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JAYANTHA GUNASINGHE

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Editor's Comment

IT has become customary to make some apology before going into print. We make no apologies. The purpose of this comment is to indicate what this is all about. *Points of View* as the name itself suggests will carry discussions on a variety of subjects handled from a variety of angles. The guiding principle however will be that from whatever angle the presentation is made, it will be made in a serious and responsible manner. This is an attempt to provide an opportunity for serious discussion on questions that should be of interest to many of us in Ceylon.

We are aware that Journals of this nature do not last very long in this country. There are two principal difficulties that will have to be overcome. The first is that of finding a reasonably good market and the second a sufficiently large body of contributors. Without the first we cannot continue long. Without the second, the interest and variety necessary even during a short existence will be lacking. Even if this publication is to die out, it will not be for lack of effort and enthusiasm on the part of those who actively support it.

Points of View is not a political journal. Political in the sense that this journal does not associate itself directly or indirectly with any political organisation in or outside Ceylon. The views expressed by the contributors are their own and if anyone disagrees, he is welcome to present a different point of view

One last point. In publishing the first issue of this journal we wish to remind ourselves and the readers of a statement made by the American critic Lionel Trilling in his book *The Liberal Imagination:*

"To the general lowering of the status of literature and of the interest in it, the innumerable "Little Magazines" have been a natural and heroic response. Since the beginning of the century, meeting difficulties of which only their editors can truly conceive, they have tried to keep the roads open. From the elegant and brilliant *Dial* to the latest little scrub from the provinces, they have done their work, they have kept our culture from being cautious and settled or merely sociological or merely pious. They are snickered at and snubbed, sometimes deservedly, and no one would venture to say in a precise way just what effect they have—except that they keep the new talents warm until the commercial publisher with his customary air of noble resolution is ready to take his chance, except that they make the official representatives of literature a little uneasy, except that they keep a countercurrent moving which perhaps no one will be fully aware of until it ceases to move."

These remarks were made in an essay "The Function of the little Magazine" and what Trilling had in mind was the *Partisan Review* in the context of the American Scene. While disclaiming any desire to think of *Points of View* as a "heroic response", we heartily endorse Trilling's general position regarding the function of the little magazine.

DR. E. F. C. LUDOWYKE

GETTING OFF THE FENCE

There is an article in the current number of *The Use Of English* (a periodical I should like to recommend very heartily to all teachers, not only to teachers of English) entitled "Values and the Fence". The writer of the article speaks of her difficulties in the criticism class: how could the teacher deal with a piece of phoney writing, for instance, without taking up an attitude to the dishonest commercial and journalistic writing of our time, which must make her seem partisan to her employers and inefficient to her students who will have, presumably, to write in just the ways she condemns if they are to succeed as the future journalists of their time ?

I do not suppose the difficulty presents itself to the teacher of English alone. After all the teacher, whatever his subject, lives as much as his pupils do in a particular social setting to which what grows out of the classroom in hours of work assigned to "subjects in the time-table" bears reference. I should like to think that where there seems to be little reference or no connection at all, the teacher, however "good" or well-qualified he may be, has failed to animate the "subject" he is teaching, it remains inert, a mass of information of little value except in so far as it is manipulated by the pupil on the set occasion for which it is solely intended.

Further, where there seems to be little connection between what is "taught" and the setting in which both teacher and pupils live, it is most likely that the teacher is not sitting on the fence, but that he passively acquiesces in what he does not trouble to understand. My point is this: not only those who take up attitudes to the dishonest writing of our time are partisan, but those who do not - either because they will not or cannot take sides just as much. In illustration one might cite the interesting but common-enough significance of the phrase "political activities". In the social setting in which we live it most often means' 'objectionable activities", objectionable, of course, to the *Status Quo*, whereas extensive propaganda in support of it becomes the duty of that figment of the poor journalist—"the right thinking citizen."

I do not suggest, however, that it should be the duty of the teacher to disseminate actively points of view unfriendly to the *Status Quo*. I expect a quite respectable body of opinion will question whether it is the teacher's business of duty to disseminate points of view at all. But I should have thought that in training people to write it is also necessary to enable them to think, and I do not see how this could be done without

having some values consciously maintained somewhere in the background of one's mind. If the pupil should ask "Who are you to say that dishonesty, sentimentality and vulgarity are Bad Things?". I feel that the only reply which can satisfactorily be given is: "Only one of those persons who is ready to try to demonstrate from the piece of writing we are examining and its relation with the world in which we live, that they are bad because they assume a lack of intelligence on the part of the reader". Unfortunately I do not know enough about educational theory to be able to say whether intelligence is a value at all.

As far as the teacher of English is concerned—I know it is unwise to limit it to him, but I restrict the discussion deliberately—one has to be carefully of two dangers as a result of the examination of phoney writing. Both are variations on the theme "how difficult it is to be intelligent all the time". The first was considered by C. S. Lewis in his monstrously unfair Riddell Memorial Lectures *The Abolition of Man*. The subject matter of the lectures was the result of impatience with King and Ketley's *The Control of Language* a book known and used in Ceylon. I mention Lewis's Riddell Lectures only because the book which occasioned them is comparatively well-known here when one considers the small numbers who read Englisgh for the H.S C. It is true that the inferior and careless pupil will derive from exercises in criticism the feeling that any emotion is suspect, and that any passage of writing, therefore, is an invitatiou to critical cliches which obediently follow. This may be as much the fault of the uninterested teacher as of the dull pupil. It has to be guarded against. But I do not see—whether one accepts the TAO or not (Lewis brings it into the discussion) that you can say that the doctrine of objective value—"The belief that certain attitudes are really true and others false to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are"—must claim your adherence unless you are in agreement with others about the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are.

To descend from such high ground—I feel that it should be possible, even though it is difficult, to keep at bay the first danger: the "narkiness" of the limited intelligence trained, or ready through deficiency, to suspect any emotion. This is the student uncertain of his direction and ready poised to hear the faint cry "Sentimentality" somewhere and to join in the chase spurs deep stuck into the old Rosinante of clichès he rides.

The other danger is another kind of "narkiness". The young man who believes that it is safer to confess your inability to be pleased with anything, unless you are sure in advance by knowing more about the matter through someone else's exertions, not yours, that you are permitted to like what

is on the page in front of you. Both dangers ultimately result from ignorance, but there seems to be this to be said for the first – there has at least been some unsatisfactory examination of the page. You will find that the critic who behaves as if it were his duty to disapprove of whatever is set before him is most often the person pitifully aware of his own lack of information or intelligence I would not object to such criticism as "destructive"—so often those who yearn for "constructive criticism" want you to praise what they have written—but as no criticism at all. I shall not dare to enumerate the critic's tasks serially, but I should think that at some time it will be necessary to consider what is written (or played or painted) as expression in a social context I do not see how this could be done without getting off the fence.

MAHINDA SILVA

COMMENTS ON THE ENGLISH EDUCATED READING PUBLIC IN CEYLON

I believe it will be part of the policy of this journal to concern itself with questions that have an immediate importance for readers in Ceylon. This essay points to one such field where useful discussion could take place — the field of the English reading public in Ceylon. It would be a good thing if someone undertook, on the principles and methods suggested by *Culture and Environment* and *Fiction and the Reading Public* a study of conditions in this country. Such a study can lead to valuable data and still more valuable conclusions regarding the problems of the English educated reading Public in Ceylon. These comments, however have no such aspirations. They are concerned with a very much narrower question, namely the kind of literature that the average English educated person reads, (if he reads at all) and some of the implications of this reading.

The term "English-educated public" as applied to Ceylon is a rather vague and confusing term that may cover an assortment of groups and individuals. In this discussion "English educated public" refers to that class of people in Ceylon who are able to read and write English with some fluency, who are in the habit of reading English books, newspapers, magazines and periodicals and who are fairly conscious of the influences exerted through the English language Even within this account there are different classes of readers and I shall try to indicate in the course of this discussion what these clasess are and what, for the purposes of this discussion, their special features are. In spite of the fact that English has been in Ceylon for nearly two centuries, the English-educated still form a tiny

minority concentrated for the most part in and around the towns. The main reason why people "took to English" was of course the prospect of obtaining employment. The same process continues today with increasing momentum. The high premium placed on English education will continue for many years to come, but it is unfortunate that English education has come to be regarded more and more as the ability to obtain a degree or at a lower level, to pass the Senior School Certificate Examination with English as a subject.

I think it would be correct to say that English education in Ceylon has created a class of people cut off and islolated to a great degree from the traditions, customs, ways of thinking and feeling of the large majority of people in Ceylon, who have never had an English education. The English educatd have derived their ideas, their values and conceptions of life largely from England and Western Europe. But this overwhelming influence and pressure of Western Civilisation which has reached us through the medium of the English language, the field of commerce and technology and through political associations, has not made us English or Western European. Even if we wish to, we can never hope to participate and imbibe the culture and traditions of England in the way an Englishman is able to, because we are not the direct heirs to that civilization which the English language represents. Our contact with Western European culture is to a large extent second-hand, derivative and even remote This does not mean that our lives have not been effected by English, in fact English has had tremendous effects and some of these effects have been for the good. But the point is that we cannot cast away completely, even if we wish to, the customs and traditions of this country, in whatever disorganised way they exist. The English language and the culture it represents is foreign to us, and will always be foreign to us. We may speak and write English with ease, we may intelligently understand and react to the culture of that language, but we can never completely participate in the experiences of that culture [1]. We may study

1. "Fundamental English" by Ballard was a popular series in Ceylon used in teaching English in the "middle school". These books which were written with an obvious English background and the typical English child in mind, were interesting in their own way, but I wonder they were eminently suitable for the child in Ceylon. The Bargery Family —a more or less typical British lower middle—class family would have been a centre for immediate reference to the English Child; but not to the child in Ceylon, especially in the rural schools. An experienced teacher who has used these books may disagree with this opinion, but it is my feeling that the kind of background, interests and social relationships seen in these books are outside the experiences of the average child in Ceylon. It is however possible that the intelligent student may imaginatively enter into the world of these readers and derive genuine satisfaction; yet it is doubtful whether he will carry into his immediate environment with advantage the experience and understanding thus gained.

