A GENEALOGICAL HISTORY OF ENGLISH STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RESPONSES BY SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMIC LITERARY CRITICISM TO THE EMERGENCE OF AN INDIGENOUS SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines certain social and institutional forces that have shaped the outlooks and procedures of English departments in South Africa. The approach taken is based on the researches of Michel Foucault, notably his genealogical approach to history, and his view of the university as an institution within a broader "disciplinary society" that controls discourse in the interests of existing power relations in that society and not out of a concern with disinterested truth. It is argued that English departments are contingent, historically constituted products whose genealogies continue to have serious consequences for struggles around contemporary issues, notably the reception of indigenous South African writing. The first chapter examines the beginnings of the institutionalised study of English literature in England. This inquiry reveals that English literature became the subject of academic study as a result of conflict between opposing interests in the university and the social world of nineteenth century England. It also points to the existence of a "discursive space", an inherently unstable area, which the emergent subject of English was forced to occupy as a result of the existing arrangement of disciplines in the university.

Chapter Two analyses the decisive contribution made by I. A Richards and the importance of practical criticism for the humanist enterprise of English studies. F. R. Leavis's adaptation of practical criticism is also examined with a view to understanding its consequences for English studies in South Africa. Chapter Three examines the early history of English studies in South Africa and assesses the impact of metropolitan developments on the manner in which the discipline was constituted in this country. Chapter Four focuses on the effect of metropolitan developments on the conceptualisation and study of a South African literature. Chapter Five examines descriptions of sub traditions of South African literature that were offered during the 1960s and '70s and concludes by offering an analysis of the radical critique of English studies that appeared at the end of the decade. The thesis concludes that the radical critique was largely unsuccessful for a number of reasons, one being the lack of a genealogical analysis. It is suggested that the manner in which English studies was historically constituted, and its mode of institutional existence, pose a perhaps intrinsic obstacle to the study and teaching of indigenous writing.

To my grandmother

Charlotte Helen Davies Small

(1904 - 1987)

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge - and with good reason. We have never sought ourselves - how could it happen that we should find ourselves?
>
> Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals

I

In 1984, during his inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Ife, Nigeria, Wole Soyinka expressed exasperation with the treatment he had received at the hands of academic critics, and suggested that attention should be paid to questions of how critics themselves were constituted in their social roles.

> To my knowledge, very few attempts have been made to study the critic as a socially situated producer, and therefore as a creature of social conditioning. . . . About the writer, on the other hand we are traditionally over-informed . . . . But, although readers have at least some measure of fact, fiction and speculation about the writer to engage their interest, regarding the critic they have none.[1]

The motivation for the present study is a desire to analyse certain social and institutional forces acting upon academic literary critics and their practices, in much the way

that Soyinka calls for. Its ultimate aim is to understand how such forces have shaped the outlooks and procedures of South African university English departments as they exist in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The assumption will be made that English departments are not fixed and final entities, embodying some eternal essence, but are themselves contingent, historically constituted products, the result of processes that call for analysis.

Critical attention to English departments as institutions with histories is not an entirely new mode of enquiry. For several critics it has sprung from a concern with the politics of criticism. Terry Eagleton, for instance, begins his Literary Theory: An Introduction with a chapter which presents the rise of "literary studies" as an ideological response to historical circumstances.[2] Although some American critics, also working in this vein of political analysis, have produced institutional histories that are equivalent to Eagleton's in their demands for a radical rethinking of the relationship between literary studies and broader power relationships,[3] there have been other investigations that are not overtly political in approach. Gerald Graff's "institutional history" of literary studies in American universities exposes a long history of conflicts that were masked by departmental structures; but these conflicts are revealed with the intention of enlarging the sphere of literary education, not of challenging the entire enterprise.[4]

The political line of analysis has commonly relied on an ideological critique of literary study, and, although this has provoked some important reappraisal of the relations between English departments and the capitalist state, it has tended to remain too abstract in character. As Paul Bové points out, "it operates at too high a level of generality to catch the specifics of particular material and discursive situations."[5] Or, as Ian Hunter remarks, it neglects "the investigation of the way in which different arrays of human capacities and aptitudes are formed through historically specific cultural techniques and institutions."[6]

If a new investigation of this area seeks to meet the above demands for historical specificity and attention to "discursive situations", it must search out models that go beyond ideological critique as such. Although his researches have been only peripherally concerned with literature, Michel Foucault's interest in the relationship between forms of knowledge and power, as they operate through institutional structures, has been a fruitful stimulus for the kind of radical analysis of the "institution of literary criticism" hailed by Catherine Belsey below:

> Here is a field of operations which brings together literature, history and politics in crucial ways, undermining the power of the institution and challenging the category of literature. The effect of this project, in other words, is to decentre literary criticism, to displace "the

> text", the "primary material" from its authoritative position at the heart of the syllabus, to dislodge the belief in the close reading of the text as the critic's essential and indispensable skill. . . . What is to be read closely is criticism, official reports on the teaching of English, examination papers, and all the other discursive displays of institutional power.[7]

This study will be undertaking an analysis that in some degree fits the prescriptions above, and makes use of the kind of material Belsey specifies. In this it will be largely inspired by Foucault's concept of a genealogical history. Foucault, in works such as Discipline and Punish and The History of Sexuality, explores a scheme of historical investigation that forces us to look anew at features of present day society in the light of their frequently unappreciated origins.

The situations that have attracted his attention are those in which the final functions of such features are markedly at odds with their original purposes. The importance of the disparities uncovered by a genealogical inquiry into the past is that they reveal the hidden power relations that operate in the present, and so give clues to the nature of the structures within which we live. As Rajchman summarises these notions, Foucault is engaged in writing a "history of the present" in which "writing about the past is a way of criticizing the present under the assumption that the past still informs the present in ways and with consequences we don't recognise."[8]

That such a critique of social structures may have political consequences is obvious enough; but Foucault differs from Marxist commentators in that his main interest lies in the power structures themselves. He sees escape from determination by such structures as inherently problematic, though acts of what he calls local resistance are still possible. In this he follows Nietzsche, the originator of genealogical analysis. Foucault's relationship to Nietzsche however is not that of slavish imitation but involves the creative application of his principles. As Foucault describes it:

> The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if the commentators say that I am being unfaithful to Nietzsche that is of absolutely no interest.[9]

It is noteworthy that critics who have followed a Foucauldian approach have generally worked in areas well served by existing histories. As Foucault describes his method: "Genealogy is grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times."[10] In the case of the history of South African English departments, no prior overview is available. Hence in what follows I am obliged to chart the outline of such a history while at the same time highlighting the aspects pertinent to a genealogy. In so doing I will be using Foucault in the manner which his own relationship to Nietzsche seems to sanction, that is, with a certain degree of freedom. This follows from the need to establish the historical

circumstances in question before specifically genealogical points can be isolated.

II

The nearest that Foucault has come to providing an account of his use of genealogical history is in his paper "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History."[11] He provides a detailed meditation on the different German words used for the notion of "origin" (Ursprung) in various texts by Nietzsche, and from differences in their senses derives hints towards two related but distinct approaches to historical material. The first such line of approach comes from the analysis of Herkunft or "descent"; the second is suggested by Entstehung or "emergence". Foucault summarises "descent" as follows:

> The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself.[12]

In Nietzsche's usage the analysis of descent "may be generally characterised as the attempt to debunk cherished values by demonstrating their contingency and ignoble origins."[13]

Conventionally - as in a "family tree", for example - a genealogy serves to legitimate and underwrite claims of authority

and status through reference to the past; but in the sense of "descent", the genealogy is instead always situated in the struggles and uncertainties of the present. It functions not as a teleology or a justification for existing situations but as a relativising factor. As Rajchman notes:

> The point of Foucault's history . . . is thus neither to explain the past nor to learn moral lessons from it . . . . On the contrary, he tries to make our situation seem less "necessitated" by history, and more peculiar, unique or arbitrary. . . .[His history] might thus be said to be critical in that it studies the past in order to find alternatives to the present. Yet it is not about those alternatives themselves. It neither looks for them in the past nor projects them into the future.[14]

"Emergence", on the other hand, is defined by Foucault as "the moment of arising" and is concerned with the play of forces that produced the phenomena under investigation.[15] Foucault's contention is that the main forces involved are social groupings, with special interests which they wish to see given expression through the emerging cultural entity concerned, such as a literature or a critical practice. It is in the conflict between these forces that power relations are "exposed" and made available to analysis.

In pursuit both of "emergence" and "descent" it will be necessary for a genealogy of literary studies within South African English departments to reach into the nineteenth century, to the beginnings of the institutionalised study of English literature. From this perspective it becomes apparent that English literature became the subject of academic study as a

result of opposing interests in the educational and social worlds of the time, few of these interests being of an elevated character. In the motives of conflicting pressure groups, not only do we find echoes of the struggles that were later to be waged over "South African" literature and "Black" literature, we also discover that apparent ideals are not necessarily those to be given most credence. English literature - despite the claims of universality made on its behalf by an academic orthodoxy in the 20th century - was a late arrival on the university scene precisely because the academic or social usefulness of such a subject was not at first particularly obvious to the political and educational groups with power in the universities. This study will examine the purposes that motivated both the state and university as institutions to take an interest in the formal teaching and examining of English literature.

For example, as we shall see, it was in the nineteenth century that English literature began to be used for selecting civil service candidates, for providing a non-classical education for middle class women, and for disseminating an idealised "Englishness" amongst colonised peoples, notably in India. All these forces played a part in the constitution of English literature as a university subject.

Foucault's own genealogical researches have identified the existence of what he calls a "disciplinary society" that came

into being in the early nineteenth century, and is still with us today: its main characteristic is that it utilises techniques of "individualisation" (the institutionalised isolation of the individual for the purposes of assessment) as a means of social control. This control is exercised through institutions such as the family, the school, the prison, and the hospital - and typical techniques employed are examinations and other similar critical selection procedures; for example, (in terms of this study) those of the British colonial administration in the nineteenth century. The university subject of English emerged within this complex of disciplinary practices and bears many of the identifying features described by Foucault.

While a significant pressure towards the granting of academic respectability to English literature came from those concerned with the business of running an empire, the genealogy of the subject reveals a struggle, in its turn, between "English literature" and the other disciplines that were already in positions of power within the universities. Here we find classics and philology strenuously opposing the intrusion of the new subject. The universities were in the business of providing some socially recognised attributes of what had once been an aristocratic, and was now increasingly a professional, exclusiveness. Behind talk of the humanising influence of classics, and later philology, lay the desire to preserve the

privilege and status of an educated class for whom classics had traditionally been a distinguishing badge.

All this tallies with what Foucault sees as a principal mode by which power is exercised within institutions: the ability to exclude. He does not see the university, ostensibly dedicated to the disinterested pursuit of immutable truth, as exempt from this principle. Foucault's discussion of the "will to truth" sees our access to truth as always limited and constrained by discourse, itself governed by institutionalised systems of exclusion and control. Seen as a site for the appropriation and development of discourse, the institution is not in a position to liberate knowledge from its discursive nature. If what is at stake is "the type of division which governs our will to know (notre volonte de savoir), then what we see taking shape is perhaps something like a system of exclusion, a historical, modifiable and institutionally constraining system."[16]

Foucault goes on to talk of the dependence of the institutionalised "will to truth" on

> the material, technical, and instrumental investments of knowledge. This will to truth, like the other systems of exclusion, rests on institutional support: it is both reinforced and renewed by whole strata of practices, such as pedagogy, of course; and the system of books, publishing, libraries; learned societies in the past and laboratories now.[17]

The main objection to "English literature" for its nineteenth century academic opponents, was, that as a subject, it

lacked sufficient rigour for university study. It appeared to offer no convincing methodology which would establish its status as a university discipline. Where its presence was sanctioned at all, it thus appeared under the aegis of philology or history, which seemed to add the necessary degree of difficulty and mental discipline. Only with the entrance of I. A. Richards and the development of practical criticism as a pedagogical technique was the study of English literature fully instated in its own right. When this happened, it signalled larger social movements at work: conferring status on the field to some extent "democratised" the university by moving English literature out of the preserve of philological and historical scholarship and making it fully available to unprepared students. But, as Paul Bové observes, practical criticism, in so doing, brought students themselves under intensified institutional scrutiny. In the very act of presenting close readings of literary texts, students were subject to more minute and personal assessment than had ever been the case.[18]

So if the university was in the business of purveying status quite as much as knowledge, then the "Cambridge revolution", based upon practical criticism, was associated with a gradual apparent democratisation and with the entrance of a new social grouping within the college walls. F. R. Leavis, like Richards himself, belonged to "a social class entering the traditional universities for the first time".[19] Yet his own

principles were at once both egalitarian and elitist. To an extent the communalising tendency in Leavis's thought was defused by its projection back into the past to the time of the "organic community", the supposedly contented integration of all classes into a harmonious unity, based on fulfilling work practices. In spite of this emphasis upon social integration in the organic community, what of its spirit survived into the present was necessarily to be promulgated not by the many but by the few. We see Leavis introducing at Cambridge an "aristocracy of sensibility" to replace the outmoded aristocracies of birth and means, and using the technology of practical criticism to identify the quality of sensibility acquired by his students. The proper sphere of influence of this new elite was not directly the world of commercial or political power but the newly burgeoning area of education. What appears as an alteration in the class composition of the University, as an opening up of a previously restricted order, begins to seem far more like the replacement of one set of institutional practices by more efficient "disciplinary" techniques, in Foucauldian terms.

As we shall see, the appropriation by Leavis of practical criticism, the technique pioneered by Richards, was predicated upon a significant absence in Richards's theory: attention to the question of critical authority. Richards's account of practical criticism directed the teacher's attention to the responses of students towards texts, but his theory provided no ground for

distinguishing the value of one text above another. The elitism of Leavis's critical practice can be linked with the attempt to define this value in relation to a contemporary modernist poetic, derived from the work of T. S. Eliot. This led to a series of "revaluations" and the development of a narrow canon on the basis of a rigid view of what qualified as good English literature.

The various exclusions associated with the "Cambridge revolution" identify this grouping as what Foucault terms a "society of discourse". Such societies "function to preserve or produce discourses, but in order to make them circulate in a closed space, distributing them only according to strict rules, and without the holders being dispossessed by this distribution."[20] According to Foucault this is managed by the strategies enabling the control of discourses, which contribute to

> imposing a certain number of rules on the individuals who hold them, and thus of not permitting everyone to have access to them. There is a rarefaction, this time, of the speaking subjects; none shall enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so. To be more precise: not all the regions of discourse are equally open and penetrable; some of them are largely forbidden (they are differentiated and differentiating). . . .[21]

Foucault's descriptions might seem rather dire to apply to the activities of the Leavisite group at Cambridge, which was, after all, no more sinister a programme than the cultivation and formation of sensibility and discrimination. And yet the history

of Leavis's movement at Cambridge, its cadres and exclusions, its canonisations and excommunications, should by itself convince us that broader principles and tensions were operating. Foucault's account of the nature of "societies of discourse" may offer some guidelines to understanding the forces which were at work. Certainly, Leavisitism coincides with Foucault's description in many particulars. As we have seen, not only texts but persons themselves may be subject to the strictures he articulates, and were often treated in this way by Leavis and his followers. The Leavisites' resistance to explicit theorising of their position also qualifies as a region of "impenetrability" of the kind Foucault describes above.

III

And yet some conflict may be felt by the reader who entertains settled views about a noble entity called "English literature" which extends back to Chaucer and, in the view of some, to Beowulf. Surely this entity preserves its independence of institutional wrangles and interdepartmental squabbles? It could be assumed that English literature through its long history has acquired a stable and enriching character of a kind which predates and is independent of the use institutions have made of it.

A history of popular conceptions of the nature of literature is beyond the scope of this study, although where these notions had a specific effect on the development of English studies in the nineteenth century, they will be dealt with in the next chapter. But what the very notion of a genealogy invites us to expect is that the concept and meaning of a literature, and the function that criticism performs in relation to it, will be vastly different at various points in history. As Terry Eagleton points out in a different context: "Any belief that the study of literature is the study of a stable, well-definable entity, as entomology is the study of insects, can be abandoned as a chimera. . . . Literature, in the sense of a set of works of assured and unalterable value, distinguished by certain shared inherent properties, does not exist."[22]

This perception is particularly relevant to the case of South African literary studies, and its incorporation into the curriculum of South African English departments. In Chapters Four and Five we will see that at least four different models of South African literature have been proposed at different stages, in response to social and institutional developments. The acceptance of South African literature was itself dependent upon the result of conflicts between opposing conceptions of what literature involved. Indeed it could even be asserted that literature, particularly in the South African context, actually came to be

accepted, for a time, as the kinds of texts that were suitable for utilisation in the pedagogic structures that had been brought into being by practical criticism.

The question of the institutional history of South African literature will figure as the central and defining issue for this genealogical study. This study will discuss the manner in which the subject was constituted, and the implications this had for later developments, notably the incorporation of writing in non-standard English. It will also reveal the tensions which were inherent in the "discursive space" that English occupied, then and earlier, between the existing disciplines of philology and classics; between English as a technology for shaping a "sensibility" and English as a division of scholarly knowledge; and between the demands of a canon of unquestionable classics and the need for incorporation of non-metropolitan literatures. This study will also attempt to situate the radical critique of South African English studies relative to this discursive space.

Such a "discursive space" - which Foucault defines as "that whole domain of institutions, economic processes, and social relations on which a discursive formation can be articulated"[23] - constitutes the site of conflict between contending discourses, a conflict which can result in mutual destruction or in the creation of new forms. It is towards the understanding of such a space as it pertains to the academic

study of South African literature that this investigation into origins will proceed.

INTRODUCTION: NOTES

1 Wole Soyinka, "The Critic and Society: Barthes, Leftocracy and other mythologies," in Black Literature and Literary Theory, ed. Henry L. Gates (New York: Methuen, 1984), 28-29.

2 Terry Eagleton, "The Rise of English," chap. in Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

3 See for example, John Fekete, The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to Mcluhan (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977); and Paul A. Bové, Intellectuals in Power (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

4 Gerald Graff, Professing Literature: An Institutional History (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1987). See also the collection of essays: Criticism in the University, Triquarterly Series on Criticism and Culture, ed. Gerald Graff and Reginald Gibbon, no. 1 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1985); and William E. Cain, The Crisis in Criticism: Theory, Literature and Reform in English Studies (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984).

5 Bové, ibid., x.

6 Ian Hunter, Review of Marxism and Literary History by John Frow. In Southern Review 20 (November 1987), 299.

7 Catherine Belsey, "Literature, History, Politics," in Modern Criticism and Theory, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), 406.

8 John Rajchman, Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 58.

9 Michel Foucault, "Entretien sur la prison" [Prison talk], Magazine litteraire 101 (Juin 1975); trans. Colin Gordon in Radical Philosophy 16 (Spring 1977); quoted in Alan Sheridan, The Will to Truth (London: Tavistock, 1980), 117.

10 Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, edited by Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139.

11 Ibid., 139-164.

12 Ibid., 147.

13 Jeffrey Minson, Genealogies of Morals: Nietzsche, Foucault, Donzelot and the Eccentricity of Ethics (London: Macmillan, 1985), 7.

14 Rajchman, 58.

15 Foucault, 148-150.

16 Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse: Inaugural Lecture at the College de France, given 2 December 1970," trans. Ian McLeod, in Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 54.

17 Ibid., 55.

18 Bové, 39-68.

19 Eagleton, 30.

20 Foucault, "Order of Discourse", 62-63.

21 Ibid., 61-62.

22 Eagleton, 10-11.

23 Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972), 164.

CHAPTER ONE

The history of the acceptance of South African literature as a suitable field for university study curiously mirrors the struggles to establish English literature as a university discipline some half-century before. But taking the imperious objections made to the study of South African literature by members of South African English Departments throughout the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, one might be led into assuming that "English literature" had been accepted as a university subject since the dawn of the literature itself. The position espoused by Philip Segal during the 1969 Symposium on "The Place of South African Writing in the University" is paradigmatic. He insisted that the already overcrowded curriculum couldn't afford to admit works of inferior quality:

> An English course is, in fact, an introduction not only to a history but also to aesthetic experience, to the classics which are classics because they . . . constitute touchstones of excellence and help us to know ourselves and make ourselves.[1]

Students could be forgiven for their impression that English Studies, as they encountered it, represented the final form of a long-established tradition of academic practice. What our genealogy reveals, however, is that English Studies drew its origins from a number of different and sometimes unlikely sources.

It is almost always a surprise for students to learn that "English literature" did not gain a place as a subject in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge until the early years of the twentieth century. Throughout the nineteenth century the classical curriculum at these universities excluded works of English literature.

> As late as the 1860s, the "literary curriculum" in British educational establishments remained polarized around classical studies for the upper classes and religious studies for the lower. As for what is now known as the subject of English literature, the British educational system had no firm place for it until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the challenge posed by the middle classes to the existing structure resulted in the creation of alternative institutions devoted to "modern" studies."[2]

Moreover, even after having gained a place, it existed as an unstable amalgam of several, often contradictory, discourses for the first two decades of the century, only achieving a relative stability as a "discipline" after the transformation later described as the "Cambridge Revolution". The most decisive factor in this transformation was the development of "practical criticism" as an effective pedagogic tool by I. A. Richards, and

the remapping of English literature by F. R. Leavis and the critics associated with the Scrutiny journal. This development corresponded to the translation of literary criticism from a private activity to a formalised and systematic discipline within the university.

Although English studies in South Africa has a distinct genealogy which parallels and is almost as long as that of the metropolitan model - tertiary English appears as an examination subject for prospective candidates in the Cape Civil Service in 1850 - the "Cambridge Revolution" had a profound effect on the development of English within South African universities. Hence tracing the genealogy of the "Cambridge Revolution" is an indispensable first stage in understanding the constitution of English Studies in South Africa.

I

Throughout the nineteenth century the study of classical languages and literatures remained the mainstay of a humanist education for those destined for positions of social and administrative leadership. Conversely, religious instruction was intended to provide moral examples to the lowest orders of society. The formal study of English literature was restricted

to the less exceptional sons and particularly the daughters of the rising middle classes: those with neither the opportunity nor the means to acquire the classical languages, yet whom, it was hoped, English literature, by a vague and hopeful analogy with the classics, would broaden and sweeten.

We can see these suppositions about the educational value of reading English works in Thomas Babington Macaulay's speech delivered at the opening of the library of the Edinburgh Philosophical Insititution in 1846.

> . . . [we] wanted a library open to that large, that important, that respectable class which, though by no means destitute of liberal curiosity or of sensibility to literary pleasures, is yet forced to be content with what is written in our own tongue. . . . What I confidentally anticipate is that, through the whole of that class whose benefit we have peculiarly in view, there will be a moral and an intellectual improvement; that many hours which might otherwise be wasted in folly or in vice, will be employed in pursuits which, while they afford the highest and most lasting pleasures, are not only harmless, but purifying and elevating.[3]

This humanising property attributed to reading was partly the product of attitudes towards imagination and the artist that were fostered by Romanticism.[4] But in the specifically educational context, the belief in the humanising power of English was based on analogies with prevalent assumptions about the power of classical literature. It was assumed that readers were morally improved by extensive contact with classical texts. But in fact this belief was founded not on the "literary" characteristics of classical writings, but on the imputed

properties of the classical languages. The tedious drills and recitations that were the basis of a classical education justified themselves by the fact that students were in intimate contact with the languages. As Gerald Graff points out:

> Classical education presupposed the belief, as Hegel put it, that not only did "the works of the ancients contain the most noble nourishment" of the human spirit "in the most noble form," but that this spirit was inherently bound up with the grammar and etymology of the languages in which these works were written.[5]

Classical education - maintained through a system of public schools and by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge - provided a badge of class distinction, one of the marks that had traditionally separated members of the ruling class from those of the lower orders. But it was exposure to the power of Latin and Greek through the repetitive labours of rote-learning that constituted the real efficacy of a classical education. In contrast, literature written in English was precluded from serious academic study because its meanings were assumed to be self-evident, and because the vernacular did not attract the respectful attention that the classical languages demanded.

Eagleton has summed up the prejudices against the academic study of English literature in his ironic aside: "since every English gentleman read his own literature in his spare time anyway, what was the point of submitting it to systematic study?"[6] It must be admitted that when literary culture flourished amongst the classically educated ruling class it was

as an essentially non-pedagogic activity. Reading habits were regarded as an aspect of "taste", and nothing more rigorous seemed ~~be~~ be required.

II

Though it was not acceptable as a subject of study at universities or the public schools, English literature had made its way onto the syllabus of nonconformist middle class institutions such as Dissenting Academies from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. There its presence was justified by the kind of analogies with classics as a humanising force that we have already examined. Hopes were entertained by high-minded benefactors, influenced by aristocratic models, that the study of English works would edify and uplift the inherent "grossness of spirit" induced by customary middle class pursuits. One of the first anthologies of English Literature intended for teaching purposes was prefaced with the claim that

> There is no good reason why the mercantile classes, at least of the higher order, should not amuse their leisure with any pleasures of polite literature. Nothing perhaps contributes more to liberalize their minds, and prevent that narrowness which is all too often the consequence of a life attached, from the earliest age, to the pursuits of lucre.[7]

But at these dissenting academies the works studied would include speeches, biographies, and essays: the emphasis was not

primarily on imaginative works.[8] The increased belief in the humanising power of literary works was related to a shift in the meaning of the term "literature" itself. In his classic study of the "Culture and Society" tradition, Raymond Williams shows how both "literature" and "culture" underwent shifts in their meaning that accompanied the profound social transformations in English society during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[9] In this process, English literature came to mean "imaginative literature" rather than the earlier sense of "any written texts". It began to acquire the status of a repository for the creative and humanising influences that were increasingly denied by the utilitarianism of an industrial society. With the appearance of mass-produced fiction and new types of popular entertainment in printed form, literature also acquired the status of an antidote to these developments. Increasingly, at least for its middle class readers, English literature of an imaginative character was acquiring a humanising status that did not derive from that of the classics.

Palmer has identified the proliferation of cheap fiction ("penny dreadfuls", adventure stories, and cheap romances) as an important influence on what he calls the "rise" of English Studies.[10] The advocates of English literature as a subject paid great attention to the vicious and corrupting effects of cheap fiction. But this can also be interpreted as a device by which the middle class distinguished itself from the barely literate

lower classes, who were beginning to benefit from elementary state education. Whereas the upper classes had identified themselves with the reading of classics, pressure from below led to a movement among the middle classes to define themselves in terms of good English literature.

It was upon this basis of popular sentiment that Matthew Arnold was able to make his modifications and criticisms later in the century. Arnold took issue with this too close association between imaginative literature and particular class ideals. Arnold has been identified by Williams as a central figure in the "Culture versus Society" tradition and later studies have frequently named him as the "father" of academic literary studies.[11] While we can endorse such claims of paternity, it is important to recognise how he differed from the academic exponents of his beliefs in the twentieth century. Where Arnold looked towards a future unified culture of Europe, Richards, and more particularly, Leavis placed great emphasis on the "Englishness" of English literature. Nonetheless, they were not returning Arnold's analysis of culture to the function of shaping a class identity for the "Philistines"; rather they were identifying a special elite within the middle class which had the potential, through cultural practices, to transcend class-based identities altogether.

