help themselves and at home it gave a focus on the world beyond. However, if Lefkas was there to help Coventry Cathedral members to awareness, the lesson was not clear. Did the donations really help? Within two years Lefkas reappeared in the congregation news. This time the Cathedral congregation was only expected to help raise half the cost of a second tractor. The appeal referred to "two needs", asking for more money for Greece as well as real Christian service at home. Could people open their own homes for "1,500 juveniles and adults" and also give temporary accommodation for "Borstal boys" (CCR April, 1965)? The latter was not the only local want. Shortly after having been made the Bishop's chaplain for "Overseas People" in Coventry, Peter Berry decided to thrust the "dynamite subject" of the "'dark million' in our midst" upon

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, Personal Interview, 2 April, 1987.

<sup>2</sup>I am borrowing the term from Lesslie Newbigin's address, "Living With Change" given at the Cathedral in June 1972.

the Cathedral congregation's conscience ('Review' July, 1965).<sup>3</sup>

The tension between local and universal needs was a continuous feature of the Cathedral. While Provost Williams made concessions to local concerns, his heart was more with Albert van den Heuvel who spoke at the Deans and Provosts conference held at the Cathedral in 1966:

A man today who is not a world citizen is out of date; that a man who still thinks of his ministry and his life in terms of one country, is a man who has become a reactionary. That is a very harsh verdict on most of us (and I think on the British Isles more than on the rest of the world): but it is a remark worth pondering.<sup>4</sup>

van den Heuvel spoke from personal experience. Availing himself of the navigational metaphor, he admitted that defending larger horizons felt "like [being in] a rowing boat in an ocean of idolatry". Some "demonic perversion in man" prevented acknowledgement of "a larger horizon than the one we were brought up with".<sup>5</sup>

Williams could have told many stories in support of this. His entire experience at Coventry was an illustration of van den Heuvel's comment that "the making of a nation out of tribes has hardly ever happened without some strongly guided means of persuasion".<sup>6</sup> Still, these were strange feelings for inhabitants of Kennedy's global village when even the nation state seemed no longer the final frontier of social organisation, when commercial and political life seemed to become absorbed in a multi-national economic and political superstructure and all events linked electronically, therefore, almost simultaneously.<sup>7</sup> Yet, they reflected a genuine experience. People were indeed proportionately more inward bound. There was plenty of resistance

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<sup>3</sup>For a brief period in 1965, the Coventry Cathedral Review, was called the Review, and looked like a theological journal.

<sup>4</sup>A.E. van den Heuvel, "The Character of the Community Today", in *Cathedral as Places of Learning and Influence in the Community*. Conference of Deans and Provosts in Britain, 1966, (Coventry: Edwards The Printers Ltd., 1966) 9.

<sup>5</sup>van den Heuvel, "Character of the Community", 5.

<sup>6</sup>van den Heuvel, "Character of the Community", 6. He claimed to be quoting from William Temple.

<sup>7</sup>Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962, University of Toronto Press, 1968) 30-1.

to processes that universalised and in this way threatened local and personal life. Although van den Heuvel believed himself to be addressing an enlightened minority, he was wrong. Coventry was as parochial as could be. The very conference at which van den Heuvel spoke was a difficult affair for Williams. The Deans and Provosts from cathedrals around the country viewed Coventry, the cathedral in the blaze of public attention, with cynical reservation. To them it was "that new place with new ideas". Press attention had favoured Williams and Coventry over cathedrals which were mainly local. Ecclesiastical hostility to the host cathedral was expressed at this very conference. Even today Williams will deny that he sought publicity out of fear of "the ease with which publicity might appear as boasting". Going on television was always accompanied with trepidations about the "parsons who would see this".<sup>8</sup>

## II.

### Local Resistance.

In spite of local embarrassment, Williams never let go of his universalist vision. From the moment of his collation and instalment in September 1958 to his retirement in 1981, he fought one prolonged battle. Much too much of his and his team's energy had to be diverted to the purpose of winning local support. It will be seen that the reasons for this resistance were in part the intrinsically local identity of the Church itself, rooted in the parish structure of the old regime; in part the very giganticizing trends of modern life, of which the modern Cathedral was, inadvertently, a part.

This conflict was apparent long before the actual Consecration, for example in the full time appointment of a Diocesan missionary.<sup>9</sup> This office, assumed by Stephen Verney, spoke volumes about the need to win native acceptance for this artificial implant of a Cathedral with national and even

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<sup>8</sup>Williams, Personal Interview, 2 April 1987.

<sup>9</sup>His task was specifically "linking the parishes as one family to the mother Church". (CCR Dec.1961)

international pretensions, moreover with a Provost and a team which firmly believed that the old parish structure had to make way, preferably to a supra-parochial, outward reaching cathedral.<sup>10</sup> Judging by the size of Verney's campaign, as will be seen, persuasion was not easy.<sup>11</sup>

As the Consecration of the new Cathedral approached, Stephen Verney arranged for a Cross of Nails to travel from parish to parish of the Diocese. Following the Cross to Nuneaton, the reporter from the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* was able to observe local reaction to the Cathedral first hand. His report confirmed that the reception was not overly enthusiastic. Charged with the difficult task of persuading his parish to accept the new Cathedral, the Rector, Canon Herbert, needed to remind the parishioners that the Bishop of Coventry was also the Bishop of Nuneaton. Of course, he felt, the parishioners would not have experienced nearly the same difficulties had the Diocese been named the Diocese of Warwickshire rather than of Coventry. A delicate reprimand, not made in jealousy of Coventry's triumphalism - although such jealousy, it was suspected, did exist - but a genuine attempt to have the parishioners accept Coventry as Nuneaton's own Cathedral. The newspaper report also revealed some interesting parish history, for example that the town of Nuneaton had not been spared by centralization:

...speaking of the improved setting of the Parish Church in the middle of the new Nuneaton, Canon Herbert said a triumphal approach had been opened up by the new section of the inner ring road...Despite the movement of population from the town centre, the parish Church, added Canon Herbert, still held the affections of people who had moved miles away.

These changes in housing had altered the make-up of church membership. "The electoral roll", the paper reported, "now consists of 765 nonresidents and 635 residents". This presented the Nuneaton Church with a problem typical of most parishes since the second World War: the parish had become a congregation, composed of members rather than inhabitant souls. For a

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<sup>10</sup>Williams wrote in the Dec.1960 issue of the CCR that "the churches in every field are inhibited by tradition, by fear of change...[and] by an inadequate vision on the parochial level".

<sup>11</sup>Stephen Verney describes his labours in *Fire at Coventry* (1964, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969)

"congregation", the basis of membership came from memory and loyalty rather than residence. Would such a congregation outlast these memories? Anxieties about the future of the parish church spoke through the closing comments of the reviewer: "What they missed greatly were the children, very seldom did one see them now".<sup>12</sup>

From the Nuneaton perspective, it was far from clear how the new and triumphal Cathedral nearby would help reverse its problems. Even if local interests were willingly tied to the Cathedral's popular success, there was a concrete danger that the activities surrounding its Consecration and ministry would enhance rather than change secular attitudes. The Cathedral's modern image bowed to the popular demand for entertainment, the clamour for sensation and novelty. Open resistance to Coventry Cathedral was, therefore, not long in coming. A Leamington vicar, E.J.C.Haselden, while berating his parishioners to be "more outward looking", also let it be known that "there is a tremendous danger of the Coventry Cathedral Festival being a great secular celebration and nothing more".<sup>13</sup> The authorities at the Diocese, however, had only been waiting for this kind of criticism. Bishop Bardsley, backed by Verney's counsel, was ready with an elaborate plan of making the Cathedral integral to the life of the entire Diocese. His Pastoral Letter claimed: "I believe that the Holy Spirit has been leading us all [*Italics Mine*] for many months past and is now revealing a clear pattern". He praised the "meetings of the Clergy/Laity groups which had laid the foundation of a forward movement" as part of that revealed pattern, but he hoped to enlist more local support: "May hundreds of such people now see that the Consecration of a building can become really effective in the life of the Diocese and the whole Church, only if it is accompanied by a Consecration of the people" (CCR Nov.1961).

