

# Reviews

John Beer, Wordsworth in Time (Faber, 1979, 232pp.)

As Dr John Beer (B.A., 1950) continues his studies of the English Romantic poets, he shows - in almost Wordsworthian fashion - a patient and determined preoccupation with certain leading images and complexes of ideas, an ever-growing command of their range of implication, and a capacity for judicious comparison. The present work, Wordsworth in Time (1979), complements Wordsworth and the Human Heart (1978).

It is generally accepted nowadays that Wordsworth took himself as his principal subject. At times, of course, his overt emphasis is on "Nature" or his fellow-men; at times he employs another person as his ostensible narrator. The Prelude is nevertheless the chief but far from the only testimony to an essential self-absorption that persists throughout his life and that springs less, one would suppose, from solipsism (much less mere egotism) than from an apparent conviction that the proper study of mankind is that man whom each of us knows best. With Wordsworth, accordingly, Dr Beer's tendency to treat literary criticism as, at bottom, an account of the poet's moral and intellectual condition is more rewarding than it might be with a more outward-looking poet like Burns or Crabbe. Criticism of this cast must rely on just such a close and accurate knowledge, not only of the published poetry but also of a plethora of secondary material, as is evident throughout this book. Like other good Wordsworthians, that is to say, Dr Beer is usually able to say not merely that such and such an image or turn of phrase is characteristic enough but that it is, or is not, to be expected of Wordsworth at that particular time. Unlike some good Wordsworthians, moreover, (to say nothing of the bad ones), he knows his Coleridge well enough to write persuasively about the subtle and far-reaching effects of each poet upon the other.

In its main argumentative development, this book shows Wordsworth struggling, with varying success, to arrive at and sustain a world-view capable of relating opposed ideas of time: on the one hand, a secure but comfortless recognition of time as linear; on the other, those transcendent moments, whether comforting or appalling, of release if not from time itself then from that way of regarding time. In a language only lately resurrected, "Kairos" and "Aion" stand opposed to "Chronos". All this makes for an assured though not essentially novel approach to the idea of "spots of time"; to those well-known and justly admired poems in which Wordsworth treats, for example, of the interfusion of time present and time past in a place revisited; and to those other poems and episodes, of no less merit, where the sudden intervention - of a leech-gatherer or a discharged soldier - seems to disrupt the very reign of time. It also makes a basis for considering some quite unexpected poems under the same aspect and for reaching out into comparatively unfamiliar parts of Wordsworth's oeuvre.

At times there is a certain loss of adjustment between argument and subject-matter. For me, at least, some of the slighter poems cannot quite bear the weight of this analysis. And, again, some generalizations about the eighteenth century - about attitudes to sanity and madness or about the complete pervasiveness of Newton's doctrines - are as harsh as they are simplified. The choice of Blake as witness here suggests that Dr Beer's studies of that poet may have coloured his own thinking. No doubt Blake felt it personally necessary to sweep aside the ideas of his predecessors. To accept his guidance there, however, is like accepting D.H. Lawrence as a guide to darkest Bloomsbury.

As an instrument of critical analysis, Dr Beer addresses himself to the idea that the critic:

should look first not for the homogeneity of Wordsworth's diction but for the disturbances in it - the moments, for example, where he uses an unexpected word, or even a normal one with some unexpected heightening of effect. The more puzzling the usage, the more likely it is that the key will be found in some subterranean working of Wordsworth's imagination (inviting, in turn, reappraisal of some of his more commonplace expressions). (p.27)

Some of the most rewarding points made throughout - and they are many - stem from a keen attention to just such "disturbances". Many readers will have corroborative examples of their own to add. "Standing on the top of golden hours" (p.41) may well carry a reference, in that context, to spinning-tops as well as mountain-tops and wheels of fortune. The allusion to As You Like It noted in one place (p.164) is matched by an allusion to Macbeth ("Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!'" ). To multiply such examples, however, is to acknowledge the power of the instrument we are offered.

It remains true that this instrument of method is much less unorthodox in criticism since Empson and Leo Spitzer (if not, indeed, since Coleridge) than Dr Beer's energetic account of it implies. And the attempt to justify its use, as if justification were needed, leads to unduly firm distinctions between "the words on the page" and those other "hints, yearnings, and hauntings which are only half present in the text" (p.21). As someone remarked long ago, the words are on the page - or they are nowhere. An analogy with Dr Beer's own style may clarify my point. There is a sense in which Yeats is half present throughout this book on Wordsworth: an adumbration, possibly, of work in progress? Were it not so, one could see no occasion whatever for a reference to "Yeats's street-walkers" (p.138: my italics) in a comment on a passage about London, a city where street-walkers are neither unexpected nor especially Yeatsian. But it is so: and, accordingly, this odd little remark falls into perspective as an "unrealized" part of a larger affinity. And yet, again, one takes it to be so only because these "hints, yearnings, and hauntings" are themselves among the words on the pages of Wordsworth in Time. There are still those, in short, who read Wordsworth and other poets entirely for "the surface diction": but one may doubt whether they deserve the attention they are given here.

Such methodological cavils notwithstanding, the notion of addressing particular attention to "disturbances" in the text proves as rewarding for the understanding of Wordsworth's poetic lapses as for the enhanced appreciation of his finest moments. Dr Beer writes

well and seriously of Wordsworth's banality and bathos. He follows Coleridge in suggesting that the man who must always test his experiences on his own pulses is only too likely to announce, with an air of discovery, something that his fellows take for granted. And he adds the less familiar but no less valuable suggestion that banality could help "preserve (Wordsworth) against the extreme workings of his own consciousness" (p.153). He writes better still, with a sober felicity, of those moments when Wordsworth leads us to recognize that even "the blank rock-face ... is open to the sound of hidden torrents, or that, at the touch of sunlight, it is thrown into a more bearable relief" (p.27).

J.F. Burrows  
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MORAL SCEPTICISM AND MORAL KNOWLEDGE. By Renford Bambrough.  
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979. Pp. ix + 166. £5.50

It was, I think, just 18 years ago, in the Lent Term 1962, that I first was sent to Renford Bambrough for supervision - in Greek philosophy - along with the other Classical undergraduates of my year. We had already heard him lecture in the Faculty on 'Socrates and Wittgenstein': one of those courses which generate a hum of anticipation in the audience - it had opened to us a new world of thought which little in our previous experience of literature or philosophy had prepared us to conceive of. But it was the supervisions which confirmed some of us in our conversion to philosophy, and in due course led Mike Brearley, Michael Scholar and me to read with Renford for Part II of the Moral Science Tripos.

This snatch of autobiography is prompted by the President's new book. For the reading of it has powerfully revived memories of those early supervisions. I know exactly why it has done so. Everything the President writes is written to teach us to think about matters theoretical and practical, or rather to show us how we do and must think. And it is written in a style and tone distinctive of its author. I have often heard him say (p. 6):

'We also find that much of the trouble that the theories [sc. of moral philosophers] cause and much of the trouble that causes the theories arises where one theory is in secret and mistaken agreement with another, where because they both agree on a false disjunction each of them sacrifices a truth that the other strenuously guards, and embraces the paradox that it is the primary function of the other to controvert.'

I do not recall hearing him observe (p. 8):

'The reductive philosopher of science wears his operational definitions on his sleeve as proud proof of the toughness of his mind. The conventionalist about logical necessity is comfortably conscious that Occam's razor gives a smooth shave.'

Nor was I unsurprised by the coda of Chapter 6 (p. 104):

'We need not deny, as we throw away the shells, that the oysters were succulent and nutritious, even if we allow or insist that there are other and plainer sources of nourishment.'

I would certainly have scored heavily in any quiz on the identity of the author of these quotations.

It will already have become apparent that Moral Scepticism and Moral Knowledge is a highly polished artefact. Although the book appears (somewhat unconvincingly) in a series on philosophical psychology, it is the very opposite of the swiftly composed and swiftly thought response to an invitation which not infrequently finds its way into such contexts. It is no exaggeration to say that we have here the studied distillation of a youngish lifetime's reflection upon moral thought. The upshot of that reflection is clear, definite, and firm, although not easily summarized. As the author observes (pp. 30-1):

'If a dispute is capable of being settled by the presentation of a memorable theory or by a briefly manageable description then it is almost certainly not a philosophical dispute and it is quite certainly not a long-standing philosophical dispute. The paradoxical doctrines and the unsound sceptical arguments abound precisely because there is no way of describing the peculiarity of moral judgements that is brief and accurate and memorable.'

A reviewer, however, must attempt the impossible. And in fact the second sentence just quoted intimates something of the essential doctrine of the work. It is a trenchant defence of the common sense view of morality as a matter of objective right and wrong, and as subject to rational argument and investigation and reflection no less than any other topic of inquiry or disagreement or puzzlement. Each successive chapter takes up the same theme, and develops it with unfailing resource in a new key or with a fresh inversion. While some parts of the work will be of most interest to professional or tiro philosophers, the whole is written with the common reader above all in mind. For it is one of Mr. Bambrough's cardinal philosophical beliefs that philosophy is too important to be addressed just to other philosophers. I would have described this as a belief unfashionable among philosophers were it not for the success he has in persuading contributors to the journal Philosophy, which he has edited since 1972, to share it.

It is time to give some indication of the character of the argumentation of the book. I take as my example the author's treatment of 'an objection which is usually felt to have special if not conclusive force against objectivism' (p. 38). The objection is that 'if we believe (as Hume does) that there are moral distinctions (Right and Wrong, Good and Evil) we shall become dogmatic and authoritarian, and ... , in the light of that assumption, we shall have reason for our authoritarian principle and practice' (p. 39). Mr. Bambrough quotes a variety of evils which have been alleged by philosophers to be the consequence of belief in the objectivity of morals. He then deploys against this position a very old form of counter-argument, beloved of the Greeks from Democritus and Plato to Sextus Empiricus (p. 40):

'Nowell-Smith and Hare and [William] James are hoist with the same petard. Persecution, inquisition and slavery function in their arguments as moral villainies that the objectivist's moral philosophy requires him to countenance. They see themselves as pointing out to the objectivist that he has made a moral mistake. They accordingly see themselves as correcting that mistake, as the sceptic of the senses corrects the mistake of one who sees as an oasis what is only a mirage, as a bent stick what is really a straight stick in water. But a mistake cannot be corrected or even made in a sphere in which there is no right or wrong or true or false. Our recognition that slavery and tyranny and persecution are morally objectionable is a sample of the moral knowledge that the critics' conclusion declares to be impossible, even while their premises openly exemplify it.'

This passage is a characteristic one in many ways. Its reasoning is crisp and elegant and explicit: one knows exactly what is being claimed and why. It stops the reader in his tracks and forces him to critical reflection not merely on what the author is saying but on what he himself ought to think. But immediacy of impact is not bought at the cost of deafness to the intertwined traditions of moral philosophy and English letters. One of the pleasures of the book is its courteous dialogue with philosophers of two or three generations ago, like Ross and Rashdall, James and Peirce, as well as its regretfully qualified devotion to Hume and G.E. Moore. Notice, too, the comparison of the difficulties of the anti-objectivist position about morality with those of the sceptic attack on our knowledge of the external world. Mr. Bambrough everywhere insists, and nowhere more tellingly than in the brilliant second chapter, that if we scrutinize doubts about the objectivity of moral reasoning and moral judgment, we usually find that they are twins or at least cousins to doubts which philosophers have raised about the objectivity of other forms of reasoning and other types of judgment; and contrariwise, that if we are invited to endorse the objectivity of science and logic, we should not fail to discern equal reason for endorsing the objectivity of ethics. Central to his argument, here as elsewhere, is his acceptance of the idea of moral truth and falsehood. For his principal opponents - writers like R.M. Hare and Bernard Williams - are anxious to allow moral reasoning many of the characteristic features of all reasoning: argument, premise, conclusion, consistency, inconsistency, validity, invalidity, to mention only some of the more fundamental. But they hope to reconcile such objective properties of reasoning with some form of ethical subjectivism. And their hope is founded on the idea that the most important and basic properties of reasoning can be divorced from the notions of truth and falsehood, notions which should in their view be abandoned in the philosophical characterization of moral judgments. Only then, they believe, will the rationality of moral argument be rendered compatible with what they take to be just as important a feature of morality: our freedom to choose our own fundamental moral principles, our responsibility to take up our own individual stance on deep and controverted moral issues.

In Chapters 4 to 6 Mr. Bambrough explicitly rejects the subjectivist idea that moral freedom is a matter of absolutely autonomous individual choice. He suggests that moral freedom is founded rather on an ability prerequisite for all human enquiry: our ability to draw our conclusions from evidence which we have to seek out and

smile. This of course was the real Dennis Bailey; and this in all probability is the memory which will be treasured most of all by his very many friends.

J.C.H.

## Reviews

Alec C. Crook, From the Foundation to Gilbert Scott: a history of the buildings of St John's College, Cambridge, 1511 to 1885. Cambridge: printed for the College. 1980. £9; £5 to Junior Members.

The College was already indebted to Mr Alec Crook for his earlier book Penrose to Cripps (1978), in which he told the history of the College buildings from 1885 to 1978 (see The Eagle, No 287, pp. 27-30). That book not only provided the first full account of additions and alterations to the fabric of the College over the past century but also had the unique interest that it was written by the architect immediately in charge of the major restoration of the older Courts, begun in 1934 and taken up again in 1958 after a long interruption caused by the war.

He has now greatly increased that indebtedness by this new book telling the history of the buildings over the whole period from the foundation of the College in 1511 to 1885, including therefore the great changes of the seventh decade of the nineteenth century, the building of the new Chapel, the enlargement of the Hall, and the building of a new Master's Lodge, with the drastic demolitions these changes involved.

This long period is, of course, covered in the second volume of the great work by R. Willis and J.W. Clark, The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge and of the Colleges of Cambridge and Eton (1886), a source of information on the buildings of Cambridge that can never be superseded. Mr Crook naturally draws upon this source, and upon the other relevant published sources, the writings of Torry, Babbington, Mullinger, Bonney, Scott, the Cambridge volumes of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1959), and the rich resources of The Eagle. A Bibliography duly lists them all. But he also draws directly upon original material in the College archives, accounts, plans, contracts, correspondence, and the Conclusion Books of the Master and Seniors. Some of this material has not previously been used in writings on the buildings.

His arrangement is chronological. The result is a clear, yet detailed, and always interesting account, beginning with the original buildings of the College at its foundation and then telling of new building and expansion, century by century: Metcalfe's little Court, long ago demolished, the Second Court, the new Library by the river, the west and south ranges of the Third Court, the extension across the river and the building of the New Court, together with numerous changes over the period in buildings already erected. At the same time, though more briefly, the book describes the extension of the College precincts and changes in the lay-out of the grounds. It provides, for the first time, within the space of about 180 pages, an architectural history of the College; though to cover the whole period to the present day it must be read together with the earlier book Penrose to Cripps.

The book is illustrated by plans, drawings, and photographs. These naturally include reproductions, necessarily on a reduced scale, of David Loggan's two perspective views from Cantabrigia Illustrata (1690), which are indispensable for a study of the history of the buildings. Mr Crook also provides a drawing giving his own impression of the thirteenth-century Chapel of the Hospital of St John, which, transformed into Tudor Gothic, became the Chapel of the College and so remained until 1865. The book is beautifully produced by the University Press in a format identical with that of Edward Miller's Portrait of a College (1961), to which it is thus an architectural companion. The frontispiece is a watercolour by John Ward, showing the north-east corner of the Second Court with the Chapel tower behind, commissioned by Dr. N.F.M. Henry in 1980 and presented by him to the College.

Mr Crook's use of contemporary correspondence adds greatly to the interest of his account of the building of the present Library in 1624 (the correspondence with John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, was printed by Scott in The Eagle) and to his account of the discussions with Wren and Hawksmoor, which led eventually to the building of the old Bridge under the charge of Robert Grumbold in 1712.

The part of the book in which most new detail is provided is the two final chapters dealing with the building of Gilbert Scott's new Chapel in 1865 and the consequent demolition of the old Chapel and of the original Master's Lodge and Combination Rooms, the lengthening of the Hall, and the erection of the present Master's Lodge on a site that originally had lain outside the precincts of the College. The detailed account is enlivened by use of the diary of G.F. Reyner, Senior Bursar, who had immediate oversight of the work, and of the notes of W.M. Cooper, the Clerk of Works. The number of skilled masons employed emphasizes the immensity of the task of erecting a Gothic building like the Chapel. Today, even if the masons could be recruited, the cost would be beyond the resources of any College.