Arnold's programme involved familiarity with the best that has been known and thought in the world; in short "the love and pursuit of perfection". His insistence that this process of "cultivation" takes individuals out of their classes, making "their distinguishing characteristic not their Barbarianism or their Philistinism, but their humanity",[12] has led critics in the Marxist tradition to mistakenly identify his programme as ideological, in the crude sense of fostering false consciousness amongst the working class. In Eagleton's phrase: "If the masses are not thrown a few novels, they may react by throwing up a few barricades."[13] In fact, Arnold's interests transcended classes as such; but there is a real sense in which his cultural analysis was directed, in practice, at the class to which he belonged. As Jonathan Arac reminds us: "It is as himself a member of the middle class that Arnold claimed the right to try to tell the philistines what they should want . . . ."[14]

Literary education was thus in practice directed primarily at the middle class; but Arnold's programme for developing "culture" in the "best-self" of the middle classes was not based on an education in English literature. If anything he regarded European and Classical literature as higher cultural achievements, and specified a knowledge of classical languages as the proper basis for a higher culture. Like most advantaged members of his class who had been inculcated in the classical curriculum, he regarded English literature as a poor substitute

for the classics. This was exemplified by his activities as a missionary of culture in the state-controlled schooling system. He deplored the reliance solely on basic literacy training and urged the use of English literature in the educational process; yet the pedagogic technique that he recommended was memorization.[15] The absence of a recognised method clearly threw even Arnold back onto the example of classical education.

III

Chris Baldick has identified the use of English literature in the entry examinations of the India Civil Service as an important impetus towards the constitution of "English Literature" as a university subject.[16] The examining principle was introduced by a provision in the East India Act of 1853. This Act established competitive public examinations in which the candidate's knowledge of English literature was to count as a significant percentage of the total mark. The example of the East India Company was emulated by most other government departments and many of the professions so that by 1875 there were 17 different examinations that tested the candidate's understanding of English literature by his "memory of certain facts and his ability to parse and gloss."[17]

These examinations preceded the development of English as a school subject. Therefore, not surprisingly, the examiners were not clear about what was to be regarded as "English literature". This is demonstrated by the evidence given by the Chief Examiner to the India Civil Service before the Taunton Commission of 1868. Asked what he understood as the objectives of the study of English literature he answered: "I understand by teaching English Literature, the reading and remembering as much as you can of as many authors as you can."[18]

Considering that this answer came after several decades of such examinations, it shows that the problems of a teachable canon and a pedagogy of literature had not been addressed by the civil service examinations. Nor had they been adequately addressed twenty years later when a campaign to introduce English as a university subject at Oxford was confidently dismissed by The Oxford Magazine in the following terms:

> Now English literature as a subject of examinations, has had its time. Public opinion demanded its insertion in the list of subjects issued by the Commissioners for the Examination of Candidates for Her Majesty's Civil Service. It was found to be, of all subjects, the most convenient to the crammers, the most useless as a test of ability or of knowledge. Nor was the failure due to the incapacity of the Examiners. Great efforts were made to find questions which could test the actual reading by candidates of "the masterpieces of our literature" . . . .[19]

The appearance of examinations marks a change in the class composition of the bureaucracy. Imperialist expansion required recruitment outside the ranks of the ruling class, with its links

of kinship and patronage. But the examinations also represent a new sophisticated technology of power in which we see, to use Foucault's vocabulary, the "disciplinary regime" employing techniques of "individualization" in order to penetrate and control expanding populations. Foucault has described the examination as combining "the technique of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement". The individual is placed under scrutiny and assessment by anonymous authorities: his elevation into community with such authorities is dependent upon his performance in the examination, which offers an ostensibly "objective" and visible scale of evaluation.

> It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected.[20]

Obviously the requirements of the examination had specific effects on the conception of English literature. For its own purposes literature was regarded as a source of factual material that provided a means for the unambiguous differentiation of candidates. But we may still feel some puzzlement at the specific choice of English literature to serve the purposes of a Department of Public administration: the two things seem widely removed in character. Indeed English literature appears as a test of administrative competence in Civil Service Examinations before

it is even taught at school level. Clearly some explanation is in order; but Baldick is vague on this point, merely citing a rationale put forward in the recommendations of the East India Company Report of 1855 which claimed that the study of English literature and history would impart a taste for non-sensual pleasures.[21]

A recent investigation by Gauri Viswanathan, into the beginnings of literary education in British India, provides an answer; one not without potential comparisons and contrasts to the equivalent situation in South Africa.[22] In an exceptionally rich and subtle argument she points out how British colonial rule originally attempted to foster the indigenous cultures in India. This policy stimulated a vast quantity of "Orientalist" research into the cultures and literatures of the subject peoples under the rule of the East India Company. This approach to colonial control, through patronage of the indigenous cultures, was subsequently opposed by what she calls the "Anglicist" policy. "Anglicism" was a new attempt to engender a sense of "public responsibility" in the educated class of Indian by imposing English culture instead of fostering indigenous forms. Paradoxically, this policy made use of the knowledge produced by Orientalist scholars, as a basis for evaluative comparisons between English and Indian culture, with the intention of creating a class of anglicised Indians. Lord Macaulay's notorious 1835 Minute on Indian Education is an example of the

"Anglicist" sense of cultural superiority. Its authority rested on the translations produced by the Orientalist researchers, enabling Macaulay to confidently pronounce that

> I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. I have conversed both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues . . . . I have never found one among them who would deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.[23]

Christian education, which would have been the most obvious means of ideological indoctrination, was debarred in the Indian context for fear of provoking Indian religious hostility. Viswanathan reaches the conclusion that "the tension between increasing involvement in Indian education and enforced non-interference in religion was productively resolved through the introduction of English literature".[24] By a series of deft, and often contradictory arguments, English was credited with both religious functions and with the idealised representation of "Englishness" as a justification for the rule over India. This position was candidly summed up by a spokesman for "Anglicism", C. E. Trevelyan:

> [The Indians] daily converse with the best and wisest Englishmen through the medium of their works, and form ideas, perhaps higher ideas of our nation than if their intercourse with it were of a more personal kind.[25]

While it is not possible to accept Viswanathan's conclusion that "the subsequent institutionalization of the discipline in England itself took on a shape and an ideological content

developed in the colonial context",[26] her research does suggest the reason why "English literature" first appears as an examinable subject in the entry requirements for the India Civil Service: it promulgated an idealised notion of Englishness as the justification for colonial rule. But because it was specifically a system of examination which lay behind this aggrandising purpose, literature was perceived as a collection of facts supported by factual biographies. English literature as a main prop of an assertively nationalist ideology stimulated a textbook industry, increasing numbers of reprints of English "classics", and a network of informal lectures staffed by enthusiastic amateur lecturers. The "subject" itself, however, as it was then understood, was an undifferentiated "catch-all" for what would later be distinguished as Modern English History, English Language, Philology, English Literature, and even Geography and Economics.[27]

None of this diminishes the central fact that it was as a patriotic study of the national character that English entered the State educational system. The generation of examination materials and the conception of English literature, evolved through the Civil Service examinations, gradually permeated the educational system as a whole. Another factor which has to be taken into account, when considering the increasing influence of English literature as a school subject, was the need to

incorporate women in the educational establishment. As Brian Doyle points out:

> . . . by the middle of the century, with the tendency of middle-class men to marry late or not at all, and with the general demographic trends of the time, considerable worry over the "surplus" of women in society was being expressed. The Census of 1851 revealed that this surplus included 876,290 women who were neither wives nor mothers, 24,770 of whom were employed as governesses. In the event, the impetus towards a conception of an organically unified whole national way of life, promoted a related view of education as a central mechanicism for the reproduction of this national culture, and in a sense helped to "solve" the problem of the surplus.[28]

The new demand for teachers in the State-funded educational system that was established in 1870 drew primarily on the previously idle women in the middle-classes. This tended to give a "female" character to certain areas of the school system.

> The dominant conception of woman as homemaker and the notion of women as potentially and acceptably employed in professions were absorbed into a quasi-professional and at the same time quasi-maternal composite function whereby women educated the children of the national "corporate body".[29]

Therefore it is not surprising to find such themes stressed in the documents of the time that concern themselves with the education of middle-class women. Charles Kingsley, the first Professor of "Literature and History" at the Queen's College for Women, spoke in his inaugural lecture of a special destiny for his students.

> . . . that woman's heart would help deliver man from bondage to his own tyrannous and all-too-exclusive brain - from our idolatory of mere dead laws and printed books - from our daily sin of looking at men . . . as mere symbols of certain formulae, incarnations of sets of opinions, wheels in some iron liberty-grinding or Christian-spinning machine, which we miscall society, or civilization . . . .[30]

Kingsley's evocation of the "feminine", in loose association with literature and its teaching, is opposed here to the utilitarian world of machinery and production, in a way which has resonances for the future of the subject. In the education of women, the nationalist reading of literature as the biography of the English nation fused with the Arnoldian opposition to a mechanistic society. As we shall see, this fusion culminated in the post-war rhetoric of the "Newbolt" Report on the teaching of English in England, and the polemics of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch at Cambridge.

IV

The real opposition to the dominance exerted by classics in the nineteenth century university came not from the proponents of English literature but from the new "discipline" of philology, the scientific and historical research into language. In comparison with the new scientific model of the university that had been established in Germany in the early decades of the century,[31] the Great Universities of England began to appear increasingly antiquated and ineffective. Even Arnold, with his reverence for the "ineffable charm" of Oxford, which he praised for being "so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce

intellectual life of our century"[32] had to acknowledge that "Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world."[33]

The German universities were the model for a new type of higher education in which a professorially directed apparatus of "scientific" disciplines, each with demarcated fields of research, produced specialised knowledge. The collegiate system at the Great Universities had been orientated towards very different ends, as we have seen: the humanistic shaping of class characteristics. The apparent "backwardness" of the Great Universities inspired concerted state pressure towards modernisation. A series of Royal Commissions, beginning in 1850, stressed the need for specialised schools (or departments) under the direction of paid professors, and the necessity for the study of "modern" subjects, especially languages. This however meant not English literature but philology.

Although philology was systematised within the German universities, "the ostensible stimulus for [the discipline] was the conquest of non-European societies by Europe",[34] as we have already seen in the case of India. Philology began with the discovery that Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, and the Germanic languages were descended from a common Indo-European Ur-language, but the real consequence of their method was to undermine the status of

the classical languages as the only ones deserving scholarly attention.

There were distinct pedagogical advantages also in their comparative method, by which languages "could be systematically compared with respect to their sound systems, grammatical structure, and vocabulary and shown to be genealogically related."[35] Philology made the study of language into a difficult and specialised undertaking. As Graff points out:

> The theory of mental discipline had a flaw that proved fatal to the classicists' interests. In making the worth of the classics rest on their disciplinary value, the classicists opened themselves to the objection that the same discipline could be provided by other subject. . . Even English could be made sufficiently taxing if its teachers concentrated on early texts and taught them philologically.[36]

Applied to English it legitimised the language as a field for professional scholarship; but it was "above such irrelevancies as authors . . . with its evolutionary emphasis".[37] Philology concerned itself with periods, defined by linguistic characteristics, such as "Old English" and "Middle English", which tended to resist the biographical approach of popular English education.[38]

The State pressure on Oxford and Cambridge came to be represented as a clash between the "Ancients" and the "Moderns". The former were conservatives upholding the humanist concept of a general education based on the translation and study of the

classics, whereas the latter were reformers influenced by the German model.[39] So when Oxford buckled to pressure in 1854, and Cambridge in 1868, it was to accommodate the new scientific studies of language: the question of English literature remained an issue concerning women, prospective colonial administrators, and the lower levels of state education. The reforms created specialist schools of philology, while retaining classics at the "centre" of the humanist education. The Chairs in these schools were filled by German or German-trained scholars such as Max Muller, the first Professor at the Taylorian Institute of Modern Languages at Oxford, and A. S. Napier, the first Merton Professor of English Language and Literature.

V

Meanwhile developments in the lower levels of the state education system created pressure for the University teaching of English; although what was meant by "English", let alone how it was to be taught at the university level, was still an open question. Two solutions were proposed towards the end of the nineteenth century. The first, aggressively promulgated by John Churton Collins, an Oxford don and extension lecturer, was to insist on a preliminary study of the classics before moving onto English literature. He condemned the existing state of English

instruction as it was practised outside the Great Universities as "an utter failure" but identified the main obstacle to its acceptance as a university "discipline" as the hegemony enjoyed by philology:

> As an instrument of culture it ranks - it surely ranks - very low indeed. It certainly contributes nothing to the cultivation of the taste. It certainly contributes nothing to the education of the emotions. The mind it neither enlarges, stimulates nor refines. On the contrary, it too often induces or confirms that peculiar woodenness and opacity, that singular coarseness of feeling and purblindness of moral and intellectual vision . . . characteristic of mere philologists, . . .[40]

At the meeting of the Oxford Convocation where the proposal for establishing a School of Modern European Languages was considered, the line of argument, characterised by Collins's polemic, was answered by the Professor of History's objection:

> All things cannot be taught; facts may be taught; but surely the delicacies and elegances of literature cannot be driven into any man: he must learn to appreciate them for himself. . . . . The crammer can but teach facts; the crammer in literature will have to fall back on the facts of literature, and these facts are, in practice, surely to be largely nothing better than the gossip, the chatter, about literature which is largely taking the place of literature.[41]

When a proposal for a specific School of English was finally and grudgingly accepted by the Oxford Congregation in 1894, the study of English literature was still regarded as a "soft option". The reasons for its acceptance were pithily expressed by the theologian, Professor Sanday: "the women should be considered, and the second or third-rate men who were to become schoolmasters."[42] This conception of English as a "soft option" is borne out, in terms of current prejudices, by scrutiny of the

candidates in what Baldick calls "the precarious first five years" of the new School of English at Oxford.[43] The overwhelming majority of candidates were women. Candidates prepared privately for examinations that were drawn up by a committee consisting largely of philologists, their "discipline" providing the "stiffening" necessary for university level examinations. In the words of one examiner at the time: "The academical study of literature, without philology, is a phantom which will vanish at the dawn of day."[44]

In 1902, an Education Act restructured primary and secondary education on the principle of stages mediated by examinations. English was situated as the core subject in a national system of education and the demand for qualified teachers became more insistent. This "pressure from below" led to creation of a Chair in English Language and Literature at Oxford in 1903, and at Cambridge in 1912.

Despite the differences between the two men who filled these two posts - at Oxford, Raleigh, a minor figure in the aestheticist movement, at Cambridge, Quiller-Couch, an Arnoldian patriot - their frustrations and the struggles they engaged in are indicative of the tensions within the nascent discipline. Both attempt to accommodate literature as a prop of a nationalist ideology - the "national biography" - with the "professional" standards of specialised research that had been set by philology.

Quiller-Couch's inaugural lecture was a confession that "I never even knew that English Literature had a "subject"; or rather, supposed it to have several!"[45]

He spurned the notion of a methodology, arguing that literature was an art depending for its effect on the author's skill.[46] Yet he incorporated into this romantic valuation of literature a strong line of nationalist rhetoric. The conclusion to his lecture was a call to arms, making a revealing association between English literature and pride in the possession of colonies:

> In English Literature, which like India, is still in the making, you have at once an Empire and an Emprise. In that alone you have inherited something greater than Sparta. Let us strive, each in his little way, to adorn it.[47]

Raleigh's career at Oxford, his cynicism and disillusionment, his contempt for the femininity of criticism as opposed to the masculinity of original creation, have been the subject of several critiques.[48] His uncertainty about his own profession can be linked to his inability to write his projected study on Chaucer because of what he called "unsettled preliminaries". In a posthumously discovered note he listed these preliminaries as follows:

> Chaucer has only got so far that I have mapped out and defined a lot of things that I should like to know and don't. "What the Philologists should tell us and don't"; "What students of French poetry should tell us and don't" - these are hardly chapter titles.[49]

Raleigh's thoughts on Chaucer are defined by their absence. Neither he nor Quiller-Couch was able to go beyond biography and

enthusiasm. It was this lack of methodology that had been identified by the opponents of the proposed English School in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Not surprisingly in these circumstances, both Raleigh and Quiller-Couch manipulated the rising tide of mass patriotism to attack the main opponent of English literature as a university discipline - philology. Raleigh denounced "German university culture" as "mere evil",[50] while Quiller-Couch, probably feeling greater pressure from philology because of the arrangement of the Cambridge Tripos, condemned the "invasion" of the "field" of English Literature by German professors, and declared that they were "congenitally" incapable of responding to the "particular glory" of the "living English language".[51]

The outbreak of the First World War constituted a decisive break for English Studies. Classics were consigned to the past by their association with a displaced class, while philology had been condemned by its associations with the German enemy. The pressures to create a new discipline were nowhere as great as at Cambridge where Quiller-Couch successfully proposed a re-arrangement of the Language Tripos, making it possible to study English without linguistic specialisation or any knowledge of literature before 1350. For E. M. W. Tillyard, one of the participants in the "Cambridge Revolution" that emerged from the structure of the Tripos reforms, the years between 1914 and 1918

were not simply the Great War but were a "War of Independence whereby English became an autonomous discipline, free from ancient prejudices and all alien tyrannies."[52]

Identifying the "ancient prejudices" and "alien tyrannies" is not difficult, but the new discipline was neither autonomous nor free. In fact it was formed in the space between the two previous discourses and was decisively marked by its emergence out of, and in contrast to, them both. The strength and the limitations of the synthesis achieved by I. A. Richards's technique of "practical criticism" were due to the way in which it straddled this uneven space.

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

1 Philip Segal, "The Place of South African Writing in the University," in South African Writing in English and its Place in School and University: Proceedings of the Conference of the English Academy of South Africa, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 7 - 11 July 1969. English Studies in Africa 13 (March 1970): 178.

2 Gauri Viswanathan, "The Beginning of English Literary Study in British India," Oxford Literary Review 9 (1987): 17.

3 Thomas B. Macaulay, "Speech delivered at the Opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution on the 4th of November, 1846," in The Works of Lord Macaulay: Speeches, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1898), 222-223.

4 See Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958; Penguin, 1963), 48-64.

5 Gerald Graff, Professing Literature: An Institutional History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 29.

6 Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 29.

7 Rev. Vicesimus Knox in his preface to Elegant Extracts, 1824 ed. ; quoted in David J. Palmer, The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of English Language and Literature from its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 13.

8 See Palmer, 7-14.

9 Williams, 13-19.

10 "The fact remains that during this time [the nineteenth century] an increasing proportion of the population became literate, and from certain influential quarters they were encouraged to read English literature of the past, as well as, sometimes as an antidote for, the more ephemeral and perhaps corrupting reading matter of their own time." Palmer, 29. See also Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800 - 1900 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 232-293.

11 "Arnold is our history: to forget him is to repeat him. Unlike Marx or Freud, Arnold is not an unforgettable founder, an authority to whose resources later inquirers in his tradition necessarily return." Jonathan Arac, Critical Genealogies: Historical Situations for Post-Modern Literary Studies (New York: Columbia: University Press, 1987), 117.

12 Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, ed. J. Dover Wilson (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 108.

13 Eagleton, 25.

14 Arac, 136.

15 Margaret Mathieson, The Preachers of Culture: A Study of English and its Teachers (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975), 43.

16 Chris Baldick, The Social Mission of English Criticism: 1848 - 1932 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 70 - 75.

17 Altick, 184.

18 G. W. Dascent (examiner both for the India Civil Service and the Council of Military Education) in Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission (1868), v. 521; quoted in Baldick, 72.

19 "The Universities and the Quarterly Review," in The Oxford Magazine, 27 October 1886; quoted in Palmer, 90.

20 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the

Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977; Penguin, 1979), 184-185.

21 Baldick, 70.

22 Viswanathan, 2 - 26.

23 Thomas B. Macaulay; quoted in Edward W. Said, The World, The Text, and The Critic (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 12.

24 Viswanathan, 12-13.

25 C. E. Trevelyan, On the Education of the People of India (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1838), 176; quoted in Viswanathan, 23.

26 Ibid., 2.

27 Brian Doyle, "The Hidden History of English Studies," in Re-Reading English, ed. Peter Widdowson (London: Methuen, 1982), 26.

28 Doyle, 23.

29 Ibid., 23.

30 Charles Kingsley, "On English Literature," in Works, vol. 20, 1880 - 1885, 245; quoted in Palmer, 39.

31 See Graff, 62-64; and also Palmer, 66-71.

32 Matthew Arnold, Essays in Criticism: First Series, 4th ed., (London: Macmillan and Co., 1907), x-xi.

33 Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, 61.

34 Eric Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789 - 1848 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 286.

35 Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v."Linguistics".

36 Graff, 72-73.

37 Stephen Potter, The Muse in Chains: A Study in Education (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), 174.

38 The authority enjoyed by philology within the academic establishment may in part be owing to its fulfilment of the criteria for a "discipline" in Foucault's sense of the term as he outlines it in "Orders of Discourse: Inaugural Address at the College de France, 2 December 1970," trans. Rupert Swyer, Social Science Information 10 (1971): 7-30. This same agreement with Foucault's definitions may explain its resistance to the biographical approach, which we referred to earlier. It is, in Foucault's terms, the author who dilutes the self-regarding exclusiveness of the discipline, "who implants, into the troublesome language of fiction, . . . its links with reality."

The objectionable sterility of philology to its more "literary" opponents may lie precisely in its near-perfect alignment with its stereotype:

> The organisation of disciplines is just as much opposed to the commentary-principle as it is to that of the author. Opposed to that of the author, because disciplines are defined by groups of objects, methods, their corpus of propositions considered to be true, the interplay of rules and definitions, of techniques and tools: all these constitute a sort of anonymous system, freely available to whoever wishes, or whoever is able to make use of them, without there being any question of their meaning or validity being derived from whoever happened to invent them.(15)

39 See Palmer, 66-77.

40 John Churton Collins, The Study of English Literature: A Plea for its Recognition and Reorganization at the Universities (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 65; quoted in Palmer, 83.

41 E. A. Freeman, "Literature and Language," Contemporary Review 52 (October 1887): 566; quoted in Palmer, 99.

42 The Times, 6 December 1893; quoted in Palmer, 111.

43 Baldick, 69.

44 Henry Nettleship, The Study of Modern European Languages and Literature; quoted in Palmer, 104.

45 Arthur Quiller-Couch, On the Art of Writing: Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge; 1913 - 1916 (London: Cambridge university Press, 1916; Guild Books, 1946), 13.

46 "Literature is not an abstract science, to which exact definitions can be applied. It is an Art rather, the success of which depends on personal persuasiveness, on the author's skill to give as on ours to receive." Ibid., 14.

47 Ibid., 20.

48 See Virginia Woolf,"Walter Raleigh," chap. in The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays (London: Hogarth, 1950); also Q. D. Leavis, "The Discipline of Letters: A Sociological Note," in A Selection from Scrutiny, vol. 1, ed. F. R. Leavis (London: Cambridge Press, 1968), 10-12.

49 Walter Raleigh On Writing and Writers: Being Extracts from his Notebooks, ed. George Gordon (London: Edward Arnold, 1926), 9.

50 Walter Raleigh, The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh, 1879 - 1922, ed. Lady Raleigh, vol. 2 (London; Macmillan and Co., 1926), 474; quoted in Baldick, 88.

51 Arthur Quiller-Couch, "Patriotism and English Literature.

II," in Studies in Literature (London: Cambridge University Press, 1918; Pocket Edition, 1923), 292-293.

52 E. M. W. Tillyard, The Muse Unchained: An Intimate Account of the Revolution in English Studies at Cambridge (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1958), 82.

CHAPTER TWO

I

The broad climate in the decade immediately after World War One was a triumph for the nationalist discourse of English literature. This was most clearly apparent in the confident pronouncements that dealt with primary and secondary education in the "Newbolt" Report on The Teaching of English in England.[1] The report began by acknowledging the recent change in the status of English literature:

> It is only quite lately that we in England have begun to have the definite consciousness, which the French gained in the age of Louis XIV., that we have a great and independent literature of our own, which need not lower its flag in the presence of the greatest on earth.[2]

As the reference to flags indicates, the rhetoric of nationalism had been fused with the metaphors of religious upliftment which had previously characterised the discourse of literary education in the nineteenth century. This combined force was now powerful

enough finally to displace the dominance of classics. The report went on to state:

> We believe that in English literature we have a means of education not less valuable than the Classics and decidedly more suited to the necessities of a general and national education.[3]

But, as Palmer observes, the flush of nationalistic enthusiasm that displaced the classics from their position of dominance in the schools did not address the very different parameters of acceptance in the universities:

> The Report itself is if anything more in sympathy with the old idea of literary missionaries among the cultural slums than with the advancement of English studies in the academic world.[4]

Mathieson notes that the section on the place of English literature in the Universities gives "the impression of a Committee almost overwhelmed by the witnesses' anxieties about the dire consequences for university studies if English courses were encouraged to be separate from the classics."[5] Raleigh, representing the Oxford position to the committee, bitterly criticised the Tripos reforms that had been instituted three years previously at Cambridge as an attempt to "supplant classical studies as the central discipline of the humanities."[6] This was perhaps surprising since Raleigh was both Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford and the administrator of the English Fund; but it was indicative that English at Oxford was still entwined with philology and with the general humanising function maintained by classics.

Alongside the upsurge in nationalistic fervour represented by the concept of "national education" in schools, another important factor promoting educational change after World War One was the increasing influence of the lower-middle classes. Mulhern notes that

> the relative decline of the public schools and Oxbridge within an expanding educational system, the amelioration of the educational prospects of lower-middle class children, the growth and diversification of State activity, the expansion of whole sectors of cultural production and the creation of new ones (publicity and the cinema, for instance) together induced the formation of an intellectual stratum which, . . . was necessarily of a different character.[7]

In the case of the universities in particular, the changing class composition of the university population was an important impetus towards shedding the burden of philology and classics, and towards the creation of English as a separate discipline in its own right. Further than that, "English Literature" would come to be presented as potentially (at least in its own view) the central discipline in the humanities. Eagleton points out that the main figures in this new elevated conception of English studies were drawn from the ranks of previously excluded social classes.[8] The lower-middle classes were entering the Universities in increasing numbers: though their outlook may have been largely secularised, their background was still broadly that of evangelical seriousness. This, among other factors, led them to take to heart the humanistic values of English literature which had steadily been promulgated during the late nineteenth century by "missionaries of culture" such as Arnold. Despite

possessing similar expectations to those which had, for example, already been expressed in the restructuring of English teaching in schools, the new element in the university population found English departments still in the possession of "the old Victorian bloc".[9] These were the dons with a classical or philological training who denigrated the English literature component of their courses as a "soft option".[10]

Although class pressure was a factor inducing change, clearly more than the opposition between class-groupings was involved. It was not merely changing class composition that forced the issue within the universities, but a new "society of discourse"[11] with its associated system of values. In its turn, this system of values had to be presented in terms that suited the discursive rules of the universities and was therefore not entirely to be separated from them. To some degree the complexity of the discursive situation is illustrated by the example of the female dons at Cambridge, which shows that membership of a previously excluded group was not sufficient condition for the development of a new approach: Tillyard records that the severest resistance to the Tripos reforms came from the three female dons who had qualified in the "masculine" discipline of philology.[12] Having finally won a place in the discipline, they had become vigorous proponents of its values.