To facilitate such enlightenment, he had a plan of action. "I shall be conducting a mission to the Diocese from the

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<sup>12</sup>"Nuneaton 'Sorrow' on Name of Diocese" *The Coventry Evening Telegraph* (3 Mar. 1962)

<sup>13</sup>*Leamington Courier* (23 Mar.1962)

4th to the 14th April 1962, therefore much of our thinking, discussion and prayers during the next six months shall be related to this important event". This was not all. People missed by step one might be found out by step two:

The mission, in turn will usher in a period of forty days of prayer, when every parish throughout the whole Diocese will be taking part in a Chain of Prayer which will continue ceaselessly and in which the consecrated life of faith, the life of the Cross and the Resurrection will be constantly on our minds. I hope that arrangements will be made through the Rural Deans, for the Cross of Nails to be carried into every town, village and hamlet throughout the whole Diocese during the forty days. These forty days of prayer will, in turn, lead us to the renewing of baptismal vows - clergy and laity alike - on the 25th of May, 1962. On this day, too, I shall re-affirm my consecration vows and shall invite my clergy to re-affirm their ordination promises in the presence of their congregations. (CCR Nov.1961)

The Cross of Nails was expected at Holy Trinity in Leamington in May, not long after Bishop Bardsley had initiated a prayer group at All Souls.<sup>14</sup>

All this was still not considered enough. If the Festival of Consecration was to bring Coventry to national and international consciousness, however, it had to be also an event staged by the local Diocese. To invite such local-level support, Provost Williams needed "every effort of publicity" to "convey the sense of importance which the Cathedral attaches to the greatest possible involvement in all the Festival Services of the greatest possible number of local city and diocesan representatives". In case this did not do the trick, Stephen Verney published a "Prayer Rota Appeal" in which he asked for no less than 600 Volunteers "to establish a rota system to enable a continuous vigil of prayer to be maintained in the new Cathedral". And if this strategy failed, there were still the eleven processions by the clergy of the Coventry Diocese walking through Broadgate to the Cathedral, beginning with the day of Consecration.<sup>15</sup>

The success of all these endeavours is difficult to measure. In his *Twentieth-Century Cathedral*, Williams spelled out

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<sup>14</sup>Leamington Courier (23 Mar.1962)

<sup>15</sup>Coventry Evening Telegraph (27 Mar.1962)



his anti-parochial intentions more fully, arguing a case for cathedrals as the new-type organization, tailored to the size of modern communal problems. It greeted the new Cathedrals Measure but complained of still being "inhibited by constitutions from active involvement in parish affairs".<sup>16</sup> Inside the Cathedral itself, the idea of a Church with a universalist mission required persistent argument. The outreach of the Cathedral to the nation and world demanded tact and diplomacy - and patience. The service to the world had to be translated into local self-interest before it could trigger interest. A typical address by Williams read:

Coventry has two main parts to its ministry:

(1) To be the Cathedral of the Diocese of Coventry, a place which can in various ways help and influence and summarize the work continually being done in all the parishes of the Diocese.

(2) To be the creative centre for enterprises on behalf of the whole Church in Britain and in an increasing number of centres all over the world, making full use of the place of prominence which God through recent history has given it. (CCR Jan. 1965)

A universal outreach, Williams assured his readers, month after month, and year after year, was in the Cathedral's own best interest, therefore, an opportunity it could not pass over lightly:

Both of these features [local and world interests] must be present in the life of the Cathedral...To pay no heed to the opportunities for experiment which the world links to the ministry of the Cathedral give us, would mean that the benefit to the Diocese would be infinitely less and would progressively diminish. (CCR Jan. 1965)

Williams did not wait for agreement. While he widened his international contacts, however, domestic strife with the Cathedral family occupied an important section in his agenda. Already in 1961, Williams had tried to prepare the congregation for its move from the cosy crypt in the Ruins into the large Cathedral: "A great deal of restraint and charity and generous help will be demanded of all of us". He promised his Congregation "an opportunity during this transition to the new Cathedral, of keeping the identity of our congregation as a compact fellowship", although this did not seem an inevitable consequence of the changeover. That restraint and charity were indeed lacking emerged from Williams' 1965 appeals to past experience.

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<sup>16</sup>Williams, *Twentieth-Century Cathedral*, 22, 42-5.

When we moved from the West Crypt to the Chapel of the Cross, the transition appeared to be very harsh for a number of the congregation. They felt that they were losing the intimacy which had been characteristic of the services in the West Crypt. It was not very long before their fears were disproved and in fact, they have now a great deal of the same intimacy in the Chapel of the Cross. (CCR June 1965)

Williams guaranteed that "nothing will be done to lose this sense of intimate fellowship...it must continually be the heart of all the work we do" (CCR June 1965).

Not long before that, Williams rebuked the congregation because 75 per cent. of the Congregation Conference's questions had turned out to be introspective (CCR May 1965). The unnamed commentator in the Review decided to make the most of the only extroverted question which had been asked: "Could there be more information about the Cathedral's role in the ecumenical movement locally?" However, local progress toward ecumenism was only modest. Staffing the Chapel of Unity, conceived by Provost Howard more than twenty years earlier, had proved difficult. No non-Anglican minister could join the Diocesan payroll.<sup>17</sup> Although the "Service and Study" programme incorporated young people of all denominations, it had to be conceded that almost all of them came from outside Britain (CCR May 1965).

In fact, it was only the Industrial Mission which had managed, as in the days of Howard, to skip over the denominational borderlines. The chaplaincy to industry included a Free Church minister and even a Roman Catholic Priest (CCR May 1965). But by the eighties, however, the world of the Industrial Mission and that of the congregation, tourguides and administrative departments of the Cathedral were completely polarized.<sup>18</sup> The majority of the Cathedral congregation and Church people in general, seemed to perceive the Cathedral as a spiritual oasis, a sanctuary, kept as far from the profanities of

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<sup>17</sup> It took until June 1973 for a "warden" to be appointed: a Methodist minister, Kenyon Wright, who was able to be put on the payroll due to his background as presbyter of the Church of Northern India. (Connie Downes, Information Officer, Interview 18 March 1987)

<sup>18</sup> Trevor Cooper, Industrial Chaplain, Personal Interview, 16 May 1987.

the Monday to Friday world as possible. Indeed, even the most ecumenical cherished the Cathedral as a place for fellowship and intimacy which came with membership, especially prolonged membership. The Cathedral was after all built in a specific place and people who came regularly, its Cathedral congregation, were, on the whole, residents of Coventry. The congregation could open its arms to embrace the world insofar as it had the individual face of "visitor". The world of unemployment, industrial relations, poverty, racism, armament - that was a different matter. Here hostility increased in proportion to the fragility of local life.

All this was very frustrating for Williams. The slowness of progress sharpened his disdain for the "dead hand of the Church", especially when he compared it to other places: for example, Valparaiso University in Indiana and its ecumenical chaplaincy (CCR July 1963). It seemed sheer utopia, its climate so experimental, liberal, prophetic. Even though Valparaiso was Lutheran and in America, Williams clung to these radical connections. It was Williams' trump card: Valparaiso could show how radical one could really get.<sup>19</sup> At home the Provost felt, as he said himself in 1963, "on a knife's edge" all the time (CCR July 1963). On the one side there was the "secular" world, moving on steadily without minding the call of the Kingdom. On the other side was the "inflexible organisation" of the Church, unable to look beyond its nose.

In our passion for legislation and minutes and canon law and inflexible organisation, we have tended so to busy ourselves with defining our position as to appease first the tensions within the Church itself and then to look outward to the world we are charged to bring to the love of God... (CCR July, 1963)

In his view, the "within" stood in the way of affecting the "without". He had no doubt what needed to come down: the narrow borders of parochial thinking.

People were never able to forget that Williams was not English, but from South Africa. Neither of his parents were Anglican. His mother was of Huguenot Protestant stock, his father

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<sup>19</sup>The Valparaiso Drama Department came to Coventry in 1970-1. (CCN Jan.1971)

a Methodist. Williams' vision could always be written off as that of an outsider, someone out of tune with Anglican sensibilities. But reservations of this sort could not be extended to Simon Phipps, the Cathedral's Industrial Chaplain: English through and through - Eton, a brilliant army career with one of Britain's crack regiments, former escort of Princess Margaret. However, such Englishness, it will be seen, endowed him with no more respect for the traditional structure of the Church than Williams.