British political institutions and try to adopt them here, we may understand the social and economic histories of England, we may be sensitive to the literature of that country, but we do not, due to any of these things, or all of them put together, become a part of that culture. There are many things in our environment here that have become a part of the unconscious if not the conscious background of our lives. The Buddhist religion, the pattern of rural living in Ceylon, the wisdom and binding force of the family, the Sinhalese language, are all different items of this background. We have lost many direct relationships with this background as a result of English education, but we have also not gained direct relationships with the way of life which the English language reflects; in fact we can never hope to. Stated bluntly, the English educated public in Ceylon is neither here nor there. They may be "enlightened", "progressive", "conscious", (or any other word you may wish to use); but that should not obscure the fact that they have drifted away from the ways of life of the majority of people in this country. I am not saying that this is good or bad (though this in itself is an important question), I am only saying that it has happened. An interesting example of the conscious isolation of the English educated, is the institution of the provincial "club", where the few English educated people who have to live in the provinces, get together in a club ('a little bit of Colombo over there') and try to live within that group. The rhythm of the club and the rhythm of the village are completely different. The language and customs of the villager are not fully understood by the club, just as the language and customs of the club are not understood by the villager. The club member must belong to the club, just as the villager must "belong" to the village. Sometimes the feeling of "belonging" is so strong that if an English educated person of sufficent importance finds the village and villagers more interesting than the club, he is suspected of abnormality. The Europeans who came to this country as planters and administrators found the institution of the club a vital necessity because they felt they were in an alien and sometimes hostile country. Although the Europeans have left, the idea of the club remains. I suppose the English educated Ceylonese finds that he is in an alien and sometimes hostile country [2]. (Whether the life of the club is superior to the life of the village I am not here concerned).

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2. I am aware that English education is not the only thing that counts for membership in the club. The importance of the job or social position is definitely a factor but this does not mean that English educated with lesser social positions remain away from the club. It only means that they have to form different clubs to entertain themselves.

Although the English educated form a special layer, so to say, it is not a layer with any definite values, standards or norms of conduct. A few things like the English language, certain ideas and a slight sense of superiority, they have in common—nothing more. In each individual the kind of balance that is struck between the native traditions[3] and western ideas varies. Very often the two are in violent opposition. An obvious instance is the question of marriage where the opposing forces stand out in relief. On one side of the scales would be such conventions as caste, dowry, parental consent, horoscopes, social position, and on the other, love, individual choice, disregard for conventions etc. For the typical village boy or girl, alternatives of this nature would not be present and it would be unusual if they were. For the English educated man and woman these are definitely warring forces, and he or she will have to take one side or make a compromise. Now, the very fact that this kind of tension should exist on an important question like marriage, illustrates one thing which I attempted to elucidate earlier—namely, that we have not cast off completely the traditions and superstitions of the indigenous culture although we have drifted away from them. Certain geographical areas like the Jaffna Peninsula and certain communities like the Muslim community have shown a stiff resistance to western ideas and the values of the English educated minority. With the attempt to revive the national languages and native traditions, the conflict may become sharper. But whatever the outcome, we shall never have an English culture in the way the Englishmen understand it, nor an indigenous culture in the way the "nationalists" understand it.

I said that the English educated public in Ceylon is a minority that has to some extent drifted away from the main community itself. I also said that this group is sensitive in one way or another, to the pressure of Western culture, but that it can never hope to participate directly in that culture. In any Society there are certain institutions which help to train the young and provide a pattern of living for the adults. The ideas of good and evil given by religion; the discipline, sense of responsibility, awareness of personal relationships given by the home and the family; the ideals and aspirations set up by the community; all play a part in training a man's character. But in Ceylon today, the power and ability of these traditional institutions to undertake this training has declined consider-

3. Throughout this discussion I have used the terms "native traditions" and "indigenous culture" withoue any attempt at definition because definitions are not of much use in a matter of this nature; besides, this is far from being a sociological discussion. But I believe the terms fairly indicate the nature of the things referred to. There is of course, no definite and organised pattern of life indicated by the term "indigenous culture", but the distinguishing elements can be seen.

ably. Buddhism has lost the vitality and binding force that it had in the past. English education and the search for employment have drawn apart the members of the family. As for ideals and aspirations, there is hardly a community that can maintain them with the necessary vitality. In this situation, the kind of influence derived from the West and through the English language has to be satisfactory, to offset even to a degree, the individual's lack of guidance from the traditional centres. But judging from the influences derived through English reading, the majority of the English educated has been exposed to the undesirable aspects of Western civilization—its sensationalism and vulgarity. My specific job here is to indicate broadly the kind of reading done by the English educated (if they read at all) and some of the implications of this reading. In undertaking this discussion it was thought convenient to consider separately some prominent, identifiable groups, within the English educated public. I should like to begin with that large group of students preparing for the English S S.C. Examination In the absence of the London Matriculation examination, the S.S.C. examination marks an important stage in the education of the student in Ceylon. This examination has also become in a sense a "parting of ways" because the students branch out in difrerent directions. Many leave school and search for jobs specially clerical jobs, others take to engineering, medicine or some other specialised course of study, some proceed to the so called 'Arts Subjects' and a fairly considerable number take to teaching. I know of several schools where the majority of the staff consists of men and women who have passed the S.S C. examination and who are not trained teachers. Since the Senior examination occupies such an important place in the present educational set up in the country, it is worth inquiring whether the kind of general education, broadening of interests, preliminary reading that can be given through the English language to students of this age, are actually given. Since many students end their studies at this stage, it is very likely that the kind of interests, attitudes and reading habits formed at this stage will perhaps persist all the time. My feeling is that the best kind of training that could be given in and through the English language is actually not given and in fact the standards attained at present are far below what they were in the past. I am not blaming the teachers of English in these classes, though sometimes they are in the fault. Actually, the deterioration of English teaching and the crudity of the English books read today, are related to wider questions. The blinding faith on examination success, the kind of examining that is done, cramming and concentration on texts, lack of proper library facilities in many schools– all these have something to do with the question. In the last few years additional factors like the larger numbers seeking English education and the replacement of English by the vernacular as the medium of instruction in the lower forms, have worsened

the situation. Although the kind of training and interests that could be given through the English language have deteriorated considerably, English remains the language that is sought after, and there is also no prospect that English will disappear to any appreciable extent in the future [4]

With a view to finding out the kind of influence that English reading brings to the average student in Ceylon of the Senior form level, some data was collected through a questionnaire to Senior and Pre-Senior Form students in a smaller Colombo school. The ages of the students varied from thirteen to twenty-one. The answers provided by the students supported by discussions with the English Master of the school, hinted at some interesting conclusions; though one must be very careful in generalising about experiences obtained in a single school. It was found that nearly all the boys in the Senior and Pre-Senior classes were in the habit of reading outside their syllabus and the text books set for the examination. I think this would hold true for most students of this level in schools in Colombo, and the suburbs of Colombo. But it is not true of the majority of the schools in the provinces preparing students for the Senior (English) Examination.

Only one student out of over sixty, stated with terrifyiug honesty that he does not read books; I only hope this does not apply to his text books as well. The fact that students do read and sometimes widely may seem encouraging, but in fact the kind of thing they read and the kind of interest they have are far from encouraging. Nearly all the students seem to read the following and perhaps only these writers:—Daphne Du Maurier, Edgar Rice Borroughs, Baroness Orczy, Conan Doyle, Leslie Charteris, Richmol Crompton, Rapheal Sabatini, Agatha Christie, Peter Cheyney, R. M. Ballantyne, Sapper, Marie Corelli and Wodehouse. Their favourite magazines were:—The Reader's Digest, Television and Screen Guide, True Romances, Cow-boy Stories, Comics, Illustrated Weekly and perhaps Lilliput and London Opinion which they dared not admit. This is of course the kind of thing that many boys and even adults in Colombo read, and some people may find the list genuinely heartening; that the Senior Former today

4. English will soon become a "second language". With it I suppose, the interest taken in the language, the amount of reading done through it and the kind of reading, will deteriorate to a greater extent. The results of this deterioration may be very great. Since Sinhalese is becoming the "main language", there should also be reading material in Sinhalese, to occupy the interests of those who will be receiving a training in that language. The absence of good reading material in Sinhalese, that can be taken up by the average reader, coupled with the decrease of interest in English, may create conditions very unfavourable to the student as well as the adult. It must be granted that in Sinhalese, even the Runyons and Wodehouses have yet to appear.

acquaints himself with all this. But the point is that reading matter of this kind form their main and often their only diet. Reading of this nature is usual, but it is not very helpful to the student, if it happens to be the only kind of reading. I am not saying that at this age students should preoccupy themselves with serious literature and critical reading; (though some kind of critical training can be given, is in fact indispensable) I am only saying that the large majority of the students of this level in Ceylon, do not acquire, and receive no incentive to acquire, a few serious interests and even elementary standards to guide them in their reading. Adventure, Detective and Crime exert the main and sometimes the only influence on the student who does read. It is worth remembering that many of these students have only this kind of interests and influences to guide them even in adult life. They cannot proceed b yond the maginary world of adventure because they have not seen any other alternative.