Mr Crook has, I think, successfully solved the complex problem of the projection on the north side of the Second Court, now pierced by the doorway leading from C Staircase to the Chapel Court. Built originally to provide a staircase from the Master's Gallery (now the Combination Room) to his bedrooms on the floor above, it passed through later changes and was given its present form by Gilbert Scott. He also does much to clarify the arrangements of the original Master's Lodge and Combination Rooms and of the Gallery added to the Lodge when the Second Court was built.

A work of this scope on the College buildings inevitably raises questions as well as supplying answers. Mr Crook accepts (p. 14), like Willis and Clark (vol. ii, p. 317), payments to John Adams in 1665-6 as evidence that the doors of the Great Gate were made at that time, replacing therefore the original doors made by Thomas Loveday. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (p. 189) held, however, in view of their style and notwithstanding the payments to Adams, that the present doors were still substantially those made by Loveday in about 1516. Mr Crook thinks (p. 72), as I did formerly (The Eagle, vol. liii, p. 157), that a culvert under the path leading northwards from Trinity Piece, bricked up in 1965, was the 'opening' made under a College Order of 28 February 1761 (Baker-Mayor, p. 1039). But a minute of the Master and Seniors of Trinity College, dated 18 March 1862, makes it probable that the culvert was made a century later. The 'opening' of 1761 more probably connected the end of the ditch running southwards from the present iron bridge that carries the Broad Walk with the Trinity ditch opposite to it. Mr Crook's plan XII of the College Grounds shows 'Bachelors' Walk' as the name of the path leading northwards from Trinity Piece. I am sure that the name, used in a College Order of 19 February 1780 (Baker-Mayor, p. 1086), applied to the path adjoining the ditch that separates Trinity Meadow and St John's Meadow. The 'blue gate' of that Order stood at its western end. But uncertainties of this kind in no way detract from the excellence or accuracy of Mr Crook's book.

His book is a notable addition to the books about the College. It will interest and inform generations of Johnians to come and enable them to know and understand more fully the buildings they are privileged to inhabit. And it will fulfil a further important purpose. A knowledge of the history of the buildings is essential to their proper care. Without it, features of great historical interest are easily obliterated or destroyed. For example, on the south side of the Second Court, facing Trinity College, there still survives in a window blocked on the inside one of the original casements of the Court, complete with its wrought-ironwork and leaded panes. It shows how all the windows of the Court must have appeared when the Court was built. Again, the ancient door in the archway leading from C Staircase Second Court to the Chapel door is the actual door that once closed the doorway in the First Court that formed the entrance to the Chapel and Master's Lodge. Bishop Fisher must have opened and closed it as he passed through. With little doubt, it was made by Thomas Loveday, master carpenter, who made the doors of the Great Gate, the other principal doors of the first buildings, the stalls in the Chapel, and in all probability the hammer-beam roof of the Hall, the finest timber roof in Cambridge.

By writing this book, which will tell present and future Johnians about their buildings and will contribute for years to come to their proper care, Mr Alec Crook has earned the deep and lasting gratitude of the College.

J.S.B.S.

Herbert Marchant, His Excellency Regrets  
William Kimber. £4.95

As a modern languages master at Harrow before the war, as a war-time intelligence officer at Bletchley Park and then as a diplomat who served in a variety of appointments culminating in that of H.M. Ambassador to Cuba during the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crises, Sir Herbert Marchant, K.C.M.G., O.B.E. - better known as Bill Marchant to his contemporaries at St. John's College in the years (1925-28) - has had an active and distinguished career. Not content with his many other achievements, he has now, in his retirement, written a novel.

His Excellency Regrets is not his first book; while still a young schoolmaster he spent a period of leave in the Soviet Union of which he wrote a lively account entitled Scratch a Russian. In other respects, also, the novel is not the work of a beginner. Set in a British Embassy in eastern Europe, it draws on his experience as a diplomat in Zagreb and Bucharest, as well as on his early adventures in Soviet Russia, to re-create the authentic atmosphere in which work is done and life is supported by diplomatic communities in the capitals that lie beyond the Iron Curtain. And it is written by a practised hand in a style which has all the spareness and astringency of a good Embassy despatch - and of the author's personality - and none of the tedium that characterises much official correspondence and many first novels. This comes out on the first page, where Sir Herbert explains why he wrote the book "even though I was fully aware that a good diplomat thinks twice before saying nothing".

Prospective readers may be assured that by this test - though not by any other - the author shows that he was not a good diplomat. He has thought more than twice while writing his novel; and he says a good deal that will interest the student of current affairs no less than the amateur of exciting fiction.

F.H.H.

## Reviews

Sources, Processes and Methods in Coleridge's Biographia Literaria.  
By Kathleen M. Wheeler. Cambridge University Press, 1980.

On first reading, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions, presents itself as one of the more ramshackle classics of English literature: criticisms of Wordsworth, autobiographical anecdotes, history of ideas, all interleaved with an account of the faculties and powers of the human mind that drinks deep from the headier springs of German idealist metaphysics. One of the few things immediately comprehensible about the text is why it should have incited its contemporaries to parody and derision. Here is Thomas Love Peacock's Mr Flosky, the character who in Nightmare Abbey does duty for Coleridge:

Think is not synonymous with believe - for belief, in many most important particulars, results from the total absence, the absolute negation of thought, and is thereby the sane and orthodox condition of the mind; and thought and belief are both essentially different from fancy, and fancy, again, is distinct from imagination. This distinction between fancy and imagination is one of the most abstruse and important points of metaphysics. I have written seven hundred pages of promise to elucidate it, which promise I shall keep as faithfully as the bank will its promise to pay.

Modern Johnians are much kinder than Peacock. What once aroused the mockery of all now arouses from among our number works of sympathetic scholarship. George Watson provided us with an edition of the Biographia Literaria (Everyman, 1956); Kathleen Wheeler now gives us a monograph that splendidly illuminates many of that work's darker facets. Are we here, one wonders, witnessing the birth of a new collegiate tradition?

The 'sources' in Dr Wheeler's title are those of the Biographia Literaria's aesthetic and metaphysical doctrines. A plethora of notebooks, letters and marginalia records Coleridge's gradual development and articulation of these ideas in the years leading up to the Biographia. Dr Wheeler displays an extensive familiarity with this material, and deploys it to reconstruct in rich detail the Biographia's antecedents in Coleridge's thought. At times I felt a lack of argument where some was needed to support Coleridge's bolder contentions. The blame for this lies more with Coleridge than with Dr Wheeler. Odd asides of his can sometimes reveal a great penetration and percipience; but he too often for my tastes replaces sustained and consecutive argument by pure assertion. Thus even in the most seriously argumentative section of the Biographia, the ten theses of Chapter XII, we are told that 'That the self-consciousness is the first point to which for us all is morticed and annexed needs no further proof'. One would be inclined to comment 'Bluster, not

philosophy' were it not for the wise warnings Dr Wheeler issues on the difference between a work of art and a philosophical treatise, the difference of approach that each requires, and the need to bear both approaches in mind when reading Coleridge (p. 81).

The 'Sources' of the Biographia Literaria are more than just its sources in Coleridge's own earlier thought. Coleridge read widely and borrowed much. The influence of earlier philosophy upon him was often mediated through German Romantic and idealist writings, above all those of Kant and Schelling. But far from negligible also was, for example, the direct influence of the Platonic tradition in many of its guises, from Plato himself, through the neo-Platonist Plotinus, to the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century. Much of this influence was acknowledged by Coleridge himself, not least in the Biographia. Dr Wheeler disclaims an exhaustive study of influences and parallels. Nevertheless, one cannot but be impressed by the way in which, using a reading that seems no less extensive than Coleridge's itself, she traces the Biographia's philosophy of mind, its metaphysics and its aesthetics back to their originals. I had only one quibble: is it really correct to suggest that the Eleatic school had adopted a subjective idealism such as Berkeley was later to develop (p. 33)?

The 'processes' and 'methods' of Dr Wheeler's title are two modes of literary composition. Processes concern, roughly, those features of a work which though of literary significance, are not subject to the conscious guidance, and are perhaps not even available to the conscious awareness, of its author. Methods, by contrast, are those procedures whereby authors knowingly and intentionally generate such features of their works as are within their control. The distinction is not always of the most exact: as Dr Wheeler herself points out, it is a nice question where the literary-critical concept of irony belongs in this classification (p. ix). Nevertheless it can, as Dr Wheeler demonstrates, be put to good use in the understanding of Coleridge. Particularly interesting are the ways in which she shows how these modes of writing have their corresponding modes of reading, and how these are connected with the Biographia's theorising about literary and other understanding. A conceit worthy of Borges (with whom Coleridge is compared: pp. 184, 201-2) illuminates the Biographia by taking it as self-referential. A chief theme of the Biographia is in a sense the reading of the Biographia itself, and it is so written as to illustrate in the experience of the sensitive reader the philosophy of mind which it intermittently expounds. Herein Dr Wheeler discerns a subtle unity for the Biographia: its apparent incohesiveness conceals a unity constituted by this theme developed in this fashion.

I was, I must confess, left with the suspicion that an artistic unity which can be displayed only by Dr Wheeler's formidable resources of scholarship and argument is not perhaps what people have been seeking when they have bewailed the absence of an organic and harmonious structure from the Biographia Literaria. Perhaps the moral is however that the Biographia's aesthetics and philosophy of mind require us to modify our familiar conceptions of literary integrity before applying them to that work.

The year after the Biographia Literaria was published Byron gave, in the dedication to Don Juan, this slighting notice of Coleridge's philosophical efforts:

... Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,

But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood,—  
Explaining mataphysics to the nation—  
I wish he would explain his explanation.

In Kathleen Wheeler's book we have all that Byron could have wanted.

N.C.D.

The Collapse of the Concert of Europe: International Politics, 1890-1914. By Richard Langhorne. Macmillan, 1981. Pp. 137.

Ever since the lights went out all over Europe in August 1914, politicians, journalists and historians have debated the causes of, and the responsibility for, the disaster of the First World War, the 'suicide from fear of death' of the old Europe. From the moment the declarations of war were drafted, statesmen were eager to demonstrate to their contemporaries, and perhaps to posterity, that the responsibility was not theirs, that they were going to war with clean hands. Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, the 'war guilt clause', fixed the blame on 'the aggression of Germany and her allies', and gave rise to a vast literature attempting to refute it. Was it not more just, and more politic, to agree with David Lloyd George that the nations 'slithered into war'?

Over twenty years ago, however, the German historian Fritz Fischer formulated what was inevitably interpreted as a new 'warguilt' thesis(1) in which Germany was presented as primarily responsible for the war, for reasons connected with the fundamental nature of the German State itself. As in the 1920s and 30s, the sometimes bitter controversy that ensued has inspired a fertile re-examination of the origins of the Great War. The arguments of Fischer, his allies and his disciples, in the view of their critics, are too like a prosecution brief: circumstantial evidence is marshalled to prove that the accused had motive and opportunity. But did he do the deed? Could not similar indictments be drawn up against other governments and other States? Perhaps a more satisfactory explanation of the war requires an examination of the international system as a whole, and not only of the misdeeds of one component State?

This is the context in which Mr Langhorne's essay appears - for it is an extended essay, although artfully presented by its publishers as a textbook. He asks why the Concert of Europe, 'the most successful system for regulating international politics that has yet been devised' (p. vii), began to break down during the last years of the nineteenth century, and proved unable to reduce the tensions of the early twentieth century and disprove the dangerous belief of so many contemporaries that war was inevitable. We need not share that belief; for, as the author suggests, an international system capable of postponing the explosion might have permitted domestic and international tensions to dissipate themselves other than by war: internal political changes, even breakdown, in Germany or Austria-Hungary could have made war with Russia unnecessary or impossible. And although the

danger of such internal breakdown certainly caused the rulers of Germany and Austria to contemplate war as a remedy, it was the instability of the international system that provided them with the idea and the opportunity (p. 6).

We have no difficulty, therefore, in following the author in his suggestion that changes in the international system itself give 'substantial clues' towards explaining the disaster of 1914. This international system, the Concert of Europe, developed after the defeat of Napoleon, was founded on the notion that the five Great Powers - regarded as of roughly equal weight in the affairs of Europe - had an interest in maintaining, and could maintain, stability in Europe by consultation through international conferences. Underlying this arrangement during the first half of the nineteenth century was an 'unwritten alliance between government and government' (p. 65) against the danger of revolution. During the second half of the century, all these presuppositions of stability decayed. The swelling power of Britain and then of Germany; the vast potential might of Russia and the United States; the relative decline of France and Austria; and the involvement of certain States in imperial expansion outside Europe all made the vision of a permanently stable Europe-centred States system increasingly unreal. Consequently, the last decades before 1914 were a time of soaring ambitions and deep fears: which States would survive to be World Powers, and which would disappear from the map of Europe? Half-digested Hegel, anthropologists' ravings about racial superiority and pseudo-Darwinian myths of struggle (Trinity College's unwitting contribution to the downfall of European civilisation), added intellectual poison to an increasingly violent international system which statesmen of the generation of Metternich or our own Castlereagh - who had done so much to establish the Concert of Europe(2) - or even that rougher Johnian Palmerston would have been at a loss to comprehend or control.

It is remarkable, then, as the author reminds us, that the Concert of Europe lasted as long as it did: it functioned for the last time during the Balkan Wars (1912-13) when the London Conference of ambassadors defused a crisis which might have ended in general war. But the Concert could not solve the Balkan crisis, the next outbreak of which did bring war. By then the Great Powers had divided into two blocs: a further step in the collapse of the Concert of Europe, which was largely 'a collapse of confidence' (p. 120) in its ability to solve international problems. Finally, in August 1914, military planning set the pace and left the diplomats floundering: Sir Edward Grey's call for a conference was by that time irrelevant. The reasonableness of the Concert of Europe had given way to the ultima ratio regis.

It is a great merit of this book to offer in its analysis of the breakdown of the old European States system a clear conceptual approach, yet one which is not a monocausal explanation. The author does not gloss over the complexity of the question, but he provides a broad framework within which more detailed and more narrowly focused theses - including even that of the Fischer school - can be discussed.

R.P.T.



## Notes

1. Griff nach der Weltmacht (Düsseldorf 1961), published in English as Germany's Aims in the First World War (Chatto and Windus 1967). The thesis was developed by Fischer for the pre-war period in War of Illusions (Chatto and Windus 1975).
2. 'The Conception of a new international system for Europe was effectively his ...' R.T.B. Langhorne, 'Castlereagh, Robert Stewart, 2nd Viscount', supplement to *The Eagle*, vol. LXIX no. 289, Easter 1981.

## Gifts and Bequests to the College, 1980-1981

The American Friends of Cambridge University gave \$11,790; of this \$10,185 has been added to the Overseas Studentship Fund, \$1,395 to the Choir Music Tuition Fund and \$210 to the Research Grants Fund.

The College received £9,047.41 and 650 B.A.T. Industries shares, from the estate of Professor W.G. Brock, who died in 1974, to which no conditions are attached.

Major E. Titterington (matric. 1919) bequeathed £5,000, to which no conditions are attached.

Mrs. F.G. Hobbs bequeathed £500 (in memory of her husband, V.W.J. Hobbs, B.A. 1908) to which no conditions are attached. The bequest has been added to the General Bequests Fund.

Mr. Hall gave £100 (his legacy as an executor), in memory of the late Professor S.J. Bailey (Fellow 1931-80), which has been used to purchase law books for the Library.

Dr. Henry gave a water-colour picture of Second Court by John Ward.

Mr. Crook assigned the copyright of his book 'From the Foundation to Gilbert Scott' and Dr. Henry met the cost of the colour reproduction of the water-colour as the frontispiece to the book.

Mrs. M.W. Davies gave a bust of William Wordsworth by Sir Francis Chantrey.

Dr. Johnstone assigned the royalties of his book 'Stone Spaces' to the Fellows' Research Fund.

Dr. Bertram gave a Nepalese handbell, for use as a grace bell in Hall.



## Reviews

Trinity College, Dublin 1592-1952 - an academic history.  
By R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb. Cambridge University Press, 1982.