Phipps believed that the only alternative to obsolescence was modernization. Considering "the growth of capital", "the international banking system", "the industrial revolution", all ingredients of the "new and changing world we live in", the old patterns of Church organization seemed terribly outdated:

We may not like much that goes with the formation of increasingly large corporations in industry. But if the economic facts of life are likely to demand this pattern more and more, it is no good saying that small, personal firms are more responsive to Christian influence. (CCR Feb.1962)

What were the implications for small, personal parishes? This was not foremost on Phipps' mind. He cared more about how to

work Christian standards and behaviour into the fabric of large organizations, in terms not just of individuals being nice to one another, but in terms of organizational structure and supervision and training. (CCR Feb.1962)

The Church's role was to "stimulate industry to take this sort of thing seriously" (CCR Feb.1962). In the sixties, this did indeed take place at a sufficient scale to make his colleague Stephen Verney envision a civic role for the Cathedral, welcoming Aldermen and Councillors to divide their duties with the team ministry. There seemed "not a single item" which the cathedral could not get involved in, for example, international relations, or implementing the Albemarle report on Youth. He did not seem aware that the latter recommended Youth service to become secularized (CCR July 1962). Such outside activity, Phipps felt, stimulated to "new riches of Christian insight" (CCR Feb.1962). The main insight which it stimulated in him was that the traditional Church, local and corporate, had to go. Williams spoke for everyone on the team:

The parish unit is not the Church. Our passion for parochialism could very easily lose us the entire evangelistic opportunity of reaching that vast multitude who are untouched by the pastoral ministry of our parishes. If this Cathedral can be patient, responsible and passionately concerned experiment, penetrate this vast untouched multitude and at the same time project an image of gaiety and adventurousness of being a committed member of the Church, it will be sufficient to justify its building, and more than sufficient to encourage us to go on trying. (CCR July, 1963)

In practice, this did not seem immediately obvious. Some of the members of the Cathedral congregation complained about the vast size of its organization: "We do not know one another". Ever since the "People and Cities" Conference in 1968 Stephen Verney showed great understanding for such feelings. He agreed that the great danger today is that people should be depersonalized. Everything is on such a scale that the individual doesn't seem to count. We all move about so quickly that we don't seem to belong. We don't meet at any depth. We are not generally happy. (CCN April, 1969)

This knowledge did not stop him from wanting to destroy the old parish system. He felt that the old-type parish priest was ill-prepared for the cities of today. How could he be when he had been "trained to operate in the cities of today a system which was admirably suited to a medieval village" (CCN June, 1970)? It seemed that a "modern" society could only be redeemed by an equally "modern" Church.

### III.

#### The Medieval Cathedral Strikes Back.

For more than twenty years (1957-1980), Williams and his team devoted the greater part of their energy to persuading the Cathedral congregation, the diocese, the friends of the Cathedral, to abandon local interest, to let go of the parish image and compact cosiness, in favour of a multi-faceted operation which reached the distant corners of the globe. This was neither easy nor a task which could ever be considered done. "Keeping abreast" allowed little time for follow up and evaluation. No one pondered that the Cathedral's acceptance of the modern structure, as a "brotherhood of men engaged intensively in specialist activities" might mean also acceptance

of the reduced view of human activity and the compartmentalized vision behind it.<sup>20</sup> Was it possible to make its ministry and its means of communication more "effective" without touching the Christian essence? In truth, the desperation of the situation allowed no time for reflection. "We were very unsociological as a group. We were pioneers. Nobody was doing it together".<sup>21</sup> Coventry Cathedral had to battle to meet the bottomless local and international needs by widening its outreach, experimenting, adding departments, making news. In 1969 Williams was able to give a picture of Coventry as a modern concern:

Departments now include International Youth Work, Drama, Music and Culture, commerce, the Law (including chaplaincy to the Police), ecumenical work, public relations, the pastoral service to the Congregation, and all the necessary training this involves, the supervision of the financial administration of the whole complex structure of this multilateral experiment. (Network Winter 1968/69)

But the positive picture of ever-expanding ministries disguised the fact that these lateral experiments lacked orchestration. Some of them served local interests and furthered a sense of communal belonging and parochial feelings, others undermined these efforts. There was no time to pause and ask if ecumenical and congregationally-based programmes might be at cross purposes, providing conflicting experiences? The team concentrated on what seemed the fair practice: balancing interests, in BBC fashion, giving equal time to both local and international, religious and secular interests. This way everybody would be happy. They saw no conflict.

Still, there was a conflict, even if it was consistently overlooked. This conflict is best illustrated by looking at the most traditional person on the Cathedral team: Canon Joseph Poole, the Precentor. Poole had been appointed to the original team in the late fifties. Like the other high-profile members of the team, he also had a reputation. Before coming to Coventry, Poole had made a name for his liturgical conservatism as Precentor and Sacristan at Canterbury. At Coventry, too, Poole was in charge of the function for which cathedrals were

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<sup>20</sup> This was Williams' assessment of the first ten years in this way (CCN Oct.1968)

<sup>21</sup> Simon Phipps, Personal Interview 23 Nov. 1987.

traditionally built: the perfection of worship.<sup>22</sup> As it turned out, Poole was to be a safeguard against any radical departures from Anglican practice, a check against Williams' drive for a Coventry Universal. A visiting priest soon caught on as to what was going on: "Every good motor car has a brake. Canon Joseph is Coventry's brake".<sup>23</sup> With the new Precentor, anyone wishing wanton change would find it difficult. Experiments did take place, but from the start it was known that these could only be made once a week, on Sunday, during the Family Service. The rest was off limits. While Williams travelled abroad, widening his horizons and the Cathedral's contacts with other denominations in other countries, Poole stayed home as faithful custodian, keeping an argus eye on what he felt was essential to the life of an Anglican Cathedral.

Poole was no simplistic conservative. It is true that he operated primarily out of his sense of responsibility as an ordained priest of the Church. This meant that when he considered liturgy, for instance, his primary concern was that it furthered the central obligation of the redeemed community, namely to be the Body of Christ offering itself up as a holy and living sacrifice to God. Liturgy involved the total oblation of the created order to its Creator, the souls and bodies of the redeemed community - properly constituted in its fullness as people and clergy together - offered in sacrifice to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. As he said in a lecture on liturgy given to a conference of Deans of American Cathedrals,

Does our liturgy enable us to make this total oblation of ourselves to God?.....In so far as it makes this possible a liturgy can be praised: in so far as it hinders us, any of us, from the offering of this total oblation of ourselves, it is a defective liturgy.<sup>24</sup>

The conviction that there could be a defective liturgy, one that would prevent the Church from fulfilling its ministry,

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<sup>22</sup> Chadwick felt that this function had remained the age-old tradition of opus dei, "the daily worship of God" in the best form they could achieve". (*The Victorian Church*, ii, 373)

<sup>23</sup> As remembered and retold by Simon Phipps, Personal Interview 23 Nov. 1987.

<sup>24</sup> Poole, "Liturgical Perspectives", *Cathedrals as Places of Learning and Influence in the Community* (Coventry: Edwards the Printers Ltd., 1966), 30.

gave Poole his reputation as a liturgical conservative. From the point of this enquiry, it is particularly interesting that one of the things which could make a liturgy defective was the failure of the group of people offering the eucharist to be a real community, in the sense that they were not fully open and responsive to each other as persons. He stressed the importance of the intimacy of the celebration, criticizing a celebrant who "had his back to the people throughout. He did not look them in the eye and they did not look him in the eye. The total oblation of the redeemed community was not on this occasion enabled". Approaching Poole's function on the Coventry team from this perspective, his opposition to the televising of the eucharist can be seen as more than a case of reluctance to swim with the times. He did not see any way in which the millions watching the eucharist on their sets at home could be made part of a real interactive community.

I do not believe that to throw on to the television screen a picture of the total oblation of the redeemed community to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit is either a proper use of the liturgy or a sensible use of television. In a sense it is true to say that the oblation of the redeemed community is the community's business and nobody else's. On the whole I believe that the instinct of the early Church in excluding from the liturgy all but the communicant members of the Church was a right instinct. On the whole I believe that the televising of the Christian liturgy is a reprehensible pandering to the idle curiosity of the mob, eager to hear or to tell some new thing.<sup>25</sup>

To Poole, clearly, the core of the celebration of oneness was found in the oral traditions of the early Church. In this case, he seemed to recognize that there was an ultimate inadaptability, a basic contradiction between modern life and the communal nature of worship. This contradiction, however, it will be seen, posed a serious dilemma and the dilemma was that of the Church in modern society in microcosm: could the Church, whose identity was essentially the opposite of the modern order, modernize?