Once secure employment is obtained, English education has served its purpose and life is left over to the adventure story. Certain authors popularly read by students in the past, do not seem to be even names to the large majority of present-day students. One could have noticed the distressing absence of Dickens in the earlier list, One or two students mentioned the *Tale of Two Cities*, but this need not be taken as indicati ve of an interest in Dickens because this book was a prescribed text some time ago Scott, Thackeray, Chesterton. Tolstoy, Conrad, Emily Bronte, Wells. Jane Austen were all apparently n ot read. Interest created in these writers could be taken into adult life with profit, though sometimes the 'profit' may accrue by a modification or even rejection of the values of these writers. The same thing cannot be said of Ballantyne and Peter Cheyney. Two students mentioned *Wuthering Heights* and *Scarlet Letter*; these were exceptions. One student said that his favourite authors were Pearl Buck, D. F. Karaka and D. H. Lawrence, It was not possible to discover why he liked Lawrence so much. No biographies or travel books were read, and as for poetry and drama, they were endured only in class as part of the literature syllabus. (It is likely that the "Literature Class" has a great deal to do with the distaste, for literature). In the larger schools in Colombo where good library facilities and able guiding are available, the students do attain a fairly high level in the matter of reading, but the overall situation is far from encouraging. As a general conclusion, it appears valid that in Ceylon today, the majority of children in an important stage of their English education,

are incapable of general reading, [5] do not read at all or read literature that is not likely to guide them to serious reading even in adult life.

I do not know whether on the basis of statistics one could claim that English is improving in Ceylon because larger numbers from the villages clear the senior hurdle, with English as a subject. Doing English as a 'subject' is quite a different thing from doing it as a language through which various influences come into ones life. Any English master who has prepared students for the English Senior Examination will tell you the secret of putting almost any student through the English language and literature papers. As for language, the secret consists in concentrating on the grammar. By 'grammar' is not meant the ability to write gramatically—which many students cannot claim to have but the ability to distinguish between confusing pairs of words and remembering a set of hackneyed idioms. The required ability is obtained through a process of drilling. As for literature, with a few past papers, the intelligent teacher can anticipate the questions, spot the 'context' passages and the 'character sketches'. The student generally is not required to show any sensitiveness to the works of literature prescribed nor does he gain any idea of the standards governing serious writing.[6] The conclusion that one is forced to from all this is that today the large majority of students finishing their English secondary education, cannot handle the English language with ease and cannot claim to imbibe the best that is available through the medium of the English language.

The shortcomings of the English educated student of the Senior School Certificate level noted above. namely the lack of any general training, the insensitiveness to serious ideas and experiences, the concern with the cheap and the superficial; persist into undergraduate and adult life; because the specialised courses of study undertaken by many students after completing the Senior School Certificate examination, do not provide any opportunities for rectifying the early omissions. It is I believe

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5. Especially in provincial schools where the medium of instruction has been Sinhalese, English is almost an arbitrary imposition dictated by the exigencies of the examination. There the general ability to handle the English language is so poor that the question of outside reading does not enter at all. But the surprising thing is that students of this type, do pass in English at the Senior examination, sometimes with distinctions.

6. I also learn that even students who do not read many books, do read and in fact study, the editorials in the daily papers,. This is because they have been told "if you read the editorials you can improve your English." Judging by the results, editorial reading does not seem to have been of much use. But I hear editorial addicts reaped dividends in other ways—some examination precis been taken from this source'

and accepted principle in educational theory, that the study of any subject should ultimately help the student to come to an awareness of his environment. Modern 'specialisation' seems to be a living refutation of this theory. Extreme specialisation far from leading to an intelligent awareness of the environment, to an understanding of the relation between the given speciality and the rest of human life; has led the specialist to ignorance, crudity and obtuseness. If the time spent in the laboratory or the workshop has 'dulled' the mind to the wider issues implicit in living; then the cost of specialisation has been very great. A convincing example of this process is the institution of the average medical students in Ceylon. However proficient he may be in his subjects or his speciality, their general make up is to say the least infantile. A medical student's preoccupation with the human body does not lead him to a serious interest in human beings or human misery; it rather leads him to a sense of superiority over human beings and a callousness towards human misery. E. M. Foster said somewhere referring to the products of the much boosted British public school system, that the young men went out into the world with well developed bodies and undeveloped hearts. This remark has relevance here. The price paid for specialisation in this case has been very great. It may be said here that the 'medico' or any other student proceeding to a specialised course of studies has had a 'broad and general education'. (After all, haven't they passed the Senior, Matriculation and the University Entrance Examinations, sometimes with distinctions and medals?[7]) Of course the answer depends on what is meant by a 'broad and general education'. Whatever it may mean, it certainly does not mean the ability to pass examinations or familiarity with Wodehouse and Damon Runyon. If these were the requirements, the numbers in Ceylon are excessive. The consequences to the individual and to society as a result of modern specialisation, is a complicated subject; but without proceeding to details, the results, of specialised training are fairly obvious even in Ceylon. Many readers may have noticed the difficulty of discussing even simple things, with people who know little beyond their speciality, Even on such topical subjects like Temperance or Persian oil, they tend to be disinterested misinformed and unable to grasp any serious implications that may be involved. In most cases, this is not due to a lack of intelligence, but the inability to apply the available intelligence to any field beyond the narrow field of their specialised training.

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7. The ability to pass examinations and collect Degree Certificates command almost universal respect in Ceylon. I wonder whether the situation is the same in other countries. If "Education" and "ability to pass examinations" were synonymous, this discussion would never have been attempted.

Once out of their specialised field of work, bawdy jokes and the Reader's Digest define the limits of their vision. This inability of the specialist or technical man to relate his specialised training to the wider background of living, is not so much a defect of the individuals, as of the system that has made this possible and even normal. By using the word 'system', I do not mean that a change in the 'system' in the political sense is what is required. The specialist handicrafts-man or technician whose immediate interests formed part of an established way of living was attained in certain communities that decayed centuries ago. We cannot hope to create the conditions that prevailed in the so called 'Organic Communities'; but this need not prevent us from realising the value of what we have lost by the loss of community living. The narrowness and even immaturity of the 'specialist'—technical'—man are best understood in relation to a background of highly developed commercial, industrial and technological life as in America; but here in Ceylon the nature of the problem remains very much the same. It is not that this class has a "different point of view", it is just that they do not have any set of serious standards, supported by any facts and consistently maintained—that may be called a "point of view". When we remember that this kind of layer—the engineer, dentist, surgeon, cultivation officer, irrigation man and the like—has to be included in the English educated reading public in Ceylon, then the question of reading habits may even be left out. I do not think any serious reading is done by the majority engaged in 'specialist-technical' jobs. In fact they consider reading a mug's game. English education enabled them to find employment and this is felt sufficient. The things they read are the daily news papers, some cheap fiction and magazines. These help to fill up those tedious 'leisure hours' after work, when the 'club' is inactive or there isn't a sufficient number for the game of Bridge which is raised almost to the level of a ritual. I knew a person who thought that one took to books only when one was disgusted of life, and felt it his duty to rescue the man from the book. The sincerity and strength of his convictions were never in doubt This may have been an extreme case, but the general tendency is clear enough,

Apart from this layer that I called, for want of a better name the "specialist-technical"; there are the professional classes, concentrated for the most part in the important towns, whose work is not of a specialised nature. The average clerk, teacher and city worker may be taken as representatives of this layer. This class has fairly wide interests and serious preoccupations; but it must also be remembered that this is mainly the class that follows Eddie Jayamanne from the stage to the screen, applauds Flybynight and keeps the Times Quiz

going. In the matter of reading habits, there are certain special things that may be noted in this class of readers. The popular thrillers and romances that the average school-boy reads are of course readily enjoyed by this class. In fact, in Colombo there is a special agent, a kind of travelling library—the man who carries second hand books from house to house, selling or exchanging his wares—who caters to this public. A scrutiny of the bundles of these book vendors and their business technique will show the tastes and changes in tastes that take place in this reading public. The institution of the book-vendor is as much a part of the present day English reading public in Colombo, as the up-turned umbrella in the Pettah is part of the Sinhalese reading public The books vendors know their reading public better than many critics. For instance, it was found possible to exchange a book of D. F. Karaka for several books of Lawrence; (not *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, which would fetch a fabulous price, especially if it claimed to be unexpurgated). Apart from cheap fiction and magazines like 'London Opinion', 'Lilliput' 'Reader's Digest' and the rest, there are certain special books and authors that this public goes in for. These books and authors deal with serious ideas and seriou,. subjects. I am referring to such authors as Joad and Huxley, "The Living Thoughts" and the "Thinkers Library" seriess Reading of this nature would not matter, if not for the fact that the reading is confined to this kind of thing only. In fact, they set the limits beyond which few wish to proceed. Joad may have his uses, but he can never be a substitute for the originals. He is a middle-man and a populariser of ideas, and I am not sure whether in the process he does not vulgarise them. The average clerk or school-teacher is conscious of the influences that the English language has brought to us and is desirous, even eager (unlike the 'specialists') to acquaint himself with as many "fields" as possible. "Acquaint" seems the correct word because deeper investigations are generally not sought after. Something on psychology, philosophy, politics, equality of the sexes, education in the kindergarten, freedom of speech, is felt as an asset, makes one "educated", "modern and up-to-date.". This desire to be up-to-date with new ideas and new attitudes without the accompanying readiness to consider them deeply, has naturally led this reading public to places where the ideas are available in easily digestible form—pills, compendiums and summaries (Joad and the "Thinkers Library'; come in handy). There is also the evident danger that as long as the ideas are presented in a popular manner and the subject of discussion or the author discussing it has some popularity, this reading public tends to appreciate, however banal and crude they may be. D. F. Karaka played with an air of seriousness on two themes which were attractive namely, anti-British feeling and the young man of good family who breaks the conventions. Presented in a popular style, with a little sex and the Oxford days thrown in, he succeeded

completely. Joad who guides you to many fields, and the "Thinkers Library" come in handy to the office worker who spends the greater part of his time doing a job which probably is not particularly interesting, and which has no vital bearing on the rest of his life