This is a study on the grand scale of a College and University (for T.C.D. is both) that occupies a distinctive, and for long enjoyed a privileged, minority position in Ireland. It is written by two well known Fellows of their generation, the one, Dr McDowell, a historian and Senior Fellow, and the other, Professor Webb, a botanist. Dr McDowell has experience of collaboration, being the co-author with Professor W.B. Stanford of an outstandingly, and in my judgment deservedly, successful biography of Provost Mahaffy. On this occasion his association with Professor Webb has ensured that the progress of teaching and research in Arts and Sciences alike is professionally appraised. By reason of T.C.D.'s earlier association with Trinity (Cambridge) and its present alliance with St John's (where both authors have been welcome visitors) publication in this handsomely produced volume by the C.U.P. seems altogether appropriate.

Trinity was founded in 1592. From the outset it was conceived of as a single foundation able to discharge the functions of both college and university. The last of the medieval universities in its formal resemblances to Oxford and Cambridge, it may equally, in the view of the authors, be thought of as the first of the colonial colleges which were to be founded over the succeeding two centuries overseas. Religious and cultural colonization loomed large among its original purposes, its founders conceiving of higher education as a powerful auxiliary 'to breaking down the two great barriers to the spread of English influence in Ireland: Catholicism and the Gaelic cultural tradition'. Given the date of its foundation, it is no matter for surprise that four of the first five Provosts were Puritans from England, Trinity offering to 'an English Puritan a place which was near to the front line of battle against Rome'.

The authors candour on such unfashionable historical topics is not only in itself commendable but gives the reader confidence in their objectivity tempered though it is - and why not? - by affection. Their historical commentary, moreover, is evidently based on intensive research in the college archives, which despite some *lacunae* appear to be unusually rich, and an even richer vein of oral tradition. One incidental by-product is that the footnotes to some of the later chapters contain so much of curious interest as to be read with pleasure without reference to the text to which they refer.

But one should not be misled by such incidentals. This is, as the authors emphasise, an academic study. It is concerned with dons and undergraduates as members of a particular and psychologically isolated academic community. The range of subjects on offer, changes in syllabus, numbers in residence, the working of the tutorial system, the quality of teaching, the academic standing of the College at different times, the admission of women - at T.C.D. this happened in 1904 and there was a brief halycon interlude in which Oxford and

Cambridge women, not so admitted until 1920 and 1947 respectively but having performed all the exercises which, had they been men in keeping with an old tradition of reciprocal recognition, would have entitled them to a degree, sought and obtained Trinity B.A. degrees on an *ad eundem* basis - the facilities available by way of buildings, scientific equipment and libraries, and, at the heart of it all, government and administration in which until comparatively recent times the Board consisting of the Provost and seven Senior Fellows, all of whom at one point in time were over 70, was more or less omniscient - these are the matters on which their attention is focussed. The presentation is chronological with reliance upon special occasions for taking stock in the form of comprehensive review and interim assessment - an unusually good example of this being a rather remarkable essay on the state of T.C.D. at the time of its tercentenary celebrations in 1892. In respect of chronological balance, the work comes down heavily on the modern side, i.e. from the late XVIII century to the chosen terminal point in 1952, on grounds of interest and, more particularly, by reason of new ground to be tilled, the earlier years having been surveyed by historians in the past. The tone is critical yet, as already mentioned, attached. Essentially it is a historian's book in a traditional sense.

All of this may sound a trifle constricting. In so far as it is so, it is altogether in accord with the authors' intentions. They conceived of their undertaking as a thorough historical enquiry, not a series of reflective essays and still less an anecdotal *melange*. At the outset indeed the authors' firm insistence upon their aim, defined as the investigation of how the purposes for which this particular College and University was founded and developed, were advanced (or neglected) in changing human and historical environments, suggested that a much needed corrective might even bring the balance down the other way. But as the centuries unfold, either the rigour of their first intent softens, or the material becomes more colourful with the result that no one need fear that the authors', and more particularly Dr. McDowell's, reputation as foremost among Dublin's raconteurs, is about to suffer self-imposed eclipse. There is constraint, a very proper constraint it may be thought, but in T.C.D. there is enough in the way of relevant anecdote, much of it acerbic in character, to make the work all the better for the absence of the questionably relevant. Moreover, and surprisingly in view of all that has before been related, there is commendable freshness in what is now set out in context, and it is illustrative I suppose of the authors sense of fair play, as well as of what is relevant, that readers will have an opportunity of seeing a reproduction of Sarah Purser's portrait of a medical don, Dr Haughton, on which Provost Salmon commented when first unveiled, 'Excellent! Excellent: You can just hear the lies trickling out of his mouth'.

The overall treatment is open to criticism in some respects. The sketches of individual academics has about it an air of leisurely diffuseness and the space given to the more distinguished is not always that much more than the space devoted to those, not inconsiderable in number, who, in the authors pleasing phrase, 'evaded the critical judgment of posterity by refraining from the printed word', not to mention others, of whom one (an economist) was said to have been more at home in a cattle market and another on a race course than in academic surroundings. The recurrent and usually protracted business of selecting Provosts is described with zestful relish down to 1952, when McConnell was chosen. He was instrumental in bringing about a palace revolution, chiefly by introducing a convention that

all the major offices should be held by Junior Fellows and that no one should remain a member of the Board after the age of seventy two. This ensured that Senior Fellows 'the last anachronistic survivors' of the old system and resistant to almost all change, including the appointment of a senior secretary for the Tutorial office, should lose their control over policy. By contrast, little is said even of the most distinguished T.C.D. alumni who ventured forth, as many did, into imperial administration or politics. Sir Edward Carson rates one mention in the text (as a supporter of Archbishop Bernard's claim to the Provostship) and one footnote about his shade of Unionism; while his namesake Joseph Carson, Senior Fellow, has sixteen among which may be mentioned attachment to examination through verification by viva voce of the detailed and exact knowledge of a prescribed text, so that candidates in divinity had to be prepared for questions as 'Who did what on a snowy day?' or 'where is ink mentioned in the Bible?' (May I suggest that those who would like to know the answers approach the Dean of Chapel rather than your reviewer?)

The place of politics as distinct from politicians may also be mentioned. Here the authors' comments are brief to the point of terseness. They take the political situation of which T.C.D. was a part as read. The politics of Ireland - being what they are, and have been - intrude, but they are discussed only in so far as their intrusion needed explanation in terms of understanding of the development of the College. As for the opinions of Fellows (who mattered) and professors (who did not, being part-time and not members of the Governing Body for most of the period), they are accepted as being Unionist and deserving of comment only if expressed in relation to a particular incident, or with unusual vehemence, or in the hope, as with Provost Mahaffy, that they might be deemed memorably offensive. Nonetheless despite such restricted treatment, there can be little doubt that the book, and not least chapter 12 on 'The last days of the Ascendancy: 1901-1919', will command a good deal of interest and attention precisely by reason of the political assumptions entertained, until the coming of a new political order in 1921, by its Fellows and junior members alike and until recently implicit in its very existence.

In sum, this is, as the review may suggest, one of those rare books which can be opened at random and read with pleasure. That is at once a tribute to the authors and the University whose history they relate. With the passing of the older Trinity, nothing quite of its kind is likely to be written again. It is a period piece composed by those familiar with, but not over-enamoured of, the period in its last authentic phase.

N. Mansergh

#### FELLOW IN LABOUR

The Working Class in Modern British History: Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling. Edited by Jay Winter. 315 pages. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Henry Pelling became a Fellow of the College in January 1966, returning after a spell of teaching at Queen's College, Oxford, to one where (it is rumoured) he came up as a freshmen in 1939 to read classics, changing only eventually to modern history. This is perhaps

the only scandal attached to his name, for he is not the sort of Fellow about whom stories are told. Since his return to Cambridge he has become a University Reader in History, retiring in 1982.

The collection now published in his honour, and at a price meant not only for capitalists, would do any historian that. It was formally presented to him in the Senior Combination Room on 16th February 1983, before a large audience that included not only the Vice-Chancellor but the Master as well, along with a pack of notabilities from his own and other colleges. Its thirteen essays, largely composed by former pupils and examinees, range over British political topics of the last hundred years or so, and hang together to a remarkable degree. It is only a coincidence, I imagine, but a happy and unifying one, that the same quotation from Winston Churchill's early social policies is cited by two contributors independently and in distinct contexts. All this mirrors the life-work of a scholar whose writings, listed here as an appendix, hang remarkably well together in themselves, almost as if he had designed them in advance and as a whole. His first book was the pioneering Origins of the Labour Party, in 1954; and twenty years later he produced his twelfth and so far his last book, a life of Churchill. Since he is now said to be working on the Attlee era of 1945-51, all this suggests a significant devotion to order and to method. History, like life itself, is one thing after another.

The Pelling Festschrift has a strenuously revisionist air about it, like a good deal nowadays to do with British Labour. Founded in 1900, that movement may yet last to 2000 AD, but there is by now an increasing number of political observers who see it as a specifically twentieth-century phenomenon. Some of us might wish that the same could be said of its doctrines. But socialism is a wholly Victorian faith, non-existent before 1830 and totally existent as a set of published propositions by the 1890s. It is the only Victorian political doctrine, effectively speaking, to survive into the late twentieth century; and the only political doctrine we have that is wholly Victorian in its content. (What Victorian had ever heard of monetarism or of the European Community?) This gives the substance of the book its peculiar and inescapable flavour. Labour is a fact of our times, indeed, but one wholly inspired by a set of doctrines invented and proclaimed while Victoria was still Queen.

Another incongruity, noted by the editor himself, Dr Winter of Pembroke College, is that there is and was no easy correspondence between British workers and the Labour Party, given that the movement has 'never recruited more than a minority of the working class'. In other words, the Labour parliamentary party represents not British workers, and not even very certainly British trade unions, but rather a traditional interpretation placed by one political sect, and on grounds wholly conceived within the Victorian age, of where the interests of such workers and of such unions lie. This explains, if anything does, such paradoxes of history as Mr Arthur Scargill, whose proposals for the mines would be devastating for working people in their inflationary consequences if they were ever put into effect. It explains the easy traditional confusion in Labour rhetoric between 'the poor' and 'the working class' - a confusion that ceased to be plausible before most readers of The Eagle were born. It explains the spectacle of a party of the poor publicly dedicated to the cause of state monopolies that almost certainly advantage the rich, like Concorde or British Rail. And it explains the present difficulties of Mr Michael Foot in holding his party in one piece.

The story of British Labour, as the contributors make clear, now looks like a story of unremitting failure, confessed and in its own terms. Nobody now talks about the 'sixty-year march', or any other march, and it is many a long year since any of us have heard the expression 'Scientific Socialism'. It is not even clear that we owe anything much at all to Labour. No self-respecting historian, and certainly nobody here, now believes that we owe the welfare state to socialists, and Dr Paul Addison's contribution on 'Churchill and the working class 1900-14' is a formidably lucid analysis of the New Liberalism of 1908 as an instance of disinterested Edwardian statesmanship, adapting state welfare to British conditions before Labour politicians had shown any notable interest in the matter. Since 1945, indeed, Labour governments have tended to satisfy their own supporters even less than their opponents. Hence the fury of the Bennite Left against the leadership; hence the resounding SDP split of 1981. Dr Peter Clarke, in 'The social democratic theory of the class struggle', finds himself faintly embarrassed by the creation of a new party under that very title since he first drafted his piece, and it must always be uncomfortable for an historian to watch the facts catching up with him; but he is in fine form on the evolution of social-democratic opinion over a hundred years, from Marxist collectivism to Jenkinsite competition by way of the New Liberalism of Churchill and Lloyd George.

Dr Clarke's paper, however, like much else in this highly professional volume, leaves one with a suspicion that there is more work to be done, some of it severely lexical, on the changing political senses of such vital words as 'class'. To this day the word is worse than ambiguous, and when we say of someone that he is class-conscious we seldom (if ever) imply that he is exceptionally conscious of the difference between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Gladstone meant something else again by the word, and it would be good to see it explained and justified. Nothing in this book, certainly, will persuade those not already persuaded that there is such a thing as a working class in Britain, or that there ever was. Much of our political debate is mythical.

Revision goes on and on. Some of these papers, like Jose Harris's 'Did British workers want the welfare state?', are bracingly agnostic, and scarcely any (it is good to say) are too technical to attract general readers. Its authors are evidently men not to be fooled by stereotypes or easy opinions, and every essay here looks designed as a graveyard to one or more received ideas. But then Dr Clarke himself, in a speech delivered in the Senior Combination Room last February on presenting the volume to Henry Pelling, signalized his characteristic contribution to modern historical studies as 'the democracy of fact', where no generalization is ever allowed an easy run for its money and where every fact of social or electoral history, however awkward, is permitted to speak for itself. It is in that sense that the collection is a fitting tribute to its hero.

George Watson

Time, Action and Necessity: A Proof of Free Will. By N.C. Denyer. Duckworth, 1981.

Nicholas Denyer's Time, Action and Necessity is a work of great interest. The book offers 'a novel refutation of determinism and a novel proof that human beings have free will'; it presents a stimulating, wide-ranging but tightly structured argument which is conducted with vigour and clarity; it yields many insights into the nature of time, action and necessity; and if it does not ultimately deliver a proof of free will, that, perhaps, is not too surprising, given the nature of philosophical debate.

Mr Denyer's argument for free will focuses around the nature of deliberation. In barest outline: one cannot consistently both deliberate and believe that every detail of the future is both fixed and determinate, as is required by determinism. The argument is, then, an attempt to derive the freedom of the will from an examination of the conditions of deliberation, and such an examination forms the core of the book.

Before considering Mr Denyer's analysis of deliberation, however - which I believe is largely both novel and correct - it is worth asking just how much, and how little, he can hope to prove from such a basis. As Mr Denyer notes himself, his argument has the form of an argument ad hominem; but he is able to claim, rightly, that his argument is more forceful than most such arguments in so far as it is addressed not to some particular opponent in a dialectical debate, but to all rational agents in so far as they deliberate, and thus to all determinists and to all potential opponents (we know that all men do in fact deliberate, and must continue to deliberate while they continue to act rationally). Even if Mr Denyer's argument is so far dialectically successful, however, as to convince all rational agents and all potential opponents that free will is a precondition of deliberation, we may still, perhaps, remain dissatisfied, and want to offer the following response to the argument: 'yes, you have certainly now convinced us that we must all believe in the freedom of the will; but you have yet to convince us that we do, as a matter of fact, have free will'. To such continuing scepticism about his argument, Mr Denyer has a quick response: he complains that he does not understand the conception of truth implied by this scepticism, and asks simply 'How can a proposition to which rationality demands assent fail to be true?'. This is a good question, of course; but it is not altogether sufficient, just as it stands, to dispel the suspicion that Mr Denyer's argument, if sound, shows something very interesting about the mind; whereas what his opponent demanded was a proof concerning how things are in the world.

The centrepiece of Mr Denyer's book is an analysis of deliberation (practical reason). Following Aristotle, Mr Denyer takes the view that one deliberates about the contingent, or rather, that one does not deliberate about whether or not to do something when one believes that doing it is either necessary or impossible (p. 40). Indeed, Mr Denyer believes that it is the link here described between necessity and practical reason (that the impossible is excluded from deliberation) that offers the best account of what the different forms of necessity have in common. For Mr Denyer recognizes not just logical necessity, but epistemic necessity (what is known is in a way necessary), a natural necessity (something can be necessary because it follows from a natural law), a necessity arising from coercion (sometimes one has to do something because one is forced to) (section

21); the necessity of the past; and various forms of deontic necessity (examples are 'you may not kill the innocent' and 'you can't say that, it's inconsistent'). The advantage claimed for this account of necessity is that some of these forms of necessity (namely the epistemic and the deontic) resist explanation in terms of the rival possible world semantics (section 37).

There are many felicities in Mr Denyer's account of deliberation - not least an attractive contrast between practical reason and theoretical reason. Theoretical reason, by contrast with practical reason, stands revealed as concerned with the fixed and determinate. To questions of theoretical reason, there is, accordingly, but one right answer ('did I go to an Indian restaurant last night, or did I go to a Chinese restaurant?'); but to questions of practical reason, there may be more than one right answer - perhaps it would be equally desirable for me to go to an Indian restaurant tonight, or to a Chinese restaurant. Mr Denyer also draws an interesting contrast, as a result of his argument, between the past and the future. He holds that the future is less real than the past, in that, firstly, there is a certain sparseness of facts about the future (by comparison with the past); and secondly, what facts there are about the future 'owe their being' to facts about the present - the facts which are their causes.