If Poole was insistent on confining the eucharist to the rather small group of people who were regular members of the Cathedral community, he was just as concerned as other members of the team that the Cathedral's influence should spread far beyond

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<sup>25</sup>Poole, "Liturgical Perspectives", 35.



this small group, for example, to "the immense numbers of people from all over the diocese", able to come with their cars to the Cathedral, where they met as members of

the Soroptimists, the Loyal Order of Moose, the Animal Welfare Societies, the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Guild of Cordwainers, and a score of other societies [which] come in their hundreds and thousands to this cathedral in Coventry, as they do to all our cathedrals...<sup>26</sup>

The way Poole perceived this problem was similar to that of Bonhoeffer who envisaged the Christian community in three concentric circles, with only the innermost and smallest circle consisting of real communicants. For Poole, it seemed that as long as the life of the inner circle could somehow be kept alive in much the fashion of the oral mode, then the people who had, through the inexorable processes of modernity, moved further from the centre into these other ways of experiencing life, could be reached by other means. Here he was willing even to consider a para-liturgy. If a living liturgy had to be related to the culture in which it is enacted, then of course the era of the motor car and diverse associations demanded something other than the traditional forms of worship.

Who are these people? They are not, for the most part, committed christians; they are not in the habit of public worship; they would hesitate to recite the christian creed. What sort of a liturgy will they use? What order of service will enable them to make their oblation? Not the office; not the Communion. Something else must be devised.<sup>27</sup>

What that something else might be in a Church of the future Poole did not fully reveal. Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity certainly was not on his mind. Aware of modern trends, however, Poole felt that the worship should be modernized.

It is unreasonable to hope that a liturgy made four hundred years ago, and fitted to the pace of a rural culture, will suit our urban culture without some drastic pruning...We need an office whose pace is adjusted to the pace of life in an urban culture, and which affords more variety than the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>28</sup>

He proposed to trim the lessons and make the readings, in line

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<sup>26</sup>Poole, "Liturgical Perspectives", 41.

<sup>27</sup>Poole, "Liturgical Perspectives", 41.

<sup>28</sup>J. W. Poole, "Liturgical Perspectives", 33-4.

with broadcasting standards, short and relevant. These adjustments did not seem to touch the fundamental elements of the liturgy. After all, as emphasised by the central altar, at the Cathedral the eucharist remained of central importance.

Now whatever be the mode of worship on a Sunday in a parish Church, it is quite certain that in every<sup>29</sup> Cathedral Church the principal service must be the communion.

In line with this priority, the Cathedral at Coventry communed daily, and "communing" together meant the passing of the cup and the sharing of bread among real people who were physically assembled in one place, gathered together within the sound of the human voice. Looking around the Cathedral, it was possible to find many signs of an order different from the modern one. Here, the oral tradition was not a past at all but a living presence. Radical or not in the conception of its ministry, the Cathedral continued to "gather", to bring together into bodily presence. People, although declining in number, continued to come to affirm their faith publicly and audibly. They came: to be confirmed, blessed, absolved, invited to the table, to be dismissed, to hear, to speak the prayers together, to recite the creeds, to face the East wall,<sup>30</sup> to bow their heads or kneel, to make the sign of the cross or simply to stand and sing in unison. The oral tradition lived especially through the large presence of women, who brought their love-economy, the silent unpaid economy of monetarily unvalued time spent in duty and service, to flower arrangement and embroidery - both activities which do not recognize the division between head and hand, activities so silent they are hardly taken note of. At the height of the machine age, the women of Coventry hand-embroidered several thousand kneelers for the Cathedral. The same ladies have been "manning" the gift stalls and serving the tea after the Tuesday lunch-time service, year after year (CCN Apr. 1972).

In the entire 25 years of Coventry's radical ministry, the oral mode was never far removed. People who partook of the ceremonial life of the Cathedral came within the reach of the

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<sup>29</sup>Poole, "Liturgical Perspectives", 40.

<sup>30</sup>To be precise, because of siting problems the Cathedral East wall faces North.

sound of the human voice, heard the spoken word, the litany of prayers, received blessings, absolutions, made confessions, said the graces, sang doxologies, "proclaimed the mystery" of their faith, and listened to the sanctus and the agnus dei. For the oral mode to work there had to be ritual, that is to say, regular and repeated, participation. Church bells invited people to come out of their homes, to leave their private realms for the public affirmation of their beliefs and identity. Inside the churches of Britain, congregations confessed unity, harmony, simplicity, one God, while the world outside hailed variety, sensation, plurality of opinion and choices.

The contrast between outside and inside seemed only to enhance the attraction of the small-scale face-to-face ways inside the Church. In the nineteenth century, a similar apprehension had led to a self-conscious emphasis of the Eucharist by the Sacramentalists.<sup>31</sup> In the post-war years, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, the concern for communal life led to a campaign to reach modern worshippers ritually and mimetically.<sup>32</sup> Poole, too, wished the outside world's redemption. He wished the Church to do its work of influence. But, looking at Poole's preoccupation with adapting worship to modern life, it was evident that it was really the other way around: the world outside bore pressure on him. The pressure to modernize the timing and setting, it has been seen, came from the wish to widen the circle of communicants to include more people.

Theologically speaking, Poole was able to solve the contradiction between modern society and the communion by coupling the two realities in a paradox:

It is not enough to agree that [the communion service] must be so, and to leave it there. It is essential to discover, by reflection and by discussion, how to present the Communion in such a way that its true nature becomes apparent. The Communion (Simon Phipps has memorably said) is the action of a

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<sup>31</sup>Peter de A. Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968) 28.

<sup>32</sup>See also Ch. 14. Poole greatly enjoyed experimenting liturgically and was very innovative - within the limits of Anglican sacramental tradition, of course. In "Liturgical Perspectives", he is enthusiastic about a communion celebrated like an agape feast in Washington. ("Liturgical Perspectives", 39)

coherent community set within an incoherent society: and what makes the community cohere, what binds it together, is nothing else but love.<sup>33</sup>

A look at the environment Poole and his colleagues participated in daily, however, showed that it was not just the will to "love" that bound the "coherent community" of Christians at Coventry together, allowing them to cohere in spite of the incoherent society. The participating communicants were a far more coherent community than they were generally understood to be. People like Poole felt at home in the oral world of the Church and its order because its rites and ceremonies were complete expressions of their own experience of life. The rite of communion posed no difficulties to them. They enjoyed a consensus that was close enough to bring them together. In spite of advocating a religionless Christianity, Bonhoeffer was similarly never able to imagine that "there would be no longer any community gathered for worship, so that the Word, the Sacrament and the community would be simply replaced by Caritas".<sup>34</sup>

Nor did it occur to Bonhoeffer to enquire why the liturgy of the Christian community was only celebrated by the small number of practising disciples, why it enjoyed complete devotion and meaning only among a minority. Indeed, he firmly rejected R. Widemann's, his friend and colleague's, suggestion to subject this situation to class analysis.<sup>35</sup> Such an invitation to sociological analysis had indeed come from the German theologian Bultmann, who saw the connection between experience and religious practice and beliefs.<sup>36</sup> Theologians usually pondered the historical changes which had pushed a wedge between the traditional Christian communities and the present. They did consider that the same wedge separated their own world, a very intimate and corporate world, from the experience of industrial society. But, unlike T.S.Eliot in *The Idea of a Christian Society*, they never considered if this might constitute a fundamental contradiction of two ways of life, one corporate,

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<sup>33</sup>Poole, "Liturgical Perspectives", 40.

<sup>34</sup>Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian. Christian.* Contemporary, 585.

<sup>35</sup>Bethge, 65.

<sup>36</sup>See Ch. 13.

one atomic, one unified by symbols, one unified only by material necessities. Nor did they wonder why they, unlike society at large, were able to feel drawn to a pre-modern liturgy. Adopting such sociological questions would have meant that the theologians had already left the theological circle and were looking at it from the outside.<sup>37</sup>

Of course, they did not think so, but the team at Coventry was set off from the religionless world by its lifestyle, habits and past experience. Although its members joyously courted the modern image of Coventry, of being part of a "Church for these times", much of their private and professional life contained experiences that were not modern at all. Their living and working environments were relatively unruffled by the profanations of the fifties and sixties: rationalization of work and related spheres of life, de-personalization of services, division of public and private identity, and so on. In other words, it can be shown that the team of ministers at Coventry lived still largely unaffected by the dividing processes of the day.