In fact, if not for Joad and company he would be lost entirely, This is a genuine difficulty and only indicates the ill-health of this society. It has been correctly said that modern society differentiates sharply between "work", and "leisure". The idea of deriving pleasure in and through one's work has almost disappeared and "leisure" is thought of as something completely unrelated to work. From this, it is a short step to the idea that "leisure time" should take you away from work, the "work-a-day world"; and modern society has ample means of doing it. In this situation the average city worker with an English education naturally prides himself that in the few spare hours, he has been able to "acquaint" himself with the ideas that matter. This reading public having its own notions of good writing and good projects, is rather easily duped when the essentially vulgar or mediocre is presented with an air of seriousness and modernity. A point to illustrate this is the reaction of the Colombo cinema going public to the film "Secrets of Life" which had a record breaking run. From the outset, the advertisements claimed that it was a frank presentation of certain sex secrets that had been debarred from the screen and from the growing child. The film had all the pretentions to seriousness. The idea of dragging sex into the open gave the needed touch of modernity. Thus, profitable commercialisation of sex was applauded as a daring attempt to handle "the problem". If a delivery and a Caesarian operation were the "secrets of life", life would be quite simple. What "sex education" the younger generation or even the adults got from this film, was never understood—perhaps this was the "secret". The large number of letters to the papers recommending this film showed some interesting things. Nearly all the correspondents had ''modern ideas.". They were all agreed that the cinema was a serious medium, that sex must be discussed in the open etc; but these 'up-to-date' ideas did not prevent them from praising a putrid film and displaying the vulgarities in sensibility. How the subject of sex was presented through the medium was not taken up—it was beyond their depths.

The different groups within the English educated reading public that were indicated, were not meant to be taken as strictly differentiated classes of readers. They were only different points for focussing attention. The discussion itself has been very broad and general but, this could not be avoided. An attempt at detailed analysis of popular books and magazines would have made this paper unduly lengthy. It is hoped that

future issues of this journal will undertake such discussions. The main thing however is that the majority of the English educated reading public in Ceylon is neither critical nor sensitive to the things they read. Since the English language is a foreign language, sometimes we have to strive hard to understand and assimilate the richest experiences obtainable through this language. We cannot get them so readily and naturally as those who are direct heirs to the culture that the English language reflects. If we are not prepared for this striving or are prevented in some way from doing so, that is no reason why the crude and the superficial should be accepted as the best that can be obtained through the English language.

The task of maintaining serious literary standards in a mass civilization is an extremely difficult one. In Ceylon that task appears to be easy in one sense and difficult in another. It appears easy in that, in Ceylon, ndustrialisation and mass production, do not have the same hold on the people as in England or America. The English educated public compared to the total population, is small. Journalism is hardly the menace that it is in other countries. In fact the "Ceylon Daily News" whatever its defects, avoids sensationalism and maintains fair sobriety in reporting. It sometimes devotes a fair percentage of its space to sober discussions on topics of current importance.

The flood of cheap literature into the island is not very great. These facts tends to show that it is still possible to maintain serious literary standards, to discriminate between different kinds of writing and indicate the general directions in reading and analysis. But no attempt has been made in this direction and the indications seems to be that no attempt will ever be made. One obvious place in which a start can be made is in the schools, but in fact, the standards of teaching English have deteriorated. Library facilities for school children and for adults even in Colombo are quite inadequate—in the provinces they are almost nil. English education as stated earlier is sought after primarily as a means of securing employment and the interest in the language itself is secondary. With the introduction of free education and the larger numbers seeking English education, the standards of teaching are fast deteriorating. All these are serious difficulties and the prospect of their being solved is remote. Besides, even the continued use of the English language is in doubt Whatever the outcome of these issues, English will remain in Ceylon whether we like it or not, because it is the only medium through which we can communicate with the rest of the world.

It has not been my intention to advocate that all people should stop reading detective stories and take to serious literature. I only wish to say that if a person could distinguish between genuine and fake writing, between normal and

exaggerated feelings; have some ideas about serious writing and be prepared to defend these ideas and if necessary modify them, then, it is something desirable. To be able to make these discriminations, one need not be a literary critic or a scholar [8].

D. WALATARA

THE TEACHING OF VERSE I.

This subject is too wide a one to be treated exhaustively in one article. In Ceylon it is too complicated also, because English is a foreign language which is fast being reduced to the status of a Second Language. Difficulties of a purely linguistic kind therefore intrude and complicate the subject. I like to dwell on some questions that make the subject of verse teaching a problem for teachers in Training Colleges and for lecturers.

Firstly all are not agreed that any literature at all need be taught in our schools. The argument is that literature is not necessary as English is taught for utilitarian purposes, i. e. for getting information e. g. of a technical kind—how to make a new cement mixture, or for writting commercial letters e. g. to banks or foreign business houses. Further, it is stated of the Junior School to which trained teachers generally restrict their teaching, that all students will not proceed to academic studies and hence it is not necessary to burden them with the study of verse.

Next, those who agree that some literature may be taught, cannot agree about the verse that should be prescribed. Some are for teaching English verse writen by Ceylonese or Englishmen who lived in and wrote about Ceylon. The quality of the verse is not the criterion of selection, but the connections the writer of the verse and his topics have with Ceylon. Others

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8. I have made no special reference to the reading habits of the English educated women in Ceylon. The majority of them do no reading at all. Those in the cities, do read the detectives and cheap fiction. They also relish the magazines that have a feminine slant. But I wonder, whether they have an interest in imbibing even second hand ideas (Joad and 'living thoughts') that the men seem to have. Their ideas of being 'modern' and 'up to date' are seen in fields other than that of reading. For the women, English education is not so much a qualification for employment as an accomplishment for a qualification for marriage. Like the music examination and domestic science, English comes in handy. The Women's pages, the gossip columns, and the bargain counter indicate, sufficiently the interests of the majority of English educated women.

admit a larger circle of authors but the verse selected is deliberately of a minor order and maintained at that— e. g. Casabianca, and Lochinvar.

Lastly, there are at least two extreme points of view about the presentation of verse in school. Some believe that the meaning has to be fully understood. The verse is to serve as some comprehension exercise. Questions must be asked to elicit the events of the story, and in their correct order. Grammar, language—points, have to be accordingly taught. The verse has to be divided into three or four divisions — meaning rhyme, imagery and sometimes is added appreciation. Under imagery is perhaps considered figures of speech. The other point of view is that poetry is to be enjoyed, ethereal material the aesthetic quality of which would melt and vanish under the gross light of classroom study and instruction. This is a precious sort of attitude to poetry.

There are other questions too that complicate the subject of verse teaching for even the convinced teacher of language—through—literature. A teacher trained according to stiffer standards than at present applying and having an excellent record of service, once asked me why a sad poem like Robert Frost's 'Out Out' should be taught in Form II. She had forgotten that a day or two before she had herself recommended "Casabianca". Anyhow the question of cheerful or cheerless poems poses itself to many a teacher genuinely interested in teaching literature. Even more troublesome than this, actually more serious, for such teachers is the question of procedure. Their position is as follows. "We recognize the value of literature. We ourselves take a serious interest in it. We also know the ways recommended for presenting verse, but we cannot always follow them. They are suited to one type of school, but in another in which the standard of English is lower they are thoroughly impracticable. The solutions offered are various crosses between different approaches. We have no sure fire approach but only various tentative proposals."

Problems of this sort imply some fundamental misconceptions and errors, about English Language instruction in Ceylon today, about literature itself and the extent to which it is separate from language, about the function of literature, and about the helpfulness or not of methodology.

Even if we assume that literature need not be taught to students who are learning language only for utilitarian purposes, and that the students in the Junior School in particular don't need the English Language for any other purpose because the majority of them will start vocational education after the Standard 8 Selective test, we are faced with a practical problem. How are we to know which one will proceed to higher academic studies and which not, for the former will need more English and literature too, and the latter not. Since we cannot dis-

tinguish between them we have to teach all with the lower aim in view in which case literature need not be taught, or all with the higher aim in view. If we teach them with the lower aim those who pass the Selective test will suffer. Their grounding in English will be weak. If on the other hand we teach them with the higher aim we will instruct all adequately. Those who proceed to higher studies will have a good grounding. Those who do not will at least bear away the "impress" of English. So it follows that the practical difficulty of distinguishing between the two sets of students will be such that all will have to be given the best instruction in English, and that will include literature too.