Mr Denyer's account of necessity seems less plausible, however. For we might suppose that he had shown, not that all forms of necessity were to be accounted for in terms of their connection with deliberation; but that there were two distinct sorts of necessity, one to be accounted for in terms of possible world semantics, the other (the epistemic and the deontic) to be accounted for in terms of the link with deliberation. After all, it is not in fact what is necessary and what is impossible that circumscribe our deliberations, but what we know or believe to be necessary or impossible - as Mr Denyer remarks, it is quite possible to deliberate whether or not to go to tea at 5p.m. when it is already 5.05p.m.; and it was once possible for geometers to contemplate squaring the circle. Most forms of necessity circumscribe actions rather than deliberations. (Epistemic and deontic forms of necessity constitute an exception here - the innocent are killed, people are inconsistent, and the 'kind of possibility something has if and only if it is not known to be false' (p. 48) also does not preclude its actually being true or false.)

In addition to his argument for free will, Mr Denyer also examines and offers to refute three forms of argument for determinism - a logical argument, which embarks from the consideration that every proposition is either true or false; a theological argument, which starts from the existence of an omniscient god; and a pair of arguments Mr Denyer terms 'scientistic' - to the effect that determinism is either a presupposition or a consequence of scientific enquiry. Having completed his argument for free will, Mr Denyer is now in a position to claim that it is simply wrong to suppose that it is now the case that propositions concerning the undetermined part of the future are either true or false - we should say, rather, that they come true or false; and it is simply incoherent to suppose that there could be an omniscient god; and that, if science implies determinism, so much the worse for science.

Mr Denyer's argument also touches on many other central topics in philosophy (notably the relation of mind to body) - into which, however, I shall not pursue him here. Suffice it to say that Mr Denyer writes with great panache, and that he has produced one of

the most enjoyable philosophy books of the year. No rational agent should fail to purchase this book and to pursue its argument with care and attention.

William Jordan

States of Emergency - British Governments and Strikebreaking since 1919. By Keith Jeffery and Peter Hennessy. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.

Keith Jeffery in happier, and more masculine, times was non-rowing Captain of the Lady Margaret Boat Club, returning later to his native Ulster as non-rowing lecturer in history at the Polytechnic there. Peter Hennessy is scarcely less well remembered in College as winner of a piece of Sir Joseph Larmor's Plate for sharp comment and good works, and scarcely less well known in the world at large for his reports in The Times on Civil Service innuendo, politics and power. Yet what have these two - neither workers, nor managers; the one an academic, the other a journalist on a paper scarcely noted for its breaking of strikes - to teach us, or Mr Tebbit, or Mrs Thatcher, on the art of successful confrontation, or on the way to keep Britain lit when the power workers go out?

Their credentials are good. Dr Jeffery's dissertation on "The military defence of the British Empire 1918-22" leads naturally on to the topic of military aid in support of the Civil Power - a theme strongly running through this book, from the General Strike of 1926 to the firemen's strike just over half a century later. Mr Hennessy's early interests lay in the field of trade union affairs in the 1930's, another strong theme of the book, though one subordinated somewhat to that of the mechanics of the administrative engine concealed behind Whitehall's bland facade, which have come increasingly to fascinate him in his later writings.

The authors take us from the end of the First World War to the present day, the political history of industrial relations of this period standing as backdrop to their study of the evolution of the Government's emergency planning apparatus. For the earlier part of the period more primary sources in the public domain are available to provide the detail, but the coverage is an even one. The story is remarkable mostly for its continuity and sense of minimal change. Maybe in the early days principles seemed clearer; perhaps by later times a greater awareness of the limitations of help from the armed forces has emerged. Labour governments have often been strong; Conservative governments sometimes weak. All have been committed to secrecy.

For the man in the Combination Room, sitting with his port and his pipe by the fire and reliving the heady days of a decade ago of students baying for justice in the court, what are the lessons to be learnt? Few I think. But that perhaps we may put down to the failure of successive Governments to solve the insoluble, rather than to any defect in Keith Jeffrey's and Peter Hennessy's interesting and valuable book.

G.A. Reid

# Reviews

Memories of St John's College, Cambridge, 1919 - 1969.  
By J.S. Boys Smith. St John's College, Cambridge, 1983.

St John's College, perhaps more than many Cambridge Colleges, has been well served by its more recent memorialists - E.E. Raven, A.C. Crook, H.F. Howard, R.F. Scott and many contributors to The Eagle. John Boys Smith, as one would expect, has maintained and enhanced the tradition of his fellow Johnnians in Memories of St John's College, Cambridge, 1919 to 1969, printed for the College (curiously) at the University Press, Oxford. The book consists of two parts, Recollections of Life in St John's College, 1919-1945, written in 1979 and Fifteen Years as Senior Bursar of St John's College, 1944-1959, completed in 1982. Arriving as a freshman in 1919 Boys Smith has served the College virtually all his days as undergraduate, bachelor of arts, Fellow, Chaplain, Tutor, Junior Bursar, Ely Professor of Divinity, Senior Bursar, Master, and from 1963 to 1965 Vice-Chancellor of the University, possibly a unique record. The period covered by the book is the half century from his arrival to his retirement from the Mastership in 1969, a period which saw far reaching changes in almost every aspect of the life of a Cambridge College - academic, economic and domestic. The continued existence of Colleges over the centuries indicates their ability to adapt to change (an ability some critics of the system might find surprising) but that ability is in a large measure derived from the rare qualities of the people who govern them, and their concern for the society they serve.

Those rare qualities are evident from this book. It is not only a Bursar who 'must be deeply interested in the purpose and needs of his College' but the Fellowship as a whole, although Bursars and Masters of necessity carry a greater obligation to demonstrate such an interest. It cannot have been an easy choice for Boys Smith to make when he was offered the post of Senior Bursar; he had held the Ely Professorship for only a short time of four years, he had on his own admission, little financial experience, recognised that there would be much to learn, and - it was 1944 - was aware of the huge problems which would face the College in adapting to post war change. "I came very close indeed to refusal ... (but) I have never since regretted my decision." Neither, I suspect, has the College.

But a College is not simply a set of purposes and needs, and the ability to recognise those needs and to be interested in them is not in itself sufficient; a necessary concomitant is a recognition of and interest in the people who make up the College. This recognition is another of Boys Smith's qualities demonstrated in the book. Memories of undergraduate dining practice, of deliveries of coal up countless flights of stairs, of the installation of bathrooms are interspersed with reminiscences of, and compliments to, those servants of the College who were known to generations of Johnnians. Porters, in any College, are the public face of a mainly invisible army of cooks, bedmakers, gyps and maintenance men. Too often too

little is said about their contribution to the well being of undergraduates and Fellows alike, but this is not an omission one expects from Boys Smith. Charlie Gawthrop, J.H. Palmer, J.R. Collins, E.W. Austin, Miss Alice Price, Harry Wright, W.S. Matthews, the Butlers, the Wards, the Nicholsons, the Mannings are all recalled and due recognition given to their contribution or their character.

So too are the Fellows, too many to mention individually here. H.S. Foxwell, who had taught Boys Smith's father forty years earlier, and whose direction of studies in Economics consisted of a few minutes conversation at the beginning of each term; J.M. Creed, who seems, as Dean, to have had some difficulty coping with the more boisterous of the ex servicemen amongst the undergraduates; A.J. Stevens, who held his Fellowship for life, without obligation; E.A. Benians, whose remarkable gift of insight into character and into the nature and needs of individuals, draws the following tribute:

To consult him - and everyone consulted him - was not only to recognise the wisdom of his advice but to know that it was the right advice because he had understood your problem and had, even if only momentarily, given you his undivided attention.

Boys Smith's interests in matters bursarial is evident even from Part I of the book. In 1928 he moved into F4, Third Court, the rooms occupied by Thomas Baker for over thirty years in the eighteenth century. Characteristically, Boys Smith notes that 'It gave me great pleasure to know that I was living in his rooms.' Fellows were responsible in those days for furnishing and decorating their own rooms, and Boys Smith together with M.P. Charlesworth and I.L. Evans, seem to have set about a major renovation project, installing bathrooms, revealing concealed cupboards and creating interconnecting doors. The obvious delight with which he writes of these activities surely indicates another of his qualities - an eye for detail in the improvement and presentation of the fabric of the College.

In Part II of the book, which is concerned with his fifteen years as Senior Bursar, Boys Smith pays due tribute to the work of his predecessors, in particular R.F. Scott and Sir Henry Howard, and to the unfailing help of members of the Bursary Staff such as W.E. Wolfe, W.T. Thurbon and R.G. Badcock. Drawing on the published College Accounts and the internal Note on the Accounts circulated to Fellows, Boys Smith gives a comprehensive insight into the mysteries of the Bursary and its work. Modern day Bursars - and indeed anyone connected with business or institutional management - may well complain about the constant stream of parliamentary legislation with which they have to familiarise themselves; Acts relating to employment, health, social security, safety and equal opportunity have significantly affected both employer and employee in recent years. But there was a veritable deluge of post war legislation which affected Colleges as employers, landowners and investors. Nationalisation affected investment interests in land, railways, coal, electricity and gas companies; town and country planning legislation affected development opportunities, and there were a series of enactments regulating landlord and tenant relationships. Simultaneously there were changes in statutes, which essentially created the present day financial relations between the University and the Colleges.

Meanwhile the College had to be restored following war time occupation; and the College estates had to be assessed for compen-

sation under the War Damage Acts. To all this must be added the day-to-day complexities of running a large institution, and although Boys Smith's enthusiasm for the varied work of the Bursary is apparent, one suspects that he has characteristically underestimated the workload of those days and the amount of midnight oil that was burned on I Staircase, New Court.

That enthusiasm is nowhere more apparent than when he is writing of the agricultural estates of the College, which will not surprise those readers who have noted, in Part I, his interest in the countryside as shown by his ornithological observations in the Wilderness and his appreciation of walking in the wild places of Wales and Scotland in the vacations.

The intimate feeling for the country, its sights, its sounds, its smells; its birds, its butterflies, its trees and flowers; its hedgerows, woods and heaths; its streams, its winds, its storms and its silences; its earth and its skies: all this constitutes an experience for the loss of which nothing else could ever fully compensate. I have had the good fortune never to be wholly deprived of this immediate contact with the natural world; and when partly separated from it, memory and imagination make it still a living and present reality.

In stressing that it is important that a College Bursar should visit the farms, and should have a first hand acquaintance with them and with their tenants, Boys Smith candidly admits that there was no part of his duties which he enjoyed more, and the hospitality of farmers and their wives no doubt contributed to that enjoyment!

The chapters on the Agricultural Estates and on the Estates Repairs and Improvements Fund are not only contributions to the economic history of the College, but to the social history of agriculture as well; pen portraits of tenants and descriptions of audit lunches are interspersed with the details of rent reviews and the cost of improvements, undertaken not only to increase the earning capacity of the farms, but also to improve the standard of accommodation of the tenants and their employees, showing yet again the author's concern and care for those to whom the College had an obligation.

If there is a unifying theme to the two parts of this fascinating book it is surely that of obligation, either to farm tenants, to colleagues or to the staff, or indeed to that somewhat nebulous body, the College as a whole. In describing the attractions of his office, Boys Smith states that they are many and varied, arising partly from the independence of the position but equally from the responsibility inseparable from its exercise. 'Independence and the exercise of discretion are not inimical to a strong constitutional feeling, and they should foster a sense of responsibility to the society it is a Bursar's duty to serve.' St John's College has indeed been fortunate to have been served by J.S. Boys Smith.

C.J. Taylor  
Bursar of Corpus Christi College



The Emergence of African Capitalism. By John Iliffe. London, Macmillan, 1984. 113 pages.

This short book consists of four expanded lectures given at Canterbury in memory of the African historian, Roger Anstey, who was also a Johnian. Its aim is to document and organize the evidence for an indigenous African capitalism. In this John Iliffe is eminently successful. The materials he has brought together constitute the first systematic treatment of the topic for Black Africa as a whole. Reasonably enough, he concentrates on the more advanced countries, which means, with the exception of the Ivory Coast, a handful of ex-British colonies in West and East Africa. Dr Iliffe divides his topic into four separate themes: nineteenth-century capitalism; rural capitalism during the colonial period; the positive and negative aspects of the relationship between religion and capitalism; and state-made urban capitalism since 1945. Of these, the first is a model of the comparative historian's structured approach to thin sources; the second covers more familiar ground; the third strays somewhat from its ostensible topic, but is always stimulating; and the last struggles rather unsuccessfully with an issue - the postcolonial state and capitalism, domestic and foreign - which is a little large for these lectures. The combined result is an essential background text whose ideas and examples will engage professionals of several disciplines for years to come.

If I have given the impression that this is not a theoretical work, it is not quite so. For Dr Iliffe, despite his commitment to exegesis of the sources, takes some principled stands. Thus, for example, he introduces Gerschenkron's notion of "late capitalism" to the discussion of postwar trends. More important, he equates capitalism firmly with the predominance of the wage labour form. It is right to emphasize, with Marx, the importance of the penetration of capital into production (as opposed, say, to merely making money - in trade or usury). But there is something teleological about focusing on the relationship between capital and labour in the developed mode of production, when African realities are invariably emergent, partial and, as Dr Iliffe himself stresses, synthetic. Under these circumstances, a more eclectic approach, such as Weber's, seems more fruitful: there are many more types of capitalism than that idealized in *Capital*, many forms of labour (capitalist firms have used slaves, migrants, sharecroppers etc.), and any number of distributional arrangements, often involving political agents. In practice, Dr Iliffe is forced to consider a wider range of phenomena than his restrictive definition admits. Again he finds justification for this pragmatism in Marx. Drawing on a discussion of the historical outcomes of conquest by such peoples as the Mongols, Dr Iliffe picks on the possibility of synthesis between conquerors and conquered as a prototype for the confusion of precapitalist and capitalist forms he now finds in Africa. Elsewhere he endorses a modified structuralist-Marxist approach of the sort associated with Rey's 'articulation of modes of production'. When we add these somewhat contradictory borrowings from Marxism to an interest in Gerschenkron's ideas and Weber's religious sociology, the resulting intellectual confusion tends to cloud the reader's perception of the issues.

No doubt the historian's tasks do not primarily include the need to fix on a unified conceptual vision - best leave secular theology to the social scientists. But one does not gain from this book a clear idea of what has become of African capitalism. Partly,

that is because African capitalism is weak to non-existent; partly it is because Dr Iliffe has opted for a survey rather than a polemic; but it is also because his analytical framework, which opens in so rigorous a manner, later becomes dissolved in exploration of a much more diffuse set of topics. It is possible that we cannot honestly arrive at a coherent discussion of incoherent social phenomena. Whatever the case, John Iliffe's courage in tackling so difficult and important a theme is an example to us all. African studies is incontestably richer for the publication of this book.

Keith Hart

The War Against Paris 1871. By Robert Tombs. Cambridge University Press, 1981. 265 pages.

The Second Empire, that of Napoleon III, which lasted from 1851 to 1870, was confident in its army and in itself, although it had many enemies, and Europe was not thinking about war when France, tricked by Bismarck, declared war on Prussia on 19 July 1870. In one month half of the imperial army under Bazaine was invested in Metz. Two weeks later the other half, except for two regiments, but including the Emperor, was invested in Sedan: its commander had been de MacMahon who had fortunately been slightly wounded at an early stage in the investment. Bazaine was court-martialed and disgraced, while de MacMahon escaped censure and later became President of France. Two weeks after Sedan German troops surrounded Paris. The Empire had fallen and Paris was in the hands of a republican government. This hurriedly raised new armies of National Defence under the slogan that it was only the hated Empire that had been defeated; but it was France after all, and these were easily defeated in their turn. There followed four months of heroic fight against the besiegers of Paris, but on 28 January 1871 exhaustion forced an armistice under which the Germans made a formal entry into the city for three days and all except the National Guard and 12,000 men of the regular army of France were disarmed.

Elections took place and a large conservative majority in the National Assembly, meeting at Bordeaux on 12 February, elected a provisional government under the elderly statesman Thiers. The dramatic events and the rapidity of terrible changes since the previous summer had inevitably produced great confusion in people's minds. The will of the large majority of Frenchmen was expressed in the new Government, which came to be called at first that of Versailles where it soon betook itself. This was referred to as a government of 'rustics' by the majority of Parisians who moved far to the left. In the city the National Guard had seized cannon from Army depots, and the Government tried to recover these by stealth, but this was foiled by the populace on 18 March. All armed forces loyal to the Government were then withdrawn to Versailles; preliminary fighting on 2 April then confirmed the split, and the second siege of Paris began on 11 April. The attempt of the city forces to break out were no more successful than they had been against the Germans, who played no part in the fight although they still surrounded the Parisian area as a whole. On 21 May troops first entered the walls of the city and after the Bloody Week, Versailles had crushed the revolution.