In youth, the majority of the team had their "individual character" nurtured and confirmed in public schools (Eton, Harrow, Marlborough, King's School-Canterbury, Solihull) - homogeneous environments favouring discipline, order and continuity of time and space.<sup>38</sup> Many of these schools still struggle to maintain the pre-industrial ethos of their first conception: "cultivation" bred by pre-modern conditions of life: shared working, living and worship space.<sup>39</sup> All of the team

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<sup>37</sup>As an historian, I can only point to the contradiction involved in the modernizing of an ancient order. To the theologian, the matter of ultimate concern was carrying forward the good of the past so that humanity might be saved. Bonhoeffer's concern led him to fight the various profanations against human community.

<sup>38</sup>Although not recognized as a public school in the nineteenth century, Solihull appears on classifications for the twentieth century. de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Public School in the 19th Century* (London: Millington Books Ltd., 1977), 275.

<sup>39</sup>According to statistics quoted by Paul Ferris in *The Church of England* (Harm: Penguin, 1964), public schools supplied one in  
(Footnote continued)

members had been to Cambridge (Poole, Wright, Phipps, and for a short time, even Williams) or Oxford (Verney, Patey); and at least four knew one another from Westcott House. Both universities were founded well before modern times and carried on their traditions into the twentieth century almost unaffected by the scientific discoveries which they spawned.<sup>40</sup>

No less than four of the members of the team had "served" in the army. The immersion in a big machine like the modern military, efficient and mechanized (delegation of orders and tasks), it might be considered, would thoroughly modernize these men. Yet, there are striking parallels between the military and the ecclesiastical "way of life" which have outlasted their first twinning as "respectable professions" some 200 years ago.<sup>41</sup> Both areas of professional life called and provided for something well over and beyond specialized training. Service in both vocations demanded "more" than the civilian pursuit of income and security: character, courage, love - qualities that belong in the attitudinal and moral realm.<sup>42</sup>

The profiles of Hoggart and Robinson have shown that across the threshold of Church and Army exist values, and, to use a word growing rapidly unfashionable, "virtues", long superseded in everyday life. People there speak of deep bonds between men and officers - primary relationships emerging from loss of privacy and intense and intimate togetherness over a long period of time. Simon Phipps, the first industrial chaplain at Coventry, came to the clerical profession from the Coldstream Guards, moving from "service" and "sacrifice" in the Army to "service"

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<sup>39</sup> (continued)  
every 70, other schools one in 600, students for the clerical profession.

<sup>40</sup> This applied also to Cambridge. The pinch of modern mass organization and standardization has, of course been felt - see Chapters 3 and 10..

<sup>41</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914*, 1. - Spiers also links to these two professions the Bar and the highest ranks in Civil Service (especially the Diplomatic Service and the magistracy).

<sup>42</sup> Although I am familiar with Anthony Russell's arguments in *The Clerical Profession* (London: SPCK, 1980), I disagree with them. Professionalization, although a modern process, helped to preserve pre-modern values and relationships.

and "sacrifice" in the Church. His longings came from somewhere beyond conscious understanding: "If you have a heart it is natural. They are your people, you come to love them, their life depended on me, and mine on them... The ministry seemed the logical continuation of 'service'".<sup>43</sup> Church life, just like the military way of life, fused private and public identity. At Coventry, work and residence, personal and official worth, formed one seamless whole. This whole was held together by hierarchies which were vertical, integrating, holding together rather than stratifying. Bishop, Provost, Canons, Deacons, Chaplains, and Vergers formed unselfconscious ranks of service and duty. Duty was indeed everything: there reigned a sense of noblesse oblige manifesting itself in the metaphors of authority, commitment and concern. Indeed, on the question of duty there existed complete consensus, and the same was true for the commitment to the end wholeness.

The Coventry order was rooted in a particular place. It beckoned those abroad to a pilgrimage to its site. The Ruins and Basil Spence's Cathedral invited entry, being there, and so did the central altar.<sup>44</sup> Coventry was first and foremost a sacred and ceremonial place of which it would be said, over and over and without self-consciousness: "Worship is at the Centre of what we do. Everything springs from worship".<sup>45</sup> The following "Order of Proceedings" for the Ordination of Deacons (8 May, 1987) shows the abiding importance of ceremony:

*Following the Welcome and Statement of Purpose by the Provost, a Fanfare is played and everyone stands to sing the opening hymn during which the procession moves into the chancel and nave.*

*To The Chancel:*

*A Verger  
The Choir  
The Director of Music  
Cathedral Chaplains  
The Director of Ordinands.  
A Verger*

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<sup>43</sup>Simon Phipps, Personal Interview, 23 Nov. 1987.

<sup>44</sup>The centrality of the altar was already a pet project with the first design for the new Cathedral by Gilbert Scott. (*The New Coventry Cathedral Plan and Scheme*, (London: The Baynard Press, 1944))

<sup>45</sup>Colin Semper, *Coventry Evening Telegraph Special Anniversary Issue* (May 1987)

The Great Cross  
 Three Lights  
 Two Clerks  
 A Reader  
 The Provost's Verger  
 The Cathedral Chapter  
 The Provost.

To the Nave.  
 A Verger  
 Visiting Clergy  
 The Archdeacon  
 Candidates with Clergy Colleagues

To the Chancel  
 The Suffragan Bishop with Chaplain.  
 The Banners of the See of Coventry.  
 A Chaplain THE BISHOP A Chaplain  
 The Registrar.

This procession was of course not really medieval. But supporting the invention from below was clearly a basic experience of order and changelessness. There was an undergirding consensus, never consciously articulated, upon which the invention could be grafted and for it to be taken so seriously. Indeed, without these vital pre-conditions the procession could never take place with proper dignity and devotion.

The team and its helpers did not spend all of their time on reviving and preserving traditions. However, as members of an ancient order they were irresistibly drawn homewards. While the conscious mind modernized, "working outwards into the supra-parochial areas of the community",<sup>46</sup> the heart returned to the oral Church. There was the example of Stephen Verney, advocate of religionless and supra-parochial Christianity, who felt attracted to the example of early Christian communities. The formation of "small basic units", he hoped might overcome the anonymity of large cities and large congregations.<sup>47</sup> Williams, too, felt so great an affection for the past that he stressed the ruins of a Benedictine abbey as the natural ancestor of the Cathedral rather than the Victorian reforms and so justified links with the Benedictines in Bavaria. Then there was the Community of the Cross of Nails. For over ten years Williams

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<sup>46</sup>Williams, (CCR May. 1963)

<sup>47</sup>[Coventry Cathedral] Network (Summer 1968)



spent more love on this community than on anything else. The Companions of this truly international order were installed with medieval pageantry and promised to abide by the Benedictine Rule. Ostensibly, the community was Williams' grand synthesis between the conflicting pull of local and universal interests, between community and modern society. But the real attraction of the pseudo-Benedictine order was its proclamation of discipline, order and harmony. It was no accident that the team and their successors all cherished the image of a medieval Cathedral in a medieval town. The guilds were gone, but the town's dignitaries continued to be invited to take part in ceremonies which proclaimed the Christian culture that once was.<sup>48</sup>

However, the local and oral world of Coventry Cathedral asserted itself most powerfully where it might be least expected: in the team's universalism. This universalism was nothing if not the oral agape community on a colossal scale. The team was intoxicated with "community" metaphor.<sup>49</sup> It applied the community metaphor to the most unlikely situations, spraying its gold dust on the secular, the industrial, the urban, the modern scene. By this magic, the most incongruous scenes became transformed into secular, industrial, urban and modern communities. Verney saw a "community on the move", (CCR July 62) and Williams felt "that the Cathedral can and must discover this role as personalizing and reconciling centres for the total community about them".<sup>50</sup>

He appeared particularly charmed by the concept of a "world community", such as that given shape by the "Community of the Cross of Nails" - although this "community" consisted of companions from diverse walks of life and who were scattered over several continents - most thickly in the United States. There was no attempt made to discover whether these diverse groups acted in any real way "together". Phrases like "international community" and "secular community" kept appearing in official publications,

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<sup>48</sup>The [Coventry Cathedral] Network (1985) featured the Judges Service which brought many of the city's dignitaries together for the procession.