II

The tensions diagnosed above manifested themselves most clearly at Cambridge in the years after the War. The 1917 reforms at Cambridge created a space in which the various discourses surrounding English combined to give rise to a new type of English studies.[13] Cambridge had never had a central discipline equivalent to the Oxford "Greats", so it was easier for English studies to escape the confines of specialised scholarship still maintained at Oxford. Furthermore, the anti-German atmosphere in which the new regulations were drawn up made it relatively easy for Quiller-Couch to dispense with the philological "stiffening" that still burdened the Oxford approach to English literature. Therefore the Tripos reforms introduced a syllabus "that was overwhelmingly modern and literary in orientation."[14] But, as we have observed, the study of English literature without philology was stigmatised as a "soft option" lacking the rigour necessary for a university discipline, especially in the strongly scientific atmosphere at Cambridge.[15]

But it was not merely the possession of a new Tripos offering revolutionary possibilities that made Cambridge the locus for the "critical revolution"; it was also the relative freedom that resulted from the lack of any institutional structures to control or limit the new dispensation.[16] While, in

comparison, English studies at Oxford had been under a centralised administration since 1909, lack of funds at Cambridge necessitated the employment of "free-lance" lecturers who were appointed on an ad hoc basis and renumerated from the fees paid by students who attended their lectures. E. M. W. Tillyard, one of the original free-lance lecturers in the new Tripos, recalled his reactions upon hearing that I. A. Richards had been appointed to the staff: "Heaven knows, my own qualifications to be lecturing in English were slender enough, but it really looked as if Forbes and Chadwick [the Tripos co-ordinators] had gone to strange places in their recruiting campaign."[17]

Yet it was Richards's background in analytic philosophy and experimental psychology that enabled him to make a decisive contribution to the creation of English studies as a university discipline. Tillyard also recalled that, prior to Richards's arrival, his own criticism already tended towards a closer concentration on texts.[18] Furthermore, developments in modernist literary practice also emphasised the need for close attention to verbal complexity and rhetorical devices such as irony. The central figure in this development was, of course, T. S. Eliot, whose influence was later described by F. R. Leavis as

> a matter of having had incisively demonstrated, . . . what the disinterested and effective application of intelligence to literature looks like, . . . and what is meant by the principle . . . that "when you judge poetry it is as poetry you must judge it, and not as another thing".[19]

Paul Bové has made use of Foucault's account of European modernism to place Richards and the technology of practical criticism within the chaos of language theories that followed the collapse of the Classical theory of representation.[20] In his own accounts of his practice Richards frequently referred to the need for developing minds that were capable of adjusting to the proliferation of ideas in the modern world. Therefore his first formulation was to focus not on literature as an object but on the states of mind associated with literature. As he insisted in the introduction to The Principles of Literary Criticism: "Criticism, as I understand it, is the endeavour to discriminate between experiences and to evaluate them."[21]

But this had also been the concern of the aestheticist approach followed by figures like Quiller-Couch and Raleigh. As Rene Wellek points out in his History of Modern Criticism:

> Both men, though very different in temper and outlook, shared a condescending attitude towards technical scholarship and a contempt for or at least suspicion of theory and criticism beyond "appreciation" and the "art of praise."[22]

As we have seen, their approach was unable to develop a pedagogy to challenge the hegemonies enjoyed by philology and the classics. In fact, this resulted in a lecturing technique heavily reliant on gossip and biography, and examinations based on philology or literary history. Although Richards shared their concern with mental states, he took the aestheticist position to

task because it attempted to privilege such experiences as uniquely personal and thus unavailable to scientific analysis.

Richards later described himself as "someone really saturated in psychology and neurology making up a book about the literary approaches". It was, according to Richards, a case of "two quite different concerns crossing at a crucial point".[23] These concerns were the Arnoldian belief in the value of literature as a shaping of the best self, and the equally Arnoldian belief in literature as an alternative to a mechanistic "external society". Louis Menand has noted that a crucial factor in the success of T. S. Eliot's brand of modernism was that his redefinition, although startlingly new and even innovative in appearance, "consisted in some respects of little more than restatements of generally accepted values."[24] This is strikingly apparent in the case of I. A. Richards. Not only did his pedagogic campaign reiterate all the main themes of Arnold's cultural programme, his polemical tract called Science and Poetry used the rousing conclusion from Arnold's essay "The Study of Poetry" as an epigraph: "The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where if it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and sure stay."[25]

But Richards based this programme on a scientific justification, an approach he described as "the desire to link even the commonplaces of criticism to a systematic exposition of

psychology."[26] In doing so he accords with Foucault's assumption that discourses will draw upon one another for justification, and that one discourse, by its existence, will modify another: "will exercise a sort of pressure, a power of constraint upon other forms of discourse".[27] His first step towards this goal was to reject the belief that aesthetic experiences are a distinct kind of mental activity. His argument against the aestheticist position insisted that aesthetic experiences "are only a further development, a finer organisation of ordinary experiences, and not in the least a new and different kind of thing".[28] The experiences communicated through art were important only because they were "more highly and more delicately organised than ordinary experiences".[29] This meant "that critical remarks are merely a branch of psychological remarks, and that no special ethical or metaphysical ideas need be introduced to explain value."[30]

Bové observes that this move made previously "ineffable" experiences into an object of knowledge available to scientific analysis:

> Richards' tactic is to bring literature into the realm of commentary as human science so that it can be established as an effective material institution to "educate" the minds, bodies, and souls of its students.[31]

As we have seen, the earlier advocates of English literature as a humanising tool were unable to justify its efficacy except through spurious analogies with the classics or by nationalist

rhetoric. Hence their pedagogic practice was reliant on "external" forms such as literary biography and literary history and examinations based on the facts produced by these forms of knowledge.

Richards dismissed all previous attempts at literary criticism (from Aristotle onwards) as a chaos of conjecture, mysticism, and dogma that was unable to justify the arts as a humanly significant activity. Instead he incorporated aesthetic experience into the realm of ordinary experience and proposed what he asserted was a scientifically credible theory of criticism based on two separate pillars: an account of communication, and an account of value.[32] According to Richards, the arts offered a "storehouse of recorded values" but these values had to be re-activated through the practice of reading. His psychological model of the mind as a hierarchy of impulses enabled him to justify literary value as a stimulus to more efficient mental organisation. But it followed from this model that "bad art" had the negative effect of disrupting mental stability. Arnold's insistence on the social consequences of aesthetic judgements were restated in a manner that made comparison and evaluation possible:

> Bad taste and crude responses are not merely flaws in an otherwise admirable person. They are actually a root evil from which other defects follow. No life can be excellent in which the elementary responses are disorganised and confused.[33]

Yet by his insistence on the negative consequences of bad art Richards also offered an institutional basis for the late nineteenth century hostility towards a mass culture, a culture which was now disseminated through new forms of communication: "the more sinister potentialities of the cinema and the loud-speaker".[34]

At the same time, the tradition of romantic hostility towards science as a "mechanical" and "external" form of knowledge was justified by Richards through a definition of language that separated the "emotive" and "referential".[35] In this manner the humanist project was reinscribed within a vocabulary of psychological evaluation and fitted into the apparatus of the human sciences. As one of his most ardent followers later acknowledged, Richards "introduced the collaborative yet self-critical examination of English literature which justified it as a discipline".[36]

As we have already seen, Foucault's account of disciplinary techniques stresses the relationship between hierarchical observation and the normalising judgement. Both techniques are apparent in Richards's theory of literary criticism. Poems "spring from and perpetuate hours in the lives of exceptional people, when their control and command of experience is at its highest, . . . hours when habitual narrowness of interests or confused bewilderment are replaced by

an intricately wrought composure."[37] The experience communicated by a poem "may be experienced by many different minds with only slight variations" and an accurate reading "must preserve it [the experience encoded in the poem] from contamination, from the irruptions of personal particularities".[38] Therefore, as Bové points out,

> The new factor in the realignment of criticism that precisely makes the latter a human science is the "reader," . . . as a data-producing entity, yielding up, however willingly, documents as end result of its activity, which makes criticism as a discipline possible.[39]

The psychologising of literary criticism which underwrote Richards's "invention" of practical criticism, led to what can be interpreted, in Foucauldian terms, as a powerful fusion of the external disciplinary techniques of the examination with the internal form of the "confession". Foucault dealt with the practice of confession in the first volume of his History of Sexuality. He sees it one of the most important devices by which institutions like the church bring the private inner life under the public scrutiny of "experts".[40] Practical criticism was like an examination in that students were ranked according to their responses to texts; whereas it mimicked the form of the confession in that the students' souls were subject to detailed inspection.

The place of practical criticism within the project of the human sciences is apparent in the manner that it was first

presented. Richards introduced the technology in the form of quasi-psychological experiments conducted with his students as experimental subjects.[41] Unsigned and undated copies of poems were distributed amongst his lecture classes and the students were encouraged to write down their responses. The name that he gave to these responses was "protocols", a term which captures both the experimental approach in which the student is a "subject" under investigation, and the general sense of correct or proper conduct.[42]

Hence, for Richards, the real object of analysis was not the poem but the student's response to the poem. He claimed that "we gain a much more intimate understanding both of the poem and of the opinion it provokes. Something like a plan of the most usual approaches can be sketched and we learn what to expect when a new object, a new poem, comes up for discussion."[43] The results of his analysis were used to produce a "hierarchy of difficulties": the pattern of reading errors that Richards claimed was an accurate documentation of the contemporary state of culture. Used correctly, practical criticism was both a diagnostic tool and a corrective instrument for remedying defective reading habits.

Several commentators have subsequently criticised both the critical pre-suppositions in this method, and the status of the

experiment as an investigation into the state of contemporary culture.[44] Nevertheless, as Baldick observes:

> Whatever the truth of Richards's views on the efficacy of practical criticism for the purposes of mental wholeness and sincerity, as a framework for the setting of examination questions it was a godsend.[45]

Although the exceptional conditions that made possible the "critical revolution" at Cambridge were brought to an end by the creation of an English Faculty Board in 1929 - the ad hoc system of free lance lecturing was replaced by a centralised administration of courses together with formal academic appointments - the examinations incorporated a compulsory paper based on the technique of practical criticism. The Department at Cambridge was now securely established, and the consolidation brought in members of staff who had been trained as philologists and classicists, many of whom were hostile to the broad cultural mission of the "revolutionaries" and their concern with evaluative criticism.[46] Yet the introduction of practical criticism marks the transfer of literary criticism from the area of private activities to the guardianship of the University. This had come about as a result of the cultural diagnosis in Practical Criticism. Richards had demonstrated that

> true appreciation does not occur automatically; readers need a guidance more sustained than Arnold's evocative introductions can possibly provide. Critics, accordingly, must become teachers rather than occasional essayists or impresarios. The critical apparatus is enriched . . . in proportion to the new pedagogical tasks assigned to it - greatly reducing the need for personal authority on the critic's part.[47]

Despite the persistence of previous modes of literary knowledge in the Cambridge Department, the institutional system was now founded upon close-reading and practical criticism. Increasingly, the other modes would find themselves justifying their own practice in terms of close textual analysis through an examination which confronted "the men with actual texts and test[ed] their ultimate literary insight, making them use their own resources entirely".[48] Critics became the judges of their students' ability to respond to the complex and shaping experiences in isolated texts; yet, in a manner which led to an inherent instability in the discourse of English studies, their authority to act in this way was granted only after professional academic accreditation that had developed within the philological research model.

III

In his introduction to Practical Criticism, Richards described his subjects as the best qualified group of readers available in the country; yet the results of his experiment suggested that the reading practices of his students had no relation to their position as a cultural elite. In terms of the experiment published in Practical Criticism the subjects were drawn from

an unrepresentative sample of the British educational system. About the undergraduate students at Cambridge who produced the data for the experiment, Richards pronounced: "I see no reason whatever to think that a higher standard of critical discernment can easily be found under our present cultural conditions."[49] Yet the results of his findings - the analysis of the protocols - suggested that the apparent level of culture was not realised at the individual level of reading. Richards, however, saw this as a problem which could be remedied by attention to individual reading practices. His solution was to concentrate on reading skills. But as Raymond Williams has noted, "there is an element of passivity in his idea of the relationship between reader and work" and, as a consequence, Richards's actual criticism reveals "a kind of servility towards the literary establishment."[50]

Nowhere is this servility more apparent than in the account that Richards gives of "Badness in Poetry".[51] Taking a sonnet by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Richards demonstrates his twofold approach towards criticism. The poem is identified as an example of successful communication, but the experience communicated is condemned for relying on "stock responses" and "standardised sets of attitudes". It follows from Richards's theory of value that bad art must be identified because it "is an influence of the first importance in fixing immature and actually inapplicable attitudes."[52] Yet the closer that Richards moves towards providing an actual valuation, the further he gets from the

psychological vocabulary that he employed to justify the critical endeavour. To make his point about how bad the Wilcox sonnet really is, he compares it with an example by Keats, and reaches the surprising conclusion that "actual universal preference . . . is the same (on our view) as superiority in value of the one over the other."[53] This represents more than an oversight on Richards's behalf; rather, it is what Geoffrey Hartman has called "an evaded meditation on authority in his theory of value".[54]

Leavis and the Scrutiny group recognised this as a problem of authority. In their estimation, Richards's experiment demonstrated that the elite in the Great Universities of Britain were incapable of the discriminations necessary to preserve literary culture. Leavis's campaign to remedy the situation took two directions: firstly, an attack on the ossified remnants of the ruling class institutions of culture which were identified as incapable of propagating the humanist function,[55] and secondly, the deliberate creation of an alternative elite.

The first statement of the campaign to establish literary criticism as a socially significant discipline - the "Mass Civilization and Minority Culture" pamphlet of 1930 - developed the Arnoldian themes inherent in Richards's criticism.[56] Leavis stressed, like Richards, that the human situation had dramatically worsened since Arnold's time, and that the arts represented a vital antidote. But unlike Richards and Arnold,

Leavis put the burden of social redemption not on the artist - who for Richards was the "point at which the growth of the mind shows itself"[57] - but onto the shoulders of a critical minority: those "capable not only of appreciating Dante, Shakespeare, Donne, Baudelaire, Conrad . . . but of recognizing their latest successors [are the minority who] constitute the consciousness of the race . . . at a given time."[58]

Basic English, which for Richards had become the means to establish English as a world wide means of communication, was condemned in Leavis's pamphlet:

> No one aware of the situation and concerned about the future of Shakespeare's language can view quite happily the interest taken by some of the most alert minds of our day in such a scheme as "Basic English". This instrument, embodying the extreme of analytical economy, is, of course, intended for a limited use. But what hope is there that the limits will be kept? . . . . It seems incredible that the English language as used in the West should not be affected . . . .[59]

Richards had denounced his aestheticist predecessors as having been "foiled by language" - that is, by the apparent difference between experience and language - yet his insistence on experience as the real object of criticism bypassed this question altogether. Leavis's social criticism, even in the slender 1930 pamphlet, was more specific in the flaws that it identified than the generalised sense of crisis outlined by Richards; furthermore it paid much greater attention to the English language. Richards emphasised the dangers of a mind unbalanced by contradictory

stimuli, or reduced to inflexible "stock responses". Leavis, however, located the cause of danger in the unprecedented rate of change introduced by the technology of machine production. The mass production of culture had induced an attitude of passive receptivity in a public of uncritical consumers. In this debased civilisation, the critical minority had become marginalised; hence the pejorative status popularly ascribed to "highbrows". This analysis led Leavis to a very different valuation of the English language. Discussing the social significance of the literary elite, Leavis insisted that it was founded on their concern with "the language, the changing idiom, upon which fine living depends, and without which distinction of spirit is thwarted and incoherent. By "culture" I mean the use of such a language."[60]

The attempt to form a critical authority was linked to the creation of a strict canon. After his experiment in practical criticism Richards had reached the conclusion "that four poems are too many for a week's reading - absurd though this suggestion will seem to those godlike lords of the syllabus-world, who think that the whole of English Literature can be perused with profit in about a year!"[61] In Richards's case, this narrowing of the syllabus was associated with the thoroughly utilitarian task of teaching individual reading skills. His stated ideal was the perfectly self-reliant reader, because - as he thought he had demonstrated with the poems used in his experiment, pruned of

biographical or historical indicators - without the guidelines of tradition "we discover what a comparatively relaxed and inattentive activity our ordinary reading of established poetry is."[62] For Richards, an accurate reading was able to resist the convenient assumptions provided by traditional estimations. His pedagogic goal was self-reliance: students who could "read without this guidance."[63]

Tillyard recalls that the early days of the "Cambridge Revolution" broke down the "barriers" that had previously divided up "the pastures of English literature" creating an open field where "the learner had the right to sport in every glade and green pasture";[64] and although Richards himself leaned towards modernist poetry,[65] no doctrinaire link was drawn between the technique of practical criticism and a restricted group of poems. Richards himself insisted that "It is less important to like "good" poetry and dislike "bad", than to be able to use them both as a means of ordering our minds."[66]

Leavis drew upon the lineage that T. S. Eliot had created for himself to map out a canon of authoritative poets who were presented as the real tradition of English poetry. As Mulhern observes, "the rise of the "moderns" in English literature was expressed not so much in a flurry of aesthetic manifestoes as in a struggle for a new critical canon."[67] Leavis's first volume of literary criticism, which appeared in 1932, credited Eliot with

having "made a new start and established new bearings" in English poetry.[68] Eliot's modernist aesthetic was described as "adequate to the ways of feeling, or modes of experience, of adult, sensitive moderns. Taking Pound, Manley Hopkins and Eliot as equivalent "moderns", and expanding upon suggestions made by Eliot in The Sacred Wood, Leavis set about correcting what he identified as the inappropriate notions of the "poetical" inherited from nineteenth century poetic practice. The achievement of the Romantic poets was condemned as a disabling barrier to the consciousness of real conditions in the modern world. Introducing what would become the key concept in his critical vocabulary, Leavis insisted that truly modern poetry should, by communicating particular complex experiences, demonstrate that the poet is "fully alive in our time".[69]

After having taken Eliot's practice as representative of English modernism, Leavis proceeded to "give the full perspective; to complete the account of the present of English poetry with the correlated account of the past", in his next volume of criticism, simply entitled Revaluation.[70] In producing what Rene Wellek has described as "the first consistent attempt . . . to rewrite the history of English poetry from a twentieth century point of view",[71] Leavis made use, not only of the tradition as Eliot had sketched it out, but also employed a concept that the poet had casually dropped in his 1921 essay on "The Metaphysical Poets" - the dissociation of sensibility.

Eliot had introduced the term to account for the difference that he asserted existed between the Metaphysicals and Tennyson. Although the concept remained extremely vague in Eliot's formulation, Frank Kermode has discovered variations of the concept in the work of all the major modernists. He argues that such a theory of social history is not based on history but on the imperatives of the modernist aesthetic. To justify the privileging of modernist poetic discourse as a non-positivistic form of knowledge, it was necessary to posit a social order where this knowledge was presumed to have existed and been generally accepted. The hostility towards such claims in the modern world was attributed, by the proponents of a modernist aesthetic, to a break between the earlier order and the present.[72]

Eliot's choice of the seventeenth century seems to have been based on a personal nostalgia for the great period of Anglican divinity that was ended by the Civil War;[73] yet with certain modifications the notion served as an empowering device for the critical activities of Leavis and his followers. In Revaluation Leavis insisted that "a serious attempt to account for the dissociation of sensibility" would turn into a discussion of "the great change that came over English civilization in the seventeenth century."[74] Eliot's theory was readily accepted as a historical fact requiring not investigation but substantiation. The reason for such immediate acceptance was, firstly, that the

formulation tied in with a tradition in English critical thought that Raymond Williams has traced back to nineteenth century thinkers such as Ruskin and Morris, who praised the community art of feudal times.[75] And secondly, Leavis was able to link the formulation to a cultural diagnosis of his own deriving. His diagnosis was heavily indebted to the writings of the minor ruralist, George Sturt. Sturt presented a highly idealised picture of work practices in small rural communities, central to which was the belief that such work offered creative fulfilment that was unavailable to industrial labourers.

From traditions of thought such as those of Ruskin, Morris and George Sturt, Leavis derived a further supposition about the period before sensibility was dissociated. Discussing the manner in which a minor talent such as Herrick was able to produce good poetry, Leavis used it as an illustration of "the advantages poetry enjoyed in an age in which a poet could be "classical" and in touch with a living popular culture at the same time."[76] Eliot's concept had been grafted onto the myth of the "organic community" with language functioning as the linking device:

> the cultivation of the art of speech was as essential to the old popular culture that in local variations existed throughout the country as song, dance and handicrafts.[77]

Like the undissociated sensibility, the organic community is difficult to locate in any particular historical period. As Raymond Williams observed: "If there is one thing certain about "the organic community", it is that it has always gone."[78]

Throughout the nineteenth century the myth of the organic community had served as "a myth that functioned principally as critical device in a discourse on the actual state and possible futures of modern society",[79] but by locking it to the modernist literary aesthetic it served as a justification for the unique social importance of the Leavisite group. Leavis and his followers were able to identify remaining sources of social value in a modernist canon of literary texts.

In Culture and Environment, the pedagogic text Leavis co-authored with Denys Thompson, the notion of the organic community was decisively yoked with the technique of practical criticism, appropriated from Richards, to produce a critical practice inflected towards the traditions of rural craftmanship described by Sturt in his account of the wheelwright, George Cook:

> True, it is only in individuals that tradition lives, it is you or I who make judgements and exhibit taste, just as it is George Cook who handles the tools. But in "watching Cook putting a wheel together I was watching practically the skill of England, the experience of ages": just so a good critic or a cultivated person of sure judgement is exhibiting more than merely individual taste.[80]

Claiming that the destruction of the organic community was the most important fact of recent history, Leavis proposed a programme of education to counteract the debilitating effects of the modern social environment. This education was directed towards the development of critical awareness - training in

techniques of resistance against advertising and manipulative journalism - and towards fostering "continuity". At the heart of this programme was literary training, since if language was posited as the central aspect of culture, it was possible to assert that, despite the destruction of the traditional work practices that Leavis extolled, the culture remained preserved in the language of certain literary texts which were the product of the same kind of dedicated craftmanship. However, this precious cultural resource was now threatened by the vulgarising of language in advertising, cinema, and best-sellers.

> For if language tends to be debased . . . instead of invigorated by contemporary use, then it is to literature alone, where its subtlest and finest use is preserved, that we can look with any hope of keeping in touch with our spiritual tradition - with the picked experience of ages.[81]

The tradition, however, existed only as long as it was kept "alive" by an educated elite who were capable of identifying the texts containing the cultural values lost during the destructive changes of recent time.

> It is important to insist on what has been lost lest it should be forgotten; for the memory of the old order must be the chief incitement towards a new, if ever we are to have one.[82]

This was a programme of culture <u>against</u> the environment. In the Leavisite discourse the contemporary social environment in England was antithetical to the real values of the organic community. Hence there was no reason why the programme had to be practised in England itself. In fact the opposition to Leavis's programme from the English Universities meant that it was only

realised on the margins of the system: the provincial and colonial universities, and the secondary schools, where the myth of the organic community provided immense impetus towards pedagogic practice.[83] Because, as Leavis declared in the opening pages of Culture and Environment: "if one is to believe in anything one must believe in education. . . . For we are committed to more consciousness; that way, if any, lies salvation.[84]

In America, for example, New Criticism, a parallel development from Richards's theories, rapidly came to dominate literary studies. Richards's work was closely associated with the modernist aesthetic. As Gerald Graff has noted, one of the first stages in the development of New Criticism in the American Universities was the creation of a canon that justified Eliot's brand of poetic modernism.[85] Cleanth Brookes's study, Modern Poetry and the Tradition (1939), almost exactly parallels Leavis's stance in New Bearings in English Poetry and Revaluation. The institutional arrangements that followed the "Cambridge Revolution", in both Britain and America, accepted practical criticism as a pedagogic technique but occluded the broader social ambitions propagated by Leavis and his followers.[86] It should be noted that the New Critics, unencumbered by the burden of social doctrine,[87] found relatively easy acceptance in the American universities whereas

Leavis was kept on the margins of the Cambridge Department of English for most of his career.

The influence of practical criticism on institutional developments in South African Departments of English was far-reaching. The first conference of South African university teachers of English in 1946 was followed by a special symposium on practical criticism. Lecturers presented the results of experiments modelled on Richards's example, and debated about the significance of the poor results for South African culture. This impetus, however, was rather problematically fused with the further development of practical criticism associated with the work of F. R. Leavis. In the next chapter these developments will be more closely pursued.

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

1 In May 1919 the Board of Education established Departmental Committees to investigate the state of teaching in the areas of Science, Classics, Modern Languages, and English. The Committee appointed to investigate English had fourteen members with Sir Henry Newbolt as chairman. The other members included Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, J. Dover Wilson, Caroline Spurgeon, F. S. Boas, and John Bailey. David J. Palmer, The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of English Language and Literature from its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 179.

2 The Teaching of English in England: Being the Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the President of the Board of Education to inquire into the Position of English in the Educational System of England (London: His Majesty's Stationery Of-

fice, 1921), 198.

3 Ibid., 15.

4 Palmer, 183.

5 Mathieson, Preachers of Culture, 127.

6 The Teaching of English, 218.

7 Francis Mulhern, The Moment of Scrutiny (London: New Left Books, 1979), 9.

8 Observing that F. R. Leavis was the son of a musical instruments dealer; Q. D. Roth, the daughter of a draper and a hosier; I. A. Richards, the son of a works manager in Cheshire, Eagleton notes that "they were members of a social class entering the traditional Universities for the first time, able to identify and challenge the social assumptions which informed its literary judgements in a way that the devotees of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch were not." Eagleton, Literary Theory, 30.

9 Mulhern, 9.

10 An example of this attitude is the statement made by the Professor of Modern History at Oxford when a Commission proposed that a Professor of English Literature be attached to his school:

> I think that to have the history school hampered with dilettante teaching such as the teaching of English literature, must necessarily do great harm to the school.

W. Stubbs in Royal Commission on Oxford and Cambridge, Minutes of Evidence, 1881, 75; quoted in Palmer, 71.

11 See Introduction, 10-14.

12 Tillyard, The Muse, 65.

13 English was separated from the Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos and established as an independent Tripos consisting of Section A (Modern and Medieval English) and Section B (Old English). It was not necessary to take both sections, and Tillyard recalls that the reformers hoped that Section A would be combined with another "modern subject" instead of Section B. Thus it was envisaged that "Modern English was to be widely used as a means of a good general humane education . . . ." Ibid., 55.

14 Mulhern, 19.

15 In fact the new Tripos immediately acquired the stigma of being a "novel-reading Tripos". Tillyard, 72.

16 This point is made by Mulhern, 22.

17 Tillyard, 76.

18 Tillyard was happy with the existing "emotional theories of art" but he "craved something that stuck closer to the texts and that sought to give reasons for a given literary effect." Before Richards invented practical criticism, Tillyard recalls that "in my supervisions for individuals or small classes I began to vary essay questions with detailed discussions of the texts themselves." Tillyard, 87.

19 F. R. Leavis, "Approaches to T.S.Eliot," in The Common Pursuit (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952; Pelican, 1976), 280.

20 Paul Bové, Intellectuals in Power, 46-48.

21 I. A. Richards, The Principles of Literary Criticism, 2d ed., (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1926), 2.

22 Rene Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750 - 1950, vol. 5, English Criticism, 1900 - 1950 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986), 25.

23 I. A. Richards, "Beginnings and Transitions: Interview with Reuben Brower," in I.A.Richards: Essays in his Honour, eds. Reuben Brower and others, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 28.

24 Louis Menand, Discovering Modernism: T.S.Eliot and his Context (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 130.

25 I. A. Richards, Science and Poetry, 2d ed., (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1935).

26 Richards, Principles, 3.

27 Foucault, "Orders of Discourse," 11.

28 Richards, The Principles of Literary Criticism, 16.

29 Ibid., 78.

30 Ibid., 23.

31 Bové, 60-61.

32 Richards, Principles, 25.

33 Ibid., 62.

34 Ibid., 36.

35 Ibid., 261-287. Richards found this anticipated by Matthew Arnold, as his epigraph to Science and Poetry demonstrates:

> There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, or in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything.