What is meant by bear the "impress" of English? It may be argued that by aiming so high the vocationally inclined students will not even know a little English. This will not be so. If they bear away the "Impress" of English more would have been achieved than could be if a mere utilitarian aim was pursued. A mere utlitarian aim will teach these children a few isolated sentences which will soon fall into desuetude, but if with a higher aim some literature also is taught there will be the sense of contact with something foreign that can quicken their lives even later on. Ability to sing "Farmer in the Dell" will be, in my eyes, more enriching than the ability at silent reading, for the latter ability will soon fall into desuetude as there will be no occasion or little for employing it.

In any case is it true to say that literature is not necessary if English is taught with the lower utilitarian aim? Is there such a thing as the teaching of English with a utilitarian aim in Ceylon now? What is a utilitarian aim in relation to our students today? It can refer to the need our students may have for writing in English for say, the import and export trade, for reading English to get some information, say of a new cement mixture from a journal (perhaps the *Penguin Science News*). How many of our students who take to a vocation after Standard 8 will have any connections with the import and export trade, even if they take to trade, and how many will be capable of the latter, even if they want to. And will they have the need to look up a foreign journal for such a technical matter—it will come to them in Sinhalese from the larger establishments which would have studied the techniques abroad and imported them. There, it seems to me, can be but one aim in teaching a second language in any country, whether the pupils are going to leave at Std. 8 or continue there studies after it—contact at different levels with a foreign culture. Even the mason who gave up his academic studies after Standard 8 needs to make his contact, at a lower level of course than an H. S. C. student. A utilitarian aim—apart from this one of general enrichment of experience—I find hard to conceive.

Apart from all this how is it ever possible to teach a language but through its literature. Let us for the moment assume that there can be a utilitarian aim in the teaching of English as a Second Language. Let us assume that all our Junior School students need is a knowledge of the language for workaday practical needs. How is it possible to teach a language for these needs without recourse to its literature? To say it is possible is to admit ignorance of the entirety or oneness of a language and literature.

Writting is a refinement on speech. But literature is not. We are tempted to equate literature with writing. We think of literature as something written down. This is an error. Literature is written down only for purposes of record. Actually it should exist only in speech and does, as a matter of fact. Even before writting became a democratic skill literature existed, it was sung and handed down by Guru to Pupil. Even after the art of writting is lost, literature will continue to exist so long as there is speech. Literature is nothing but speech, significant speech, if you like it, but speech, just language. And it is wisest to teach a language through it: significant speech. I don't mean of course "teach English to Second Formers through Yeats" but through what would be significant speech to those of their age and level.

The desire to teach English Verse written by only Ceylonese or those with Ceylon connections is the outcome of a genuine desire to teach a language in relation to a local environment. This desire to teach a foregin language through a local environment is a generalisation often made, but needing investigation. Anyhow the English verse written by Ceylonese or about Ceylon by Englishmen and others does not become significant speech. The Rev. Mr. Senior wrote verse for adults, on an adult level, but in my eyes his verse is not significant. For adults it will not do; for children of course it was never meant, and should never be prescribed.

I am for quality as a basis of selection. Yet I would select my verses for their comprehensibility too. By comprehensibility I mean experientially as well as in relation to the recognizability of the environment. Let me illustrate what I understand by a recognizable environment as contrasted with a local environment —How can one demand from English verse a local environment? — a verse alluding to Sri Pada or Kataragama, or Ruwanveli Saya, will contain something of a local environment. What a recognizable environment is can be illustrated from the following action rhyme — which for quality too— I would select for Standard VI (in the average village school) in place of a traditional nursery rhyme (the environment of which will not be so recognizable).

THE POLICEMAN

Boy— *Good Morning, Mr, Policeman,*

Policeman *Good Morning, Little Man,*

Boy— *I can't find my mother*
Please help me if you can.

Policeman *What's your mother like son,*
Is she thin or fat ?

Boy— *Oh ! she's very thin Sir,*
And she doesn't wear a hat.

Policeman *Put your hand in mine son,*
And come along with me
I can see her waiting
By the old shade tree.

(Children's World)

Policeman, Mother, old shade tree, are all recognizable elements, though there is nothing specifically local in the environment.

Fortunately public opinion more than anything else has liquidated the teacher who taught verse as an exercise in comprehension. Teachers now practising, who sometime ago asked for paraphrases of poems, defiantly deny former loyalties. The dangerous ones are those who reacting against this point of view have made of poetry and the verse class a kind of off—period, activity undertaken for pure relaxation, quite amoral, like a ride on a merry-go round.

If we keep constantly in mind that we are ultimately teaching language through our verse and rhymes, then we cannot relapse into the luxury of this kind of verse-lesson. There are many important tasks to be done, and hard work goes into it. Especially into speaking. Speaking verse is highly desirable. One of the best trainings in intonation, modulation and interpretation is the speaking of verse. The surest way to the mastering of a language and the quickest way to it is speech. Even if a passive understanding is the aim, the surest aim should be speech for it is true to say that a passive understanding is developed in proportion to venturings and acquisitions on the active side. Speech, through verse—speaking is an important means of learning a language, even if the aim is ultimately a passive one. But more about this amoral attitude to verse teaching when actual ways of presentation are discussed on a subsequent occasion.

The confusion of the serious literature teacher as to methodology is because of a misunderstanding of methodology. Methodology is a recent study. It seeks to suggest one or two approaches (or methods as they are called) for teaching any

particular subject. It is wrong to expect sure fire methods. To prescribe sure fire methods one is compelled to assume the class of students to be an unchanging factor, the teacher himself as being an unchanging factor, and the educational needs and aims as unchanging. If the impossibility of this is realized it will be clear why a good teacher must invariably feel his procedure highly tentative, a very delicate castle of cards which any rude child's question can entirely destroy and compel to be refashioned.

These doubts and difficulties connected with verse—teaching I have cursorily considered are the results of misconceptions and false assumptions. It is important for teachers interested in teaching language through literature to clear their minds about them before the actual presention of verse is considered.

GODFREY GUNATILLEKE.

THE MATERIAL SAP

> *" She who herself will sliver and disbranch*
> *From her material sap, perforce must wither*
> *And come to deadly use....."*

The lines are spoken by the Duke of Albany to Goneril his wife, in *King Lear*. The words in their associations seem to contain a recollection of the metaphor in the *New Testament:* "I am the vine, ye are the branches. if a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." Goneril is the branch which is cast forth, and ready to wither. She has done violence to the closest human ties. Locating her end in her own self and its appetites, she has lost connection with the moral centre, the life giving whole; no longer will she be nourished by the material sap.

But I was not interested in this quotation, for itself. It only gave me an apt set of associations, from which I could begin to discuss in a very general way, a 'slivered' and 'disbranched' portion of our knowledge, our study of literature. For, to extend the metaphor we have accepted today. that the 'Tree of Knowledge' should be 'disbranched.' Specialisation has given us the virtue of being precise in details and relieved us of our responsibility as persons, to see in larger and more meaningful wholes. In this article I am not undertaking to discuss any literary critical method in itself—I am concerned

more with the quality of the responses people make in the reading of literature. I am thinking specifically of English literature and the English educated class in Ceylon who read it. Of course I cannot talk as though there were any very definite attitudes regarding literary matters in a place like Ceylon. The attitudes would be in fact so various, ranging from those of the English department of the University of Ceylon to. the doctor who reads the "thriller" for—a very convenient word—relaxation. One still meets people who have read widely among the 'classical' authors Milton, Goldsmith, Scott and Dickens among others, who, if they tend to think of literature as a serious activity, tend to think of it as embellished philosophy; they are principally interested in the moral weight of the utterance. On the other hand there are those who enjoy the early poetry of Keats or Shelley, the verbal felicities of Burke or Macaulay, and place the emphasis on excellence of style, the beauty of words or the facility of expression. I remember in school we were usually encouraged to keep a 'thesaurus' of beautiful words, and felicitious expressions. I am not saying that this is in itself good or bad, I am only taking these two attitudes on a very simple level, to illustrate an everpresent difficulty, the difficulty of bringing together technique and content.

The 'critical reader' would meet me with the commonplace that statements in literature, and by literature, I mean creative writing, are different from the statements in a philosophical tract or sermon. In literature our perceptions are held within the particular situation and the general attitudes and values with which the writer may live are explored within that situation, are applied. and tested. In that sense we are concerned with direct experience in literature, not the generalised precept or belief. In deciding whether the writing is a part of what has been directly experienced we examine the language, and the skill with which it is employed. The 'critical reader' would say that in his approach there is no disparity between technique and content. But even within this approach we find so many shifts of emphasis, so many different ways of experiencing literature. Today we are so intent on containing a study within its own self-imposed limits, that we are frightened to make the wider relations which are implicit in the study. Here is a representative quotation from Cleanth Brooks.

The good critic "will regard as acceptable any poem whose unifying attitude is one which really achieves unity, but which unifies not by ignoring but by taking into account complexities and apparent contradictions of the situations concerned...He would not be forced to go outside the poem, to find some criteria external to it."...