<sup>49</sup>Sensitive to this, William defended its use since it best expressed the ideal of togetherness. (Twentieth-Century Cathedral, Preface)

<sup>50</sup>Williams, Twentieth-Century Cathedral, 42.

talks and sermons in spite of much evidence to the contrary, such as the scandal that the vast majority of the population in Coventry showed no communal interest in the Cathedral (or, for that matter, in their City) at all. Williams wrote:

"Industrially, politically, socially, racially and denominationally we hide ourselves in fragments of the community and never rise above our own fragmented loyalties to see the community whole".<sup>51</sup> In other words, the community was known by its absence.

Already in 1944 Bishop Gorton wrote with great alarm about the "eighty per cent. of Coventry" who "are without membership in church or chapel. They are unrooted even in the secular community of which they form a part".<sup>52</sup> By the sixties the situation in Coventry was worse, leading to Phipps Christianizing mission to the city's industrial relationships. The spectre of the uprooted population at the Cathedral's doorstep led to the hosting of "People and Cities Conference" in 1968, bringing together experts from all over the world, including the world-famous anthropologist Margaret Mead. In retrospect, no site could have been more appropriate than Coventry with its vast population of history-less immigrants.

One paper in particular impressed Stephen Verney: Richard Hauser's *The Invisible Community*.<sup>53</sup> As far as Coventry and many other modern cities were concerned, "community" was indeed invisible, that is to say, absent. However, this was not what Hauser had in mind. According to Hauser, generations had gone into the production of "the values and traditions which held it intact and guaranteed its survival from one generation to the next". These underpinnings, called the "invisible community", were gone today:

Today's communities...go to pieces despite the most adequate physical environment, the most elaborate welfare administration and scientific research by the greatest experts...deprived of the single most important factor in the

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<sup>51</sup>Williams, *Twentieth-Century Cathedral*, 42.

<sup>52</sup>Bishop Neville Gorton, "A People's Cathedral for the New Coventry", *The New Coventry Cathedral: Plan and Scheme* (London: The Paynard Press, 1944)

<sup>53</sup>Hauser was listed as Special Lecturer in Social Education at the University of Nottingham.

building of true communities - human warmth. (Network Winter 68/69)

Yet, such a community, it seemed, must have an existence somewhere for Hauser, and for that matter all those at the Conference, knew exactly what it was - perhaps from their own experience? Hauser suggested that the "invisible community" be brought back into being, through social education, or through the creation of a new type of "community worker", an enabler and stimulator rather than a provider. "Human warmth", he realized though, could not be imposed from outside; it had to come from the people themselves.<sup>54</sup>

That urban life reduced the availability of human warmth was a fact everyone knew but no one at the Cathedral would admit. In 1968, the team's outlook was the same as when van den Heuvel had addressed the first Deans and Provosts Conference in Britain, in 1966, speaking of "The Character of the Community Today". Like most of his listeners, van den Heuvel had clung to the community metaphor even though he described anything but a community:

The...characteristic of our community is that it is mobile. And by that I do not only mean that people move; I do not only mean that most people once lived in the same house and died in the same house in which they were born, but that today people move five or six times during their life into new surroundings...By mobility I mean that all our communities are penetrated by rapid change...the city has become the symbol of our society.<sup>55</sup>

What troubled him mostly and needed re-education was that people did not seem to perceive their "community" interest:

One of the characteristics of a city is that people do not know the community's problems any more. People concentrate on their immediate problems, because they have never been taught how to be working on the problems of the community at large.<sup>56</sup>

This was the problem of the Victorian intellectual tradition incarnate: how to reinvigorate a sense of "Them", as Hoggart had called it. How could modern people be persuaded to embrace the immensity of the modern world, its diversity, its pain, its

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<sup>54</sup> From Stephen Verney's summary in Peoples and Cities Conference. (Coventry: People and Cities Conference, 1968), 9.

<sup>55</sup> van den Heuvel, "Character of the Community", 13.

<sup>56</sup> van den Heuvel, "Character of the Community", 13.

infinite variety and chaos - yet without diminution of that relationship, without loss of its personal and emotional content? At Coventry, the community metaphor was invested with this task. It was a metaphor expected to trigger the right feelings in relation to "Them": to the people in the urban ghettos, to the restless and mobile world outside. The metaphor was meant to enrich the individual's relationship to a realm which in reality, as has been seen, encouraged most people to withdraw and shut off.

The team strained the community metaphor to its outermost limits. In *Twentieth-Century Cathedral* Williams described the Cathedral as one of the new "Community Centres" in which relationships would be given that added personal dimension:

Cathedrals can and must discover their role as personalising and reconciling centres for the total community about them... The problem of the churches in the metropolitan areas is intimately bound up with the conflict between the large, impersonal, economically and administratively interdependent communities on the one hand, and the need for personal relationships within the community on the other. There has never before been as immense a need as now for big community centres in which persons in an otherwise impersonal community can meet to grow in personal relationships.<sup>57</sup>

There were attempts to put Williams' ideas into practice. Simon Phipps in particular had been given the green light by the Provost to turn the Cathedral into a place on which the representatives of management and the workers of Coventry's industries could meet. Williams recollected:

Simon Phipps' method was to bring the two sides face to face; inviting the leaders of both, workers and industry, to a weekend together. It started off informally - drinks at night, breakfast together the next day... At the end they were on a Christian ~~name~~ basis. They had begun to see the person, not the label.<sup>58</sup>

In short, Phipps instinctively attempted to infuse urban and industrial relationship, relationships which were necessarily negative and stripped of personal interest, with the personalism of his own order, an order in which, as seen, the personal and emotional came along to all activities: to the Monday morning

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<sup>57</sup>Williams. *Twentieth-Century Cathedral*, 42-3.

<sup>58</sup>Williams, Personal Interview, 2 April 1987.

communion, breakfast and Bible study no less than to the once-a-month conference in the country. In those days it was indeed possible to write, as Verney did, that Coventry was a "symbol that new kinds of relationship are possible here" (CCR July 62).

No one seemed to remember Provost Howard's attempts to recharge the instrumental relationships he observed in the city. Inspired by the medieval guild chapels that once gave work relationships a transcendent mystery, he invented the Hallowing Places - the plaques that can still be found in the Ruins. A little pamphlet, handed to pilgrims by a certain Mrs. Barnes even today, in the true Victorian tradition, still "explains" their implicit function:

A distinctive feature of this Cathedral throughout the centuries was its series of Guild Chapels situated round the walls, the chapels of the Smiths, Girdlers; Drapers; Mercers' Cappers; Dyers...The guild chapels stood in ancient times for the close connection between Church and Industry. These Hallowing Places stand today for the same principle that the whole of our daily life in all its parts belong to God.

The Hallowing Places:

In Industry - God be in my hands and in my making.  
 In the Arts - God be in my senses and in my creating.  
 In the Home - God be in my heart and in my loving.  
 In Commerce - God be at my desk and in my trading.  
 In Healing - God be in my skill and in my touching.  
 In Government - God be in my head and in my ruling.  
 In Education - God be in my mind and in my growing.  
 In Recreation - God be in my limbs and in my leisure.

These Hallowing Prayers and Places were to be an important part of the new Cathedral, expressing its role in the city. At one time Basil Spence even considered commissioning Henry Moore for appropriate sculptures to be set up in the nave of the new Cathedral. But gradually the idea fell into disfavour.<sup>59</sup> Responsibility for sacred dimensions of working lives in Coventry fell into the lap of Simon Phipps who, as the Cathedral's industrial chaplain, felt that Howard's way was too romantic.<sup>60</sup> To him, "the meaning of love in public life", without structural changes, would be only self gratifying.

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<sup>59</sup>Spence Phoenix At Coventry, 73-6.

<sup>60</sup>Simon Phipps, Personal Interview, 23 Nov. 1987. This is also implicit in his approach to industrial relations.

In personal life Christian action can be immediate and direct and complete and quite clear for what it is. But in public life it is more a matter of building up relations of trust through a structure of policies and practices which substantiate and validate trust, from where affairs may be pushed slowly in a Christian direction.