36 M. C. Bradbrook, "I.A.Richards at Cambridge," in Brower and others, 66.

37 Richards, Principles, 32.

38 Ibid., 78.

39 Bové, 62.

40 Foucault, History of Sexuality, 53-73.

41 I. A. Richards, Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement (London:, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1929).

42 This connection is made by Bove, 63-67. The process is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in a South African textbook on practical criticism, compiled from exercises used in the Dept. of English at Natal University during the 1950s and '60s. In her "Advice to Beginners", the editor, Christina van Heyningen, urges the student reader to present his responses to the text with "honesty, real deep, fearless honesty", and never to "distrust his genuine reactions: if they are 'sincere and vital' they are bound to be right." Yet the student is also warned to prepare himself for assessment and correction: "The pain and humiliation that a reader feels on being shown that he was wrong in some literary judgment may be the pain of growth; but if he . . . refuses to accept that he was wrong he will learn nothing." Christina van Heyningen, ed., On the Printed Page: Exercises in Literary Criticism (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1964), 72-74.

43 Richards, Practical Criticism, 9.

44 See George Watson, The Literary Critics: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), 201; and Graff, Professing Literature, 174-177.

45 Baldick, 155.

46 F. L. Lucas, a fellow of King's College at Cambridge was one of the new members of the English Department who was implacably opposed to evaluative criticism and campaigned against it from the time of his appointment in 1929 until the 1950s. He claimed that "one of the least desirable results of too much English in the Universities is that it turns out numbers of young men and women who will trot off half a dozen pages exposing the "stupidity" of Tennyson, or the "insincerity" of Hardy." F. L. Lucas, Style (London: Cassell, 1955; Pan, 1964), 94.
The Oxford hostility to evaluative criticism was even more thorough-going. See, by way of example, Dame Helen Gardner's diatribe: ". . . the attempt to train young people in this kind of discrimination seems to me to be a folly, if not a crime." The Business of Criticism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 13.

47 Elizabeth W. Bruss, Beautiful Theories:The Spectacle of Discourse in Contemporary Criticism (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1982), 32.

48 Tillyard, 122.

49 Richards, Practical Criticism, 5.

50 Williams, Culture and Society, 244-245.

51 Richards, Principles, 199 - 206.

52 Ibid., 203.

53 Ibid., 206. Compare with his statement in Practical Criticism:

> When we have solved, completely, the communication problem, when we have got, perfectly, the experience, the mental condition relevant to the poem, we have still to judge it, still to decide upon its worth. But the later question nearly always settles itself; or rather, our own inmost nature and the nature of the world in which we live decide it for us." (11)

54 Geoffrey H. Hartman, "The Dream of Communication," In Brower and others, 162.

55 See, for example, the attack on the "academic English club" at Oxford by Q. D. Leavis. She links the Merton Professor of English's lack of interest in contemporary poetry to his training as a classical scholar, and attacks "the atmosphere of Classical Studies pursued without any standards other than those of scholarship and of social snobbishness." According to Mrs. Leavis, the "stranglehold" that the "academic club" has over appointments in "nearly every university . . . threatens to discredit the entire enterprise of humanistic studies". "The Discipline of Letters," in A Selection From Scrutiny, 7-22. The pages of Scrutiny carried similar attacks, all characterised by an extreme vituperativeness, directed against most other institutions of British culture, ranging from the Bloomsbury Group to The British Council.

56 F. R. Leavis, "Mass Civilization and Minority Culture," reprinted in Education and the University: A Sketch for an "English School", 2d ed., (London:Chatto and Windus, 1948), 141-171.

57 Richards, Principles, 61; quoted in Leavis, "Mass Civilization," 144.

58 Ibid., 144.

59 Ibid., 168.

60 Ibid,, 145.

61 Richards, Practical Criticism, 317.

62 Ibid., 316.

63 Ibid., 316.

64 Tillyard, 82.

65 The second edition of The Principles of Literary Criticism (1926), contained, as appendix B, one of the first academic defences of Eliot's poetic practice. See "The Poetry of T. S. Eliot," in Richards, 289-295.

66 Richards, Practical Criticism, 349.

67 Mulhern, 16.

68 F. R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932; Penguin, 1972), 25.

69 Ibid., 24.

70 F. R. Leavis, Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936; Penguin, 1972).

71 Wellek, A History, 242.

72 Frank Kermode, Romantic Image, 2d ed., (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961; Fontana, 1971), 153-160.

73 Ibid., 156.

74 Leavis, Revaluation, 38.

75 Williams, Culture and Society, 137-161.
> It is, however, perhaps one of the most important facts about English social thinking in the nineteenth century that there grew up, in opposition to a laissez-faire society, this organic conception, stressing interrelation and inter-dependence.(146)

76 Leavis, Revaluation, 40. The study written by Q. D. Leavis, Fiction and the Reading Public (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), had provided the empirical basis for this conviction.

77 F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness (London: Chatto and Windus, 1933), 2.

78 Williams, 252.

79 Mulhern, 59.

80 Leavis and Thompson, 82.

81 Leavis and Thompson, 82.

82 Ibid., 97.

83 See Mathieson, 85-103.

84 Leavis and Thompson, 4-5.

85 Brookes synthesised "the disparate ideas and judgements of Eliots, Richards, and Ransom into a usefully compact revisionary theory of the history of poetry." Graff, 152.

86 "Contrary to a widespread impression, Leavis did not and does not represent English teaching at Cambridge. Rather, he always struggled on the fringe of the university in opposition to the ruling group." Wellek, 239-240.

87 "The New Criticism originates as an argument about the nature of poetry in T.S.Eliot's The Sacred Wood, and as a conservative Southern resistance to values associated with science, industrialization and urbanization . . . But their political efforts met little success, and the Agrians soon abandoned the cause of the autonomous, self-sufficient southern farm for that of the self-sufficient poem." Jonathan Culler,"Literary Criticism and the American University," in Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions (Oxford:Basil Blackwell, 1988), 9

CHAPTER THREE

I

As befitted the colony's secondary status in relation to the metropolitan culture, South Africa's part in the struggles which attended the arrival of English literature in the university inevitably paralleled the developments in England. Nevertheless, important differences mark the two lines of development, and these differences are as significant for a genealogy of South African literary studies as are the similarities with the English pattern of emergence.

Whereas in Britain, the insertion of English literature into the admission requirements of the Civil Service was an important strand in the genealogy of English Studies, in South Africa the relationship between English literature and the Civil Service examinations was the central factor. It was the need for

assessing candidates for the local Civil Service that led to the establishment of the Cape Public Service Board in 1850 and the first public examinations in literature and science. The examinations, however, were conducted orally and led to verbal recommendations rather than formal qualifications.

The need for more detailed assessment and evaluation led to the creation of a Board of Examiners by Act No.4 of 1858. Seven members appointed by the Colonial administration were empowered to grant "certificates of merit and attainment in literature and science, of qualification for admission to the public service".[1] This was merely the formalisation of the activity previously conducted by the Public Service Board, but the Examiners were given further powers, notably the right to award certificates in literature and science, "the qualifications for which shall correspond, as far as the circumstances of the colony will admit, to the qualifications required for degrees in the Faculty of Arts granted by the universities of the United Kingdom."[2] This was to be achieved through written examinations based on those employed by the University of London. With this decision, university level education in English literature came to South Africa.

Previous attempts to teach English literature beyond school level had floundered owing to the limitations of local educational standards. The South African College had been

established partly through Pringle's influence in Cape Town in 1829. Although the College was intended to improve upon the level of education provided by the existing schools in the Colony, its objectives were vague and its standards were imprecise. The "professor" appointed to teach "English Classics" (English and classics) found himself obliged to drop the classics component because his students' grasp of English grammar and composition was so rudimentary.[3] In any case, "English" itself was somewhat broadly defined as "everything that was not science taught through the medium of English."[4]

Despite the connection with London University, "Literature" as examined by the Board of Examiners was a not much less nebulous area. The Cape body had merely imported all the confusions over the status and justification for literary study from England. From the examination papers set by the Board it is apparent that English was a subsection in a literature examination that included questions on English Constitutional History and exercises in translation from Greek, Latin, and at least one modern language. Malherbe points out that, as in England, "the examination was influenced by the traditional belief that classics and mathematics were necessary for the training of the mind and for an all-round education."[5]

Literary education thus corresponded to the middle class variations developing in England, but the South African

institution lacked the resistance of an established classical education and the impetus of philological scholarship. The position in South Africa was summed up by the Rev. Professor Cameron of the South African College in his essay "Classical Studies and their relation to Colonial Education" of 1869. Cameron evinces a high degree of awareness of the debate between Classics and English that was being conducted in England. In spite of his clear affinities with those who stress the pre-eminence of classics, he accepts that classics is only one element of a full humanist education, but insists (using a metaphor that dramatises the fusion of the "essentialist" theory of language study with the theory of education through mental discipline) that classics must remain the basis of a truly liberal curriculum.

> As one climbs a mountain, partly for the healthy exercise of the walk, and partly for the glorious view from the summit, so we would have boys learn Latin and Greek both for the sake of the process and the result of an acquaintance with them.[6]

Acknowledging that "the scientific analysis of language" was able to provide the necessary complexity for disciplined study, Cameron, however, insisted on Classics as an irreplaceable link with the tradition of classical culture:

> It is a rich inheritance that we have received, and if we would hand it down not impoverished, but strengthened, it must be by duly appreciating the relations that we bear to it.[7]

His conclusion was that the Cape Colony had the best of both the established classical tradition and the new tendency towards

modern education, because "in our own Colony the machinery is simpler. We have no founders' wills to fetter us, no inveterate prejudices to contend against. . . . Our colonial examinations seem to meet fairly the requirements of the opponents of the exclusively classical training, while at the same time they most properly insist upon Greek and Latin as indispensable elements in a scheme of liberal education."[8]

In 1860, the candidates writing the examinations of the Cape Board of Examiners were tested on their command of English language by an analysis, "as to grammatical structure", of a passage taken from "an author of eminence; eg. a book of Milton's Paradise Lost or one of Shakespeare's historical plays." The candidates' understanding of literature, however, was tested by their knowledge of a specified period. For candidates in the Public Service Examination this period was listed as "chapters III to VII (inclusive)" in Spalding's History of Literature. Thorough memorisation of the same chapters also qualified candidates for the Second Class Certificate; whereas candidates for the First Class Certificate were expected to know Spalding's History in its entirety.[9] As in England, the problem of English pedagogy did not receive any deep analysis, and the result was that English literature existed as a series of facts to be committed to memory.

The system whereby education was directed towards external, centrally regulated, examinations was reinforced by the establishment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873. Brought about by the refusal of the University of London to recognise the Board of Examiners' certificates as the equivalent of their degrees, the Cape University was set up to be nothing more than an examining and degree granting institution modelled directly upon the University of London. Since the Board of Examiners had received much criticism that their examiners were not impartial, the Cape University was instructed to "avoid, as much as may be, appointing any person to be an examiner of any candidate who shall have been under the tuition of such an examiner at any time during the two years before the examination."[10] This limitation effectively divorced the teaching from the examining function, and concentrated power in the hands of the examiners. Unlike literary education in either England or the United States, literary education in South Africa was conducted within a highly centralised system of external examinations that was only partially disrupted by the creation of teaching universities at Cape Town and Stellenbosch in 1916.[11] It was only in the 1940s, when most of the constituent colleges of the examining university had attained the status of teaching universities, that English departments gained relative control over their own pedagogic practice.

As a purely examining university the new institution relied on a strongly factual approach to English literature. Although its examinations were more expansive and detailed than the Board of Examiners', they were based on biographical and historical details in which "prescriptive attitudes and factual questions predominate[d]".[12] This approach was justified by the familiar claims that contact with great minds was inherently enriching, and that the study of English literature was a patriotic activity. Both claims are to be found in the Opening Address given to the Class of English Literature at the Stellenbosch Gymnasium in 1879:

> And as with the history of the individual so with the history of the nation; its life is mirrored not less truly, if not so clearly, in its literature. . . . Thus the true student of English literature cannot help becoming a student of England's history, a not unconcerned spectator of her present position, and (let us hope!) an intelligent and willing co-operator in advancing her best and highest interests.[13]

A constantly reiterated theme in the documents of the time was the importance of maintaining standards equivalent to those in England. As the Vice-Chancellor of the Cape University, Dr. Langham Dale, stressed at the graduation ceremony in 1879:

> whilst we labour to elevate the degraded savage and to put schooling and all its incidental advantages within his reach, we are bound to maintain the prestige of our race, by seeing that our own boys and girls are kept up to the educational level of their peers in Europe.[14]

Despite these large claims, the suspicion that the examinations conducted by the University were incapable of

testing "those essentials of true education, general culture, aesthetics, the cultivation of the moral feelings, and the development of habits of observation and reflection," was sufficiently troubling for Dale to have already refuted it at the third graduation ceremony in 1876.[15] This question continued to perplex educators in the humanities until the experiments in practical criticism conducted by I. A. Richards in the 1920s. In South Africa it was repressed below the level of serious consideration by an examination system that imposed British standards on students educated in the constituent colleges.[16]

II

A greater degree of self-consciousness about the special conditions in South Africa arrives after the turn of the century with the cultural diagnoses offered by the Professor of English and Greek at Rhodes University College, A. S. Kidd. In implying that the South African situation called for special measures, Kidd was recognising a divide between metropolitan and colonial conditions. However this was not to grant independence to South African culture: the difference was perceived only in terms of decline.

The possibility that South Africans might be developing characteristics different from their peers in England was the subject of a paper Kidd presented to the Seventh Annual Meeting of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in 1909.[17] Speaking in his capacity as a university teacher with ten years of experience in South Africa, and citing the examiners' reports from the Cape University, Kidd claimed that special measures were called for because of the "deterioration" in the standard of English spoken in South Africa. This decline, which he ascribed to "the contamination of English by contact with alien tongues", notably Dutch, combined with the markedly different environmental and social conditions in the colony, had made English literature incomprehensible to South African students:

> It must be realised that while the Home English language is a foreign language to more than half the Europeans in the country, it is, even to the English colonial-born, a <u>semi</u>-foreign language, and therefore in the same way and to a greater extent English literature is a foreign literature in South Africa.[18]

Kidd's prognosis was based on an identification of two areas of decline. The first was due to changed social conditions, exaggerated by the limited imaginative capabilities of the colonial mind. The remedy for this deficiency was "a closer union of the study of Literature with that of History."[19] By studying works of English literature in their historical settings, together with additional input provided by illustrative material and background information, he hoped to overcome the

imaginative and geographic shortcomings of the students. The second area of decline, resulting from linguistic contamination, was more serious, and required a principled "stand for English pure and undefiled" on the part of teachers.[20] Urgent remedial action was called for, including the study of phonetics in Training Colleges to prevent "the Home English language" and its literature from becoming foreign to South African readers.

A similar differentiation was made in the introduction to the first poetry anthology designed to cater for the needs of the typical South African reader by Professor John Purves of The Transvaal Technical Institute in 1915. Going beyond Kidd in his recognition of a distinctive character to South African taste, Purves attempted to represent "the range and scope of the English lyric from Shakespeare's time to the present" in so far as they could "appeal to the South African imagination".[21] Purves allowed for the possibility that a distinct "dialect of taste" could arise in geographically separate communities of readers, and brushed aside the fallacious effects of what South Africans had been "taught to believe they see", to discern

> a new accent and a new pattern in the process of being formed. Distance and variety of experience have made the appeal of much English poetry different for South Africans from what it is for Englishmen or Scotsmen.[22]

Purves insisted that the emerging South African "dialect of taste" had to be taken into account, and recommended the use of ballads to "teach the lesson of the effectiveness of a simple,

naif style, which is one of the most necessary and salutary lessons a young South African can learn."[23] He condemned the examiners of the University of the Cape of Good Hope for their "amazing predilection for the eighteenth century" which, he claimed, had the negative effect of encouraging the South African fondness for empty rhetoric and bombast. But neither Kidd nor Purves was in a position to institute measures to correct or, alternatively, to facilitate the cultural distinctiveness they had perceived. Examinations and syllabuses were still in the hands of the Cape examiners who continued to insist on historicism and a selection of texts that aped the London University syllabus.

III

The liberation of English studies from the tutelage of Philology and Classics that had precipitated the "Cambridge Revolution" in post-War Britain had certain analogies with the creation of two teaching universities at Cape Town and Stellenbosch in South Africa in 1916: their establishment enabled a relative autonomy from the strictures of the examining university. Although neither Kidd nor Purves articulate their misgivings explicitly, their analyses represent a dissatisfaction with the inflexibility of the centralised examination system. But this centralisation was

itself a reflection of the power relationship between colony and metropolis which was also undergoing changes. The Act of Union in 1910 must have stimulated the slow process of differentiation and educational self-consciousness.

The first notable expression of this development was the University Act of 1916 which granted the power to conduct their own examinations to several newly created educational institutions. In Cape Town, the South African College was incorporated into the University of Cape Town, and, at Stellenbosch, Victoria College was transformed into Stellenbosch University. Meanwhile the examining university at Cape Town became the University of South Africa in Pretoria. The mixed B.A. degree (in literature and science) was abolished, and independent internal examiners were appointed at the Natal, Transvaal, and Orange Free State constituent colleges.[24]

Cape Town continued to dominate English studies in South Africa by virtue both of its Department's size, and the fact that the Arderne bequest, in 1903, had made possible the creation of a Chair of English Language and Literature. Separated from Philosophy, English was allowed an unprecedented degree of specialisation at Cape Town University. (By comparison the constituent colleges of the University of South Africa were so understaffed that Oswald Waterhouse taught English and Philosophy at Natal until 1938; Kidd English and Greek at Rhodes until 1932;

W. S. Johnson English and Logic at Grey; and at the Transvaal Technical Institute Max Drennan taught English and Philosophy until 1922.)

The first Arderne Professor of Literature, John Clark, an M.A. and LL.D from St. Andrews in Scotland, was appointed at the South African College in 1903. Penrith, in her study of teaching methodology in South African English departments, claims that Clark was practicising a method of close reading that approximated "practical criticism" in the first decade of the twentieth century.[25] We should be wary of adopting her loose understanding of the term - that is, as a personal response to the textual details of the poem - since practical criticism, in the present study, implies a specific concern with the quantifiable evaluation of students' responses to literary texts. George Watson in his study of English literary criticism points out that examples of "close-reading", in the broader sense, can be detected in the work of critics as far back as the eighteenth century.[26] Nevertheless, the approach Clark calls the "documentary method" was articulated in opposition to the historical periodisation that dominated the literature examinations at the time.

> Vest-pocket generalisations, which save a reader the trouble of reading the poets he desires to know, and which enable him to talk round, but not about, the persons discussed, are out of place in such an endeavour as mine, whose object is to make one read, think and judge for oneself.[27]

Penrith acknowledges that there is no record of Clark having introduced his method into literature examinations, even after 1916 - but consonant with his emphasis on the acquisition of personal judgement, he practiced an early form of tutorial teaching. Clark is believed to have taught his documentary method "very thoroughly indeed" to classes that were kept as small as possible. Penrith describes them as "a combination of the lecture and the tutorial".[28]

A pedagogy more directly approximating practical criticism was introduced at Cape Town in the early 'twenties when a grant of thirty thousand pounds from the De Beers Corporation made possible the separation of the Language and Literature Chairs. This approximation of practical criticism was introduced in the language courses by the first De Beers Professor of English Language, W. S. Mackie. Mackie was another Scot, with an M.A. from Aberdeen and a B.A. from Oxford. He had been the head of the English Department at Southampton University College before taking up the Chair of English Language at Cape Town in 1921. Despite his training as an Oxford philologist,[29] his approach towards language education, without exhibiting any signs of direct influence, shows close parallels, even in its motivation, with the innovations at Cambridge. For Mackie, the purpose of language training was not merely to impart scholarly discipline or the ability to write beautifully, but was to train students

> to respond intelligently and critically to its use by others around them, whether in ordinary conversation, or in letters, or in broadcasting, newspapers, advertisements, and propaganda.[30]

Although literary criticism was secondary to the main purpose of language education, Mackie introduced classes in literary appreciation from 1926, and set a critical question on poetry in the English 1 language paper of that same year. Candidates were given forty minutes to "explain . . . the central idea, and write a brief criticism, of one of the following poems."[31] When in 1939, critical questions on poetry were first introduced into the literature papers, Mackie began to examine critical responses to prose. Although his teaching exhibits a concern with modern communication technologies and the evaluation of students' personal responses, Mackie's approach did not privilege literary experience in the manner that was central to Richards's project. It was merely an emphasis on language skills and comprehension.

IV

The Transvaal Institute of Mines and Technology acquired the status of an autonomous teaching university in 1922. Max Drennan, the occupant of the chair at the Institute, who was a London-trained philologist, retained the chair of English in the

new University of the Witwatersrand. As is evident from the textbook he published together with the senior lecturer in his Department in 1925, Drennan followed an aestheticist approach similar to that practiced by Raleigh at Oxford. English studies at Wits sought merely to improve students' ability to write elegant English, with extensive philological exercises for the sake of discipline.[32] Literature was defined as "the body which clothes the scientific skeleton. Without the bony framework the most beautiful body is but a mass; without the intricate harmony of flesh and blood and skin the most exquisite skeleton is for the scientific student to admire and not a charm and a delight for the world at large."[33]

Drennan's successor, another Scottish educated academic, J. Y. T. Greig, introduced a campaign to preserve language and culture against the threat of technology at the same time that F. R. Leavis was organising a critical vanguard at Cambridge to the same ends. Greig's fervour and vehement pessimism about the inevitable decline of humanist culture under the onslaught of the machine was voiced in his lecture, "Literature in the Machine Age", delivered in 1932, the year after his appointment. Greig declared that an antagonism had developed between writers and the main current of life in the nineteenth century, and was widening in the twentieth. The "Machine Age", " a sham form of civilization", was destroying variety and individuality,

> and if its course is not checked, there will soon be no more literature, no more painting, no more sculpture, no more

> music, worthy the name. I can see no escape from this, to me devastating, conclusion.[34]

There are clear affinities between Greig's position and that taken up by F. R. Leavis in his Mass Civilization and Minority Culture pamphlet published two years previously. As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, this view derived from an English nineteenth-century tradition of reaction to the social transformations caused by industrialisation. Both Greig and Leavis argue that the machine is destroying the fabric of human values essential to social life. Both see the creation of leisure time as a compensation for the lack of creative fulfilment in factory labour. In this situation "the arts will not easily survive a condition under which we work and play at cross purposes."[35]

Both are opposed to the belief that the production of consumer goods necessarily leads to an improvement in the quality of life. Greig, however, showed no knowledge of the application of this tradition of thought in English literary studies by Leavis. His conscious affiliations were with the reactionary group of poets from the southern states of America known as the Agrarians.[36] This group, under the leadership of Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom, once they had given up their directly political ambitions and had embraced I. A. Richards's theory of poetic autonomy, were to provide the nucleus of the "New Critics", the American equivalent of practical criticism that

began to dominate the university teaching of literature in the United States from the 1940s.[37] On his part, Greig insisted that "It is one of my firmest beliefs that the Machine Age, if it goes on as it is going at present, will destroy itself."

The fact is that this analysis was something of an anomaly in a region still so rural in character. Nonetheless, polemically, the threat posed by the machine provided a potent justification for the value of literary education. The only indication that Greig recognised the difference between conditions in South Africa and the industrialised nations, was his admission that "those regions of the world which are either not industrialized at all or industrialized only very imperfectly" would learn from the example of the industrialised world that the Machine Age is "a sham and self-destructive form of civilization."[38]

The textbook that Greig published in 1943 - in the rather unusual form of a dramatic dialogue between the author and imaginary students - included chapters to alert students to the manipulation of language for ulterior purposes such as "Advertisements"; "Undisguised Comment in Newspapers"; and "Cooking the News". It was generally prescribed by English Departments in South Africa, including at UCT for Mackie's language courses. Although primarily a language textbook, it led the student towards a characterisation of poetry that was

distinctly modernist: "a highly concentrated form of language at work".[39] Greig warned prospective readers that

> When I invite you to read what we call literature, and especially those forms of it that we sort under the heading of poetry, I'm not inviting you to a simple task; I'm inviting you to undertake some good hard intellectual labour.[40]

The sense of social mission espoused by these precursors of the practical critics was directed towards the corrupting influences of the new communication technologies, not towards the threat of another language as had been the case with Kidd. Greig, the most vehement of the pre-war campaigners, invited teachers to join a campaign against the decay in the standards of spoken and written English, but insisted that the enemy was not bilingualism and the proximity of Afrikaans, or the geographical separation between "the Union and the Homeland", but was the stereotyping of thought and imprecise emotions induced by the "Machine Age".[41]

This was especially a paradox at a time when the threat Afrikaans nationalism posed to English cultural dominance was becoming apparent to political commentators. As evidence of his cultural internationalism, and his corresponding insensitivity to local developments, Greig even contributed a paper - which was translated into Afrikaans - to the 1938 Eeufees edition of the Jaarboek van die Afrikaanse Skrywerskring,[42] while organs of English liberal political opinion such as The Forum and Trek were expressing serious misgivings about the developments in Afrikaans

cultural-nationalism.[43] Alan Paton's reactions to the 1938 Celebrations in Pretoria represent the response of alert commentators outside the university:

> Many English-speaking South Africans were shocked by the revelation of the depth and intensity of the new Afrikaaner nationalism. But they were frightened also. They were apprehensive of what a triumphant nationalism might do to their security and traditions.[44]

Greig's concerns were quite different. Denouncing the "atmosphere of drugs" (referring to the mass media), he called for an education designed to give effective training in precise reading, because

> Today, the youngster is surrounded all day long by confidence tricksters - the advertisers in newspapers, in illustrated magazines, in filmlets, on the hoardings, on the air, the journalists of the daily, weekly and monthly press; Hollywood; and the wireless broadcasting from round the corner and from every corner of the world. Nothing like it has ever happened before . . . . What is common to all these agencies is the stereotype, since only the stereotype can be mass-produced.[45]

Penrith notes that "tutorial teaching was practised in Professor Clark's Literature and Professor Mackie's Language work",[46] and has remarked on the relationship between practical criticism and the application of new teaching methods. As Paul Bove has argued, practical criticism must be understood as a new development whereby literature was brought under the aegis of the human sciences, whereby its social effect was seen as paramount. Not surprisingly, considering his stronger sense of social mission, Greig was strongly opposed to the lecture system and struggled against financial restrictions to introduce tutorial

discussion groups. Bruce Murray, in his history of the University of the Witswatersrand, observes that Greig's emphasis on small-group teaching was an exceptional practice at the University during the thirties.

> His concern was that students should learn to think for themselves, and communicate effectively and clearly. Few departments in the '30s followed the lead he offered. Lectures, still very often virtually dictated, remained overwhelmingly the dominant ingredient in the system.[47]

What emerges from the elements of genealogy above is that important aspects of the Cambridge Revolution were anticipated or paralleled by developments in South Africa without apparent direct influence. This happened despite the absence of important features of the Cambridge situation. The intrusion of new class elements into a set establishment was not apparent, neither were the specific professional standards set by advanced researchers within the institution. It seems that similar results were reached for divergent reasons: Mackie had introduced a form of practical criticism as a teaching and examining strategy because his students appeared to lack the knowledge and reading skills that could be assumed in a metropolitan situation. Greig had sounded the first notes of a campaign to protect culture from the effects of the Machine Age, but this apparent connection with Leavis can, more correctly, be traced to his links with the Agrarians. Both Mackie and Greig had emphasised small group teaching in preference to lectures. However neither had paid serious attention to the question of a canon nor to the

incorporation of modernist texts. Both Mackie and Greig had been concerned with how we read, while a new and growing coterie of teachers were equally concerned with what was being read.