In this situation where '... no true compromise was acceptable



either to the Right in the Assembly, determined to resist revolution at all costs, or to the Left in Paris, convinced that revolutionary victory was within its grasp' (p.7) the role of the Army was crucial. It is from the view of the Army that this book tells the story from 18 March to 28 May 1871. It is history on two levels - for the professional historian and for the general reader, which latter concerns us here. It is all the more successful in being told from one side, and the clear and cogent style carries the reader along so that he finds it hard to lay the book down. The copious Notes are all gathered at the end, and their text references are discreet superior numbers, so that the book can be read like a novel. Further there is a Glossary of French terms and four good maps, so that the author's care for the general reader is clear. All we need now for this period is a companion volume from the other side - Paris against Versailles 1871.

N.F.M. Henry

Castlereagh. By Wendy Hinde. Collins, 1981. 320 pages, £16.00.  
 Palmerston, the Early Years, 1784-1841. By Kenneth Bourne. Allen Lane, 1983. 747 pages, £25.00.  
 Lord Aberdeen, a Political Biography. By Muriel E. Chamberlain. Longman, 1983. 583 pages, £25.00.

The appearance of these three biographies serves to remind us of the astonishingly complete sway held by members of the College over the conduct of British foreign policy from 1812 until Palmerston's death in 1865. Only one noticeable break occurred between 1822 and 1827 - the others were matters of months only in 1834 and 1858 - in the predominance of Johnians as either Foreign Secretary or Prime Minister. At the time of the Congress of Vienna not only was the Foreign Secretary a Johnian, but so also was the British Ambassador at Vienna, who acted together with another Johnian Clancarty, as Plenipotentiaries at the Congress. It should be added that at least in the case of Aberdeen and Palmerston membership of the College and education at Harrow might well have been the only thing which united them, their differences in character and methods being otherwise so complete. It was Palmerston, perhaps typically, who gave expression it in one way by describing Aberdeen as suffering from "antiquated imbecility" and Queen Victoria who acted for Aberdeen in castigating Palmerston over the vexed question of the Spanish Marriages: "if our dear Aberdeen had still been at his post, the whole thing would not have happened". There is no doubt that all three men achieved the kind of greatness which leads to a deeply ingrained but shorthand public reputation: Castlereagh was hated in Ireland as a Unionist and more widely as a cold-hearted reactionary. His death by suicide in 1822, which remains in some ways hard to explain, convicted him of ultimate madness. Aberdeen was held to be weak, particularly in respect of Russia and France, to the point almost of being a pacifist, and having first muddled into the Crimean War, then proving totally incapable of presecuting it. Palmerston divided people, but along suspiciously clear lines. He was either the greatest and most vigorous defender of British interests who has ever lived or the dangerously bombastic seeker after short term political advantage at the expense of the long term interests of Britain, and one who was

prepared to make use of every dubious propaganda device to achieve his ends. Abroad, he was widely believed to be a fomentor of revolutions. All three of these books attempt in different ways to adjust such caricatures.

Castlereagh, despite the great work of Sir Charles Webster on his foreign policy (1931), and more recently the short biography by John Derry (1976), still needs all the help he can get. His evil reputation was both less fair to him than the commonly held views on the other two and yet more difficult to shift. Wendy Hinde's carefully balanced, pleasantly readable book avoids tangling with Castlereagh's image, and relies on giving an accurate but plain account of his career; and it may be that such an approach is well justified. Certainly, any reader who had not before known how Castlereagh had been regarded, would not be willing to accept so hostile a view of him after reading Wendy Hinde's biography. A doubt, however, remains. Castlereagh was not just a sensible, even wise, domestically charming, if publically shy, British politician of a certain period. He was one of the greatest, arguably the greatest, foreign secretary this country has ever had. When he came into office in February 1812, expecting only to be at the Foreign Office for a matter of weeks until the domestic political situation again broke down, he in fact faced ten and a half years of the most compelling problems that a foreign secretary can expect to meet. He first had to cope with war on a huge scale, and maintain what had up to that point proved unmaintainable, a durable coalition against Napoleon. If and when that succeeded, the end of the Napoleonic imperium in Europe was going to require a massive new international settlement, if only to delimit a new territorial map for Europe. As it turned out, Castlereagh not only saw the last coalition succeed, but himself left for a prolonged mission in Europe to make it succeed, and in doing so played a crucial role in the establishment of a new French regime and in the preparations for the Vienna Congress. As this stage in his career, he was doing more than looking after British interests effectively, he was fashioning a new kind of international system, and doing so deliberately. He had learnt from his mentor, Pitt, that a convulsion on the scale of the revolutionary wars would have to be followed by something more reliable than the chaotic effects of eighteenth century diplomacy. Pitt, however, had not developed any mechanism for achieving a more stable international environment, and it was left to Castlereagh to overcome the anxieties of Metternich, the strange delusions of the Tsar of Russia and perhaps most of all, the suspicions of a highly isolationist House of Commons in setting up the Congress System in November 1815.

The Congress System did not succeed in its first form, principally because Metternich and the Tsar tried to use it for domestic as well as international purposes. Castlereagh had therefore to spend the post 1818 period attempting to make it work in circumstances where not only were there a more than usually irksome crop of international problems - in Spain, in Italy, in Greece - but there had also to be a constant vigilance towards the policies of the more autocratic powers. In the end the stress, together with the stresses of leading the House of Commons when domestic affairs were dangerously inflamed by economic crisis, pushed him into suicide. His death however was not also his failure. His belief that Britain was inescapably a European great power with consequent obligations and his new method of articulating great power management of the international system by means of conference diplomacy both survived

and rendered possible the establishment of the Concert of Europe under Palmerston's chairmanship of the London conference on the revolt of the Belgians in 1830. If Castlereagh had not both provided the method and showed persistence in maintaining it against very great odds, it must be doubted whether the strikingly successful conduct of international affairs which marked Europe, and therefore much of the rest of the world, during the nineteenth century would have come about. It is this achievement which gives him a place above that of a foreign secretary who would have seen the war against Napoleon to a successful conclusion and then defended British interests at the subsequent peace Congress - both difficult things to do and both of which Castlereagh did with consummate brilliance. But he did them as well as presiding over the creation of a new international system. His principal characteristic was perhaps that he avoided dogma: he did not accept the dogma of Irish independence; he did not accept the dogma that all other societies would benefit from revolutionary changes to their constitutions however backward they might be; he did not accept the dogma that great powers, particularly autocratic ones, had a right of intervention in the internal affairs of other powers in the event of a revolution; and he did not accept the dogma that, the Congress System having been established, it should be regarded as the only legitimate means of conducting negotiations between states: and, in the end, his fight against dogma was successful.

If Wendy Hinde's treatment of Castlereagh is soundly based and has no great axe to grind, the same cannot be said of either Kenneth Bourne's account of Palmerston up till 1841 - we await volume two with the keenest anticipation - or Muriel Chamberlain's new political biography of Aberdeen. In both cases we are given large scale works based hitherto unused or even, as with Aberdeen, formerly lost archives. In both cases also there is a new interpretation offered.

Bourne's first volume on Palmerston is the product of half a lifetime's labour devoted to a vast archive. He has employed, particularly on the Foreign Office itself, records unused by Sir Charles Webster in his 1951 account. It is an immensely successful attempt at a balanced interpretation both because he prevents the sheer weight of evidence from obscuring the patterns that can be discerned and because he falls into neither the panegyric or obloquy which have so often attended discussions of Palmerston's role. For Bourne, Palmerston did not begin by being emotionally committed to the ending of the Slave Trade, but fell into the policy and then came to believe in it. Nor was Palmerston deliberately concealing a policy of imperial expansion under the cloak of suppressing the Slave Trade or insisting as far as possible on Free Trade. Most particularly, he was not a closet revolutionary, as Metternich believed. He believed in Free Trade, commercial expansion and the limited form of Parliamentary democracy in force in England after the Great Reform Act, in much the same way as his contemporaries did, and, particularly with a pen in his hand was a pungent defender of all three. He was right about the great crisis of the Ottoman Empire induced by Mehemet Ali in the 1830s, even though he may have relied more upon instinct than judgement. He lost his triumphantly arranged general treaty on the Slave Trade, however, by pressing his advantage over France too hard in 1841; and, in general, he took too suspicious a view of French policy. Apart from his brilliant defence of the Ottoman Empire against what he believed at different times to have been the aggressive designs of both Russia and France, his greatest triumph during his period as Foreign Secretary was the creation of

Belgium in 1830-1. Here he showed, as he was to do again in 1848-9, that he was a true successor of Castlereagh. He recognised that the fundamental interest of Britain lay in the maintenance of the international system as it had developed in Europe. None of the global preoccupations which characterised the British Empire could be managed without European stability, and the basic caution allied to masterly timing which can clearly be discerned behind his frequently over bombastic mode of expression, was seldom put to more successful effect than during the London conference on Belgium of 1830-1. Here a crisis which stirred all the deepest anxieties and ambitions of the European great powers and carried with it a really serious risk of general war, was coaxed by Palmerston to a peaceful and in the truest sense constructive solution.

It is perhaps the most admirable element in Bourne's work that he has been able to show conclusively what Southgate (The Most English Minister, 1966) was only able to propose, that for most of the time Palmerston's characteristically intense involvement with, and colourful expression of, foreign policy must be divorced from what that policy actually was. Bourne not only establishes the complexity and essential moderation of Palmerston's stance, but also suggests that it is wrong to imagine that he had particular nostrums by which he was guided. Palmerston may have expressed this best himself in the following passage from a letter to Lamb of March 1838:

... my doctrine is that we should reckon upon ourselves; and act upon principles of our own; use other governments as we can, when we want them and find them willing to serve us; but never place ourselves in the wake of any of them; lead when and where we can, but follow, never. The system of England ought to be to maintain the liberties and independence of all other nations; out of the conflicting interest of other countries to secure her own independence; to throw her moral weight into the scale of any people who are spontaneously striving for freedom, by which I mean rational govt, and to extend as far and as fast as possible civilization all over the world. I am sure this is our interest; I am certain it must redound to our honor; I am convinced we have within ourselves the strength to pursue this course, if we have only the will to do so; and in yr humble servant that will is strong and persevering.

Palmerston had, so it has been said, been contemptuous of Aberdeen from their earliest acquaintance at school. Whether fisticuffs at Harrow really prove this may be doubted. Certainly Palmerston always believed himself to be more competent than Aberdeen, and his particularly virulent attacks upon him at the time of the Ashburton Treaty with the United States in 1842 could have left no one in any doubt as to his feelings. But they were to some extent also accounted for by the fact that Aberdeen's early successes in both the US/Canada question and in China were based upon initiatives made by Palmerston and only not concluded by him because of ill luck.

Aberdeen was in office as Foreign Secretary on two occasions: 1828 - 1830 and 1841 - 1846. On both occasions he was succeeded by Palmerston, as he was as Prime Minister in 1855. The verdict of history on the two men could not have been more different. Aberdeen has been met with an almost complete contempt. He was the man who almost settled for an inadequate independence for Greece - a cause to which he was much devoted; he was the man who seemed to give way

to the Americans too easily on the Canadian boundary question; he was the man who allowed far too much to the French government under Guizot in the 1840s; he was the man who felt unable to tell the Tsar of Russia in 1844 what the policy of England towards the Ottoman Empire had to be and who then compounded the consequences of that error by wandering ineffectually into the Crimean War and then failed to prosecute it with any real vigour. Only the Queen's well known preference for Aberdeen's gentle and courteous diplomacy towards other powers, as opposed to Palmerston's boisterous treatment of them, seemed to stand against the charges of weakness at best, treachery to British interests at worst which have been thrown at him since his resignation in 1855. Muriel Chamberlain nonetheless believes that Aberdeen can be defended.

She has done the most impressive and exhaustive work on what had plainly become a most difficult archive: she has brought order out of chaos, and found what had been lost. Alas there was nothing she could do to restore what had been destroyed. It is indeed the treatment of Aberdeen's papers which explains the failure of any earlier defence of him to emerge. Aberdeen himself seems to have been quite clear that the circumstances of the Crimean War and his departure from office would have forbidden any rapid favourable reassessment of his career, but having left careful instructions about the publication of his papers - or at least the crucial parts of them - he expected to receive justification when they appeared. In the event, for a variety of reasons, not least Gladstone's unwillingness to fulfill Aberdeen's wishes, no such publication occurred. When a full life came, by Lady Frances Balfour in 1922, it was inadequate and inaccurate and only managed to increase Aberdeen's reputation for ineptitude. It was this biography which made so much of Aberdeen's apparent feeling that because of an Old Testament injunction, (I Chronicles, xxii, 7,8) his responsibility for the outbreak of the Crimean War debarred him from restoring an old Church on his estates. That at least was evidently much exaggerated, and it is quite clear that Aberdeen suffered badly from his poor treatment by his family and his first major biographer. Does the rectification of that leave us with a new and more favourable view of Aberdeen?

Despite great efforts, it turns out there is not much to be done with Aberdeen's record in foreign affairs. It is true that in 1828 - 30, the Duke of Wellington really controlled foreign policy; and it is clear that Aberdeen had a success with the Ashburton Treaty and the whole question of the US/Canadian frontier, as he did with China: but there is case for regarding them as Palmerston's doing. There is, too, a case for regarding Aberdeen's softness towards France as sensible after the Palmerstonian acerbities of the late 1830s, but it seemed only to produce disaster in the vexed question of the Spanish Marriages. Over the outbreak of the Crimean War there will always be disagreement. Aberdeen might have been right to persist in seeking a diplomatic settlement, and right in his belief that had he been allowed to try once more he would have succeeded in averting the war. It is, however, more likely that the war could only have been prevented by giving the clearest possible indication from a very early stage that Britain would if necessary fight to maintain both the Straits Convention of 1841 and the interest of the Concert of Europe as a whole in the future of Turkey. In this case, rather like episodes of his Ambassadorship at Vienna after 1813, too great an appreciation of the pressures felt by others gave a false impression of weakness, which had to be remedied in the earlier example by Castlereagh, and in the later by going to what may have

been an unnecessary war.

Even though she thinks that Aberdeen's record has not been properly understood, it is only in comparatively minor ways that she can positively defend him. Although it is true that Aberdeen was unusual, perhaps unique, among mid-nineteenth century Prime Ministers in having seen a field of battle (Leipzig, 1813) and that experience undoubtedly did contribute towards his dislike of war, he was not a pacifist. It is also plain that he was quite unperturbed by the dirty-tricks departments which still existed both at the Foreign Office and at the Post Office. He, like Palmerston, took an untroubled eighteenth century view of this aspect of the conduct of foreign affairs. In this, as in other matters, he was not simply naive. In other respects, however, Muriel Chamberlain has to rely more upon distraction than defence. She points to the much more rounded picture of her man that she has been able to draw. He was an interesting, intelligent and given the frequency with which personal disasters befell him and the grace with which he met them, a wholly admirable character. He was a notably cultivated man, who maintained friendly relations by personal correspondence with foreign statesmen, and became expert in the affairs of other European societies. He ran his Scottish estates with great skill and made them a model for his generation. He was notable too in the general intellectual and political life of Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. An archaeologist of skill he was President of the Society of Antiquaries for 40 years. He was the valued friend and advisor of both Peel and Gladstone. Whatever may be said of his conduct of foreign affairs, he was not simply an incompetent nullity.

Aberdeen emerges from this study as someone who might have done better in home and colonial affairs. Muriel Chamberlain points to his potentially good but brief record as Colonial Secretary in 1834-5 and to the formation of the 1852 coalition as evidence of this. Only Aberdeen could have formed such a coalition and it provides the grounds for remarking that Aberdeen was the reverse of Palmerston not just in character, but also in being a Liberal at home and a Tory abroad. From his journey to Constantinople in 1803, however, Aberdeen regarded himself as working in the field of foreign affairs, and it was over foreign affairs that he expected history to judge more favourably than his contemporaries. But grateful as we are to Muriel Chamberlain for enabling us to see so much more of a civilised, complicated and admirable man in his domestic context, he yet cannot be rehabilitated as a Foreign Secretary. In the end, she does not try too hard and turns to explaining, with real insight, why Aberdeen failed. His knowledge, his courteous and restrained stance, even his scholarly, sometimes apolitical, approach combined to make him assess situations as a whole rather than to define Britain's interest in them. His dispatches read like essays rather than instructions and his whole attitude suggested an international arbitrator rather than counsel for his country. Foreign affairs were not and are not conducted in that way: they are essentially adversatorial. If they are handled in any other way, there is a great danger than the wrong signals will be sent. Aberdeen produced precisely that effect.