To exert this slow Christian pressure in public life, Christians are needed who understand the structures and balances of power, and take their place for good among them; who understand what can be done and what cannot be done, and how and why.<sup>61</sup>

For this reason he hoped for a sort of "indigenous laity", ready to accept indigenisation of Christian ethics into labour politics and workers' unions.<sup>62</sup> However, actual experience also taught him that "to be able to do this, a great deal of personal connections of trust need to be created". Even on the shop floor, Christian love and respect depended on the small and personal relationships of the oral tradition.

Since Phipps' departure from Coventry Cathedral, the situation outside the Cathedral has altered drastically. In the eighties, with thirty per cent. unemployment, there is less good will for personal conferences and love between management and labour. In turn, the vicissitudes of Coventry's working population have left their imprint on the new chaplains' world view and their politics. The Industrial Mission of Coventry has become more radical, less patient than other departments, hence a law to itself: ecumenical, political, way ahead from the Church of England's average open-mindedness.<sup>63</sup> In 1986 the Industrial Mission organized a special exhibit at the Cathedral with the title: "Today's Work for Tomorrow's World". Cars were brought into the nave, along with videos displaying the manufacturers' visions for the future, the new "developments in products and processes in industry and commerce". The effects of the exhibit were equivocal. Tourists and Tourguides were shocked to find their temple desecrated. To the chaplains, the variety of visions that abound in the modern world, differing for industry,

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<sup>61</sup>Phipps, People and Cities Conference, 25.

<sup>62</sup>Phipps, Personal Interview, 23 Nov.1987.

<sup>63</sup>After one of his Tuesday lunch-time sermons, Trevor Cooper received rebuffs from the congregation for having expressed left-wing views - but as industrial chaplain he was only carrying forward the Christian socialist tradition.

government, university, laboratory, and various segments of society was a stark revelation. The exhibit was a microcosm of the plurality called modern Coventry: a cacophony of directions, one louder than the other, yet going nowhere together. Trevor Cooper, the present Industrial Chaplain, was reminded of the words of a former colleague.

I sometimes think we are 'flogging a dead horse'. Why? Because we represent a view of life and humanity, which is concerned about the purpose of the Gospel. And we believe more attention should be given to the nature and destiny of mankind in the context of daily life. We are therefore talking about 'ends'. Whereas industrial society is concerned about the 'means' to live. So we are speaking a 'foreign language' as far as industrial society is concerned most of the time.<sup>64</sup>

In other words, at Coventry Cathedral one spoke a foreign language, that of a completely different world. It was the language of the thinning ranks, of those neo-Victorians who still stood for the Victorian intellectual tradition. The Industrial mission had briefly glimpsed the reality of two worlds.

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<sup>64</sup>From a panel display at the Industrial Mission Exhibit in the Cathedral, May 1988. The observations were made by Reverend Lee-Bapty, a former industrial chaplain.

Postscript.

Canon Joseph Poole died on July 7, 1989. His obituarist in the *Guardian* duly praised his role as the Bishop of Coventry's "choreographer". "To critics who described him as Victorian he would reply, 'You are wrong; my century is the seventeenth'. But H.C.N.Williams' addition to the obituary shows that Poole's century was both earlier and later, and it was an age which was different from the modern one:

In the 1960s there was great pressure on Coventry Cathedral to represent the mood of a changing society. There was equal pressure that it should maintain the continuity of the tradition of English cathedrals. In the event, if it achieved the right balance in its liturgical life, it was largely due to Joseph Poole: without compromising any of the liturgical disciplines of the Book of Common Prayer, he produced a pattern of worship for the new cathedral which earned world renown...He was delightfully eccentric at times and has left many legends. I loved that man and mourn not only his passing, but the passing of an age of order and disciplined faith in the Church, which he represented. His life is part of the history of Coventry Cathedral and should not be forgotten.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>"Making a New Song" Obituary: Canon Joseph Poole. The *Guardian* 12 July 1989



### Conclusion.

The myth of the sacred trust of civilization is as ancient as the history of ordered society, as old as the gradated ranks and orders of the ancient world. When Carl Becker took a second look at the Enlightenment philosophers, he found it alive and well and enjoying a wide-spread following: evident in the natural assumption of the philosopher's duty to civilization. Looking for the myth in the 1860s and again in the 1960s and beyond, I found it to exist still, albeit with a greatly reduced following. The myth of the sacred trust commissions its ranks to the highest service: a commitment to the transcendent not for itself only but for the sake of society. Within its inner circle, an individual philosophy, or a philosophy for its own sake, can not be conceived. In other words, in the collective experience which shaped and sustained this myth, such a reduction could not be thought of.

What happened in the nineteenth century is that the ranks of those who were dedicated to the trust became "critical", that is to say, self-conscious of their purpose and the beliefs and moral sense felt deep inside their inner conscience. This, in my hypothesis, was not simply the inevitable evolution of the "modern" mind but caused by the new external situation in which the tradition found itself after the fall of ancien regime England in 1828-32. "Criticism" was the result of the sudden transformation of the sacri-political state into an open society, a society without "positions", leaving, as it were, the intellectual elite and its world without a place on which to rest its authority. My main concern has been to illustrate what the intellectual tradition's fall from its accustomed position meant in actual experience; to enter the idea-world of the "critic" through the back entrance: the experience of day-to-day, the liturgical, ritual aspects of life which form the life-relationship to the myth of the sacred trust.

An examination of the life of Mark Pattison disclosed the critical mind as a product of the ancien regime, made self-conscious by contingencies beyond the traditional

"clerisy's" control. Pattison, it has been seen, was alienated from his former collective self, alienated from the new type individuals who seemed to him hollow in their *schwärmerei*, alienated from science by the impossibility of all its findings to be held in one mind, alienated by his sense of no longer being in control, outstripped by events he could not have foreplanned or foreseen, and frustrated by his powerlessness to combat the many evils afflicting modern society. All these experiences can be attributed to the feeling of being in the minority, a member of thinning ranks. The educated elite has, it is true, always been a minority; the new element here is that this time the intellectual elite found itself powerless, emasculated by the pulverization of political power and the loss of the traditional conduits of its influence. It could no longer expect to lead, yet this was exactly what its the "life experience" of its order prepared it to do. Imbued with the consciousness of an order it could never come to terms with the limitations of being a 'class' in the modern sense.

It might be suggested that the "myth" is the same as class consciousness. However, it has been seen, the concept of class, although not inappropriate when describing the intellectual elite's new situation, cannot capture this peculiar minority's sense of duty and service which reaches far beyond the limits of the interest and experience of its own class. The Victorian and neo-Victorian critic belong to ranks whose responsibility embraces the total social order. Can this condition be described by what Marx called "false consciousness"? From the perspective of class analysis it could certainly be argued that these ranks have not been able to assess their own true interests, that they perceive their power and their role as larger than it actually is.

The myth of the sacred trust of civilization, however, prevents the acceptance of powerlessness, of reduced spheres and relationships, even when a realistic, in other words, materialistic reckoning might suggest different conclusions. Robinson's assertion of the "ultimate concern" refused to stare into the glare of a finite situation. The same was true of Virginia Woolf, whose very realism sought to expose the

disastrous state of modern civilization, and of Ruskin's longing to educate and lead the numbed public to become worthy members of society, of his wish, in spite of his analysis of the modern situation, that the battle between a class-based and a money-based society was still being fought, the outcome unknown; or of Pattison's attempts to find a "public" for the new truths which he felt it needed to know. The myth's power communicated through the idea of a New Reformation, held by both the writers of *Essays and Reviews* and later John A.T. Robinson: the trust that the absence of commonly confessed ideals and unified civilization would be only a momentary chaos, preparatory of a better world. The commission of the sacred trust led Hoggart to reject "class" in any economic or material sense, finding class and culture in glimpses of the immaterial, and, most importantly, in the common, public and shared aspect of local life.

Each and every time I felt it was appropriate to speak of the "myth" rather than a collective consciousness, because the concept "myth" captured the supra-rational nature of membership in this elite, and the collective source of its predisposition. Myths do not transfer by indoctrination but through a life-membership. This thesis has tried to discover those elements which initiated Hoggart and Robinson into the same myths that were held so firmly by Ruskin and the Oxford clerisy. Looking at their development, the conditions which were peculiar to their experience, the idea was to establish the life-relationship which connected them with their Victorian and even older ancestors.