However, these new developments, directly associated with the influence of Cambridge, amount to a reorientation towards the sort of metropolitan-based perspectives that characterised an earlier phase in South African educational history. For the most part the eyes of these teacher-critics seem set on a comprehensive international cultural programme to combat the destructive effects of "mass civilisation" through a concern with a restricted canon of texts, largely unaware, as we shall see, of the more pressing problems posed by racial exploitation and rising Afrikaans nationalism at home.

V

The late '30s saw the arrival of lecturers who had been directly trained in the methods and philosophy of the Cambridge "critical revolution". They continued and extended their predecessors' emphasis on small group pedagogy, and on literary criticism as a "practical" examination technique, but they introduced the limited canon of modernist texts that had been defined by F. R. Leavis's polemics in the early 'thirties. Alan Warner arrived at

Rhodes University College from Cambridge in 1939 and began to teach both "practical criticism" and a specific canon of texts. Professor Guy Butler, who was one of his students at the time, recalls that Warner was "a gentle, subtle expositor, a disciple of F. R. Leavis" who held informal gatherings where students were encouraged to bring poems for group discussion: "Shelley was written off as a windbag, and Milton was under a cloud".[48]

This contention about his critical influences is supported by the booklet that Warner published in 1943 where he warned against using reading as a form of self-indulgence because "the quality of our lives depends,at least to some extent, upon the quality of what we read . . . [our reading experiences] make us more fully alive, more able to respond to our living experiences".[49] Here he broached the major theme of the Leavisite approach to literature, its moral influence on the reader; and in the same vein, he condemned the "tedious memorising of somebody else's criticism of books that are never more than faded names from the past", and attacked the existing educational system "where lectures seem to be the order of the day".[50] Echoing Leavis's distinction between critics and scholars, he told prospective students that "it is only a pedant who insists that students should treat all the great writers of the past as equally important."[51] Warner also urged his readers to grapple with the complexities of the best contemporary writers, justifying their apparent obscurity as due to "the lack

of a central tradition to guide and mould their writing",[52] and identifying T. S. Eliot's poetry as responsible for the change of idiom that characterised modern poetry.[53]

Geoffrey Durrant, who arrived at Stellenbosch from Cambridge in 1939, also insisted on the necessity of teaching and studying a canon based on contemporary literature, claiming that: "the poetic diction and the poetic machinery of the romantics has been thrown on the rubbish heap. The poetic revolution has been accomplished ".[54] This was combined with a hostility towards both scholarly research and impressionistic belle-lettrism, since both were incapable of responding to modernist innovation in writing. In the critique of the previous models of English studies, Durrant's voice was at the forefront, dismissing the "naive philological view of literary tradition" and insisting on the direct experience of the text that was only possible through practical criticism.[55]

The new movement of which Warner and Durrant represented the advance guard received considerable impetus from the Second World War. Several factors influenced this development. One was the enormous increase in student numbers that followed the demobilization at the end of hostilities. Witwatersrand University had grown from 1030 students in 1922, the year it was raised to university status, to 2776 students in 1940; but in 1946 it dramatically expanded to 5097 students;[56] while even

Rhodes University College increased from 784 in 1945 to 1189 in 1946.[57] Although these figures are inflated by the extra intake of ex-servicemen, universities in South Africa continued to expand in the post-war years. Natal, which had a total of 911 students on both campuses in 1945, had 4422 by 1965.[58] As a historian of Natal University observes: "it was possible in 1911 or 1912 for a Professor to know personally every one of his students. This was almost impossible in 1945, quite impossible by 1965."[59]

The consequences for practical criticism were immense. The increased numbers of students were drawn from widely divergent scholastic backgrounds and varying degrees of cultural preparedness. The concentration on reading techniques rather than on scholarly knowledge made practical criticism a godsend to hard-pressed educators. The demonstrable efficacy of their methods, and their applicability to English in Afrikaans-medium as well as English-medium universities, put considerable institutional power into the hands of the practical critics.

Secondly, for some few of them, the experience of actively fighting against a form of totalitarianism increased their sense of the relevance of their social programme. In his role as spokesman for the new critical discourse - consistently emphasising in conference after conference that "the study of English Literature was a training in human values"[60] - Durrant,

in particular, seems to have been empowered by his experiences in the Army Education Unit during the War. Although it distributed books and co-ordinated studies, the Unit took the unusual step of encouraging political discussion using tutorial-sized groups who met to consider social, economic, and political problems.[61] Durrant, who was seconded from the Tank Corp to the Unit, had been deeply influenced by the experience and referred to the methods employed on several occasions. Claiming that public opinion was manipulated by political and business interests that controlled the means of communication, he strove to discover "how thought can be made free, not only from government tyranny, but also from the more subtle and pervasive tyrannies of a commercial society . . . [W]e need a positive programme for democracy."[62]

Having studied the effects of Nazi propaganda, notably Zeesen Radio, he prophesied that similar techniques of mass persuasion would be used to manipulate race prejudice in South Africa:

> We need not doubt, however, that a modified form of mass propaganda will be applied to the European group in this country, and indeed there is every sign that it has already begun.[63]

Counteracting these techniques, he insisted,"would commit teachers to an open discussion of the political life of the country",[64] and he advocated the practice of "trained impartiality" which had proved successful in America, Australia, and England. His reading list, which included Leavis and

Thompson's Culture and Environment, Middletown, and Greig's Language at Work, left no doubt as to the antecedents of the practice he advocated. Unlike Greig, Durrant unambiguously linked the totalitarian threat to the rise of Afrikaaner Nationalism.[65] He explained how small group education could neutralise the mass influences manipulated for commercial gain and political power:

> the group, organized as a team for discussion, allows the individual to develop his critical sense. He gains courage from the presence of a few others who echo or at least respond to his views; and at the same time the sense of a critical opposition checks his more extravagant fancies.[66]

After taking up his chair at the University College of Natal in 1945, he delivered an inaugural lecture which is unquestionably the most coherent application of practical criticism in a social context that was ever produced in South Africa. The theme of the lecture was that English studies "will make possible, if rightly followed, a more intelligent political activity, a clearer sense of ultimate values and a generally higher standard of human life."[67] The lecture is plainly indebted to Leavis's position as it was articulated in the Education and the University pamphlet of 1943.[68] Quite un-Leavisite was the stress on political activity and the serious consideration of popular arts, including Leavis's blind spot - the cinema. Nevertheless Durrant's conclusion - "we shall find our most effective field of action in the intellectual and moral discipline of poetry, taken in its widest sense"[69] - represents a narrowing of political activity ("our most effective field of

action") to the institutional confines of the English Department: reading of poetry and exposure to its moral influence here counts as the most significant of political activities.

Durrant could be taken as an exemplary figure among practical critics in South Africa for his willingness to confront political issues; however, as Gerald Graff writes about the similar process within American New Criticism, the limitation of politics to questions about the intrinsic properties of the text was an endemic feature of the currents in criticism descending from Richards. In the end it led to the nullification of a political role for literature.

> For them [the New Critics], . . . the point was to define these social and moral functions as they operated within the internal structure of literary works themselves . . . . It was not a question of purging moral and social significance from literature, but of showing how that significance became a function of the formal texture of the work itself rather than something external . . . . But in practice these interests were not reconciled. . . . The argument that the politics of literature should be seen as part of its form modulated subtly into the idea that literature had no politics, except as an irrelevant extrinsic concern.[70]

The third result of the war was a change in the character of South African universities which indirectly benefited the practical critics. The need for industrial growth during the war years led to direct government investment in scientific research and specialised institutes. As L. Cooper, a vigorous proponent of the scientific, research-orientated conception of the university, announced in 1946: "the major effect of the war on

future university policy has been the realisation it has brought of the importance of the sciences to the national well-being."[71]

The comfortable assumptions of "humanistic" college education which had prevailed in South African universities were seriously challenged by the new arrangement of grants and publication incentives. A National Research Council had investigated the question of University research in 1940 and recommended the creation of a standing Research Council at every university in order to stimulate research; but for the first nine years of the decade this was overwhelmingly aimed at the sciences.

As in Britain, these developments in the universities provoked considerable unease amongst teachers of the humanities. Practical criticism was perfectly suited to combat these inroads made by the sciences. With their emphasis on the humanising value of poetic as opposed to directly referential language, and their suspicion of the mechanistic world-view, the practical critics were armed to defend the humanist position.

It was Greig, now largely supported in his positions, who instigated the 1946 Conference of University Teachers of English at the University of the Witwatersrand. Not only was this the first such gathering of English lecturers, but it also pioneered a self-consciousness about teaching methodology in the humanities in general. As the Principal of the University, H. R. Raikes, announced in his opening address: "the Conference, in which teachers from different universities had come together to discuss their aims as teachers and not their salaries, would be an original and valuable experiment."[72]

We have seen how, after World War Two, the systematic application of practical criticism accompanied the rapid growth of South African university populations that urgently required a simplified teaching method of demonstrable effectiveness. The language-based initiatives of the '30s were introduced by teachers who had one factor in common - their hostility to lectures. Warner and Mackie had expressed frustrations with the limitations of lecturing and the historical approach that accompanied the method, and, as we have indicated, Greig had pushed for the introduction of a tutorial system at Wits. But outside the structural rearrangments of the English Department pioneered at Wits and UCT, the tutorial method was still innovative enough to provoke comment when Durrant introduced it at the University of Natal in the nineteen-forties.[73] A historian of the University observed that

> The basis of University teaching, in the University of Natal as in the other South African Universities, is the lecture. . . . Tutorials are also used, but the only department which had really built its work on them is English, where Durrant's masterful perseverance managed to secure the additional staff which made the system possible.[74]

Alan Warner summed up the effects of the 1946 Conference as follows:

> Out of this conference had come a realisation of the function of teachers of English in universities. It was significant of our present civilization that this Conference was not regarded by the public as having the importance of a scientific conference. Teachers of English must attach great importance of their own job, in order that others might do the same. The preservation of human values, as distinct from material values, lay in the hands of teachers of English; . . . The teaching of literature was not mere technique; it was a means of preserving some kind of genuine culture at a time when this was threatened on all sides.[75]

The broadening effects of the war are visible here. Most notably, the threat to "genuine culture" was identified as multi-faceted, rather than a monist notion of a single "Machine Age" driving through the fragile china shop of humanist culture.

Amongst the papers presented at the 1946 Conference the greatest interest seems to have been created by Durrant's unequivocal polemic on behalf of practical criticism. He touted the method as the only direct means of access to literary values and poured scorn on indirect means such as historical or philological scholarship. This argument was supported by other papers which emphasised "the indissoluble partnership of language and literature"[76] . . . . "which trains students to acquire the

mental habits necessary in a world of advertisements, best sellers, film fantasy, and irresponsible journalism."[77] Such was the interest in the method aroused by the Conference that a special symposium was arranged in 1948 at UCT under the Chairmanship of Professor Mackie. Significantly it was Mackie who chaired the Symposium, and not the Arderne Professor of Literature, Oswald Doughty. The latter was a scholar with an interest in literary biography who was opposed to practical criticism.[78]

Mackie's Preface to the Symposium stresses the importance of practical criticism as providing a necessarily modern approach to literature:

> any university school of English that should neglect it, or should continue to teach English literature as a solemn and dreary procession of names and dates and periods . . . interspersed in text-book fashion with summary, dogmatic, and often traditional judgments, would at once stamp itself as antiquated.[79]

Nevertheless, as a precursor of the militant Cambridge-derived discourse, Mackie expressed reservations about the claims of "its more enthusiastic disciples" whom he identified with "Dr. Leavis and the Cambridge School", and he warned against the "temptation of trying to shock young students into modernity by violent assaults on the literary idols that their school training has taught them to worship" and also cautioned against a "too great concern with only the best."[80] These, of course, were the central

concerns of the next generation of practical critics, whose position was articulated most forcefully by Geoffrey Durrant.

It was in fact Durrant who delivered the first paper of the symposium. Speaking on the theme of "The Place of Practical Criticism in the University Curriculum" he dispelled reservations amongst some academics that the method was unteachable, and also again insisted on the centrality of practical criticism to the humanist project. Although Durrant provided a broad social justification for the method, his accent was on society in general and no attempt was made to respond to specific South African developments. This was typical of the polemics at the Symposium which limited themselves to justifying the effectiveness of practical criticism as a pedagogical tool. Durrant spoke of "the two chief tasks of literary studies - the improvement of skill in reading, and the framing of concepts which will help us to understand the art of reading, and know what we are doing when we criticise." This was directed towards the creation of an English studies which could "confidently claim, in their own right, a place in the most strenuous academic curriculum."[81]

The echoes of the old philological controversies are ominous. The study of English literature is being justified in terms of the strenuousness and rigour of the techniques to be applied. In other words, it is situating itself in institutional

terms rather than those of, for example, social effectiveness: a strategy Foucault includes among the "whole strata of practices such as pedagogy" with which an institution establishes itself.[82] At any rate, as this emphasis on pedagogical method suggests, within the few years of its rise to dominance, practical criticism's association with broader political issues had given way to narrow methodological questions.

By the second such gathering of university teachers, held at the University College of the Orange Free State in 1949, under the chairmanship of Professor D. Hopwood, the approach had become known as "Practicable Criticism". Hopwood, in his opening address, spoke enthusiastically about the revivifying effect of practical criticism, a method "of teaching English which had put new life into modern studies by enabling us to get away from books about books and get down to books themselves."[83] At this symposium, papers were presented on the application of practical criticism to Afrikaans and black students, to school teaching, and in specialised areas such as speech training. In the same year the Second Conference of University Teachers of English took place at Pietermaritzburg. Practical Criticism was accepted as indispensable because the "critical reading by students of the best poems is of the utmost value";[84] with only the older members, educated in the traditions of historical or philological scholarship, insisting on the need for "historical background",[85] against the insistence by Durrant, Warner, Christina van

Heynigen, and Guy Butler, upon the autonomous existence of the poem.[86] Durrant concluded that "if we put off reading till we know the background, we shall put it off for ever; and so we should abandon the study of literature and become historians."[87]

In 1953, W. H. Gardner, then head of the Department of English at the University of the Orange Free State, went on a study tour of educational institutions in England, France, and Germany, in order to compare their methods of teaching English with the accepted South African practices. After his tour Gardner concluded that South African teaching was on a par with most overseas universities, and could even claim to have led the originators of practical criticism in terms of examination techniques and the use of small group discussion. As a means of developing resistance towards the manipulative or dishonest use of language - in advertisements and propaganda - and for developing responsiveness to literary values, Gardner had no hesitation in declaring that "the methods of Practical Criticism (from simple comprehension tests upwards) are of an absolute and permanent value."[88] If we take Gardner's report as evidence, 1953 can be set as the date by which practical criticism had become established as the dominant discourse in the English departments of both English- and Afrikaans-medium universities.

As we have seen, the Cambridge school of practical criticism as developed by Leavis and his followers brought with

it an emphasis on a culturally and historically defined set of values that were "recognised" in a narrow canon of texts.[89] As Gardner acknowledged, in addition to teaching and reading, practical criticism had "the secondary but hardly less important aim, of interpreting and transmitting a culture and a "way of life."[90] The consequences of a discipline being organised around such a conception of literary value were stifling in many ways, particularly for the incorporation of South African writing into the curriculum of English departments. The struggles around this issue will be examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

1 Quoted in Ernest G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, vol. 2, 1923 - 75 (Cape Town: Juta and Co., 1977), 423.

2 Ibid., 423.

3 Mary C. Penrith, "A Historical and Critical Account of the Teaching of English Language and Literature in English-Medium Universities in South Africa" (M.A. diss., University of Cape Town, 1972), 24.

4 Eric A. Walker, The South African College and the University of Cape Town: 1829 - 1929 (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1929), 15.

5 Malherbe, 434.

6 James Cameron, "Classical Studies and their Relation to Colonial Education," in The Cape and its People and Other Essays by South African Writers, ed. Roderick Noble (Cape Town: J. C. Juta, 1869), 292-293.

7 Ibid., 297.

8 Ibid., 300-301.

9 Cape of Good Hope, Report of the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science, G.19.1860.

10 Quoted in Maurice Boucher, Spes in Arduis: A History of the University of South Africa (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1973), 27.

11 Malherbe, 422.

12 Penrith, 57.

13 Thomas Walker, "On the Study of Literature," The Cape Monthly Magazine 3d series, 2 (March 1880): 171.

14 Langham Dale, "The University," The Cape Monthly Magazine 3d series, 2 (January 1880): 63.

15 Langham Dale, "The Cape University and its Works," The Cape Monthly Magazine 2d series, 14 (January 1877): 52.

16 See Malherbe, 433.

17 This Association was brought into being in 1903 following the end of the Anglo-Boer War. It concerned itself with the advance of knowledge in general, signified by "science" with an uncapitalized first letter. The years in which it functioned show a distinct lack of dissociation between the scientific and the humanistic modes of thought in South Africa. The Conferences feature papers on Greek verbs, followed by studies of explosives and monographs on cattle disease. In 1947, the Association was relocated from Cape Town to Pretoria and changed its policy to accept only "papers of special scientific value".(S. B. Asher, "Editorial Note," South African Journal of Science 43 (July 1943): 1.

18 A. S. Kidd, "The English Language and Literature in South Africa," in Report of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science held in Bloemfontein, 27 August - 2 September 1909 (Cape Town: South African Association for the Advancement of Science, 1910), 155.

19 Ibid., 161 - 162.

20 Ibid., 156.

21 John Purves, ed., The South African Book of English Verse (London: Longmans, 1915), v.

22 Ibid., vii.

23 Ibid., viii.

24 Boucher, 133-141.

25 Penrith, 94.

26 ". . . what we nowadays call "close reading" . . . has not, as one might have guessed, evolved in one direction, ever closer to the text: Dryden, after all, is much "closer to the text" . . . than Addison . . . or Arnold." George Watson, The Literary Critics, 26.

27 John Clark, "A Study of Pringle," The South African Quarterly 3 (March 1921): 10.

28 Penrith, 99.

29 Mackie edited Part II of The Exeter Book for The Early English Text Society while he was Professor of English Language at UCT in 1934.

30 W. S. Mackie, "Memorandum on the Syllabuses in English," Education 53 (March 1943), 30.

31 Quoted in Penrith, 102.

32 The 1923 syllabus reveals that a combination of philology and literary history was taught at the undergraduate level at Wits. At the fourth year level the proportion of philological material was greatly increased. For example, the second year of the B.A.course is divided into 3 sections: an outline of Old English grammar; an outline of Middle English grammar; and a history of English Drama. (University of the Witwatersrand, Calendar, 1923.) A similar pattern is to be discerned in the syllabuses of Grey, Natal, and Rhodes during the same period.

33 Charles M. Drennan and J. G. Lawrie, The Writing of English: A Textbook of Composition (Johannesburg: Central News Agency, 1925), 134.

34 John Y. Greig, "Literature in the Machine Age," in Our Changing World View: Ten Lectures on Recent Movements in Science, Economics, Education, Literature, and Philosophy (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1932), 4.

35 Ibid., 9.

36 Greig quotes from the Agrarian Manifesto, I'll Take My Stand, and refers to one of the members of the group, Donald Davidson, as "an American poet friend of mine." Ibid., 9.

37 For an overview of this process see John Fekete, The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary theory from Eliot to Mcluhan (London: Routledge,Kegan Paul, 1977).

38 Greig, "Literature in the Machine Age," 10.

39 John Y. Greig, Language at Work (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1943), 225. The modernist aesthetic had been stridently introduced into South African letters by the first two issues of Voorslag in 1926. Roy Campbell wrote in his review of Turbott Wolfe that "literary criticism in South Africa is

either in its infancy or in its dotage; and the present younger generation who have produced the bulk of that not very bulky growth, South African literature, have had to be patient and forgiving. It seems that political, moral, and theological standpoints are still considered legitimate criteria in reviewing a work of art."[My underlining] Voorslag 1 (June 1926), 39. In the same issue the publication of Eliot's Waste Land was hailed as beginning "a new era in English poetry".(60) Significantly, this concern with a European modernist aesthetic went together with a dismissal of local "colonial" culture. But the introduction of this aesthetic into the pedagogy of university literary education required rather different strategies and justifications.

40 Greig, Language at Work, 225.

41 John Y. Greig, Keep Up the Fight for English (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1946), 5-23.

42 John Y. Greig, "Engelse Letterkunde in Suid-Afrika," Jaarboek van die Afrikaanse Skrywerskring 3 (1938), 165 - 169.

43 See, for example, P. Beukes, "Dictatorship in Afrikaans Culture," The Forum, 18 July 1938, 15.

44 Alan Paton, Towards the Mountain (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980; Penguin, 1986), 212.

45 Greig, Keep Up the Fight, 21.

46 Penrith, 116.

47 Bruce K. Murray, Wits, The Early Years: A History of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and its Precursors, 1886 - 1939 (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1982), 268.

48 Guy Butler, Bursting World: An Autobiography 1936 - 1945 (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983), 99.

49 Alan J. Warner, About Books: Some Notes on Books and Reading for the English Student and the General Reader (Grahamstown: Grocott and Sherry, 1943), 7-8.

50 Ibid., 11.

51 Ibid., 9.

52 Ibid., 21.

53 Ibid., 23.

54 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "Cast a Cold Eye," Trek, 4 May 1945, 16.

55 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "The Teaching of English," The Mentor, 27 (1945): 10.

56 University of the Witwatersrand, University Bulletins, Febuary 1942, and August 1946.

57 Ronald F. Currey, Rhodes University 1904 - 1970: A Chronicle (Grahamstown: Rustica Press,1970), 97.

58 Edgar H. Brookes, A History of the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966), 63.

59 Ibid., 64.

60 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "The Teaching of Poetry," in "Proceedings of the First Conference of University Teachers of English held at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 10 - 12 July 1946": 4.

61 Geoffrey H. Durrant, Making Up Our Minds: Propaganda and Public Opinion, South African Affairs Pamphlets (Johannesburg: Society for the Friends of Africa, 1944), 4.

62 Ibid., 21.

63 Ibid., 26.

64 Ibid., 26.

65 Geoffrey H. Durrant, Adult Education for Citizenship, South African Affairs Pamphlets (Johannesburg: Society for the Friends of Africa, 1946), 3.

66 Ibid., 15.

67 Geoffrey H. Durrant, English Studies and the Community: Inaugural Address, 8 June 1945 (Pietermaritzburg: Natal University College, 1945), 3.

68 F. R. Leavis, Education and the University: A Sketch for an "English School", 2d ed., (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948).

69 Durrant, English Studies, 18.

70 Graff, Professing Literature, 148-150.

71 L. Cooper, "Universities in South Africa" Trek, 13 December 1946, 12.

72 H. R. Raikes, "Opening Address," in "Proceedings of a Conference, 1946": 1.

73 Guy Butler records that a tutorial system was only introduced at Rhodes when he took over the Chair of English in 1952. His use of the method derived from Greig's innovations at Wits where Butler had been a member of staff. In the third volume of his autobigraphy he notes that "I brought the idea of such small group work with me from Wits." Guy Butler, "The Professor," chap. in "High Corner," Tms., 1990 (?), 8.

74 Brookes, 137.

75 Alan J. Warner, "Summing-Up of the Sixth Session," in "Proceedings of a Conference, 1946": 19.

76 Thelma H. Philip, "The Ideal First-Year Course in English," in "Proceedings of a Conference, 1946": 1.

77 Rico H. Titlestad, "Some Reflections and their Bearing on the Teaching of English in Predominantly Afrikaans Universities," in Ibid., 4.

78 O. Doughty; quoted in W. H. Gardner, The Teaching of English Through Literature: Report on a Study-Tour of Schools and Universities in England, France, and Germany (Pretoria: National Council for Social Research, 1954), 80.

79 W. S. Mackie, "Preface," in A Symposium on Practical Criticism by Members and Graduates of the South African Universities, ed. W. S. Mackie (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1948), 1.

80 Ibid., 2.

81 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "The Place of Practical Criticism in the University Curriculum," in Ibid., 7.

82 Foucault, "Orders of Discourse," trans. Rupert Swyer, 11.

83 D. Hopwood, "Preface," in Practicable Criticism: Symposium Number Two by Members and Graduates of the South African Universities (Bloemfontein: The University College of the Orange Free State, 1949), 3.

84 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "Discussion of Professor Haworth's Paper," in "Proceedings of the Second Conference of University Teachers of English held at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 5 - 7 July 1949," 19.

85 For example Professor Haworth from Rhodes presented a paper on "The Co-ordinates of Criticism" at the 1948 Symposium and developed it further in the direction of accomodating practical criticism at the 1949 Conference. At the same conference Alan Warner introduced a distinction between "direct" and "indirect" approaches towards literature: "Direct approach to literature would be a better phrase than Practical Criticism. (The indirect approach is giving lectures on literature.)" Ibid., 18.

86 Despite the echoes of the old controversies the conference concluded with unanimous agreement to Durrant's suggestion that all English departments should exchange practical criticism exercises and syllabuses.

87 Durrant, "Discussion," in "Proceedings of the Second Conference, 1949": 19.

88 Gardner, 158.

89 This question will be given more extensive consideration in the following chapter.

90 Gardner, 158.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dan Jacobson, the South African-born writer and essayist, first encountered F. R. Leavis's criticism some years after he had graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1949. By that time Leavis was at the height of his influence and, although on the fringe of the institutionalised English teaching at Cambridge University, was attracting students from all over the British Commonwealth to his college at Downing.[1] But what attracted the young South African writer to Leavis's criticism was not merely his prestige as a critic or his outspoken diatribes against the literary establishment. For Jacobson there was "something else at stake" in his admiration for practical criticism. Leavis's criticism offered an "ideal community" where writers from the present could interact and co-exist with writers from the past. This third realm, outside time and the minds of particular individuals, had obvious parallels with the notion of religious communities, but it had particular significance for

Jacobson because he was a displaced writer: exiled from his homeland yet alienated from the London social environment. The literary tradition, as posited by Leavis, represented for Jacobson

> an ideal community which could be experienced only inside my own head, but which nevertheless felt more like the real thing than any other I could imagine myself joining.[2]

The young writer's first personal contact with Leavis was in the late '50s when he was invited to deliver a paper to the Doughty Society at Downing College, Cambridge.[3] Jacobson was asked to talk on the topic of "The Writer in the Commonwealth" and spent most of his time adumbrating the difficulties facing writers who tried to create literature without any of the preconditions necessary for such a task. To his surprise, he received an ad hominem "grilling" from Mrs. Leavis because of the negative and generally defeatist tone of his paper.

> The sum of her questioning amounted to her asking me what I proposed doing about those lacks and deficiencies. There was no point in my coming to Cambridge to talk to <u>them</u> on the subject. Why didn't I go back to South Africa and talk about it there?[4]

In retrospect, Mrs. Leavis's vehemence is even more surprising because Leavis's students - and Jacobson reports that there was one South African in his audience - generally took it upon themselves to oppose serious critical attention to South African literature. Nonetheless, Jacobson's anecdote illustrates how heady and important the Leavisite project could appear to South African eyes: it seemed to address matters of crucial

spiritual import, yet in such a way that South Africans could feel themselves an integral part of an enterprise of international significance. In this chapter I will examine the effect of the practical critical programme, and its Leavisite development, on the academic study of South African literature.