R.T.B. Langhorne

The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe. By J. Goody. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Many historians will feel more than a twinge of shame if they try to master Professor Goody's complex book. The remarkable energy with which he blazes his trail across the centuries, from the late antique period almost up to the present day, and from continent to continent, cannot fail to impress those who focus their attention on more restricted areas. Whenever he came to a topic about which I felt I knew something, I was no sooner settling myself down comfortably for a bit of disputation than he was off again, alighting on evidence from widely differing periods and geographical locations, and attempting to set European developments in the context of African and Asian social structures. Thus bewilderment on the part of historians reading this book will not simply be due to their genteel affectation of an inability to comprehend anthropological terminology (although I did find the early chapters rather difficult because the glossary was not full enough); it will also be a consequence of their failure to master their own subject in comparable breadth.

This breadth of scope is only achievable, of course, by the use of a few short cuts, and Professor Goody is quite honest about these. In his preface he says that he has had to 'compromise with the realities of the allocation of time', and that he has not in every case used standard editions 'sometimes because I did not always know what these were, and sometimes because I work in a peripatetic fashion and use whatever is available where I am'. Although it is a little startling to find quotations from two different translations of Gregory of Tours (elsewhere incorrectly renamed 'Geoffrey') on the same page, the line of argument is nevertheless usually quite clear to the non-anthropologist. It loses little from what he describes as his tendency not to 'satisfy all the conventions of historical scholarship'.

Professor Goody's starting point seems to have been to ask himself a question which also troubled the sixth century Spanish bishop Isidore of Seville. Why had the church's concept of incest been extended to the seventh degree of consanguinity, affinity, and spiritual kinship in the late antique period, so that it greatly surpassed the prescriptions of Leviticus xiii and xx? Given that consanguinity tended to be calculated according to the Germanic mode, this made it in practice almost unlimited. Moreover, the requirement of exogamy contradicted the church's strict rule on the indissolubility of marriage. If it were enforced, it made divorce compulsory. Professor Goody's answer to this knotty problem, in contrast to Isidore's, is that this was a deliberate strategy on the part of the church, which sought to restrict the potential field of heirs in order that property might more easily be bequeathed to the church.

This is uncannily similar to the views of the reformation protestants, which he quotes at some length. We learn that the Elizabethan commentator Philip Stubbes wrote, 'The Papists also holde it to be a work of unspeakable merit, for a man or a woman ... to give the greatest part of their goods and lands (the more, the more the merite) to popish priestes, (though in the meane time theyr wife, children, and whole families goe a begging all theyr lyfe long)... to the ende that they may pray for them when they are dead.' I have the impression that Professor Goody's opinion is much the same as

Luther's: 'This is nothing but pure farce and foolishness, concocted for the sake of money and to befuddle consciences.' Like the protestants, he puts an extremely good case for the lack of biblical precedents for the prohibited degrees, and together with restrictions on adoption, divorce and remarriage (the last two being irreconcilable with the regulations on incest), he sees this as a prime cause for the ecclesiastical acquisition of property. This ecclesiastical interference, through (potential) control of marriage and the legitimation of children, is in its turn the major reason, according to Professor Goody, for significant changes in the pattern of kinship in Western Europe which differentiate it from the patterns he has observed in Africa.

The problem with this thesis is that he is not able to adduce much evidence from the late antique period to substantiate his claim that the ecclesiastical definitions of incest were a primary cause for restrictions in the field of potential heirs, or that if such a restriction occurred, it encouraged legacies to the church. From time of Constantine the property of churches grew rapidly, for donations were encouraged both by his own example, and by his legalisation of bequests to the church in 321. Evidence for or against the effects of ecclesiastical rulings could only emerge from a lengthy investigation of bequests recorded in the papyri. According to one historian of the family and sexuality in the period, cited in George Duby's review of Professor Goody's book in the *TLS*, the sort of changes in kin structure which Professor Goody attributes to the influence of the church, were already taking place in late ancient society and were simply mirrored by the ecclesiastical legislation.

In the early medieval west, to which a good deal of the book is devoted, the written testament seems to have come into being largely as a means of recording bequests to individual ecclesiastical foundations. But for the most part churches only receive a proportion of the property left, and it is fairly clear that such documents do not deal with the whole of the family patrimony. In Anglo-Saxon England, for instance, 'bookland' originated in the seventh century as a means to serve the interests of the church, enabling laymen to grant their land to religious foundations (and, of course, to plenty of lay beneficiaries). 'Folkland', on the contrary, was not alienable and seems never to have bequeathed by will. It probably formed the bulk of the kin patrimony, but our evidence for the manner of its descent is all but non-existent. Thus the church only had the possibility of receiving a bequest from what was probably not the major part of the inheritance, and most extant Anglo-Saxon wills show that it only received a variable proportion of this. Moreover, the field of heirs mentioned in such bequests shows that kin included not only sons and widows, but daughters and sons-in-law, brothers, nephews, etc., and a whole host of kinsmen whose relationship was never defined. Land was distributed laterally throughout the branches of the kin, as well as descending vertically. Professor Goody claims that in any given sample, 20% of couples will be childless, and will therefore be heirless. But in the loose kin structure of Anglo-Saxon England, which can be appreciated by examination of the extent of the legal liability of members of the kin, there were plenty of others to whom property could and should be distributed. The will of King Alfred, which summarizes a series of agreements about inheritance between his older brothers and himself at their father's instigation, shows that laymen could be far more concerned about restricting the field of potential heirs than the

clergy were. Indeed, it appears that Anglo-Saxon kings in the tenth century deliberately did not marry in order that competing collateral branches of the stirps regia should not be produced.

In tenth and eleventh-century France it was the preoccupation of noble families with the consequence of the disintegration of centralized authority, rather than an ecclesiastical influence, which promoted the complex change in kinship structure resulting in the emergence of the lignage. The noble family ceased to be a social and legal grouping in which resources were distributed throughout the kin, and became a compact unit of husband, wife and offspring, in which the patrimony was passed on to the elder son (who was heir without any need for testamentary bequest), and the cadets might receive either their father's acquisitions or small portions of the family property in tenurial dependence on their elder brother, or nothing. As Professor Holt has shown, it is true that a grant in perpetuity to an ecclesiastical foundation was logically inseparable from inherited tenure, because possession had to be more than a life interest if it were to be alienated for ever; but this seems to be the main contribution which the church made to the development of the lignage. Such grants did not occur because there were no heirs, but with the consent of the heir(s). The canalisation of inheritance in the lignage had nothing to do with the church's strictures on incest, and would not necessarily result in any increase in bequests to the church. Lack of a direct heir was more likely to allow the patrimony to escheat to the feudal lord, than to leave the church as the only possible beneficiary. This new system of inheritance was largely imposed on England as a result of foreign conquest in 1066, not because of the limited jurisdiction of ecclesiastics over marriage. I think that Professor Goody, looking at the medieval church through his reformation spectacles, sees it as far too distinct from society. To contemporaries the ecclesia was the whole body of the faithful. The interests of the clerics and the lay nobility were closely bound together, as the example of the coincidence between monastic endowment and the emergence of the lignage illustrates.

Just as there was no overt conflict here, so there was none between 'Church' and 'State', and such a characterisation can be misleading, particularly in the period before the investiture contest. Most medievalists would resolutely reject the assertion that there was a 'state', and particularly 'the State', in the middle ages. Government was an arm of the institutionalized church with claims and duties which might lead to conflict of interests, but conflicts which can best be analysed by the distinction between spiritual and temporal. It was royal authority which promulgated the traditional regulations on incest at the Council of Paris in 829. The Eigenkirche meant that nobles, and kings to a greater degree, had a vested interest in ecclesiastical wealth because it was also their wealth. In England ecclesiastical foundations escheated during a vacancy, just as lay fiefs did. When William Rufus was feeling particularly exasperated with Anselm, the archbishop of Canterbury, he shouted at him 'You do what you like with your manors, and I'll do what I like with my abbeys'. Professor Goody himself makes many of these points, but then gets the issue out of focus again by returning to his characterisation of 'Church' and 'State'. He cites the famous lament of the fifth century Merovingian King Chilperic: 'See how our wealth has gone to the churches! Only bishops rule nowadays!' But the kings were chiefly responsible for the endowment and the protection of the churches. Chilperic would not have had any conception of mortmain legislation.

Professor Goody is more at home with developments after the investiture contest. He gives a clear assessment of the role of Peter Damian's De Gradibus Parentale in defining the precise limits of the prohibited degrees, and the effect which the church's new determination to enforce these had on marriage at the upper end of the social scale. It is only at this stage that there is much evidence for detailed knowledge of the bewildering complexities involved in computation of different degrees of consanguinity according to the Germanic and the Roman schemes. Although the Paris Council of 829 had resulted in a fairly clear definition, it had had little practical effect, partly because the regulations were too extensive and complicated to apply in practice; and partly because, as Professor Wallace-Hadrill's latest book on the Frankish church illustrates, the church was only just beginning to penetrate into the administration of marriage. The new sophistication in the twelfth century is well illustrated by a letter of the celebrated canon lawyer Ivo of Chartres to King Henry I of England. He wrote that he had 'consulted a written genealogy' ... 'drawn up by noble men issued from the same lineage, who are ready to count degrees before ecclesiastical judges and to prove them according to the law'. The ability of the church to exercise influence over marriage settlements resulted in a flow of revenue from dispensations from the regulations on consanguinity, and Professor Goody deals with these at some length. It also meant, of course, that it was easier for laymen to recover their freedom in order to marry again, and the church had to drop its insistence on the indissolubility of marriage. Gratian went to the lengths of claiming that invalid marriage was no marriage at all. It is possible to construe the papacy's reduction in the number of forbidden degrees at the fourth Lateran Council, as some sort of conciliation between the theories of churchmen and the practices of noble and royal families, and it may be that Professor Goody should have examined at greater length why the papacy took the advice of Parisian masters like Peter the Chanter. Understanding on this point can only come when it is ascertained what happened when the ecclesiastical regulations were applied in practice.

The length of my rather laboured musings on what constitutes only a part (if the major part) of Professor Goody's work should indicate how easily it will fire debate amongst historians. There may well be a long and turbulent betrothal between them and the anthropologists. Whether it all ends in nuptial bliss is another matter.

George Garnett

The Labour Governments, 1945-51. Macmillan, 1984. By Henry Pelling.

In July 1945 Churchill hoped and expected that the British people would entrust him with the task of rebuilding the walls of Zion. But the Labour Party won the election, and Attlee's view of the task in hand was quite different. He wanted to build a new Jerusalem.

Attlee's first administration, one of the most constructive of this century, lasted until early in 1950. His second, a much less satisfactory affair, was formed after the February election of that year slashed Labour's parliamentary majority. It lasted for eighteen months or so. The Conservatives resumed power in October 1951.

The post-war years were not an easy period in which to initiate a programme of legislation which was both novel and reforming. Financial uncertainty and stringency reigned between the end of the American Lend-Lease Scheme (21st August 1945) and the beginning of payments made under the Marshall Plan (1948). In 1947 the economic crisis became acute. Attlee's ministers had to deal with shortages of food and a scarcity of raw materials, e.g. for the building trade. Meanwhile, they had to oversee the business of demobilization. A new international situation had to be assessed, and policies and allies established, with an uneasy eye on Russia. Britain emerged from the war into a world in which her Empire was no longer viable.

Nevertheless, Attlee and his team also had some advantages. Several of the protagonists had served in the coalition government during the war. They knew that they were competent to govern, and although hard-pressed at times they were confident. They believed that they were creating a new thing, the epitome of statecraft, the centrally-administered modern nation. It was to be industrially competitive, and socially compassionate. The election indicated that the time was right for it. The opportunity of enacting the proposals of the Beveridge Report fell to Labour. Although Beveridge was a Liberal, his ideas had won acceptance across party lines. The coalition government had passed, in November 1944, an Act establishing a Ministry of National Insurance. In June 1945 the caretaker government passed a Family Allowances Act. If the Conservatives had won the July election of 1945 they would have continued the process. But the chance fell to Labour.

The range of the achievements of Attlee's first government is a tribute to the ability of the men who participated in it. On 5 July 1948 the provisions of four important Acts, National Insurance, Industrial Injuries, National Assistance, and the National Health Service, came into force. On 1 March 1946 the Bank of England passed into public hands. During the next five years civil aviation, mines, cable and wireless, transport, electricity, gas, iron and steel, and one or two smaller areas, were nationalised. Town and Country

Planning was also created (1947), and a British Nationality Act passed (1948). Palestine was handed over to the U.N., the nettle of withdrawal from India was firmly grasped, Ceylon was given independence, and Bevin achieved the North Atlantic Treaty (1949).

Dr Pelling gives a dispassionate and uncluttered account of this story. It is not his intention to evaluate the success of the Labour Governments of 1945-51 in the light of subsequent history. But, if Attlee's administrations set the agenda for post-war Britain until Mrs Thatcher's election victory in 1979, they also left unresolved problems. In Ireland and India and Palestine they still fester. In Britain nationalised industries and welfare state have guaranteed neither efficiency nor compassion.

The tragedy at the centre of Dr Pelling's story is that of the Labour Party. Attlee, Morrison, Bevin, Cripps, Dalton and others, bestride the pages of his book like giants. They were giants whose struggles with the ambiguities of socialism left them with a clear-headed appreciation of the demands of power. Their successors, Wilson, Callaghan, Foot, Healey, most of whom walk in and out of this tale, never calculated so nicely between idealism and pragmatism. They, in turn, have begotten a brood of dwarfs. This book, confined so carefully to its chosen scope, whispers all the time 'Gaitskell, Gaitskell', as the coming man. What if he had lived? There are hints throughout of those deadly struggles, over pacifism, nationalism, the place of the Unions in the party, Britain's place in Europe, which have so divided British Socialism.

Dr Pelling has surely found the right moment to write this book. He records a remark from Hugh Dalton's diary (12 October 1947): 'I am haunted by the thought of people starving, unemployed, and in revolt! And of the end of our Socialist experiment, and of all our dreams!' The dream did last for thirty years of political consensus. But now it is over. Mrs Thatcher has a different dream. So now the historian can sharpen his insights in the cold light of contrast.

Dr Pelling entertains by his shrewd sense of the issues of power, and the vanity of powerful men. His narrative is smooth and well oiled, his thematic treatment judicious. The book is an expert synthesis, yet it is entirely accessible to the general reader. Dr Pelling inserts his scalpel into ghosts and myths. In the year of the miners' strike we need such writers.

C.M. Jones



Professor Huxley's anthology, written over the course of twenty years but first published as a collection in 1984, betrays on every page an intimate and affectionate acquaintance with the Latin authors whose legs he likes to pull. The big names of course are there: Virgil, Catullus, Ovid, Horace - though the last might have been surprised to discover an impeccable Horatian poem in Sapphic metre on Mohammed Ali! Soon the reader is on a tour of the less frequented corners of Professor Huxley's favourite watering place, the Aneid; instead of Aneas and Dido falling in love, we see an impassioned correspondence from servant to servant (Anna to Achates). The latter even has a poem to himself which confirms the impression gained from the Aeneid that fidus Achates never really did much apart from fill up the end of a hexameter conveniently.

As if to encourage lesser Latinists, the author shares with us his difficulty in fitting 'Scotch' into Latin verse, so that we have to settle for visci. Great fun, too, is the extraordinary doggerel inspired by the challenge of using mensa in every conceivable case in eight lines. Usually, though, the lines keep coming in all shapes and sizes with apparently effortless ease. Lewis Carroll's

Speak roughly to your little boy,  
And beat him when he sneezes ...

turns without a flicker in the metre to

Affare natum duriter  
Pulsaque sternuentem.

Often the richest treasures of the anthology lie just beneath the surface. Many an innocent poem has a mischievous twist, though never beyond the bounds of good taste. (A sole exception is perhaps The Canadian Beaver, whose habits cannot readily be disclosed in print - at least not in English!) Amidst the gentle ribbing there is also time for real paths - Kipling's solitary deserter brought face to face with the death he sought to avoid, and some of the Christian Latin cameos, are deeply impressive. Much more could be said in praise of a slim but extraordinarily diverse collection: a Latin anthology seems quaintly anachronistic in the 1980s, but the content of this one has much to amuse and surprise the most radical reader.