This seems to be the right moment to repeat that J.C.D. Clark's revisionist tract poses an important challenge to Victorian Studies. First of all, the recognition that it is possible to speak of ancien regime England as late as 1828, suggests that the old regime and its sacri-political structure must be still an important partner to the crises of Victorian life. Clark's revision contains an invitation to rethink the personalistic and moralistic elements of Victorian as expressions of a different experience, to appreciate the Victorian affinity with the classic and medieval past in its own right and as a reflection of actual commonality, to appreciate its concern with religion and outward behaviour (virtue) as hypocrisy, but to

ponder these phenomena as possible expressions of the continued presence of ancien regime England, responding to new circumstances in its own peculiar way. In short, there is much work to be done and this thesis constitutes only a beginning.

This is not the only challenge posed by Clark's work. Clark also puts a question mark to received models of modernization, that is to say those explanatory models of change which are rarely admitted but must accompany any history. Even the denial of a model is a model of sort. The model underlying Clark's analysis appears to be as follows: as far as the old doctrines and practices are concerned they remain as true and viable to those who hold them, only, their number diminishes steadily. Observing the fate of the aristocratic Establishment, which is also the fate of its popular arm, the Anglican Church, at the beginning of the nineteenth century Clark, writes:

The indications are that the doctrine of the Protestant constitution of 'Church and State',, remained convincing for those whom it convinced but that they steadily diminished as a percentage of the population... One aspect of the problem was geographical. As William Otter, later Bishop of Chichester observed in 1820, the labourers were increasingly living ' in crowded villages, in the neighbourhood of the towns, where they formed as it were an isolated class, without that due admixture of ranks and orders, which in all other cases tends, by the infusion of benevolence, respect, and intelligence to temper and soften the whole mass'.<sup>1</sup>

The challenge contained in this explanatory model is that modernization of English society is not seen as a revolution, that is to say, the outcome of a conflict of two ideologies, two views of society, but rather the gradual loss of confessional commonality, the dismissal of a common intellectual inheritance and possession, the sacred, as the conditions of its promulgation and maintenance, described by William Otter, fell away.

The Establishment eventually responded with impressive programmes of school and church building, but it did so after the problem had become acute, and did so on an insufficient scale to prevent very many of these new cohorts either evading Anglican teaching altogether, or interpreting their<sup>2</sup> religious indifference in terms both sectarian and political.

The fact that the Establishment "eventually responded" but "after

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<sup>1</sup>Clark, 372.

<sup>2</sup>Clark, 373.

the problem had become acute", indicated that it had to operate in a new context, one in which it was no longer in control. The old Establishment clearly continued to exist and to have a following but in a society that had no requirement of its parochial institutions and the ideals which they served. This suggests that the Establishment could, ultimately, not adapt. Not only was "adapting" contrary to being the establishment, although the nineteenth century bears testimony to the manifold ways in which it tried to do so, but it would be impossible to adapt a doctrine of the sacred, of things beyond the material, to a basically profane and anti-parochial state. There seemed no avenue of returning to the realities in which such a sacred-symbolic society is again desired.

Clark's explanatory model tidies up many of the paradoxes which haunt Victorian Studies. His postponement of the fall of ancien regime England gives a new meaning to the intensity of the sense of crisis, the high pitch of alarm, indeed the necessity of invention, history, the new self-consciousness, the proliferation of means of communication through print, the growing associationism, the conscious concern with education, public school and other, university reform, the rise of Evangelicalism, reaching beyond parishional borders and "adapting" national structures, and on the other side, the withdrawal from the profanations of the sacred into the small-scale economy of the fathers, as rediscovered by Newman. It suggests explanations for the new self-consciousness of an elite which is now powerless, robbed of the circumstances which until very recently, indeed, until only a few decades ago, allowed for its - personalistic and particularistic - influence. It makes sense of the new arrival of the critics, and their preoccupation with the "interpretation and translation" of the past, all stemming from the sense of being part of two worlds. The important point is, the critic, a Victorian phenomenon, is still with us, a discovery which has led me to argue that the crisis, and a crisis involves two parties, is still going on.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Raymond Williams notes that Victorian age saw the "emergence of culture as an abstraction". xvii

### *Notes on Sources concerning Coventry Cathedral.*

To reconstruct the Coventry experience, the following publications were used. They give some insight into the changing style of the ministry.

From before the war until 31 Dec. 1958, a monthly *Cryptogram*, typewritten and printed with economical references to church life by Provost Howard served the Cathedral congregation's need.

Beginning with 1945 there was also the annual *Coventry Cathedral Chronicle*, a booklet chronicling important dates and announcements only.

From December 1960, until May 1965, the Cathedral published the *Coventry Cathedral Review* on a monthly basis, with the appearance of a family magazine, of which the team made good use communicating its plans for the future and to educate on certain issues, with some contributions by laypeople.

In May 1965 the *Coventry Cathedral Review* became temporarily the *Review* and assumed a scholarly format, supplemented by the monthly *Coventry Cathedral News*, a congregational news bulletin.

In Summer of 1968 the *Review* became the *Coventry Cathedral Network*, appearing four times a year and much like the original *Coventry Cathedral Review*.

*Network* began around Oct. 1970, and claims to be the "Journal of the Community of the Cross of Nails, the Friends of Coventry Cathedral and the Congregation", appearing only twice a year. Since 1982, *Network* appears only once a year.

A news bulletin, entitled *Coventry Cathedral this Month* appears to have taken over from the *Coventry Cathedral News* at the moment. I was unable to determine when the change was made.

### *Notes on Oral History Project Leicester.(Ch. 8).*

This oral history project, entitled "War-Time Leicester" took place at the Fosse Centre in Leicester between January and April 1987 and was conducted by Dr. James L. Salter. About fourteen men and women attended. Some of the comments used in this thesis were compiled by Dr. Salter.

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H.T. Donner: *The Thinning Ranks: Neo-Victorians and the Victorian Intellectual Tradition, 1890-1980*

There can be no doubt that Ms Donner has set herself a very difficult task, even a perverse one in terms of the wide-ranging but eclectic study that surrounds her chosen thesis. Because of the diverse nature of her sources, and the synthetic nature of the linkages she tries to establish, much of this difficulty brushes off on her examiners in attempting to assess the validity of her conclusions. This is caused not only because her range necessarily tests my expertise, but also because of the nature of her writing, which is sometimes more assertive than deductive, associative rather than analytical. I have a sense of a thesis being imposed upon a widely discrepant range of sources rather than emerging from them. Herein lies my difficulty, for this is a thesis without a clearly defined body of primary sources, though one could have been produced for many sections, whilst other sections seem to derive entirely from secondary reading. Thus the more normal skills of the deduction and development of an argument from clearly rehearsed sources is much less apparent here.

She seems sometimes to miss the substance of issues and to become engrossed with certain accidents of the matter in view. Another difficulty is the differing genre employed as the thesis develops from intellectual history to the sociology of elites. Or again, it seems that the full prescription has not been fulfilled in the writing: e.g., pl8 promises a discussion in the third section of Virginia Woolf, John Baillie and William Temple, but in the event Temple seems to get left out.

I am also curious as to why Ms Donner looks for the Victorian legacy where she does. Presumably it is because with Pattison, Jowett and Essays and Reviews as her starting point, she wants to lodge the whole enterprise within the Broad Church Tradition. Otherwise she might have looked at areas of more anticipated traditionalism, in theology e.g. the writings of anglo-catholic thinkers like Austin Farrer and E.L.Mascall, or the whole tradition of the neo-orthodox; in practice, debates about language and worship [whether in Prayer Book or Scripture], about the nature of priesthood, sacraments, and the received beliefs of Church, and about the nature of authority in the church. All of which might have added some density to the thinning ranks.

There is, therefore, much to criticize. On the other hand, there are strengths. The candidate demonstrates a shrewd intelligence, even if it is not always well-focussed, but this should not detract from some of her interesting insights. Though sometimes overtaken by jargon and sometimes dense in exposition, she is capable of writing quite well. Moreover she has clearly eschewed the safe option, and thus needs to be rewarded for her courage, even if the end result is not altogether successful. Again the dissertation demonstrates a clear and conscious hypothesis, indeed at times it seems too clear and commanding. There is a freshness that comes from a mind untraditioned by familiarity with the British scene from childhood, though sometimes that leads to imperfect understanding of situations and processes.