I

The examinations that tested candidates' memorisation of literary history at the University of the Cape of Good Hope may well have been vulnerable to the criticisms later levelled by practical critics, but they did not necessarily occlude attention to South African writing. In her historical review, Penrith records that the first question on the topic of South African literature appeared as early as 1909 (although what primarily interested her, as a practical critic, was that the question suffered from "a pronounced historical bias").[5] Candidates in the Literature paper were asked to comment on "The bearing of Economic conditions on the rise of a National Literature. (Discuss this with reference to South Africa and also to the history of any European Nation.)"[6] Although surprisingly modern in the sophistication it would seem to expect from the students, the format of the examination, and the lack of any South African

literary histories available at the time, make it hard to know what answer was expected by the examiners.

The question was posed only two years after the first informal attempt to provide an outline of the history of South African Literature, by the amateur scholar and critic, Manfred Nathan. Excluding travellers' accounts and hunters' journals, because they were not distinctively South African, Nathan proposed a definition of work that qualified for consideration as South African literature:

> it must reproduce the local colour and atmosphere of the country and have been written by one who was either born in South Africa or has lived there long enough to become identified with the country as an inhabitant[7]

Nathan's definition is notably nationalistic in impulse; nevertheless it is broad enough to embrace Kipling and Rider Haggard, as well as works in Dutch, travellers' journals and "aboriginal folklore". He later developed these suggestions into a full-length study called South African Literature: A General Survey. His broadly inclusive notion of South African literature did not divide off English and Afrikaans/Dutch works.

> To classify authors according to the medium in which they wrote appears to be an arbitrary mode of treatment, more particularly when the influence of great events or movements upon literature has to be taken in to account. . . . Consequently, writers are treated indiscriminately without regard to their origin or language. Such a mode of treatment appears to be inevitable in a bi-lingual country, like South Africa.[8]

Nathan's broad approach was also employed by Professor John Purves at the Transvaal Technical Institute in his essay on "South African Literature" in the 1910 Union Commemoration Edition of The Cape Times.[9] Stephen Gray hails Purves for "his vision . . . of a literature that was far more organically whole than we like to believe today."[10] Like Nathan, Purves made no distinction on the grounds of language and was prepared to consider both Dutch and "indigenous", together with English, writing within the category of South African literature. For Gray, Purves's "sense of openness and all-inclusiveness acts as a challenge still today".[11]

Unlike Nathan, Purves was writing as an academic teacher of literature. Nonetheless, his interest was not in materials for teaching South African literature, but, as we have seen in a previous chapter, his recognition of cultural difference between South Africa and England led to a concern with appropriate models for local imitation. Purves's criticism of "the second-rate romantic style", which he identified as a hindrance to the development of a robust South African poetry, prefigures the modernist critique of nineteenth century literary modes that was imported into South Africa by Cambridge-educated academics in the '30s and '40s. However, while the practical critics rejected South African writing of the time per se because it was flawed by its allegiance to a sentimental romantic aesthetic, Purves

attempted to find more appropriate models for South African poetic practice.

The opposition of practical critics to South African literature was not necessarily a result of the close-reading technique. Professor John Clark, whose "documentary method" has been identified by Penrith as a possible precursor of the practical critics' attention to the textual qualities of poems, applied his method to South African poetry. Significantly, his discussion of the method was presented in a study of Thomas Pringle. Clark also wrote papers on W. E. Hunter, W. C. Scully, Lance Fallow, Herbert Tucker, and Charles Murray.[12] In his description of the "documentary method", Clark objected to "question-begging and unscientific labelling, such as that of "minor poets". He claimed that "[s]trictly speaking, there are no 'minor poets' . . . . Every poet, worthy of the sacred name of maker, feels and presents things differently from another."[13] In his emphasis on the irreducible qualities of individual poets, and in his refusal to evaluate poets according to some crõerion of social or psychological usefulness, however, Clark was still outside the categories shortly to be formulated for practical criticism.

We have seen how the South African precursors of practical criticism, like Mackie and Greig, were concerned with the social consequences of new communication technologies, in particular

their deleterious effect on language. Although this shifted attention away from bilingualism as a threat to the "purity" of the English language, Mackie's and, in particular, Greig's sense of social mission prompted a new kind of hostility to the concept of a South African literature. In the article he published in the 1938 edition of the Jaarboek van die Afrikaanse Skrywerskring, Greig repudiated the notion - held by Nathan and Purves - that a literature was characterised by the birthplace of its authors or its subject matter.

> Such a notion, which is not at all uncommon in this country, . . . distributes the emphasis on the wrong place, and betrays a serious misconception of the method and purpose of literature. Literature is the memorable expression of human experience, not the record, description or delineation of "subjects" considered in abstraction.[14]

Greig was prepared to grant that a South African literature existed - but only in Afrikaans; because "the only sure criterion by which we may distinguish one literature from another is the language it is written in; and the country it is written in is largely irrelevant." This implied taking a different attitude towards South African writing in English because it "should be regarded as part of English literature." From this perspective only two South African writers (Roy Campbell in verse, and Olive Schreiner in prose) were considered "worthy of being included in the canon";[15] yet Greig's strongly hierarchical approach - generated by the conviction of social purpose and cultural crisis - allowed even those two writers only onto the lower ranks of the canon.

With the arrival of the Cambridge-educated practical critics, with their emphasis on the undivided "organic community" of English language and culture, the exclusion of South African literature became even more stringent. Their insistence on a limited canon of English classics, derived from a militantly anti-Romantic aesthetic, limited the syllabus to metropolitan texts. As Geoffrey Durrant proclaimed: "we should concentrate upon making students familiar, through the most intensive study, with the really great works in English."[16]

II

Since these exclusions depend upon evaluative principles, we should pause to consider the concept of value that lies behind such selectivity. I. A. Richards had contested the aestheticist valuation of literary experience because, he claimed, it was unable to justify the social importance of literature. Instead he proposed a psychological theory of value that presented literary texts as more balanced and complex versions of ordinary experience. But, as we have seen in a previous chapter, his theory of value was unable to provide a working basis for discriminations between actual texts.

As we have already recorded, this gap was filled by the Leavisite stress on critical authority and on the canon. Discriminations were based upon the judgments made by a group of critics with access to the values of the organic community. Criticism was proclaimed as a unique "discipline of thought that is at the same time a discipline in scrupulous sensitiveness of response to delicate organizations of feeling, sensation and imagery",[17] and therefore the privilege of a selected elite. It is possible to see these claims as having solved a difficulty in Richards's position by simply transferring the problem to a different level. The advantage of replacing Richards's imputed theory of mental impulses by an appeal to the organic community was that, unlike Richards's quasi-scientific approach, it was not subject to easy positivistic rebuttal. On the other hand it could be accused of entrenching itself by replacing Richards's psychologising with a different brand of mystification.

The Leavisites' notorious antipathy to theory could be interpreted as a symptom of this mystifying stance. Francis Mulhern, in his study of the Leavisite discourse of Scrutiny, has observed that "a reticence so obdurate, and so enigmatic in its effects cannot have been merely idiosyncratic",[18] and has demonstrated that the literary criticism practised by Leavis and his followers, far from being innocent of theory, concealed a systematic substructure.[19] This is exemplified in the celebrated interchange between F. R. Leavis and the literary philosopher,

Rene Wellek. Leavis used the dispute with Wellek to emphasise his customary distinction between literary criticism and philosophy, as "quite different and distinct kinds of discipline". The difference, according to Leavis, lay in the antithetical modes of reading practised by the two disciplines. Whereas philosophical reading was "abstract", literary-critical reading was "concrete". In Leavis's definition, literary criticism attempts to evaluate objects in terms of their internal qualities without reducing them to elements in an external system.[20]

Leavis seems to assume too readily that a clear and unproblematic distinction can be drawn between "concrete" and "abstract" language. More recent critical theory, for example, would be suspicious of the binary opposition invoked to support Leavis's methodology. What is, at any rate, evident is that Leavis does not see how the main ground of his argument rests on an unquestioned theoretical assumption. What particularly strikes Mulhern, from his point of view, is that Leavis failed to address the major point in Wellek's argument: the request that Leavis articulate the presuppositions behind his criticism. Instead of doing so, Leavis presented what purported to be a description of a technical process structured simply by the "demands of the material". For Mulhern, this description, despite its claims, revealed "certain fundamental ideological assumptions." Implicit

in the assumptions structuring Leavis's criticism was the refusal to define them abstractly.

Leavis's stress on "concreteness" and "particularity" as the essential characteristics of literary-critical language flowed logically from his hostility to the anti-human discourses of science and technology and his affirmation of the intuitive and traditional work practices of the organic community. In Leavis's critical system, "life" was invoked as the highest possible value; yet, as Mulhern points out, this was to suppress the abstract implications in the notion of human essence that lay at the basis of the concept. The result was "a totality whose compass was such as to dwarf even the most audacious theoretical system".[21] Since the critical method was based on an avowed hostility to abstraction it could not be defended except by repeated demonstrations of the methodology in particular judgments. As Leavis insisted in his reply to Wellek:

> The business of the literary critic is to attain a peculiar completeness of response and to observe a peculiarly strict relevance in developing his response into commentary; he must be on his guard against abstracting improperly from what is in front of him and against any premature or irrelevant generalizing - of it or from it. His first concern is to enter into possession of the given poem (let us say) in its concrete fulness, and his constant concern is never to lose his completeness of possession, but rather to increase it . . . . he aims to make fully conscious and articulate the immediate sense of value that "places" the poem.[22]

Criticism, in Leavis's terms, as the effort made to "enter into possession of the given poem" was, in other words, to realise the

pre-existent and undefinable meanings that already existed in the arrangement of words on the page; so that the typical Leavisite critical gesture took the form of recognition and affirmation. It followed that when the values "communicated" by the text diverged from those tacitly held by the critic, the text became "unrecognisable"; and in place of affirmation, some form of external explanation became necessary. Typically the "immaturity" of the author or the destruction of the organic community would be cited. Such a criterion of "unrecognisability" was used in practice to exclude non-canonical forms of writing and non-metropolitan literatures.

The refusal to articulate their theoretical premises, and a critical practice based on the disciplined sensibility of practical critics, caused special difficulties when it came to the academic acceptance of South African literature. In order to qualify for serious consideration, such a literature had to justify itself in terms of criteria that were never made explicit and were drawn from an English model. Furthermore, since the Leavisite hostility to contemporary English "civilisation" meant that the organic community did not necessarily have to be preserved in its country of origin, practical critics in South Africa could be fully occupied with the identical concerns of their British counterparts. The net result of this involvement in an internationalist cultural programme was to blind local critics to the needs of a burgeoning South African literature.

Durrant, as a leading voice among local exponents of practical criticism, was predictably outspoken in his hostility towards the concept of a South African literature. In his 1947 review of a new anthology of verse for schoolchildren - The Living Tradition compiled by Thelma Tyfield and K. R. Nicol - he condemned previous anthologies which, by their unnecessary attention to South African poetry, had denied children contact with verse of "the first order". South African poetry was characterised as "an exhibition of false heartiness or of sentimentality about Nature"; yet he simultaneously insisted on the need for poetry that was alive and of contemporary relevance because "nothing does more harm to poetry than the view of it as a 'fine art' meant for decoration, and with no roots in our common earth."[23]

This was not, however, a specifically South African "earth". Ten years later Durrant was still repeating the point made by Greig in 1938 that the category "South African literature" was a misnomer. Giving the keynote address to the Annual Conference of the South African Library Association in September 1956, he admitted that "one of the most difficult questions to be answered by those who teach a 'literature' . . . is to know what exactly a literature is, where its boundaries are to be drawn, and what is to be included within its territory", but he categorically insisted that

> if we consider "English Literature" as the literature produced anywhere in the English language, it is reasonable to suppose that any literary work, to be thought worthy of study, must be able to assert its value in the whole context of books written in English everywhere. In other words, it will have to be very good indeed to merit attention at all.[24]

The context of books already written constituted a tradition (here he acknowledged Eliot's formulation) which Durrant warned was threatened by "three major heresies, to which for the purpose of abusing them I give the name of Provincialisms." These were the provincialisms of "Time"; "the Sociological"; and "the Regional or National mind".[25] A concern with South African literature he classed under the provincialism of the Regional or National Mind, which he defined as the attempt by people with limited talent to create a market for their writings by fostering regional characteristics. This strategy he claimed "has attractions for groups of writers, academics, and publishers whose work might be little in demand if it were not stimulated by a patriotic desire to support national or local products."[26]

Allowing that contemporary works of local significance could be of interest, he insisted, however, that such writing could only be understood within the context of a tradition. This tradition, by definition, had to be <u>the</u> English tradition, because "it is . . . too late for a new national tradition in English literature." He reminded his audience of South African

librarians that classifications along national lines were purely arbitrary groupings, and that

> Education in literature, and the discussion of literature, must, no matter what our political views, at all costs be preserved from illiberalism, from national or local prejudices and from the urgent attentions of humanitarian reformers.[27]

III

The Third Conference of University Teachers of English which was held at the University of the Witwatersrand in July 1956 could have been what Durrant was referring to when he dismissed attempts by groups of writers, academics, and publishers to substitute nationalism for literary talent. Unlike the previous conferences which had been concerned with the methods of teaching English at South African universities, "this conference was an innovation; for the first time, writers, publishers and editors were introduced."[28] In keeping with the dramatically enlarged gathering of delegates, the opening address, by the Acting Principal of the University, sounded a new theme in South African English studies. For the first time English-speakers in South Africa were conscious of themselves as a minority group.

> Something, then, must have happened in recent years for us to become aware of our position as a minority group, and to feel that things are no longer going our way, . . .[29]

He rejected suggestions that the only role for the English-speaking group was as a "creative minority", and attributed this talk to "those English-speaking unfortunates among us who have not yet outgrown their 'colonial mentality'".[30] To attain their full stature as South Africans, the English-speakers would have to break their emotional ties to the "Mother Country" and look for a way out of the political wilderness. He predicted that the new status, that of "a minority group under pressure" would lead to a greater group consciousness and a more determined defence of the distinctive group values.

> As we re-orientate our attitude and outlook, in order to take into account our changed status, we shall have to turn to our intellectuals and writers, those whose job it is to handle words and ideas, for leadership and guidance. It is mainly through the new definitions which they alone can supply, that we shall be able to bring into play our resources as a group, that we shall be able to preserve and enhance the values which mean so much to us.[31]

The subsequent proceedings - although unfortunately the discussions following each paper are given in summary form - show a clear division between the academic approach to the problem and the markedly different responses of the creative writers. The practical criticism hegemony stood emphatically against any attempts to adapt the syllabus to local conditions. Durrant, in his capacity as Professor of English at Natal University and Chairman of the English Committee of the Joint Matriculation Board, once again attacked the emphasis on research and publication and insisted on "the transmission of the inherited values of the past."[32]

The only attempt to introduce a serious academic consideration of South African literature was by a relative outsider, the Professor of English Literature at UCT, the Australian, R. G. Howarth. Whereas William Plomer and Uys Krige both read papers on the subject of South African literature that were treated with polite interest, Howarth's paper on "Indigenous Literature and its place in University English Studies" caused a furore. Guy Butler, who chaired the session, later recalled that

> Professor Guy Haworth [sic] of U.C.T. put up a projected syllabus for a one year course in S. A. Lit., and was treated with blistering irony - a display of academic bad manners such as I hope never to witness again.[33]

Howarth was, in fact, presenting the outline of a course that he had already introduced into the first year syllabus at UCT. The entire literature section had been replaced by "the study of literature in English" which included examples of British, Commonwealth, and American literature, "by kinds (poetry, drama, fiction, general prose) exemplified in main works."[34] To the conference he presented his "preliminary and tentative selection", ranging chronologically from Thomas Pringle to Nadine Gordimer.[35] Howarth stressed that the works were to be studied "as examples of various literary kinds and read comparatively with British, other Commonwealth, and American literature."[36] He even suggested that comparisons should be made with Afrikaans writing, to illuminate similar backgrounds and experiences to those dealt with in the English works. The generally low

estimation of South African writing was acknowledged, but he justified the course in terms of the educational principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown. The study of South African literature would, according to Howarth, lay a basis of reference from which students could assess the admittedly superior achievements of English literature.

In retrospect, the paper was presented so tentatively and with such frequent acknowledgements of the superior literary values of British literature that the vehemence of the response towards it - as reported by Butler - is somewhat surprising. Yet, in the outline of the course, practical critics could discern the educational principle that they had most opposed and that was the antithesis of close reading and small group teaching - the literary survey course. Howarth was, furthermore, also introducing history as a necessary element of the text's meaning, not merely as background. Howarth, it should be noted, was not a "practical critic";[37] he was Australian born and Oxford educated, and brought a different set of ideas and experiences into the South African critical discourse. Howarth's ideas came from a rather eccentric belief in literary "kinds", and in practice he imposed an exceptionally wide selection upon his students with examination papers designed to curb "spotting"; hence eliminating just the kind of detailed attention to specific texts that was fundamental to practical criticism. Penrith notes that his insistence on teaching South African literature had been

discontinued by the late '60s, and stresses that his contribution was

> chiefly in the perpetuation at Cape Town of Oxford's insistence on scholarly procedure in literary studies; his assertion of the importance of wide reading over "close reading"; and his unusual treatment of regional literatures.[38]

IV

Butler, who spoke on "Poetry, Drama and Public Taste", escaped the opprobrium that greeted Howarth because he spoke as a practising poet, defending the unashamed use of local references because

> Culture is surely that which tries to name and give significance and value to objects among which we move and have our being.[39]

Butler's argument can be traced back to a seminar paper that he delivered at Wits in 1949.[40] On this occasion he elected to speak as a teacher, and he argued for the importance of South African literature, using the "mass civilization - minority culture" debate. If youth are not encouraged to develop imaginative roots in Africa, he warned his audience, "they shall become the flaccid sloppy sensation-seekers . . . the products of the sex-appeal advertisement, the "Flick" . . . ."[41] In a way which almost exactly echoes Kidd's analysis from 1909, Butler went on to argue that the remoteness of the references in English

poetry made it appear vague and nebulous to South African students. Whereas Kidd had identified this as a malady requiring special pedagogical initiatives, for Butler it was a reason for fostering a national literature at home.[42] The weakness in Butler's argument was his inability to challenge prevailing literary valuations, since he granted English literature a superior place in the hierarchy of artistic achievement. Thus he was forced to plead for the inclusion of South African writing on an already overcrowded syllabus, without any other justification than the need to remedy the imaginative short-comings of South African students.[43]

Butler's opinion at this time represents one of the least controversial arguments for the inclusion of South African literature in the university syllabus: as a remedial response to the backwardness of South African students. On the same basis, Afrikaans-medium universities had led the way with the introduction of South African literature into the undergraduate syllabus as a compromise gesture towards the restricted experience of their students.[44]

In the conclusion to his seminar paper, Butler raised the possibility that the true wealth of the European heritage was not the accumulation of great texts, but was a certain state of mind. Living up to the example of the European heritage meant "the adaptation of ideas and tradition to a new environment."[45] In

1956, Butler began to portray the role of the English minority in terms of the Nietzschean opposition between Apollo and Dionysus: "Our role, as I see it, is to play Apollo to Africa's Dionysus."[46] This meant that Butler continued to acknowledge the need for an awareness of English literature, which "sets mercifully high standards, which should prevent us from becoming isolated, uncritical and provincial".[47] We see Butler using the same terms of reference as Durrant, though his object was entirely different.

Like the Principal of Witwatersrand University, Butler identified the diminution of political power as a catalyst to cultural self-consciousness.

> There was a time when we English were in the ascendancy here, when we borrowed whenever we needed a word. We must, I believe, start borrowing again if we want our language to stay here at all.[48]

Butler was now arguing for an English South African poetry as a political imperative. If the Afrikaners had staked their right to ownership by developing a language that named the environment, the English South Africans were obliged to follow a similar strategy or else become "their assistants, allies, or stooges."[49]

Such negative reaction as there was to Butler's paper raised the familiar distinction between the particulars of South African poetry and the universals of English poetry: to write about a nightingale was universally understood, but to mention a

bokmakierie would be obscurely local to an "ideal" international reader.[50] Poets who introduced local idioms into their language were accused of "evasion" and failure to live up to writers such as D. H. Lawrence, who were capable, by "a vivid and imaginative understanding of their material", of turning the unfamiliar or the exotic into generally appreciable poetry. Therefore it was concluded that

> If words were induced in the poet because of the need of a peculiar idiom for any special reason, then the poet was misusing his freedom. It might not be wrong to do so, but he would not be working very well as a poet.[51]

The conference concluded with a unanimous vote in favour of establishing a South African Journal of English Studies, but only as "a medium for general literary studies with some reference to South African literature."[52]

The series of talks that were commissioned for radio broadcast by the South African Council for English Education in 1960, as part of the celebration of the Union half-centenary, included both Durrant and Butler among the participants. Their talks were published in a 1961 edition of the journal that had been proposed at the 1956 Conference: English Studies in Africa. The published talks convey a cross-section of all the contending positions about the role that language and literature studies should play in an ex-colony where English speakers perceived themselves as a minority group.

Butler's paper was appropriately entitled "The Language of the Land" and concerned the fate of English speakers "likely to be slowly crushed politically, and culturally absorbed by one or other" of the contending nationalisms, Afrikaner and African. He berated his fellow English speakers for their complacent belief in English as a world language, and warned that without creating a living, and uniquely South African, English, they were destined to become "flotsam on the tide of other people's nationalisms". English treated purely as a "contact" language risked becoming "something closer to pidgin English: a sort of European "fanagalo"." He warned that "this sort of English is already widely spoken and written in our country - make no mistake. It is not a fantastic joke, but a sad fact."[53]

Against this pessimistic prognosis he upheld the stirring example of writers who had expressed their commitment to the land in a distinctively South African manner. Listing Pringle, Schreiner, Moffatt and Livingstone, Sir George Grey, Plomer, and Campbell as examples of writers who had adapted the language and the tradition of liberal impartiality to South African society, he declared that "as a Christian and a Westerner, I believe [this] to be a most wonderful thing: it is proof that a great tradition has struck root in a new soil."[54]

Not only was Butler's conception of a South African literature limited by his refusal to criticise the high valuation

of English literature, but his conception of a living South African English was largely confined to borrowing words from local dialects. As Elaine Williams points out in her study of what she calls Butler's "cultural theory":

> What Butler means by the Africanisation of English is never made explicitly clear, but where this is discussed it seems to imply the domestication of the "ethos" and "tradition" which Butler has named as tied to the language. Africanisation then comes to mean the successful introduction of English, along with a few anglicized South African words into an environment where the purity of the English language is potentially threatened.[55]

The problem of value appears not only in the ranking of different literatures, but in the internal valuations among local writers. This notion of a ranking relationship between certain South African writers was apparent in the bibliography compiled by W. H. Gardner for the Union Exhibition at Bloemfontein in 1960.[56] Unlike its predecessor - compiled by E. R. Seary at Rhodes University College in 1938[57] - Gardner's bibliography privileges certain authors by giving their biographical details. In this way, Pringle, Slater, and Campbell are singled out as significant poets; and Schreiner, Plomer, and Van der Post are given attention as novelists. But the explicit definition of a tradition encompassing such authors had still to be offered.

By 1960 the vague forebodings voiced at the '56 Conference had been actualised by the Nationalist government's decision to sever the country's ties with the Commonwealth and to create a republic on May 31. These events catalysed opponents of Butler's

programme such as Philip Birkinshaw, a lecturer at UCT, who defended the political consequences of teaching only a canon of English texts, identifying the notion of South Africanism as "the tool of a regime which has lost the sympathy of the world."[58] Birkinshaw proclaimed the teaching of solely English texts as politically courageous, and encouraged teachers who refused to bow to narrowly nationalist pressures. The teacher who stuck to the canon "will recognize the brick bats he endures - "disloyal", "outmoded","un-South African" - as his very contribution to saving South Africa from the shadow of totalitarianism."[59]

It was not only the proponents of dogmatic positions within the local literary-critical debate who were subject to such fears. Joseph J. Firebaugh, a visiting American academic who had attended the 1956 Conference, reported in 1958, that "in such an atmosphere, however, there is undeniably some justification for the fear that mediocre works, selected for political reasons, may push aside superior works of established merit."[60]

This trend reactivated what had always been a strong theme among practical critics: that the effect of close study of a limited canon of great texts was inherently humanising and therefore anti-totalitarian. Advocates of a South African component to the syllabus thus struggled to mediate between their local sympathies, and acknowledgement of the superior humanising

values of the great English texts. Practical critics, such as Birkenshaw and Philip Segal, insisted on the teacher's responsibility to introduce students to only the highest standards of excellence.

V

When the journal, English Studies in Africa, appeared for the first time in 1958 under the editorship of Astley Partridge, the new Professor of English Language and Literature at Witwatersrand University, it was used to attack the Leavisite hegemony in South African universities. The editor accepted that "the new critical liberalism" had arrived, but insisted that it be closely examined. Upholding the example of the Oxford tradition for "sound textual and critical scholarship", he nevertheless reiterated the importance of metropolitan literature as a rallying point for English South Africans.

> A great tradition in the hands of a minority group, as the English-speaking people happen to be in Africa, must give tangible evidence of the will of the group to survive. . . . [But] there is a danger, now, that rival English-speaking cultures, evolved in different continents, may press their claims to recognition at the expense of the parent tradition itself.[61]

Yet in Partridge's insistence on the need for scholarship and research - which the practical critics largely condemned -

was a contradiction. The professional status of English as a "discipline" required teachers who had undertaken advanced research; but increasingly the only primary area open to South African researchers was indigenous literature. In 1949, at the very zenith of the practical criticism hegemony, Professor R. E. Davies of Potchefstroom had unwittingly uncovered the contradiction in his paper "Problems of Research in South Africa". Freely acknowledging the inferior quality of South African writing, he urged his fellow academics to adopt a pioneering attitude. But he did so without threatening the position of practical critics. Davies was quick to reassure his audience that "I know that the term 'history of literature' is anathema to some of us, but this is not a matter of undergraduate teaching methods."[62]

He pointed out that research in English that was possible in Britain itself was impossible in South Africa due to lack of original material; whereas, "if we look at South African literature . . . we find a surprising amount of material."[63] The proof of this approach was the amount of research produced by post-graduates at his department at Potchefstroom University for Christian National Education.[64] What Davies failed to take into account was that those who researched the subject would eventually have to teach it, leading to an inevitable clash over the undergraduate syllabus, the question of literary values, and teaching methods.