D.S. Martin



## Hugh Sykes Davies: *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* — (CUP, 1986) pp. xxi+324

Many who knew Hugh Sykes Davies personally, and particularly those who, like myself, were taught by him, will be delighted that his study of Wordsworth, *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words*, has at last appeared. The book was largely written in the late 60s, and it was characteristic of Hugh, for whom a sort of conscientious self-doubt was never far away, to decide to withdraw it from the press and (apparently) leave it untouched for several years; he seems, in fact, to have considered reworking it as a selection of passages with critical commentary, and one can understand why the idea attracted him. The typescript, left among his papers when he died in June 1984, has been efficiently edited by John Kerrigan and Jonathan Wordsworth. The title, which the editors describe as 'mischievous', is, I think, unfortunate - at first sight slightly silly.

This is a complex, highly individual, idiosyncratic book - the expression, in a number of ways, of deep personal preoccupations, displaying a close imaginative sympathy and a special, individual subtlety of critical insight. *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* certainly draws attention to qualities of Wordsworth's poetry that have been unduly neglected, reminding us of its peculiarity, its introverted strangeness and imaginative intensity. I found much of the material, including the detailed discussion of particular passages, quite familiar, recalling long, extremely interesting conversations with Hugh about Wordsworth - a shared enthusiasm; indeed, the whole critical approach is unmistakably Hugh's. One thinks, for example, of the remarkably sensitive discussion (pp. 24-26) in Part I ('Introductory') of the 'spots of time' passages in *The Prelude* XI, and in particular the way in which Wordsworth uses verbal repetition and variation to suggest the quality of the imaginative experience: repeated, slightly varied words and phrases referring to the separate elements of the stark landscapes of childhood memory ('The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,/And the bleak music of that old stone wall...'), set in the context of a painstaking explanation of feeling, take on a quiet, understated power and intensity that is quite distinctive. Hugh was especially interested in this kind of effect, and it is perhaps relevant to mention that he had very definite views about how Wordsworth's blank verse should be read aloud, so as to convey its 'internal', meditative, recollective quality. His own readings of Wordsworth were memorable.

In *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* Wordsworth's language is considered in relation to his own views on poetic language and, more important, his very radical conception of the imagination and its processes - the imagination which for Wordsworth was essentially active, creative, continually drawing on unconscious memories and directly informing present experience. Hugh Sykes Davies also attempts to place Wordsworth's originality in some sort of literary-historical context, emphasising the influence of the 'Gothic' on the very early poetry and, more fully, the taste for the 'picturesque' on the development of the poet's sensibility. Sykes Davies's passionate, though sometimes quirky, interest in certain aspects of linguistic studies (notably word frequency) and psychology is also clearly reflected. In their Preface the editors quote a hand-written note of Sykes Davies's, describing the structure of the book: 'One topic has arisen from another, and from that another again, and so on, until the last leads back to the first. The form, if there is one, reminds me of people playing leap-frog, one over-leaping another until they have resumed their original order.' (p. viii). Perhaps a certain obliqueness and indirectness were implicit in what was being attempted, but the end result is more like a partial superimposition of several different approaches than a

satisfactory integration. Some of the most brilliant parts - and for one the over-used adjective seems entirely apt - occur when Sykes Davies is discussing the 'inner' workings of a particular poem or passage, or, very typically, trying to pin down the complex habits of feeling that seem to have shaped the poet's experience (at one point he describes Wordsworth as 'skilled in introspection'). *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* gives the impression of having been slowly and very carefully written: much of it is quite closely argued, and often there is a characteristic defining clarity and brevity of phrasing: for example, discussing the opening section of book I of *The Prelude*, Sykes Davies remarks, 'So subjective a subject both demanded and developed an idiolect as an essential condition for its own expression' (p. 102) - a fairly central idea - and a few pages later, considering Wordsworth's different uses of 'one', he notes 'Objects, places and moments isolated from the rest of space and time seem to have had a clear and special significance in his experience, and in his vocabulary' (p. 116). As one would expect, ironic asides are quite frequent ('the modern miseries of the slide-show and holiday film'), though at times, as for example when he touches on what he calls 'the unchecked and constantly accelerating lapse into urbanism' (p. 248), there is a quiet urgency of tone which is very familiar.

Parts II and III of *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* are, I think, the most remarkable. In Part II ('Wordsworthian Words') Sykes Davies is concerned with the function of 'repetition and tautology' in Wordsworth's poetry. Near the beginning he examines the use of verbal repetition in *The Thorn*, a poem which was included in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), and which depends heavily on repetition and the cumulative effects associated with it; *The Thorn* always held a particular fascination for Hugh. I remain, I must admit, a little sceptical: like several of the other experimental poems of *Lyrical Ballads*, *The Thorn* seems too consciously contrived to be taken entirely seriously, and it is surely not as significant as Sykes Davies suggests. He rightly draws attention to the 1800 Note to *The Thorn*, with its stress on 'the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are themselves part of the passion'. The two sections (6,7) on word frequency, elaborately illustrated with tables, seem oddly out of place - pertinacious, even a little obsessive - but the discussion of recurrent words and word groups which takes up most of the later part is excellent, with some extremely fine analysis of particular poems and passages. These recurring words and word groups, Sykes Davies argues, perfectly ordinary in themselves, take on a kind of concentration of meaning adequate to the intensity of the poet's imaginative experience: Wordsworth's use of 'one', for example, conveys something of the force of his imaginative response to the emphatically isolated, self-subsistent object or figure. This second part of the book left me, though, with a few doubts. Is there not, for example, a simple but fundamental distinction between the highly conscious 'repetition and tautology' of *The Thorn* and the occasional recurrence of 'special' words and word groups in different poems written at different times - which, at least in the familiar sense, is not 'tautology' at all? Is this kind of occasional recurrence really as crucially important, as essential to Wordsworth's poetic creativity, as Sykes Davies claims? In more general terms, the approach he takes, concentrating on particular words, phrases and lines taken out of context, brings with it a real danger of distortion or exaggeration: occasionally connections seem to be made a little too easily. The suspicion arises that general, apparently highly significant conclusions are being reached on the strength of a few special cases.

In Part III ('Involutes and the Process of Involution') Sykes Davies's psychological interests are much in evidence. It opens with a rather involved and, I think, not entirely convincing discussion of the connection between the verbal 'tautologies' and 'larger mental

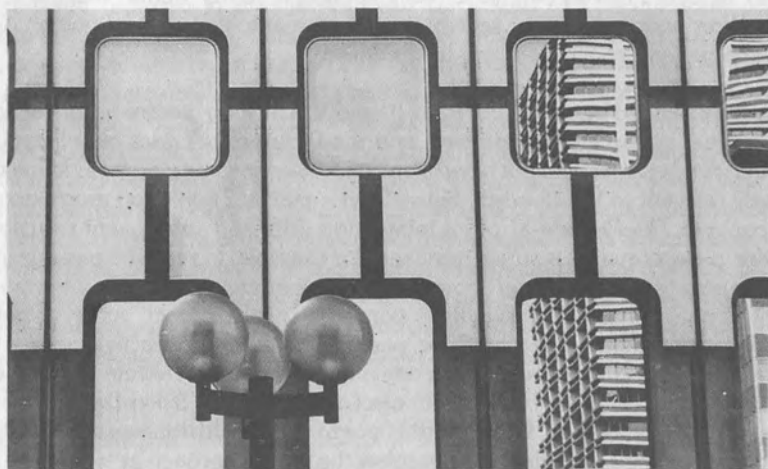
constructs': these 'constructs', it turns out, are particular, complex, recurring imaginative experiences, originating for the most part in early childhood - which Sykes Davies, borrowing a term from De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, refers to as 'involutes'. The early part, notably sections 14 and 15, contain a good deal of highly speculative psychological discussion, in which Freud is prominent. The analysis of particular poems and passages is, once more, extraordinarily sensitive: a good example is the discussion of the passage in *The Prelude* IV beginning 'As one who hangs down-bending from the side/ Of a slow-moving Boat ...' and the earlier passage, in book II, beginning 'A tranquilising spirit presses now/ On my corporeal frame ...' (pp. 146-7). Sykes Davies refers to the 'delicate, wavering mixture of belief and self-mockery' in the poem which eventually became 'Strange fits of passion have I known' (p. 142). The account in section 17 of the 'involute' of the gaunt, skeletal, ghost-like man, most strikingly realised in the 'discharged soldier' passage in book IV of *The Prelude*, is fascinating even to one who has 'heard it all before', and the discussion of *Resolution and Independence* ('*The Leech Gatherer*') in the following section is most impressive: quoting Wordsworth's remarks on the poem in a letter to Sara Hutchinson, Sykes Davies observes, 'there Wordsworth gives his most vivid description in prose of what it felt like to be in the midst of an involute, to be in the grip of a strongly reacting and interacting cluster of words, memories, thoughts and feelings' (p. 164). Despite the brilliance of much of this third part, one is again left with certain doubts. An obvious point, but one which is not sufficiently taken into account, is that *The Prelude*, with which Sykes Davies is mainly concerned, is itself an attempt at psychological investigation and interpretation: the experiences described in the poem have been very consciously selected and very deliberately placed in an interpretive framework, and the passage in which they are described certainly are not, and cannot be treated as, random pieces of psychological 'evidence', arrived at unconsciously. There is, perhaps, something circular about what Sykes Davies is trying to do. Then there is the quasi-technical term 'involute'. The underlying idea, of course, is entirely Wordsworthian - the 'spots of time' passages are partly concerned with the influence of unconscious memories of childhood experience - but this is only one of a range of loosely connected ideas that Wordsworth puts forward about childhood experience and the unconscious workings of the imagination. Sykes Davies's concept of the 'involute' seems in a sense much too definite: it is something one can 'be in the midst of'. Apart from the skeletal man and a few other clear examples 'involutes' seem suspiciously thin on the ground. Is the term, as Sykes Davies defines it, really applicable to the 'trance-like' transcendental states that Wordsworth describes several times in the autobiographical poem? Again one feels that too general conclusions are being drawn.

Relatively little need be said about Parts IV and V. The long literary-historical account of the 'picturesque' in Part IV ('Wordsworth and the Picturesque') goes over largely familiar ground: one wonders if it could not have been condensed in some way, so as to make it more immediately relevant to Wordsworth. Sykes Davies places, I think, too much stress on the poet's account in *The Prelude* XI of his infatuation with, and subsequent rejection of, the taste for the 'picturesque'. It is surely mistaken, for example, to read the passage in *Tintern Abbey* beginning 'when like a roe/I bounded o'er the mountains ...' as a description of his 'picturesque' phase: here Wordsworth is concerned with a much more profound and interesting development of feeling. The poet's different retrospective accounts of his intellectual and imaginative development, one is reminded, do not always fit together easily - nor would one expect them to. In Part V ('Ecolect and Inmately') Sykes Davies explores very interestingly the influence on Wordsworth's poetry of his closest personal relationships, particularly that with his wife Mary; he describes the poet's marriage as 'deeply satisfactory' (p. 276), a judgment which, as the editors point out, is certainly confirmed by the intimate

letters between William and Mary discovered in 1978 and published three years later. The word 'inmate', Sykes Davies argues, is used by Wordsworth in a specially powerful sense, with connotations of domestic intimacy and communality (in note 6 on page 319 Sykes Davies suggests, without evidence, that this may have been a Westmorland dialect usage: I think this suggestion is almost certainly wrong).

In *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* there are strikingly few references to recent Wordsworth criticism (recent, that is, when the book was written); one of the few references that do occur, to Melvin Rader's *Wordsworth: a Philosophical Approach* (Oxford, 1967) is, significantly, fairly dismissive, and perhaps justifiably so (p. 184). This virtual absence of references tells us something of Hugh Sykes Davies' approach to his subject: he was far more concerned with developing his own ideas, patiently working them out in detail, than with keeping up with contemporary academic criticism, with much of which he would in any case have been unsympathetic. Maybe a similar kind of exclusiveness of intellectual habit lies behind his insistence, stated more or less explicitly at several points in the book, and in a sense implicit throughout, that Wordsworth's poetry can only be understood strictly on its own terms - demands, indeed a specialised linguistic sensitivity. In *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* literary-historical influences are almost invariably considered negatively: the poet is seen as breaking free from literary convention, thereby discovering his own startling originality. Introspection by itself was sufficient to take him beyond the limitations of contemporary psychology. This is the work of a passionate Wordsworthian, whose feeling for the poet was intensely personal. One of the most revealing passages - more revealing, I think, of Hugh than Wordsworth - is the concluding discussion of the crisis of urban civilisation. Hugh's pessimism was not always easy to take, and often one felt mildly irritated by the apparent fixedness of his views. In the concluding paragraph he suggests that the future may lie with 'those who have remained in the country', taking advantage not only of the strength of real human communities, but also of 'a communion with the rest of the universe, in all its variety and homogeneity, its rhythms of growth and decay and growth again' (p. 307). This commitment to Wordsworthian 'natural piety', a quiet, attentive, sympathetic closeness to the processes of the natural world, was probably as close as Hugh came to religious belief.

Robert Inglesfield



Russell Spargo

# Reviews

## **British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations.**

By F.H. Hinsley, with E.E. Thomas, C.F.G. Ransom, R.C. Knight and C.A.G. Simkins. HMSO.

Vol. 1 1979 pp. xiii + 601

Vol. 2 1981 pp. xvi + 850

Vol. 3 Part I 1984 pp. xvi + 693

Vol. 3 Part II 1988 pp. xvi + 1038

Public interest in intelligence matters has latterly tended to concentrate on the indiscretions, or worse, of intelligence officers and other public servants, but it has to be remembered that the official rules are made by politicians and that not all politicians are invariably discreet. For example, more than forty years ago the indiscretion of a very senior politician gave rise to unfounded rumours so ugly as to cause the authorities to ask Commander Montagu to prepare and publish the fascinating story of "The man who never was". Much later, when F.W. Winterbotham wrote *The Ultra Secret* the Cabinet did not oppose its publication in 1974. Thus the complete discretion preserved by literally thousands of people for over 30 years (which nowadays would seem unbelievable) was broken by a political decision. What is more, anyone with any experience of interrogation (of which investigative journalism is only a branch) knows that when one cat has been let out of the bag, other furry little heads will soon appear. A situation had thus arisen full of possibilities for partial investigations; for uncovering situations charged with emotion, like the fate of Convoy PQ17; for libelling the dead and producing the maximum of distress to the living. It was therefore both very fortunate and very wise that the Cabinet should have decided to commission an official history covering all aspects of military intelligence in the West during the Second World War: to give access to all the available papers (with certain safeguards as to what might finally be published, listed, and their effects considered, in the Preface to Volume 1); and to entrust the whole project to a team of impartial historians headed by the President of the College as he then was. It should be said here that the safeguards were mainly technical, and that the authors are sure that they do not affect the validity of any part of the analysis which they present.

The unwary reader of many of the innumerable books on the intelligence services written during the last decade and a half can readily be pardoned for taking a simple-minded view of the problems involved. Indeed, during the last couple of years politicians, lawyers and journalists have vied with each other in putting forward such simple-minded views. No better therapy against these illusions can be prescribed than a read through the volumes we are considering, and especially Volume 1, dealing in some detail with the development and organisation of the wartime intelligence service. Aside



from a deep and engrained discretion, probably the most important characteristic of an intelligence officer has to be intense scepticism, such that he never believes anything he reads or is told unless there is some other reason for believing it.

Yet intelligence is valueless unless it is put to some use, sometimes for strategic purposes, but most usually by commanders in the field in ordering their forthcoming operations. To be effective, there must be confident liaison between the two, and these problems and their solutions are here explored in detail.

Time scale is of great importance - for example, the battles in the Straits of Dover between German E-boats escorting convoys hugging the French coast and the MTBs and MGBs of the Dover Command were normally fought using communications "in clear" - at high speed and close range there is no time to code and decode. But Vice Admiral Dover's radar gave him the positions of all the ships on both sides, which could be transferred within seconds to his plot. He could also readily intercept all the communications, and control operations accordingly, using his powerful radio transmitters.