It would be unfair to suggest that the quotation as it stands is typical of the literary critical attitudes accepted by Dr. Brooks In fact there is a qualifying footnote to this very quotation. But

it is interesting to examine this passage as the statement of one possible attitude. We are told that in the correct critical approach we are not forced to go outside the poem. In what sense would this be true?. If we examine Hopkins' "Spring and Fall" we would probably begin by describing the situation; we have a child weeping at the fall of leaves in Autumn. Then we follow the way in which the situation is explored and observe the complexity of the structure achieved. The girl is associated with the spring, the growing life. It is an unnameable dread which oppresses her as she watches the Autumn denuding the natural world of its beauty. Autumn, then, is associated with evil—the death and decay which are everpresent in the scheme of generation; the girl herself is seen within this scheme subject to its laws, and the whole situation is associated with the loss of Eden. It is true that we have complexity in the way one perception leads to another, and unification in the final statement: 'It is Margaret that you mourn for.' But we are not merely discovering the complexities in the situation or his skill at "unifying" these "complexities" it does not remain for us an abstract enjoyment of the poet's skill, we are responding obviously to the material out of which the complex unified structure is made. We are moved because the poem speaks of familiar things, of growth and decay, innocence and experience; the insight compels us to be alive to a part of the human condition. In that sense, what makes the attitude acceptable to us is not merely a certain complex awareness the poet shows within a situation; the attitudes in the poem must have some reality for us in our lives, outside the situation of reading the poem. In "Spring and Fall" someone might say the mode of feeling is distinctly Christian; behind the fall of the leaves and the girl's tears, the spring-life in the girl is seen as a suggestion of man's first innocence, an echo of the lost Eden. Now, the reader who cannot subscribe to the dogma of the Fall, may remain neutral to what is specifically Christian in the situation although that element, in this poem, is not very important. Of course he may give what Eliot calls "emotional assent", the lost Eden may have a meaning for him as an archetypal longing of the human heart. But I do not know whether this "emotional assent" is not, after all, a vague, momentary belief an involuntary response of certain suppressed portions of the personality, to the words. In reading the religious poetry of Hopkins or Herbert or Donne, the belief "as belief" we are told never should bother us, we give "emotional assent" to them. What virtue there is in this "emotional assent" is another matter. For after all, the situation itself, the relation between man and God is, say, to the humanist reader, an unreal one; he can only appreciate what is abstracted from the experience, the quality of feeling, the intensity of emotion the conflict, and the skill in the use of words, and unless ofcourse his receptiveness in reading the poem takes him further in his attitudes, he cannot engage himself

totally with the experience. As against this in Hardy's 'Broken Appointment', the humanist will have no difficulty, the situation is itself a real one, he can engage himself totally with the poem. I think one often tends to make an all too easy distinction between beliefs as beliefs, and beliefs as they enter into poetry. One distinguishes a bad hymn from a good religious sonnet of Donne's by saying that whereas one is good *poetry* and the other is bad *poetry*, the beliefs in the two poems, in themselves are the same; but in fact it might be accurate to distinguish between the beliefs and say whereas the belief in one is incomplete, vague, in the other it is tougher, resilient, more complete, that the bad poetry in the hymn is a result of the incomplete belief. Really, the distinction between belief as belief and belief transmuted into poetry, is only a distinction between the abstract statement and the imaginative communication, true of all poetry, not only of religious poetry. The real difficulty in reading a certain kind of religious poetry is that the sceptical reader has rejected for himself, the basis of the poet's experience, he can only give a partial assent to the poem, he can only appreciate the qualities of "sensibility" displayed by the poet, unless he admits the experience, as a possibility for him.

This "partial assent" can vitiate most of our reading ; the situations in literature seldom have a living reality for us. We tell ourselves that literature is concerned with particular situations as though we can avoid going outside the situations. But embedded in the situation are the artists' ways of regarding life as a whole. 'In Spring and Fall' the myth of the poet is as it were lived in the situation. You can term it whatever you like, beliefs or values or attitudes, but the reader cannot escape a relation with them. The reader's concern with what he reads will also be "metaphysical" if by "metaphysics" one means the central beliefs, the unified attitudes, with which a person meets the situations in his life. In remaining within the poem, there is a danger that the interest of the reader in the experience becomes a technical one, an interest in "the complexity", the "tension" the "conflict" the "refinement" and so on of the feelings. We get the critic who is a gourmet in art, a highly skilled connoisseur of emotions. I am not thinking of the aestheticism in the simple statement "Art for Arts Sake". The aestheticism to which I am referring, has a much subtler form; it may require that the material of the artist should be what has been seriously experienced by him; its standards in themselves may be acceptable to a person who takes a healthy, functional view of art. But the attitude still remains tenaciously one which tries to preserve the aesthetic within its own realm. A poem becomes—in the favourite phrase—"a point of heightened consciousness", we cannot quarrel with that, but we are anxious when it is secretly corrupted into an assumption that this consciousness is what is available only in art and therefore need not be viewed in terms which have contact with our own

personal lives. The aesthetic moment is kept disembodied, it is surreptitiously left unrelated, it does not draw its strength from the material sap of our living. As a contrast take Dr. Johnson; there is a quality which we might call fundamental in his criticism; his aesthetic judgement is also a moral judgement, it resolves into the question asked intelligently and seriously "what meaning has this writing this mode of feeling for me and the way I live ? What is its place in human experience?" One can say the same of the critical writings of Eliot or Lawrence; they go straight to the heart of the writer's experience, and sift the vital facts from it. They are not concerned with showing in detail, that what they say the novel or poem contains, is in fact what it contains: they are concerned with pointing to what remains for them, the centre of the experience, and then going on to judge it, and place it in their ways of living. Their totality of experience, the craftsman who practises the art, the moralist, and the philosopher, all speak at once in their criticism. This is true of them probably because they practise the art on which they write; they write bearing in mind that in their art they are concerned with the ordering of men's lives. Their criticisms do not take us back into the poem or novel alone, they compel us outside them to our adjustments and perceptions in normal living.

In the literary critical method made popular by the Cambridge critics Dr. Richards, Dr. Leavis, employed by Dr. Brooks in Yale, the method popular in our own University, the emphasis is on the question "what meaning has this piece of writing to the person who wrote it" ? This neutrality and impersonality is an inevitable part of University education today, for seldom do we find the humility that unites teacher and pupil in a passionate concern for knowledge. I should however add here that in Dr. Leavis's writing we get a finer conception of literary studies, his writing at its best is animated by an informed moral concern. It is without doubt necessary to use their critical method; there is a necessary place for critical writing which is primarily concerned with interpreting, and seeing the work of art in its detailed organization. Otherwise, although the critical attitudes themselves may be excellent, they may not quite apply as judgements to the work examined. One feels, for instance, in D. S. Savage, that he does not pause long enough to interpret the writer adequately, before he goes on to make his extremely interesting judgements on him. But the method which refers back everything to the poem or the novel, can lead to the 'pure' literary criticism which is merely a specialised technique, a method to demonstrate how language works in particular kinds of writing. Here the critic contents himself with pointing to the vagueness or precision of the words used, the adequacy of the words for what the artist seeks to communicate, the skill with which the emotion is recreated in words. About the emotions themselves

the writer's own valuations, he remains disengaged, for a valuation of the content of the writing involves him in a moral committal which he would avoid with deliberate care. At all costs he must refrain from a more personal response, he must hide his identity. In this way, the critic while accepting that creative writing should concern itself with what is directly experienced, can lean so imperceptibly on technique that he can make his response primarily a response to certain qualities of organization, of skill in the use of language. But to restore the living response the artist has to meet us where we have centrally ordered ourselves, with our values and beliefs; the moral significance of the writing must involve us. The most exhaustive interpretation the closest study of technique which does not proceed from such a response, is 'spendsavour salt'. We remember how all along the purpose of poetry was considered to be pleasure and instruction; that is one way of putting it, one way of saying that what is aesthetic must be informed by what is moral. A critic like Johnson did not waste time with the thin ghosts of the aesthetic form of a work, of its fineness of sensibilty; his critical language was more alive and solid, for his vision was fixed unerringly on his own living, his beliefs and attitudes.

The dissection of language never was so pronounced in critical writing as it is today. In a community where the spoken language functions healthily one can respond more naturally through the words of the writer to what is signified without dragging the associations of the words to consciousness. But where the common language is debased, the poet's language tends to become more and more personal, and the critic can make it available to the reader only by a careful examination of how it works. That is only a part of the ill-health of language and consequently the imagination to-day.

English literature is a literature which is produced in a culture different form our own, and therefore the body of experience it contains may not come to us with the same sense of 'here and now' as it might to an English reader. In *St. Mawr* for instance the characters, social atmosphere, all the myriad details that form the aura of the novel, would be recognizable elements in the culture in which the English reader lives. We may participate in what is more deeply human in the novel but the accretion of details which tie up the experience with a way of living will not be there for us to the same degree. As a result our experience of English literature would tend to be a little abstract having no place in the world in which we move.