This contradiction nonetheless took some time to work itself through the institutions. Despite the developments at Potchefstroom, research into South African literature was generally dormant during the '50s and '60s. One reason, apart from the continuing opposition, was that very few English departments offered degrees beyond honours level. Where a sympathetic ear might have been offered to such research, there was still the general opprobrium South African topics aroused to contend with. An instance is the negative response to Howarth's supervision of a Ph.D candidate at UCT in the mid-'fifties. Howarth revealed at the 1956 Conference that he had persuaded the candidate to investigate the literary value of traveller's records instead of the work he had originally proposed on Thomas Hardy. He met with the usual resistance on the grounds of relative value of the two projects.[65]

During the late '60s and early '70s the area of research received considerable stimulus with the increasing emphasis on post-graduate studies in universities abroad, which had spread through the influence of the American model. As Stephen Gray, a product of such programmes, pointed out:

> The researchers of the last decade who have taken to the field have, almost without exception, been trained overseas, in the United Kingdom or the United States most usually. Still today, no South African further degree in that area is as prestigious or as geared to appropriate methodologies or research techniques.[66]

VI

The declaration of the Republic in 1960 led, as we have seen, to a need to emphasise the Englishness of local English culture, by a process of reaction. Chief amongst the developments that followed the severing of political ties with the Commonwealth was the establishment of the English Academy in 1961. The special circumstances surrounding the creation of the Academy were admitted by its founders, such as Gwen Knowles-Williams:

> An English Academy may, on the face of it, seem to be a somewhat unEnglish conception but it is called for by the minority status of English speakers and their apathy about their language.[67]

Though the concept of an academy was indeed un-English it immediately brings to mind the figure of Arnold, who was also an influence upon Leavisitism. But by no means all proponents of practical criticism were in favour of such measures locally. As Geoffrey Durrant commented in 1960:

> Unlike those languages which have been pruned and controlled by academies and professors, English owes its strength to its native vigour, to its poets, and to its freedom to make or adopt new words.[68]

The main brief of the Academy was to uphold standards of written and spoken English, and not specifically the promotion of South African literature. By 1965 the English Academy was under the leadership of Guy Butler, and was sufficiently confident of

itself to begin to consider the question of South African literature at its second conference of writers, teachers, and academics at Rhodes University in 1969. Significantly, the original theme planned for the conference was "The English-speaking South African: his origins, achievements, and future, if any"; but the title was changed to "South African Writing in English and its Place in School and University." Notably, it was the political imperative underlying the study of South African English Literature that Butler spelt out in his opening address.

> The predicament of many English-speaking South Africans is acute. They feel a lack of purpose of [sic] direction; they want to feel they belong; and they are afraid of belonging: they don't know what they belong to.[69]

An indigenous literature would, in Butler's view, provide the definition necessary for group survival. What in 1949 had been a pedagogical tool - a way of dealing with the limitations of South African students - was 20 years later a political purpose. Butler's paper (and on this occasion he talked as a teacher not as a practising poet) is riddled with references to the importance of community, and of writing as a form of identification with place. Yet his argument appeals solely to social expediency, and leaves the question of literary values out of account. The urgency of the political need for group identity overshadows the question of literary values, because, as Butler constantly acknowledges, "no one wants to be judged by any but the most rigorous standards." Hence Butler is still tacitly

admitting the superiority of metropolitan literature, which continues to weaken his case.

Nonetheless this did not prevent Butler from insisting that the subject needed to be studied at university level. But as long as South African literature was justified in terms that acknowledged the superior literary values of the texts in the English tradition, it was vulnerable to arguments such as those advanced by Philip Segal in his paper at the same Conference. Segal rejected the claims of political expediency or local interest, and insisted that teachers had a moral responsibility to teach only the greatest texts in the limited time available in the undergraduate syllabus. He did, however, allow a place for South African literature in the specialised post-graduate programme:

> In the Honours year we could certainly offer a course which covers all or most of our field because at this stage literary problems can be handled with a certain sophistication and complexity, and there is space for personal choice, and for beginning research which could lead to an M.A.; or even a Ph.D.[70]

Once again Segal was perpetuating Davies's contradiction. Indeed even at the time the specialised research into local topics being undertaken by students on route to teaching qualifications was precipitating an inevitable struggle over the literary values at stake in the undergraduate syllabus.

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

1 The 1948 Symposium on Practical Criticism contains two papers by students who were then studying at Downing College under Leavis: Zoe N. Geffen, "Practical Criticism in Cambridge," in A Symposium on Practical Criticism By Members and Graduates of the South African Universities, ed. W. S. Mackie (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1948), 37-41; and Doris Krook, "Impressions of the English School in Cambridge," Ibid., 42-47.

2 Dan Jacobson, "F. R. Leavis," chap. in Time and Time Again (London: Andre Deutsch, 1985), 127.

3 Dating the delivery of the paper is difficult because Jacobson doesn't provide specific dates. A revised version of the paper, dated 1961, is reprinted as Dan Jacobson, "The Writer in the Commonwealth," chap. in Time of Arrival and Other Essays (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 157 - 165.

4 Jacobson, Time and Time, 133.

5 Penrith, "Teaching of English," 56.

6 Quoted in Penrith, 75.

7 Nathan read a paper on South African literature to a meeting of the Philosophical Society, with Sir Percy Fitzpatrick in the chair, in Johannesburg on February 26, 1907. It was reprinted as "An Interesting Paper," The Star, 1 March 1907, 8.

8 Manfred Nathan, South African Literature: A General Survey (Cape Town: Juta and Co., 1925), 14.

9 John Purves, "South African Literature," Cape Times Commemorative Number, 31 May 1910, 21.

10 "Would that we as literary analysts had maintained Purves' theory, seeing no divisive cleavages across language lines and maintaining that all South African literature was an interrelated whole." Stephen Gray, English South African Literature in the Last Ten Years: A Survey of Research Developments. Inaugural Address, 7 October 1982 (Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University, 1982), 6.

11 Ibid., 6.

12 Penrith, 98.

13 John Clark, "A Study of Pringle," 10 - 11.

14 John Y. Greig, "Engelse Letterkunde in Suid-Afrika," 166; reprinted in translation in Astley C. Partridge, ed., Readings in South African English Prose, 6th ed., (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1959), 270.

15 Ibid., 167; trans., 271. Greig, a Scotsman himself, actually went so far as to attribute Campbell's special feeling for poetry to his Scottish ancestry rather than his South African background: "I have often thought that Roy Campbell's consciousness of his Scottish Highland ancestors has proved more important in shaping his poetry than his South African upbringing; . . ." (167-168; 271)

16 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "The Work of the Joint Matriculation Board, the English Common Language Syllabus, and the Proposed University Entrance Examination," in Proceedings of a Conference, 1956, 19.

17 F. R. Leavis, "A Sketch for an English School," in Education and the University, 38.

18 Mulhern, The Moment, 166.

19 Ibid., 162-178.

20 F. R. Leavis, "Criticism and Philosophy," chap. in The Common Pursuit, 211-222.

21 Mulhern, 170.

22 Leavis, "Criticism and Philosophy," 213-214.

23 Geoffrey H. Durrant, review of The Living Tradition, edited by Thelma Tyfield and K. R. Nicol, in Trek, 10 January 1947, 17.

24 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "Literature and Tradition" South African Libraries 24 (April 1957): 121.

25 Ibid., 123.

26 Ibid., 124.

27 Ibid., 125.

28 Astley C. Partridge,"Preface," in Proceedings of a Conference, 1956.

29 I. D. MacCrone, "The English-Speaking South Africans as a Minority Group," in Ibid., 7.

30 Ibid., 9.

31 Ibid., 10-11.

32 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "The Work of the Joint Matriculation

Board, the English Common Language Syllabus, and the Proposed University Entrance Examination," in Ibid., 19.

33 Guy Butler, "Some Random Observations on the Teaching of English in South African Universities since 1948," in The Business of Criticism, UCT Studies in English 7 (September 1977), 7.

34 Syllabus of English Department, University of Cape Town Calendar, 1956.

35 Robert G. Howarth, "Indigenous Literature and its Place in University English Studies," in Proceedings of a Conference, 1956, 49.

36 Ibid., 50.

37 At the 1956 Conference he stated that "so-called practical criticism can easily be carried too far", Ibid., 52.

38 Penrith, 142.

39 Guy Butler, "Poetry, Drama and Public Taste," in Proceedings of a Conference, 1956, 107.

40 Guy Butler, "The Difficulties of Teaching a Non-Indigenous Literature, 1949," Unpublished seminar paper delivered to Wits English Department, Tms [photocopy].

41 Ibid., 6.

42 "The fault of nearly all South African verse - and therefore the fault of nearly all who teach poetry - is that it is written on the assumption that poetry is good poetry according to the intensity of the feeling in it. . . . and this is not really due, I feel, to a wrong appproach to the reading and teaching of poetry, but to a wrong approach to literature as a whole." Ibid., 13-15.

43 "I am not advocating the rejection of Sitwell, but the inclusion of Plomer", Ibid., 17.

44 The University of the Orange Free State introduced an English 1 (Special) Course in 1955 which consisted of a language and a literature section. The language section was almost identical to that offered in the English 1 Course but the literature section was devoted exclusively to South African texts including Lawrence Green, Bosman's Mafeking Road, Pauline Smith's Little Karoo, the F. C. Slater anthology, and a selection of South African prose edited by R. E. Davies. But the English 1 literature course - which enabled students to major in the subject - was based on several English anthologies of poetry and prose and special studies of Shakespeare's history plays and a novel by Jane Austen. (University Calendar, 1955.)

45 Butler, "Difficulties of Teaching," 19.

46 Butler, "Poetry, Drama," 109. This theme reached its

apotheosis in Butler's cultural theory during the 1960s. See Guy Butler, The Republic and the Arts (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1964).

47 Ibid., 108.

48 Ibid., 115.

49 Guy Butler, "The Language of the Land," English Studies in Africa 4 (March 1961): 90.

50 Proceedings of a Conference, 1956, 130-131. See also C. J. D. Harvey, " 'Local Colour' in South African Poetry," Theoria 7 (1955): 93-100.

51 Ibid., 131.

52 "Concluding Business," in Ibid., 158. It is perhaps noteworthy that when the first issue of the journal (English Studies in Africa) appeared in 1958 it contained no articles specifically concerned with South African literature.

53 Butler, "The Language of the Land," 90.

54 Ibid., 92.

55 Elaine Williams, "Guy Butler and South African Culture," (M.A. diss., University of Cape Town, 1989), 51.

56 W. H. Gardner, ed., "A Select Bibliography of Books in English by South African Writers: 1789 - 1960," (Bloemfontein: Union Festival, 1960). [typed mimeograph]

57 Edgar R. Seary, "A Biographical and Bibliographical Record of South African Literature in English," (Grahamstown: Tentative Edition, 1938).

58 Philip C. Birkinshaw, "Editorial: A Mythological Country Where Nightingales Flourish," English Studies in Africa 4 (March 1961): 1.

59 Ibid., 4.

60 Joseph J. Firebaugh, "Indigenous Literature in South African Universities: A Paper read to the Commonwealth Section of the Modern Language Association of America in New York on 29 December 1958," reprinted in "A Literary Miscellany: Number Two" (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1959): 4.

61 Astley C. Partridge,"Editorial - English Scholarship: A Transmutation of Species," English Studies in Africa 1 (March 1958): 1.

62 R. E. Davies, "Problems of Research in South Africa," in "Proceedings of the Second Conference, 1949": 53.

63 Ibid., 52.

64 See Barbara Richter and Sandra Kotze, eds., A Bibliography of Criticism of Southern African Literature in English (Bloemfontein: University of the Orange Free State, 1983), for a listing of all the post-graduate research projects completed at Potchefstroom.

65 Howarth, Proceedings of a Conference, 1956, 54.

66 Gray, Inaugural Address, 9.

67 Gwen Knowles-Williams, "Introduction to 'English in South Africa, 1960'," English Studies in Africa 4 (March 1961): 67.

68 Geoffrey H. Durrant, "The Living Stream," English Studies in Africa 4 (March 1961): 97.

69 Guy Butler, "The Purpose of the Conference: Opening Address to the Conference," in South African Writing in English and its Place in School and University, Proceedings of the Conference of the English Academy of Southern Africa held at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 7 - 11 July 1969. English Studies in Africa 13 (March 1970): 11.

70 Philip Segal, "The Place of South African Writing in the University," in Ibid., 178.

CHAPTER FIVE

Inevitably the demands of research would create pressure for the inclusion of South African works in the undergraduate syllabus. The problem still lay, however, in the definition of such an area and its justification in terms of acceptable values. Butler's account proposed a literature of white English-speaking self-consciousness; but, as we have seen, this failed to convince the orthodox devotees of practical criticism. Even more seriously, it was vulnerable to those gathering voices that demanded that South African literature be interpreted in the light of its relation to the politics of apartheid.

Butler's proposal that English South African literature should serve as a means of asserting an identity for the English - speaking section of the white population was decisively

challenged by Mike Kirkwood in 1974. His paper - "The Colonizer: a Critique of the English South African Cultural Theory" - presented at a conference on South African poetry organised by the UCT Summer School, branded "Butlerism" as an inherently flawed understanding of the role of white English-speaking South Africans. Because Butler's project was based on an inadequate reading of South African history, it had, Kirkwood said, failed to recognise that the middle ground had been occupied by the "coloureds" and not the English.[1] With this chimaera disposed of, Kirkwood then demonstrated that "[English South African culture] is decisively conditioned by our partnership with the Afrikaner in White domination."[2]

Butler's diagnosis of a cultural identity crisis was interpreted as a means of dealing with a sense of political impotence, and as a way of evading English-speakers' guilt over their role as colonisers. Butler's belief that the English were destined to play an Apollonian role to the African Dionysus was thus dismissed as a complex form of special pleading. Instead, Kirkwood called for a more thorough critique of the coloniser's role, based on a class analysis. He felt that the priority was not literary standards but the promotion of a programme of writing, as "art for liberation". This programme, he told his audience in Cape Town, "will demand . . . a self-transcendence in the colonizer writer, just as it will in the colonized writer."[3]

Although Kirkwood's polemic successfully collapsed Butler's programme of cultural nationalism, this may have been of less moment than was supposed at the time. We should recall that "Butlerism" was never a popular programme within the English departments, outside Grahamstown.[4] Not only had "Butlerism" failed to impress the academic orthodoxy, it was unable to offer an acceptable response to the repressive activities of the apartheid state. Indeed, as an essentially ethnic strategy, "Butlerism's" standpoint in relation to the theory of Afrikaner nationalism was morally ambiguous.

The possibility that an English South African literature might be more firmly founded on specifically moral concerns was recognised by none other than Geoffrey Durrant in one of the last articles that he wrote before leaving South Africa. In his 1959 review of the 1956 Conference (where, as it will be remembered, Professor Howarth's suggested course outline on "Indigenous Literature" was treated with general condescension), Durrant attempted to define the term "indigenous literature" more precisely. He rejected "local colour" as a criterion of South African literature because it seemed to imply an "imported sensibility"; while a "distinctive linguistic style" formed equally bad grounds, because it couldn't incorporate the numerous regional idioms of South African English.[5]

A more comprehensive basis was to be found, he suggested, not in the landscape or the local idiom, but in the social consequences of apartheid.

> What unites millions of people of different races and languages, what makes possible for them a common experience and a common literature, is the simple fact that they exist in a society whose structure is maintained by the South African State. The texture of our lives is increasingly dominated by this fact.[6]

In this schema, writers were to be judged according to how successfully they were able to "reflect human experience within the framework of South African society as a whole." For Durrant, this was "the only clear sense that can at present be given to the idea of a 'South African English Literature'."[7]

This naturally tended to privilege the novel over other forms of literature, in a way that contrasted strongly with the Butlerist concern with a poetic "language of the land". The dichotomy was explicitly stated by another proponent of the moral tradition in South African literature, Arthur Ravenscroft, when speaking at a Conference to celebrate the opening of the 1820 Settler's National Monument in Grahamstown:

> Olive Schreiner established what I see as the central tradition of South African writing in English: realism unquestioningly rooted in the local scene, which, thanks to an open, vigorous compassion, results in the numinous vision that invests local concerns with insights that speak to people everywhere . . . .[8]

Poetry was excluded from this tradition because it was "less likely than fiction and the drama to extend fully into the areas

where I [Ravenscroft] think the present core of interest is to be found in South African literature."[9]

An approach which foregrounded the moral dimension as the defining characteristic of South African literature had already been adumbrated by Ursula Laredo in her introduction to the first bibliography of South African literature in English to be published in The Journal of Commonwealth Literature. According to her classification, writers from South Africa were to be judged according to "degrees of intensity and insight into problems of life in a multi-racial society". "At the lowest level" were writers who treated South Africa merely as an exotic setting for adventure stories, but, "more seriously, the racial theme appeared initially in stories recording . . . various facets of the master-servant relationship."[10] Laredo claimed that this theme first appeared in The Story of an African Farm and had been developed by, "amongst others": Plomer, Campbell, van der Post, Abrahams, Paton, Gordimer, Jacobson, Fugard, and Cope.

Although Laredo's approach might seem to be new in several essentials, the chronology she offers above was perfectly acceptable to those who were simply looking for a local equivalent of the "Great Tradition": the "formidable monolith" which Raymond Sands discerned standing "in front of anyone who sets out these days on critical appraisal of the novel".[11] This "Great Tradition" was the prose counterpart of the Leavisite

canon of poetic texts.[12] Sands, who aimed at an assessment of the South African novel based solely on a commitment to "English and its literature", produced a version of the tradition that was almost identical to Laredo's outline.[13]

Presented in this fashion, the South African tradition fell easily into the existing teaching practices within university departments of English. The moral emphasis was thoroughly congruent with Leavisite principles; in addition, works of South African literature could be analysed in tutorial groups under the usual categories of theme, image, and symbol. This suitability was stressed by Geoffrey Haresnape in his paper of 1977 which attempted to introduce Pauline Smith's "Desolation" into the English syllabus. Stressing the dependence of the university syllabus on "worthwhile literary texts", he attempted to demonstrate that the Pauline Smith short story was appropriate for tutorial group teaching because its complex patterning and evocation of major "literary themes" were "sufficient to make 'Desolation' interesting to a tutorial group and productive of much worthwhile discussion."[14]

Haresnape's approach was both conciliatory and directed at what for the orthodoxy was the all-important question of pedagogical goals. Given the emphasis on tutorials as the heart of the teaching project, Haresnape was able to justify the

inclusion of South African texts in terms acceptable to English departments:

> Few people, one thinks, would be likely to object to the inclusion of a literary artifact of this quality even in a standard course designed to teach undergraduates literary appreciation. There is a body of work of similar calibre to be found among South African literary texts, ...[15]

By the late 'seventies it was common to find works of South African literature on the syllabi of English departments across the country. Although some dissenting voices were still evident, by and large the moral tradition of South African literature had achieved academic respectability.[16]

II

As we have seen, the pressure towards original research was by the 1970s a professional imperative. There were however a variety of models in use, not all of which immediately lent themselves to the development of a South African literature. Some saw the object of research into local materials as that of simply footnoting existing metropolitan themes and fields of interest. For example, the author of the first article in the special 1971 issue of English Studies in Africa devoted to South African and African literature, argued from the familiar point that the venerable field of research into Anglo-Saxon was necessarily

limited for South African scholars by the absence of primary materials. However, instead of encouraging the abandonment of this area, the article suggested that "an investigation of our Bantu oral tradition can cast light on the Anglo-Saxon oral tradition."[17]

This sort of Eurocentricism was exactly what the other main contributor to the special issue of the journal, Tim Couzens, claimed that research should avoid. He presented his article, on the first novel written in English by a black South African: Sol Plaatje's Mhudi, as a direct contribution to the rewriting of African history. Couzens drew explicitly on the "Africanist" trend in historiography, using John Omer-Cooper's The Zulu Aftermath to interpret Mhudi as a historical document. He argued from cross-references to non-fictional texts by Plaatje that the novel was "interesting as an historical document".[18] Supported by quotes from Africanist historical studies, he went so far as to claim that the novel provided both "the true perspective of history [concerning the period of the Great Trek] and a model for events including and after the Native Land Act of 1913".[19]

Couzens developed this interpretation in an article for The Journal of Commonwealth Literature two years later,[20] and then again in his introduction for the Quagga reprint of the novel in 1975. In his 1971 article, Couzens side-stepped the

criticisms that had been voiced against the novel's language, in order to read Mhudi as a historical text. In fact, Mhudi was read as a version of Plaatje's Native Life in South Africa, the report on the effects of the 1913 Land Act that he wrote as a member of the South African Native National Congress deputation to appeal against the Act in England.[21] Four years later, by the time he had edited the Quagga Press reprint, Couzens felt called upon to justify the novel's linguistic style. He branded all negative judgments of Plaatje's language as "superficial", because

> In the first place, it ignores the difficulties which faced a black writer at the time: the difficulties he had in getting published, the difficulties of a black writer in a society dominated by whites who could see no value in things black and who demanded "standards of civilization", that is, slavish imitation of whites. Secondly, this judgment fails to perceive the humour which lies just below the surface of Plaatje's style . . . . Finally, the judgment is not a wholly accurate one. It must be remembered that Plaatje was a linguist, knowing more languages than the average critic, and was extremely sensitive to language.[22]

Clearly these defences are somewhat over-argued. Either Plaatje is someone who was successfully coerced into a slavish imitation of white style, and those who condemn it as "imitative and derivative" are failing in due sympathy; or Plaatje, "knowing more languages than the average critic", is doing something complex and ironic that his critics have failed to recognise. However both sets of circumstances cannot at the same time be true. Couzens's suggestion that the style is ironic opens an interesting possibility that he never develops. In fact he denies this very possibility when later in the same introduction he claims that Plaatje's journalism "has a more lucid and cutting

style, and it is this style which seems to come to the fore at moments of climax within the novel."[23]

Throughout his analyses of Mhudi, both in 1971 and in 1975, the word that most frequently recurs is "implicit", suggesting the interpretative labour necessary to produce the Africanist reading that he proposes; yet the interpretative act itself is consistently masked. Couzens seems to believe that his reading is innocent and based merely on the accumulation of sufficient data to enable the dead to speak directly across the barriers of time and race, so that it appears that "Plaatje seems to be using his novel Mhudi to warn the whites."[24]

As we have seen in a previous chapter, the practical critics made a division between research and criticism proper. Couzens seems to accept this division in his insistence on objective research, but consistently fails to acknowledge the creative and interpretative implications in his own acts of reading. This is made obvious by his reliance on linguistic mechanisms such as "implicit".

The problems attendant upon Couzens's claims to objectivity were identified by defenders of the academic orthodoxy such as Jean Marquard:

> I believe that the idea, ardently taken up by many recent champions of Black literature, that in this country art should instruct, enlighten and operate as a signpost to

> freedom . . . supposes that the reader's intention as a consumer is identical to the writer's intention as a producer.[25]

The notion of tradition followed by Couzens and his fellow Africanist researchers such as Brian Willan, located coherence at the level of deliberate social purpose. As Couzens and Willan declared in their introduction to a selection of Plaatje's writings that was published in a 1976 issue of English in Africa,

> For the early African writer his purpose - the education and representation of his people - was usually the same whether he chose to express himself in the form of the novel, through journalism, through historical writing, or through semi-autobiographical works. Plaatje was no exception - all his works represent a unity of purpose: to treat them separately is to detract from their achievements as a whole.[26]

The rediscovery of the Dhlomo brothers was an important aid in unifying the tradition of black literature that was emerging from the research work of Couzens, Willan, and the Rhodes English lecturer, Nick Visser. The recently discovered unpublished writings of H. I. E. Dhlomo were presented by these researchers as the missing links in a "continuous tradition of writing in English by blacks between 1900 and the 1950's".[27] Dhlomo, however, was not an unknown writer. The head of Lovedale School in the Eastern Cape, R. H. W. Shepherd, had referred to Dhlomo's poetry, drama, and literary criticism in his overview of "Bantu literature" in the 1950s.[28] In his essay, Shepherd quoted Dhlomo's views on the relationship between rhyme in English and African language poetry, and praised his work "The Valley of a

Thousand Hills" as "a poem of high merit". Recognition had also been granted to Dhlomo's poetry by G. M. Miller and Howard Sergeant in their critical survey of South African poetry in English published in 1957, which concluded with a consideration of Dhlomo's poetry, recognizing his writing as a "portent".[29]

Yet Miller and Sergeant, who considered Dhlomo in the context of South African poetry in general, were unsure whether his verse was the beginning of a tradition or merely an isolated phenomenon. To the researchers of the '70s, however, the Dhlomos existed in a tradition of "secondary resistance" that was not one of mutual influence between writers, but was based on the authors' "recognition of what constituted South Africa's fundamental and most pressing problems."[30] This new perspective no doubt accounted for the exclusion from the same tradition of the Zulu poet who, in 1971, had been described by Couzens as "perhaps the greatest of black South African poets", B. W. Vilakazi.[31]

It is clear that the researchers into the "tradition" of black English South African literature were not merely reflecting an existing state of affairs but were actively shaping it in accordance with implicit Africanist principles. This is brought out by Nadine Gordimer, when, at the AUETSA Conference of July, 1979, she pointed to the strange neglect of early black writing by the new generation of black writers. She remarked that this

was "surprising and not entirely explained by lack of opportunity or the knowledge of specific intellectual disciplines implied by research." She named Tim Couzens as one of the "few whites" who were doing "this work of establishing black cultural heroes, in the spirit of making a meaningful move to explore African ideas."[32]

An alternative line of research, directed towards the mapping of a South African literature that included black writing as part of a larger whole, is represented by the work of Stephen Gray. Broadly, his method seems to involve the complex and exhaustive tracing of sources and influences in the hope that with sufficient information a pattern will become discernible. This method, not unlike that proposed by Howarth at the 1956 Conference, was taken up by Gray, who in fact acknowledged his debt to the Australian. However his major alignment was with developments in the new field of comparative literature, especially as practised in America. As Gray jauntily informed his audience at the AUETSA Conference of 1978,

> if we still consider ourselves Europeans, it is the old Netherlands-English classification for us; if we are Africans now, it is the American classification that we must fit into . . . .[33]

This research project set itself the task of tracing tenuous chains of influence that threaded across existing boundaries between the supposedly independent literatures belonging to different language groups. Applied to South African literature

such an approach revealed that the assumption of a single, unified English-speaking literary tradition was problematic. The "coherent, mainstream processes of literary development, . . . where one assumes that each generation reads the previous one, and either modifies it or revolutionizes it in the familiar way", produced "invalid results" when applied to South African literature. Hence, the customary Pringle, Slater, Campbell lineage was superseded by one that ran from Camoens via the Englishman John Wheatly before reaching Campbell.[34]

But, once again, this research-based approach did not engage with its relation to the existing practices of literary education. Close-reading was left intact as the primary pedagogic method. Gray insisted that the English departments continue "to perform their basic language and literature teaching, as they must do",[35] but visualised them falling under the control of a Southern African Studies Programme staffed by "a team of linguistic polymaths, historians and archivists and bibliographers."[36]

III

Christopher Saunders has described the onslaught against the liberal Africanist school of historiography in the middle '70s and the substitution of class analysis for racial categorisation in his book, The Making of the South African Past.[37] The

Africanists, he points out, came under severe criticism from a new generation of Marxist historians who condemned their lack of attention to economic factors and their unwitting utilisation of essentially racist categories.

This new "radical challenge", as Saunders calls it, had its roots in an upsurge of Marxist historical scholarship in Europe and America involving such figures as Edward Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, Eugene Genovese, and Barrington Moore.