In the middle term, the Master and his co-workers give in Part XIII (Vol. 3, Part 2) Chapter 46 an account of the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944. On the German side (p.128) "Not till 0400 did C-in-C West ... order 12th SS Panzer Division to move at once towards Caen ... At 0730 Jodl for OKW permitted 12th SS Panzer to move as far as Lisieux but otherwise refused ... until Hitler had been consulted. Hitler was asleep until mid-day, and did not consent to the movement of the divisions until mid-afternoon". On the other hand (p.129) "From the naval Enigma [the Allied commanders] received a full and prompt account of the German Navy's reactions ... The first reports of parachutists, intercepted from just before midnight on 5 June, were relayed to them from 0132 on 6 June. From 0338 they were informed of most of the orders issued by Naval Gruppe West. The first news of positive action by the German Navy ... at 0348 ... was transmitted to them at 0420". Quite a feat, when one considers that the signal in question, among innumerable other more routine ones, had to be intercepted, the intercept forwarded to Bletchley Park, decyphered using the previously determined setting of the Enigma machine for the day, translated, recyphered (using a really secure cypher this time) and despatched to the Allied commanders within 32 minutes.

In the long term, when there is ample time for reflection, perhaps the best available example is that given by Ewen Montagu in *The Man Who Never Was*. There the German intelligence services were presented, by a roundabout route, with what appeared to be a real scoop - highly personal and intensely secret communications between high commanders, in the despatch case attached to the body of what appeared to be a dead courier, washed up on the west coast of Spain after a (presumed) air crash. Considered as physical objects, there could not, of course, be anything bogus about the letters themselves.

They had been written, to recipe but using their own characteristic touches and styles, personally by the ostensible authors, and processed in the normal way in their private offices. It was only their contents which were designed to mislead. The subsequent capture of German records showed that this offering had been subjected, with Teutonic thoroughness, to every test anyone could think of, and finally swallowed whole. And so to the final denouement touched on lightly by Montagu. Spare a thought for the junior

officers of our own security service, trawling through the German records in the aftermath of victory, and coming upon the materials for a major scandal involving important personalities - unquestionably genuine documents and the German intelligence appreciation of Allied strategy based upon them.

There is a moral here. What did I say earlier about never believing anything that one read or was told? In fact in intelligence work it is always well to start from the assumption that nothing is quite what it seems, and only allow oneself to be driven from this position by strong evidence to the contrary. As another example, any large army formation generates a great deal of radio communication, and in those days, of much VHF R/T, all this could be intercepted at a distance, its type identified, and its approximate source determined by cross bearings. Consequently, in the run up to the Normandy invasion, every endeavour was made to avoid presenting the enemy with more than the irreducible minimum of information of this kind, which was the more important to the German General Staff because of the virtual impossibility of effective photo-reconnaissance. But some traffic there had to be, and it included that appropriate to the moving of a large army formation, including a lot of armour, into Kent where it would be at hand for an invasion in the Pas de Calais, thus reinforcing other indications from other sources. With the Normandy beach-head established, this army disappeared - it had consisted of an RNVR officer, a small crew of naval ratings and a lot of transmitters, playing back a carefully prepared scenario including typical recordings of the appropriate minimal army radio traffic. A small operation, but another straw in the wind helping to divert attention from the more dangerous subject of Normandy.

Consequently, between intelligence gathering and the operational commander there is normally a processing network, which must be both quick and as accurate as possible, and the Master and his co-authors devote much attention to how such arrangements were set up, and how they worked, with abundance of specific examples.

We have mentioned how vital the time factor can be in the short and medium time scale of operations. But when the intelligence is gathered and processed it is still necessary to engage the attention of the operational commander. Another example: just before the end of what the Press called the Phoney War, early in April 1940 just before the invasion of Denmark and Norway, the German Air Force launched two massive night attacks on the Home Fleet in the harbour of Scapa Flow. The Germans knew all about the chain of radar stations set up along the east coast of the mainland of Britain to detect high flying aircraft, with its northern end just south of Wick, so they flew at about 2,000 ft., well below the detection angle of the Chain Stations, but within the capabilities of stations working on higher frequencies and designed for the detection of both aircraft and surface ships. In the Fair Isle and on the southern tip of Shetland were the beginnings of the Naval network of such stations which when complete would form part of the outer defences of the Flow. They were already connected by telephone to the Fortress Commander's plotting room in Orkney, which, when the Fleet was in harbour, was linked directly to the C-in-C's command centre. 25 minutes warning was given of one attack, 30 on the other night, much more than enough to alert every Fleet unit and all the anti-aircraft batteries on the islands ringing the Flow. The result was most spectacular. Knowing when the aircraft were due to arrive I was standing on Sumburgh Head, 100 miles away as the crow flies, looking at the quiet sea on the southern horizon, the whole of Orkney being out of sight round the curve of the earth. Suddenly, spread over several degrees of arc, a tremendous firework display erupted - everyone was

indeed ready and waiting. What seemed long after, but must have been about 8 minutes, it was joined by a growling rumble, which was also heard at Lerwick, 125 miles away. A classic example of the barrage technique; no-one aimed at anything, but simply fired upward and went on, so that the air over the Flow was so full of flying metal that no object the size of an aircraft could fly across it without being hit. Minimal damage was done to the Fleet, and 80% of the aircraft were lost on each night. No similar attack was ever launched again.

But it need not have been so. Twenty months later, at Pearl Harbour, American Naval radar gave 45 minutes warning of the approach of a large force of unidentified aircraft, but not larger than that used by the Germans on each occasion. This aspect of the affair is never stressed, but it seems that a junior officer spent the time wandering around trying to interest anyone who could have done something about it.

And so we come back to the operational commander. It was a saying of Thomas Baker, historian of the College and collector of the Bakerian Manuscripts, that it was useless for the historian to attempt to penetrate the minds of princes. They have many sources of information, they are subjected to many influences, they must take account of what they perceive of the characters and abilities of those around them, before a specific decision is made. Who is to say what weight has been given to any one element? And if an apparently frank appraisal is available, who is to know how far it reflects its author's inner thoughts? It is perhaps a little ironic that Hitler used to say that one of his favourite songs was "Die Gedanken sind frei, wer kann sie erraten?" The Master and his co-authors avoid this trap, but they do perform a most valuable task in exposing all that is known of the intelligence available to a particular commander at a specific stage of some operation. Let us consider Convoy PQ17, already mentioned (Vol. 2 pp.214-223, map on p.215), bound for Murmansk through the endless day of the Arctic summer. On pp. 217-9 is a restrained yet vivid account of the events in the Admiralty on the evening of the 4th July, 1942. All centres on that superb weapon of war, the *Tirpitz*, sister ship of the *Bismarck*. The First Sea Lord knew all that was to be known about the capabilities of the *Bismarck* as revealed in her last fatal voyage - her toughness, high speed and virtual impregnability under her own air cover. Her gunnery was superb. Encountering two of the most powerful ships in the world in the Denmark Strait, she sank the *Hood* with her fifth salvo, and drove off the *Prince of Wales* too damaged to continue the fight, while all the *Bismarck*'s machinery and guns were still intact. She was finally sunk only because she was alone. So if the *Tirpitz* were at sea she could be opposed only by the Home Fleet, 500 miles away to the west. But he also knew how vulnerable major capital ships were to air attack, if operating outside their own air cover, which would have come about had the Home Fleet come further east. The Germans had in fact moved their Queen. With the *Tirpitz* at sea, virtually in her home waters off the North Cape, with her escorts, air cover and U-boats, any decision involved inevitable loss, a situation considered in detail up to p. 222. The order for the convoy to disperse, sent 2136/ 4th July, resulted in the loss of 24 ships out of 37, 14 to air attack and 10 to U-boats; but it was expected beforehand that it would have some such effect. My point is that no-one knows, and no-one can ever know, the weighting of the evidence, the exact mental processes by which the decision was reached.

The other side of the coin was the destruction of the *Scharnhorst* off the North Cape on Boxing Day 1943, this time in the endless Arctic night. Once again important decrypts were too late to be useful, but this time the outcome was, amongst other things

"a tribute to the C-in-C's imaginative and decisive use of the Enigma, that owed much to the confidence he knew he could place in it" (Vol. 3, Part 1, Chapter 36, p.268). In fact Admiral Fraser provided a classic example of the successful welding of intelligence with action.

In attempting to illustrate a few of the complexities confronted by those writing a book on wartime intelligence and its effects on operations, like Little Jack Horner I have pulled a few plums out of what is an enormous Christmas Pie. To list all its contents would be unbearably tedious, but one gets an adequate idea from the throw-away remark at the end of the second paragraph of the Preface to Volume 1: "As for the archives, we set out to see them all; and if any have escaped our scrutiny we are satisfied that over-sight on our part is the sole explanation". This conjures up a picture of a stupendous task of compilation, but the authors have succeeded in extracting from it a critical study ranging over the whole canvas of the war in the West. At the same time they wear their scholarship lightly. For those who wish simply to read a specific story, the ample references do not impede the flow of the narrative, and one cannot wait to get to the next page and find out what really happened next. I hope that the short illustrations above will give the reader some of its flavour.

In a word, the book is unique. As far as I am aware, nothing like it has ever been produced before, and historians for decades to come will find in these four volumes an invaluable source. On the other hand, in the much longer run this compendious overview, written by historians having personal knowledge of at least some part of what was going on, can be confidently expected to retain its value as long as the Second World War continues to be of interest.

G. Clifford Evans

## Antarctica, Cambridge, Conservation and Population: a Biologist's Story.

By Colin Bertram,  
with a Foreword by Lord Hunt of Llanfair Waterdine. 1987.

This is a remarkable autobiography assembled in an unusual but successful manner. The first chapter 'Family' leads one from the author's origins through school days, university and marriage to retirement. Thereafter the story is told under headings of activities rather than chronologically. Thus the reader with special interests, be they polar, conservation, world population, or the ways of a Cambridge tutor, can turn to the appropriate chapter. There he will find a remarkable tale of experience and thought which is so wide that it seems extraordinary that one man can have experienced so much.

Although the story can be commended to a wider audience, it is of particular interest to Johnians, be they of an older or a younger generation. The former will recognise 'their days' and many of the outstanding characters they knew who may have influenced their lives. Those of later years will be fascinated by the thoughts of a benign tutor who chose,

guided and launched so many young over twenty-seven years. In particular the penultimate chapter 'The Humane Mediator in Cambridge' reveals great wisdom in the appreciation and handling of young people. Furthermore, most readers will find themselves in tune with the opinions expressed and will hope that they will prevail in future years.

The same may be said of those sections of the book dealing with population and eugenics. As is pointed out, Man is the most prolific and able mammal, but is in imminent danger of destroying his own environment. One wishes that the opinions expressed in the chapter 'Population and Resources' could somehow be included in the teaching curriculum for every child in the world.

Altogether this is a splendid book in which the author - biologist, polar explorer, traveller and academic - not only reveals the course of events which have formulated his character, but provides an insight into his thinking which has resulted from so varied a life and interests.

Vivian Fuchs



## The Keynesian Revolution in the Making 1924–1936

By Peter Clarke  
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

In what is probably the most important monograph on Keynes of the last decade, Peter Clarke has attempted to rescue Keynes from the clutches of the economists, economic historians and the historians of economic ideas and to make the central ideas and implications of the 'revolution' associated with Maynard Keynes's *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) accessible to ordinary run-of-the-mill historians. However, in doing so, he has managed not only to bring together what has been said before in a manner more appropriate for his professional colleagues but also to break new ground and thus leave economic historians and historians of economic ideas in his debt.

Anyone who provides an account of a 'revolution', it would seem to me, has to provide at least four things: (i) an account of the *ancien regime*; (ii) an account of the revolutionaries' ideas; (iii) an account of the revolution itself; and (iv) some notion of the implications of what happened. As the Keynesian revolution has traditionally been about both economic theory and economic policy, this requires some discussion of both the old regime in theory and policy, which inevitably includes Keynes's earlier ideas; an account of the evolution of Keynes's theory and its policy implications; and a discussion of the implications of what emerged at the other end of the process. In the case of Keynes's revolution, the process will inevitably be complicated by the way that the literature has developed over the last decade. Here I am thinking less of the contention that Keynes's theories were unimportant or even a dead end, than the view presented by a run of younger economic historians that the important policy-making fortress that Keynes thought he was attacking, what has been known as 'the Treasury view' which strictly speaking held that loan-financed government expenditures on public works as a cure for unemployment would be ineffective as they would crowd out an equivalent amount of private investment, was less monolithic, more pragmatic and more flexible than Keynes allowed for – or, to put it bluntly, that Keynes was attacking a straw man.

In developing his account of the old regime, in his masterly Part II, Clarke, using evidence which through the vagaries of the transfer of records to the Public Record Office at Kew has only recently surfaced, clearly demonstrates that the Treasury's contribution to the 1929 White Paper, *Memoranda on Certain Proposals Relating to Unemployment* (a reply to a Liberal election manifesto), and the associated statements of the then Chancellor, Winston Churchill, were based not on pragmatism but on a coherent theoretical model developed by one of their number, R.G. Hawtrey, and published in *Economics* in 1925. As well, he clearly shows how this view fits into what one might call the Treasury's picture of the world of free trade, balanced budgets and the gold standard. He then turns to Keynes's own contributions to the discussions: his 1929 Liberal election pamphlet (with Hubert Henderson) *Can Lloyd George Do It?* (i.e.

reduce unemployment through public works); his contributions to the election campaign; his private attempts to persuade the succeeding Labour Government in the Committee on Finance and Industry and the Economic Advisory Council; his journalism; and his 1930 *Treatise on Money*. There he shows how Keynes's intuitions or political proposals interacted with his evolving economic analysis and how, under the weight of public criticism, the theoretical 1929 'Treasury view' became the pragmatic, business-like set of notions re-discovered by recent economic historians.

Thus Clarke has accounted for the old regime and the tensions within it. He then turns to the professional discussion of Keynes's *Treatise* to show how in the course of 1931 its author became so actively dissatisfied with it that he embarked on an attempt to recast its main theoretical structure. With that attempt underway, using all the available sources, he clearly sets out what in his view were Keynes's major subsequent innovations in theory and how he had reached his new system in an embryonic form by the end of 1932, before he spent the remaining three years revising and recasting it so that it would prove the most effective possible attack on the orthodoxy of his colleagues. This ground has been well-trodden before, but in his handling of the evidence and his predecessors Clarke shows a keen appreciation of and a deftness in handling the issues involved. He concludes with an assessment of the theory and a discussion of the historical Keynes and Keynesianism.

The book is a highly recommended blend of acute scholarship crossing several disciplinary boundaries, which will probably have its greatest impact where Clarke least intends it: amongst economic historians and historians of economics.

D.E. Moggridge

## The Rylands Haggadah

Ed. Raphael Loewe

London: Thames and Hudson, 1988; £48.

Johnians are a loyal breed. Amongst the most loyal is Raphael Loewe (B.A. 1942), son of a distinguished University Lecturer in Rabbinics, and for a long time himself a lecturer in Hebrew at University College, London, whence recently he retired as Goldsmid Professor. Loewe was trained in St John's as a classicist (a contemporary of, amongst others, Professor Crook and Dr Pelling), and hence is knowledgeable and accomplished in the skills of translation and poetry. According to the old College custom (now sadly discontinued) he once wrote, as a scholar, the Latin and Greek verses annually presented to the Marquesses of Exeter and Salisbury.

Raphael Loewe is to medieval Hebrew poetry what Guy Lee is to classical Latin poetry. His *Rylands Haggadah* is a beautifully produced facsimile edition of this fine fourteenth-century Catalonian manuscript, which was designed for use in the (Sephardi) celebration of the Jewish Passover. Loewe's translation skills are deployed in a full and sensitive English rendering not only of the *Haggadah* itself but of the eighty or so hymns designed to be inserted at various points in the liturgy.

A distinct feature of the work is Loewe's ability to explain, by commentary and notes, the significance of the texts. Consequently the volume can be commended warmly to gentile readers (and browsers) as well as to Jews and Hebraists. That is perhaps significant in two ways: the Exodus has from New Testament times rung Christian bells and, as a result, this liturgy with its hymns has much to teach those who, as junior brothers, share this fundamental biblical experience. Secondly, Loewe's success in making the work available and in explaining it is a tribute to the College system which, uniquely perhaps, prompts its loyal sons to fulfil this *mitsvah* or vocation of scholarship.

The author has generously presented a copy of his work to the College library where - and whence - it will certainly be enjoyed by generations of Johnians.

A.A.M.