Our need is to recover the sense of ' here and now ' when we respond to English literature, or for a matter of that any literature, to constantly renew our critial language, so that it does not become a technical and arid jargon which enables us to remain neutral to the experience, when we return from our reading. We have to make that which is of human worth in

what we read, available personally to us. For that we have to discuss literature personally in relation to ourselves, the splintering of traditions here in Ceylon our own basic beliefs or lack of them. We must try to make our critical speech as relevant to ourselves as possible. This does not mean that in examining Keat's 'Ode to a Nightingale' we must explicitly speak about Ceylon, or state our catechism of beliefs. It only means that our reading must be informed always by an awareness which is contemporary and local, by an implied inquiry about the personal relevance of what we read. We can only do so if we approach literature receptively from our basic attitude and beliefs, make our reading a meeting of our experience with the experience of another, from which we proceed to make a judgement.

There is something in the human spirit which seeks to protect it from experience in its utter and naked state always make it safe under some covering. In each experience the spirit has its wiles and deceptions to preserve itself from the impact. In literature the very manner in which we talk of and discuss experience, can become the means of not delivering ourselves to it, of placing ourselves at an infinite distance from it. Literature can for some people become a kind of innoculation against experience, a pungent sauce to preserve a spurious contact with the spirit. Like Lawrence's ' Ships in Bottles '

> "*Nipped upon the frozen floods of philosophic despair*
> *They lie high and dry...*
> *Reeling in the blackend of all beliefs*
> *they sink*
> *Yet there they are little ships*
> *Safe inside their bottles !*
> *Safe from every contact*
> *Safe from all experience*
> *Safe above all from life"...*

It is very true that a fine literary sensibility does not always go together with the same sensibility in one's living relations. On the other hand many who deal imaginatively with their human relations show complete indifference to art, except as incidental entertainment. If we place any importance on the literary activity, on preception and sensitiveness in reading literature, it is only because the imagination which we bring to literature has it place finally in our living. Or else we might say with Rimbaud "Merde pour la poesie".

MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE
A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR MODERN POETRY

Sinhalese classical poems, except one or two, appeal only to scholars for whom they have been written. The tradition of Sinhalese classical poetry originated under the influence of Sanskrit court poetry. But about two centuries later, in the fifteenth century, Sinhalese poets seem to have made an attempt to break away from this tradition to develop a poetry which would send its roots into the native soil. But their attempt was limited only to borrowing external features and metres of Sinhalese folk poetry. The themes, contents, figurative language of the old poetry remained unchanged.

The modern Sinhalese poets have been trying to break away from this tradition which has no relation to the present day life and society. They have rejected the old poetic diction by exploiting the colloquial language. They have produced a vast number of new lyrical verses. Most of them are sentimental. Many poets have attempted to depict the life of poor people and their suffering. But the great majority of them, have failed to look at life with an insight which is deeper than that of the average educated man. Their greatest failure, except for the late Munidasa Cumaratunga and two or three of his followers, is their inability to break away from the external features such as four lines ending in similar letters and hackneyed metres of classical verses. Some of the metres are too musical. The meaning and the experience they wish to transmit by their verses are drowned in metrical music. They seem to have failed to realise that music is a different language which is the medium of the composer.

They forget that the poet's concern is to learn to manipulate the rhythm of the language to suit his mood and style and to exploit the suggestive meaning of words to transmit his experience to the reader.

Teachers, I believe, can do a service to our modern poetry if they study and exploit Sinhalese folk poetry. Most of the Sinhalese folk poetry is in hackneyed metres and four lines ending in similar letters which is called 'Eli-veta' in Sinhalese poetics. But there is a large number of stray blank verses with exquisite imagery conveying an experience which will be of significance to the modern reader who is tired of conceits and hackneyed metaphors of classical poets.

කන්ද උඩින් එන කිකිළි ගෝමරියේ
තළල් වටින් එන දඬිය මුතු කැඩියේ
අත් පා මුදු පය පා මුදු වඩිරොඩියේ
මට පිටුපා ගෙට යනවද සුරතලියේ

සඳපනිගෙන් කිරි ඇලා
සඳවනසේ මුදවාලා
අනේ නැනේ නැත නොකියා
මට දිකිරි දෙන්නේ

Both of these verses are from a collection by V. D. de Lanarolle. They are untranslatable because in an English translation their suggestive meaning, poetry and rhythm will be lost. The last two lines of the second have a music and a rhythm most appropriate to the particular appeal of the lover to his girl cousin.

Intensive study and analysis of these two folk verses alone will give inspiration to a Sinhalese poet who wishes to break away from the deadening influence of the major part of our traditional poetry which having no roots in the soil is withering like an uprooted plant. Even those who seek inspiration from our classical poetry can learn much and derive inspiration by studying our folk poetry. Sinhalese folk poetry has been maligned by most of our scholars, who have lost their sensibility in concentrating only on the pedantic aspect of our classical poetry.

"Let us humbly acknowledge:" says Anatole France (*Life and Letters*, Third Series) "the old country-folk are the builders of the language, and our masters in poetry. They never seek rich rhyme, and are satisfied with simple assonance. The verses, not made for th eye, are full of ungrammatical elisions; but it must be borne in mind that if grammar is, as they say—and I doubt it — the art of speech, it is certainly not the art of song. Apart from that, the verse of the popular song strikes the ear as correct; it is clear and limpid, and possessed of a brevity which the most learned art seeks without acquiring; it has the light flight and morning song of the lark it so loves to glorify".

Any sympathetic reader with a knowledge of only the colloquial Sinhalese will be able to appreciate the assonance and the brevity of the above quoted two folk verses.

DR. E. R. DE. S. SARATHCHANDRA

THE SINHALESE NOVEL AND ITS READERS

The Sinhalese novel, a product of the meeting of two widely differing cultures, has been in Ceylon, for the greater part of fifty years, in the position of an unwanted child. No serious minded person includes a Sinhalese novel in his reading list. Like the words *nadagam* and *kolam* which originally meant plays and masked dances, but later stood for any kind of buffoonery or tomfoolery, the word *Navakatha* acquired quite different connotations from the English word "novel" of which it was a translation. *Navakatha* means any kind of wild fantasy or fairy tale the reading of which is an idle pastime, the sort of amusement that only children would indulge in.

Most novelists have gained prestige by writing informative books in addition to novels, as in the case of Martin Wickramasinghe, or by editing newspapers or even by writing poetry, as in that of Piyadasa Sirisena. Though novels are recommended annually for the local examinations, this has been done only in order to conform to the pattern of English examinations. It has had little effect, except within the last three or four years, on the prestige of the novel as a form of literature.

Novelists themselves have not been unaware of the fact that what they write has been slow to receive the status of literature. W. A. Silva makes a sarcastic reference to this state of affairs in his *Land of the Gods*, in which a parent objects to his daughter's reading of novels on the ground that they contain many things that a growing girl ought not to know. And here he has hit the nail on the head, for the objection to the novel has been more on moral grounds than on anything else. It is not only useless stuff but dangerous as well. We might attribute this attitude to the lack of critical literature. But this is clearly not the case.

What kind of people read the novel, then, since it certainly has had and still has a very wide reading public? A statistical survey would, undoubtedly, reveal many interesting facts regarding the novel reading public. At least it could be stated negatively, without elaborate statistics, that the upper classes who were English-educated, did not so much as know of the existence of such a thing as the Sinhalese novel, and that section of the English-educated upper-middle class, consisting of the higher grade of government servants, did not read

Sinhalese novels even if they amused themselves occasionally with other forms of Sinhalese literature (this is true of the older generation of government servants, who, though they had an English education, were not cut away completely from their native language and cutstoms).

This fact is of great importance in enabling us to understand the shape that the Sinhalese novel took in its beginning. Most of Sirisena's novels, the first being *Jayatissa* and *Rosalin* (1906), A. Simon de Silva's *Theresa* (1907) and *Our Religion* (1910) most of the work of M. C. F. Perera, (first novel 1906) and Wickremasinghe's *The Mirage* (i.e. the mirage of Western Civilization, 1925), were unmitigated attacks on the upper classes. It is not surprising that these works were read with avidity by the public that they were written for. Behind the thin disguise of nationalism runs a deeper vein of resentment against a whole class of people who, by means of a ticket they had purchased with their wealth and position, were infringing all the rules of a group morality and escaping the censure that would have come to those of other classes if they behaved similarly.

At the time that Sirisena was writing, the upper classes of Colombo were, if not avowed Christians, at least products of a Christian education. Unlike the educated upper classes of India, they were cut off from the rest of native life by very thick barriers. Even if they were professedly Buddhist, there was nothing to prevent them from the wholesale adoption of a European mode of living, since Buddhism has not prescribed rules for the lay life. The Hindu does not have as much liberty in his lay life as the Buddhist. From birth to death his life is occupied by an endless routine of religious ritual, the birth ceremonies, rules regarding food and drink, rites and obsequies to the dead, and a host of other obligatory practices which left little room for a foreign culture to encroach upon his life. The Europeanised Buddhist, on the other hand, has no more inconveniences than the necessity of removing his shoes when entering a temple; or, of sitting on the ground when listening to a sermon (he could still continue to wear his socks if he wished to). The taboo on drink and eggs constitute a minor obstacle which could be evaded with characteristic Buddhist common sense (notice medicated wines, etc.)