> The intellectual origins of the new radicalism lie more in new currents in Western historical scholarship generally, and in African history specifically, than in earlier radical writing on South African history. . . . The May 1968 student revolt in Paris and the anti-Vietnam war protests in America were radicalising influences, and a new, more flexible Marxism was taking the place of the old Stalinist dogmatism in British intellectual circles.[38]

Just as Tim Couzens had based his early literary researches on the work of Africanist historians, so in turn the new Marxist literary critics looked to the new shift in historical method to substantiate their approach. Saunders has identified Frederick Johnstone, Harold Wolpe, and in particular Martin Legassick, as the main interpreters of South African history in the light of the new Marxist historiography. Mike Kirkwood's attack on "Butlerism", for example, drew heavily on the views of Wolpe and Legassick. What especially impressed the critics about the work of the radical historians was that it seemed to permit the possibility of contributing to political change through literary research. These historians

> were developing what seemed to them a quite different interpretation of South Africa's past, one which they believed had important political implications and would influence the course of the struggle in that country. If the system of racial segregation was indeed intimately connected with the form of the capitalist economy that had evolved in South Africa, then it could be argued that both should be eliminated together.[39]

Couzens, as a literary scholar who had drawn upon the Africanist historians, was vulnerable to the charges levelled against such history by the radical historians, of employing an implicitly discriminatory vocabulary. His 1971 definition of a black literature illustrates this point:

> Under the . . . classification of "black" writers I include all the writers who are not "white". It is an unfortunate distinction to have to make but it seems to me that these writers will always be qualitatively distinct from the white writers[40]

But Couzens appears to have recognised the force of the Marxist critique, and we now see him actively participating in the change we have identified. Indeed, his work demonstrates a direct shift in discourses, taking its place along with that of other participants in the Marxist programme in South African studies. By 1978, Couzens was championing a new research interest, the working class author of the Doornfontein slum life chronicle, Modikwe Dikobe. From his new perspective it appeared that "[R. R. R.] Dhlomo and [Alan] Paton to a large extent share a common perspective (and hence make a mockery of racial categorisation of South African literature)".[41]

Couzens's main concern was still with research. In July 1976 he was announcing an open season in the new arena of black South African literature, which he termed "an open field where the critic can plough new ground rather than forge for the millionth time the conscience of a T S Eliot or a Jane Austen etc [sic]."[42] But, along with this research, the revisionist standpoint enabled the proponents of a South African literature to subject the notions of culture and tradition upheld by English departments to an ideological critique. Most especially, other white critics were accused of attempting to "create blacks in their own image,"[43] through a strategy of appropriating certain black poets into an existing canon.

The emerging tradition of South African literature that was gaining acceptance by the academic orthodoxy was identified as a liberal ploy, and the separation between the acceptable products of a "high" culture, even of South African origin, and a "popular or "low" culture, was condemned as elitist:

> We now have, in South African English-speaking universities, the beginning of a flood of South African literature teaching. About time, too. But what is the nature of the flood? By-and-large the teachers seem to be converted English Great Tradition adherents, The concept of high culture is transferred to South African literature.[44]

The radicals proposed a model of South African literature as a cultural totality that overrode the divisions between high and low culture and between language groups, emphasising class antagonisms as the real line of difference. For this revision

the goal was a national debate "uniting the political, economic, ideological, historical, and cultural."[45] The exact role of the literary critic in this debate was only defined explicitly by Kelwyn Sole in a seminal paper of 1977. While the Africanist researchers had attempted to circumvent criticisms of the quality of black writing, Sole now foregrounded the question of evaluation. For Sole, the Africanists had not taken into account the class dynamics of black society, and the degree to which questions of evaluation should be tied to political aspirations. Sole suggested that earlier criticism had been misplaced when it condemned the mediocrity of South African black writing:

> An enormous list of reasons were drawn up for the mediocrity and thin quality of South African writing, none of which are sufficient explanation in themselves. . . . The problem is that very few of the literary critics pay attention either to the position of these writers in their society or the history of South African black literature, its dislocations and continuity. . . . Nowhere in the criticism is there a precise searching of this very predicament, the individual's place in the social formation as a member of a class.[46]

This was a major step forward. Sole had established two useful advances on the Africanist position. Firstly, he granted the judgment of aesthetic mediocrity that the Africanists had been at pains to dispute; and, secondly, he implied that this could be imputed to political factors. According to his model, black writers could be situated in relation to a class ideology and then evaluated according to their relationship to the objective interests of the working class at that point in history.

Couzens responded enthusiastically to Sole's article in the following issue of Work in Progress, claiming that, together with Kirkwood, Sole had provided "the beginning of a conceptual framework in terms of which we can study South African literature."[47] Referring to the attitudes of the academic orthodoxy as they had been articulated at a conference that year in Cape Town, Couzens declared that "we must conclude that South African literary criticism is in the Stone Age. Kelwyn Sole's article at last allows us to have a real debate and in future to ignore the inanities of the ignorant."[48] Yet what seemed particularly pleasing to Couzens was that Sole's framework enabled "complex explanations on the micro-level, (including minute textual readings!)."[49] In other words, close-reading was once again possible but with a political relevance.

Isabel Hofmeyr, the other main participant in the radical critique of the orthodoxy, also responded enthusiastically to Sole's article, but noted that Sole had repeatedly fallen into "the content correlation trap that he had warned against," because he "suggests that research must look at 'opposition to specific government actions and how literature expressed this' which seems to be the wrong way round." She was prepared to attribute this to the breadth of the field which Sole was attempting to cover, but suggested that "the shortcoming also

relates to a methodological hiatus".[50] Her preferred method of working was explained in the following terms:

> If such an analysis is to be pursued profitably the areas of research will have to be drastically extended to include a more precise study of religion, different forms of education, the numbers of people involved, media organisation and circulation, printing and publishing industries, libraries, cultural organisations and so on. A recent English critic, Terry Eagleton, has made some useful suggestions in this respect.[51]

As Hofmeyr's last comment indicates, not merely European historiographers but also the deepening current of European Marxist literary criticism was being taken into account by the South African radical critics.[52] Despite this new influence, the emphasis was still upon research; indeed, for many, the advantages of the radical approach lay precisely in the enlarged possibilities of research it seemed to offer. Strangely, for a method which castigated elitism, its proponents stressed the necessity for professionalised research practices. Practical criticism was attacked not only for its ideological leanings, but also for its amateurism and lack of specialised knowledge. As Couzens pointed out:

> There is a general belief that once trained in the literary appreciation of the "greats" one can automatically judge anything. No special knowledge is required: simply read the book and judge. One lecturer recently said to me that he "doesn't know anything about African literature but would like to teach it". I wonder what reaction I would get if I suggested tomorrow to Medical School that "I don't know anything about gynaecology but I'd like to teach it". Professionalism does not seem to play a strong role in our "discipline".[53]

Elsewhere Couzens averred that "the gifted amateur, the officer and gentleman is a deadly danger".[54] It is interesting to note that the exclusiveness of the philological school has been revived, though in a form the philologists would have hardly approved. In a way we have returned to the battle between scholars and critics; furthermore, some of the deficiencies on both sides still remain. As we have seen, the practical critics were strongest in the area of pedagogy, and opposed research. The radical critique, while laying primary emphasis on research, failed to address the question of an alternative pedagogy.

Another problem here is the question of the audience to which the radicals were addressing themselves. In practice it can be seen that they were not aiming at a black proletarian readership; the principal target of their criticisms was the guilt of a liberal academic establishment. The typical mode of address adopted was a condemnation of the ignorance of white critics:

> Sebokeng, Galeshewu, White City, Pampierstad . . . . Names of places, which appear on few maps or no maps at all. Home at ten, up at 4.30. Repetitive work under the orders of a white man who does none and gets paid three or more times as much. No facilities, no entertainment, no hope. Places, people, behaviour totally unknown to the average South African literary critic, the great Pontificators [sic]. Because the average South African literary critic is white, is middle-class.[55]

Aware of this restricted constituency, some of the originators of the radical critique actually abandoned academic

discourse, and many of its concerns, such as the creation of cultural coherence. Mike Kirkwood, who turned to directly organising black writers, did not feel the need to create continuity among the works produced by black writers, of the kind that had occupied the talents of figures like Couzens. He claimed that "the cultural history of South Africa is best represented as a heap of fragments which are cut off from each other." This, far from being a limitation requiring research and reconstruction of lost traditions, was a strength:

> given this enforced absence of continuity from generation to generation . . . . There's a pride in each new generation that comes from the endeavour made by the new cultural activists. There's also a degree of resistance to continuity: the writers don't want to be told over and over again that they must realise that they are part of a tradition. They don't want to be hemmed in by tradition . . . .[56]

IV

Within the institution itself responses to the radical critique took time to form themselves clearly. It must also be remembered that to a large extent the debate around the radicals' position was at first conducted within the pages of small magazines. Nonetheless, by the time moves were made towards establishing a professional body of university English teachers, the steps were taken against the backdrop of the radical critique, even if at first its force was felt only obliquely.[57]

The inaugural meeting of the Association of University Teachers of English of Southern Africa was held at UCT in 1977 under the traditional theme "The Business of Criticism", and the published papers evince a familiar insistence on practical criticism as a pedagogic method; yet in comparison with the conferences of the 1940s the insistence on direct social purpose was even less in evidence. Pride of place was given to an abstract emphasis on literary values and the importance of professionalism involving responsibility to students. In the wake of the Leavisite distrust of the machine, the irony of the paper that outlined methods for teaching close reading with the aid of a computer was entirely lost on the delegates.[58]

The only seriously dissenting voice was that of a teacher outside the discipline of English, the Professor of German, Peter Horn.[59] His intervention stressed the political consequences of a critical method. Despite his choosing to illustrate his approach through an analysis of three poems - including one by Sidney Clouts - he failed to convince the audience of practical critics. In particular, what was perceived as his reductionist misreading of the Clouts poem merely antagonised the audience and confirmed their hostility towards non-literary approaches; while his methodological sources, all cited in the original German versions, were not calculated to persuade any of the establishment to explore his views.

However by the second AUETSA conference in 1978 the effect of the radical critique on academic discourse was more directly registered, and visible in the introductory remarks made by the President, Professor Colin Gardner. Referring specifically to the debates in New Classic, Snarl, Donga, Africa Perspective, and Work in Progress, he acknowledged that the question of African poetry had become a serious dilemma to almost all English departments.

> But we are going to have to ask ourselves again: how much attention should it be given, and what sort of attention should it be?[60]

The Conference that followed was divided into two main sections: 1) The teaching of English Classics; and 2) Aspects of Southern African/African poetry. This division was in itself indicative of two significant achievements: under the onslaught of the radical champions of black literature, the question of South African English literature had been rendered relatively uncontroversial, and the liberal "tradition" of South African literature - often including one or two black writers - had by now been widely incorporated into the undergraduate syllabus together with the existing tradition of English Classics.

By the third conference in 1979, the radical issues effectively monopolised critical debate. But this radicalisation of the discourse at the conferences was not widely reflected

within the institutions themselves, largely because of a structural development that had already been instituted in the American system, and which Gerald Graff has identified in his study Professing Literature: An Institutional History. This was the "field-coverage" principle whereby the teaching of English was divided into fields, each taught independently by specialists; thus eliminating conflict over first principles and the ideology of literature. Graff points out that the field-coverage model came into existence in America in the late nineteenth century, after the collapse of the College system and the fragmentation of the unified humanist ideology that had been propagated through an education based on classics. Field-coverage was adopted in South Africa more than a century later as a result of conflicting pressures within the university, and due to the critique of the Eurocentric bias in the syllabus. Graff's description explains the usefulness of the model for English departments that were under threat of disintegration.

> The field-coverage principle made the modern educational machine friction free, for by making individuals functionally independent in the carrying out of their tasks it prevented conflicts from erupting which would otherwise have to be confronted, debated, and worked through. An invisible hand - fortified by the faith that humanism in the Matthew Arnold sense pervaded all the branches of the departments and the profession's activities - saw to it that the sum of the parts added up to a coherent whole.[61]

Field-coverage manifested itself through the option system, which became increasingly common by the end of the decade in English departments, especially those that were offering South African literature as an undergraduate course. As we have seen, the

proposal to teach South African literature at the Honours level had always been relatively uncontroversial, because students at that level were assumed to have developed the necessary "critical and reading skills" to appreciate a selected canon of texts "as part of a developing tradition".[62] As an option, whatever was problematic about local literature could at least be quarantined within the limits of a self-contained course.

And with the success of the field-coverage system as a means of neutralising serious criticism, the leading voices in the radical critique seemed to drift away from the debate. Though the terms of the debate continued to echo, Tim Couzens, who had been a lecturer in the English Department at Wits University, moved into full-time research in the African Studies Institute; Isobel Hofmeyr, who had been a lecturer in English at Durban-Westville moved into Comparative Literature; and Kelwyn Sole occupied his talents with a literacy programme in Windhoek.

V

The failure of the radical critique to obtain a majority following was, I suggest, due not only to the obduracy of the practical criticism hegemony and the success of the field-coverage system, but was a result of serious shortcomings in the critiques that were proposed. Unlike the practical critics in the '40s who addressed both a sense of insecurity and a lack of

effectiveness among South African university teachers of English, the radical polemics of the '70s could not offer an alternative pedagogy of equal effectiveness. It must be confessed that this was largely owing to the lack of a genealogical awareness on the part of the radical critics. They failed to take into account the historically constituted nature of the institutional dynamics of the English Department.

Despite their insistence on the necessity of a historical awareness they lacked any analysis of their own discursive history as university English teachers. Hofmeyr, for instance, spoke of "the conventional approaches of ahistorical formalism which have held sway for so long and have not substantially altered in the past 100 years",[63] while Couzens mistakenly identified the "initial institutionalisation of English literary criticism" as the work of "a kind of aristocracy not sure if it was amateur or professional."[64]

Furthermore, this tendency to ignore their own historically constituted positions applied also to their critique of departmental ideologies. Their approach seems to have led them to disregard the factor of their intended audience. Whereas the radical critique implied a concern with the producers of cultural artifacts, their real audience was institutionalised consumers. As Mike Vaughan points out, direct engagement with black literature, even when construed as a vital necessity,

"raises the question of critical address". He warns that "academic criticism of contemporary black literature must be extremely circumscribed in its practice so long as it is deprived of contact with the writers and public of this literature".[65]

But Vaughan's formulation is haunted by a lingering nostalgia for direct contact between academic critics and a broader public of writers and readers. Vaughan even seems to suggest that the critics have been deprived of that direct communication that is their birthright. I suggest that the relationship between academic criticism and literature can never be a direct communication, but will always be mediated through factors such as discursive constraints, professional status, and research and pedagogical imperatives. Any critique that fails to take these factors into account will always be frustrated by the persistence of institutions.

VI

Despite the lack of genealogical awareness among the radical critics pointed out above, certain academics affiliated to the movement did subject the institution of literary studies in South Africa to historical analysis. Nick Visser, in his paper "The Critical Situation and the Situation of Criticism", invoked Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions to explain critical reorientations within English departments. Just as in

the field of science a dominant "paradigm", like Newtonian mechanics, holds sway for a time, exhausts itself, and is replaced by a more vigorous model, so in Literary studies practical criticism was, in Visser's view, giving way to a "sociology of literature generally and Marxist literary criticism in particular."[66]

Kuhn's theoretical model allowed Visser to recognise the institutional pressures acting upon literary ideologies:

> Critical approaches are not simply intellectual constructs existing in some purely abstract realm. They are positions that people hold, positions that serve particular interests and satisfy certain needs. The struggle now going on in our departments of English is not a clash of ideas, never mind a free exchange undertaken with all the tolerance and open-mindedness ascribed by our academic mythology to our pluralist, liberal institutions of higher learning.[67]

It should be noted, however, that the criterion by which the new paradigm (in this case Marxist criticism) identifies itself as dominant is entirely institutional in character: it is "the one that appears in quantity and quality of published research to be the most productive".[68] Hence one may see that despite advances made in relating critical stances with institutional factors, Visser's critique fails to take issue with specifically institutional values: he is simply offering to replace one paradigm with another. Visser's choice of a Kuhnian model obscures the degree to which critical positions are themselves the product of specific situations of conflict within institutions. The idea of a paradigm seems to offer no reason for

valuing one approach over another, other than by the activity it generates; nor can it explain why a paradigm of a particular character appears at a specific moment in time.

Foucault's notion of discursive space, in combination with a genealogy, allows us to examine the processes of institutional change in and of themselves. From this perspective it is apparent that the radical critique was emphasising only one aspect of the contradictory discursive space that we have identified: research and the production of scholarly knowledge. Far from offering a decisively new paradigm, the radicals were in large part returning English studies to a discursive position it had already once occupied, in the time of philology and literary history.

Edward Said is another critic who emphasises the importance of attention to "the workplace of knowledge production, the university": like Visser, he refers to Kuhn's theory of paradigms as a model for the social dynamics within institutions of learning:

> the most impressive recent work concerning the history, circumstances and constitution of modern knowledge has stressed the role of social convention. Thomas Kuhn's "paradigm of research," for example, shifts attention away from the individual creator to the communal restraints upon personal initiative.

But what Said's analysis brings out is the essential tendency towards uniformity in institutions at large, one which "encourages uniformity rather than bold enterprise":

> Over time this uniformity acquires the status of a discipline, while its subject matter becomes a field or territory. Along with these goes a whole apparatus of techniques, one of whose functions is, as Michel Foucault has tried to show . . . to protect the coherence, the territorial integrity, the social identity of the field, its adherents and its institutional presence. . . . You have to pass through certain rules of accreditation, you must learn the rules, you must speak the language, you must master the idioms and you must accept the authorities of the field . . . . In this view of things, expertise is partially determined by how well an individual learns the rules of the game, so to speak.[69]

If Said's strictures are taken into account, it is clear that any historical analysis of institutions must to an extent be prepared to view their operations from an imaginary position "outside" the discursive processes concerned: at least initially, the central interest has to be discourses themselves, their conditions and interactions. The failure of the radical critique, with its ideology of commitment, was its inability to distance itself in an appropriately strategic manner, in order to understand and to demonstrate the play of forces involved. Nonetheless, as our Introduction pointed out, what Foucault teaches us is that the institution is not in a position to liberate knowledge from its discursive nature: the forms of knowledge have an irreducibly discursive character.

In the last two chapters of this study we have examined responses by English departments to different conceptions of South African literature. From this it appears that there are two processes by which the departments resolved or defused the challenges posed to their modes of operation. Their initial

exclusion of all South African writing was followed by the incorporation of a sub-tradition of "acceptable texts", that were to a sufficient degree compatible with the existing teaching methods. More radical challenges, directed at the ideology of the English department, prompted a structural development we identified as the principle of "field-coverage", expressed in the "option" system. In neither case was the solution conceptually entirely adequate: we see responses acted out within the confines of an inherited discursive space, and within the broader operations intrinsic to the university as a site of knowledge-production. What is perhaps unsatisfactory is that in both instances a new entity is absorbed into the workings of the institution through a process of modification and assimilation, without seriously challenging the primary discourse, or promoting its self-examination.

At the end of the previous section of this chapter, we noted Michael Vaughan's concern that the radical enterprise within English Departments had foundered on the problem of "address": that it had failed to find ways of directing itself to the black proletariat, with whose situation it was most centrally occupied. This, taken with the other considerations of this conclusion, raises serious questions about the possibility of using the university English department to legitimise non-canonical forms of writing. What this genealogy has uncovered is the probability that the processes of exclusion and division -

intrinsic to the workings of the university as a site of the institutionalised "will to truth" - may well isolate such cultural products as black writing from the people they are intended to reach. As we have seen, this is not a problem that can be answered through the further accumulation of research data. However, it may not be possible to overcome such difficulties at all within an institutional framework; if progress in linking the university with the reading populace at large is indeed possible, then it can only be achieved when the problem of an alternative pedagogy, including its relation to existing forms of cultural legitimation, has been confronted. In this venture the kind of understanding that a genealogy might provide cannot prudently be ignored.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

1 Mike Kirkwood, "The Colonizer: A Critique of the English South African Cultural Theory," in Poetry South Africa, ed. James A. Polley and Peter Wilhelm (Johannesburg: AD. Donker, 1976), 102-107.

2 Ibid., 108.

3 Ibid., 132.

4 Even at Rhodes University where Butler, as head of Department from 1952, was able to introduce an Honours course in South African Literature in 1965, the course was never publicly named. It remained listed as "A special author or topic" in the Department syllabus until 1972, when Paper 9: South African Literature was introduced into the Third Year syllabus. Rhodes University Calendar, 1955 - 1980.

5 Geoffrey H. Durrant, review of the Proceedings of a Conference of Writers, Publishers, Editors and University Teachers of

English, in Standpunte 12 (April 1959): 62.

6 Ibid., 63.

7 Ibid., 63.

8 Arthur Ravenscroft, "South African Literature," in English-Speaking South Africa Today, ed. Andre de Villiers (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1976), 324.

9 Ibid., 327.

10 Ursula Laredo, "Bibliography of South African Literature in English: 1964 - 1968," The Journal of Commonwealth Literature 9 (July 1970): 2.

11 Raymond Sands, "The South African Novel: Some Observations," in South African Writing, English Studies in Africa 13 (March 1970): 91.

12 See F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), 1-27. "The great novelists in that tradition [the tradition of what is great in English fiction] are all . . . . distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity." (7-9)

13 ". . . it would seem right to seek to identify the English South African novel as a minor tradition within the Novel in English and therein establish what general contribution it can make. I offer at this stage three hostages to fortune: they are Olive Schreiner, Pauline Smith, and Alan Paton. . . . Besides the chosen three, some mention must be made of Sarah Gertrude Millan, William Plomer, Laurens van der Post, Miss Nadine Gordimer, and Dan Jacobson." Sands, 90.

14 Geoffrey Haresnape, "Pauline Smith's 'Desolation' - and the Worthwhile African English Literary Text," in The Business of Criticism, UCT Studies in English 7 (September 1977): 101.

15 Ibid., 102.

16 This is made clearly apparent by the manner in which Ernest Pereira described the optional paper in South African English literature that was to be offered at the Honours level at Unisa from 1978. The course, confined to "the major South African writers" was intended to make "students, from the beginning . . . experience South African English literature as a 'living tradition'." Ernest Pereira, "Developing Tradition," Contrast 11 (December 1977): 96.

17 Jeff Opland, "Scop and Imbongi - Anglo-Saxon and Bantu Oral Poets," English Studies in Africa 14 (September 1971): 161. See also Jeff Opland, "African Phenomena Relevant to a Study of the European Middle Ages: Oral Tradition," English Studies in Africa 16 (September 1973): 87-90.

18 Tim J. Couzens, "The Dark Side of the World: Sol Plaatje's Mhudi," English Studies in Africa 14 (September 1971): 196. See Christopher Saunders, The Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988), 143 -161.

19 Ibid., 197.

20 Tim J. Couzens, "Sol Plaatje's Mhudi," The Journal of Commonwealth Literature 8 (June 1973): 1-19.

21 Brian Willan, "Introduction," in Native Life in South Africa by Sol. T. Plaatje Johannesburg: Ravan, 1982): 4.

22 Tim J. Couzens, "Introduction," in Mhudi, by Sol. T. Plaatje (Johannesburg: Quagga, 1975), 11.

23 Ibid., 11.

24 Ibid., 15.

25 Jean Marquard, "Introduction," in A Century of South African Short Stories (Johannesburg: AD. Donker, 1978), 12.

26 Tim J. Couzens and Brian Willan, "Solomon T. Plaatje, 1876 - 1932 ; An Introduction," English in Africa 3 (September 1976): 5.

27 Tim J. Couzens, "The Continuity of Black Literature in South Africa before 1950," English in Africa, 1 (September 1974): 12.

28 Robert H. Shepherd, "Bantu Literature," Standpunte 7 (January 1953): 50. An interesting comparison might be made between the authors of a "bantu" literary tradition and a "black" literary tradition.

29 G. M. Miller and Howard Sergeant, A Critical Survey of South African Poetry in English (Cape Town: Balkema, 1957), 156.

30 Couzens and Willan, 5.

31 Tim J. Couzens, "Our Crippling Codes: Literature by Black South Africans," New Nation 4 (January 1971): 9.

32 Nadine Gordimer, "From Apartheid to Afrocentrism," in "Proceedings of a Conference of the Association of University English Teachers of Southern Africa, held at the University of Durban-Westville, Durban, July 1979": 49.

33 Stephen Gray, "A Critical Approach to the Interpretation of South African Poetry in English," in "Proceedings of a Conference of the Association of University English Teachers of Southern Africa held at the University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 10 - 12 January 1978": 2.

34 Ibid., 6. Gray submitted the results of this line of research as a D. Litt. thesis at Rand Afrikaans University in 1977. It

was subsequently published as Southern African Literature: An Introduction (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979).

35 Ibid., 4.

36 Ibid., 12.

37 Saunders, 165 - 185.

38 Ibid., 165-169.

39 Ibid., 176.

40 Couzens,"Our Crippling Codes," 9.

41 Tim J. Couzens, "Nobody's Baby: Modikwe Dikobe and Alexandra, 1942 - 1946," in Labour, Townships and Protest, ed. Brenda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1979), 94.

42 Tim J. Couzens, "The ABC of Reseach: Research in South African Literature," Africa Perspective 4 (July 1976): 21.

43 Ibid., 33.

44 Tim J. Couzens, "Living Culture and the Mortuary Slab," Speak, July/August 1978, 13.

45 "Editorial" Work in Progress, 1 (September 1977): 1.

46 Kelwyn Sole, "Problems of Creative Writers in South Africa: A Response," Work in Progess 1 (September 1977): 19 - 20.

47 Tim J. Couzens, "Criticism of South African Literature," Work in Progress 2 (November 1977): 45.

48 Ibid., 46.

49 Ibid., 48.

50 Isabel Hofmeyr, "The Problems of Creative Writers: A Reply," Work in Progress 2 (November 1977): 32.

51 Ibid., 53.

52 For the debate within the radical positions surrounding their appropriation of a European-based Marxism see Kelwyn Sole, "Analogy and Aberration: A Critique of Eagleton's Criticism and Ideology," Work in Progress 4 (April 1978): 37-44; and the papers collected as Between the Lines: An Introduction to Marxist Literary Theory, ed. Robert Ensor (Durban: Arts Students' Council - University of Natal, 1980).

53 Tim J. Couzens, "Research in South African Literature," Snarl 5 (Summer 1976): 15.

54 Couzens, "The ABC of Research," 25.

55 Tim J. Couzens, "Sebokeng, Doories and Bra Jiggs: Research in South African Literature," in New South African Writing 1977 (Johannesburg: Lorton Publications, 1977), 29.

56 Mike Kirkwood,"Staffrider: an Informal Discussion," English in Africa 7 (September 1980): 24.

57 But in fact a closer examination of the circumstances shows that the idea of the association was already active in 1975, prior to the real articulation of the radical critique, when the Minutes of the Institute for the Study of English in Africa recorded that the proposal for an English Studies Newsletter was accepted as "the first step in the setting up of a professional association of English teachers at the tertiary level." The first meeting of the steering committee, which coincided conveniently with the 1976 Shakespeare Festival, was announced in English Studies 1 (May 1976): 3.

> we have decided to go ahead in the belief that there will be a sufficiently large and representative group of academics present to proceed with confidence.

58 Paul Beam, "Comparative Teaching Techniques: A Computer Module and Criticism," in The Business of Criticism: 76-98.

59 Peter Horn, "We All Sat Round a Faia - Selection and Transformation of Human Reality in South African Poetry," in Ibid., 28-36.

60 Colin Gardner,"Some Introductory Remarks," "AUETSA Papers, 1978": 4.

61 Graff, Professing Literature, 9.

62 Pereira, "Developing Tradition," 94. See also Geoffrey Haresnape's comments as reported by Jack Cope in "Notes," Contrast 42 (April 1977): 95-96.

63 Hofmeyr, "Creative Writers," 31.

64 Couzens, "Nobody's Baby," 94.

65 Michael Vaughan, "Ideological Directions in the Study of South African Literature: A Report on the Conference on Literature and Society in Southern Africa held at York University, September 1981," English in Africa 9 (October 1982): 63.

66 Nick Visser, "The Critical Situation and the Situation of Criticism," Critical Arts 3 (1984): 8. See also Nick Visser, "Schools, Movements, and the Emergence and Decline of Critical Orientations," Theoria 61 (October 1983): 51-65.

67 Ibid., 4.

68 Ibid., 8.

69 Edward W. Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies," in The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster

(Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), 141.

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