I consider this freedom one of the most valuable possessions we have, and let this be stated here lest the point I am trying to make be misunderstood. The Hindu would never dream of entering a temple in European clothes, but the Buddhist might do it with perfect indifference. The unfortunate effect of this freedom, however, was the creation in Ceylon of an upper class or classes very widely removed from the rest. They wore European clothes which made them "mahattayas" automatically, they spoke English amongst themselves even when they travelled about in buses and trains in

the company of people who did not speak English, introduced European table manners into their homes even when they ate rice and curry, and altogether hedged themselves round with a most provoking social barrier. Hence the attack against Europeanisation in the novels was double-edged. Its deep-seated motive was a class resentment. The nationalistic motive was, I think, secondary, and this I infer from the fact that the emotional fervour of the national movement was provided by the Sinhalese speaking lower-middle class and its literature, which mainly satirised the upper class, and from the fact that the attack ceased when the leaders of the movement and its prominent writers rose to the upper class. The insincerity of the movement was evident, and it is not without some truth that people remark cynically that the staunchest supporters of the temperance movement were wine-merchants, just as people remark today that the anti-beef campaign was sponsored by the pork-sellers. Of the few people of the upper classes who identified themselves with the nationalistic Buddhistic revival was the Anagarika Dharmapala. Those leaders of the movement who either belonged to the upper classes or who rose to the upper class latter, identified themselves with the lower-middle class in public by such symbols as the "national" dress, but in their private lives carried on with the usual European, thus demonstrating the dominant class-character of the movement.

It is true that simultaneously there arose the political movement which orginated among the upper classes, and that to some extent they exploited the feeling of the lower-middle classes in order to gain power into their hands, but with this aspect of the national movement we are not concerned here. We might also remark that it is only within the past few years that the cultural revival has been making a start once more among the upper classes and its superficial nature is a natural result of the fact that the upper-classes have been, for a generation or two, completely removed from the language, literature, and customs of the country.

Apart from the psychology of class conflicts, the very fact that the Sinhalese novel did not reach any high artistic level is due to the literary tastes of the public it reached. To write better was to write for less money and at least some talented fiction writers of Ceylon realised this to their cost. Nobody took any notice of Wickramasinghe's *A Woman* when it appeared in 1924, although this collection of stories and sketches contain some specimens of very good writing. Why they took no notice of his *The Mirage* is a different story. Here the psychology of the public is relevant, for the author displayed an unpardonable sympathy for the heroine, in spite of her numerous moral lapses, although he had to kill her in the end in order to prevent a general outcry (and perhaps to find a publisher).

None of these facts, however, help us to understand why the Sinhalese novel has been slow in gaining recognition as a serious form of literature which has come, probably, to stay. If we examine the works that come under the title of novel, we will find a motley array of writing; some in prose and verse; some mainly in prose with occasional verse inserts; some in the form of dialogue with the names of the speakers prefixed before their speeches as in a play; some in the shape of a correspondence between two or more people as in the novels of Richardson; and some others very much like the class of writings that are called novels in English literature. Works of this sort are not lacking in the earlier Sinhalese literature as well, so that the Sinhalese reader is certainly not unfamiliar with such writing. *The Ummagga Jatakaya*, at least, is a "fiction in prose to a certain extent", and it has characters, some principal and others, of course, subordinate. Perhaps the "new tales" (*'navakatha'*) as the novels are called, are better told than the old ones, and what can this mean but that they are more plausible, are full of verisimilitude, or create a better illusion of reality ?

This criterion, however, does not serve to distinguish Sinhalese novels from the older prose literature, for, in this sense, the *Ummagga Jatakaya* is much more plausible than a good part of Piyadasa Sirisena at least. For Sirisena, writing to an adult public of the twentieth century, expects his readers to believe that his detective Vickramapala was able to visit Juli Nona in the guise of her lover the schoolmaster by adopting the simple device of getting into his coat. A more clumsy detective than Vickramapala never entered into fiction before, and fortunately for him, he had no more intricate mysteries to solve than those of an abduction or petty theft.

Apart from the fact, therefore, that the new tales are professedly fiction whereas it would be a heresy to suggest that Mahausadha did not live, there seems to be nothing that could serve to distinguish the novel from the old tales except its treatment of what might be conveniently called the theme of romantic love. What I mean by the theme of romantic love in literature is simply a peculiar attitude that writers take to the sentiment known as love, attempting to distinguish it from physical passion, and altogether idealising it as a unique experience either as providing a good basis for a happy marriage or as valuable in itself. Now it is obvious that such an attitude must spring in a society naturally and can hardly be foisted on it by writers. For a writer to use such a theme there must already be in society some sort of opinion in its favour, or at least the attitude must be familiar to the people. It must also be admitted by anyone even superficially acquainted with Sinhalese literature, that this is the last literature in the world that is likely to encourage such an attitude. There is a species of romantic love familiar in

Sanskrit and Prakrit literature, but this has important difference which must be noticed in order to avoid confusions. One important distinction is that Indian romantic love is a safe kind of feeling, in the sense that it does not touch or threaten to upset social conven ions. The Sanskrit or Prakrit love lyric deals with the yearning for each other of parted husbands and wives. Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* is only one example, cited here because it is the most famous. And the love portrayed is not of the idealised etherealised sort that is common in European literature. It is rather more concrete, for the departed husband not seldom has nightmares of his wife's thighs or quite frankly expresses his desire to be cuddled between her breasts. There is nothing more romantic, in this sense, in Indian literature than a clandestine tryst with a courtesan, and since courtesanship was a luxury institution of the royal classes of classical India, there was nothing dangerous in such adventures.

The well-known classic episodes in Indian literature are the stories of Nala and Damayanti, Satyavan and Savitri, and Rama and Sita. The writers of these stories deal very little, it will be seen with the pre-marital relations of their heroes and heroines. Most of them are really stories of matrimonial fidelity, and particularly female chastity, rather than stories of romantic love. Rama as is well-known, refused to accept Sita until she had gone through the ordeal of fire, for it was necessary that she should be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. Damayanti chose Nala from among many handsome princes, but the real test of her love comes after their marriage. The Savitri episode is clearly one of fidelity. It is true that often dramatists make use of the theme of the romantic love, but in this case it is kings and gods, a class exempt from moral obligations, that figure as the characters. A king can afford to have a number of love affairs as long as they harmlessly end only in the enlarging of his harem and do not threaten to upset the social order.

It is significant that the Buddhist culture of Ceylon did not encourge any of these forms of literature and that in spite of the fact that the Sanskrit drama was undoubtedly known to literary men, no one attempted anything in its style. I wonder if, together with the general opposition to Hindu culture (monks were expressly forbidden to read the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*), the remarkable fact that the Sanskrit drama did not influence Sinhalese literature was due to its employment of the theme of romantic love. But this is merely a suggestion, and one that I am not prepared to defend here. The main fact that I wish to emphasise is that Indian literature in general, and Buddhist literature in particular, did not treat love in the way in which it has been treated by European writers or encourage the sentiment to an extent that might make it a danger to the existing social structure.

This does not mean that in the ancient world marriages were made only on earth. It rather means that marriages made in heaven inevitably ended in hell. The well-known story of Patacara in Pali literature amply illustrates this. Patacara is the daughter of middle-class parents. She falls in love with one of the servants and elopes with him. The result is a string of misfortunes. She loses both her children, her husband, and, in the end, even her parents. It is almost a tribal legend illustrating the disadvantages of misplaced affection, and might have been treated quite differently by an author who wished to idealise such relationship.

The tale of Kusa, too, is one of these stories that might have been treated differently by a society whose conventional attitudes were different. The story is an oriental version of the universal Beauty-and-the Beast theme, and in its earlier part it smacks of romantic love. But in reality Kusa falls in love, first, with the image of the woman he himself carves out of gold, and the pangs of unrequited love come only after he is married to her.

It is, in fact, the recognition of the possibilities of the of romantic love that gave an entirely new direction to the whole of Sinhalese literature from the middle of the nineteenth century. The beginnings were made by the writers of the of the operatic plays known as *nadagam*. They began to popularise the love story, and the writers of metrical romances followed suit in order to satisfy a demand that was rapidly growing. The *nadagam* themes were mainly from European Roman Catholic sources reaching the Sinhalese through Tamil, and apart from the fact they were love stories they did not leave good people in despair at the wicked ways of the world. The taste for love stories grew, however, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was translated into a musical drama by C. Don Bastian and acted in 1884. The same writer dramatised many European tales, frankly championing the marriage of true minds. From 1700 onwards there was a spate of popular poetry all of them being versifications of love stories, and writers ransacked all the old sources in search of similar themes. They found quite a number in the old Jataka collections, in Tamil literature and in Sanskrit. They treated the stories rather differently this time, giving quite a lot of prominence to their love element.

I shall stop at these examples since my purpose here is not to write a history of the Sinhalese novel. They are sufficient to illustrate the fact that the main feature of the novel was its treatment of romantic love with a sympathy which authors had not hitherto displayed towards it. And it is this new attitude, I suggest, that relegated the novel to the inferior position it holds today. For it attempted to foist on a society a convention that was foreign to it, and while doing so, described society incorrectly.

This latter fact is important, for much of the unreality of W. A. Silva's romances springs from it. And the same could be said of the early novels of Wickremasinghe and A Simon de Silva. Sirisena saved the situation in unique manner, and gained for his novels a greater prestige by making the love story subordinate to the didactic interest. Besides, his characters know how to direct their affections along the approved channels. Jayatissa and Rosalin fall in love at first sight, but this is all. The rest of their love affair takes the form of a correspondence on Buddhism and national customs, until Rosalin is converted to Buddhism. Events begin to move only after the abduction of Rosalin, and the rest of the story is like the *Ramayana*

The W. A. Silva romance enjoys the popularity it does because of its dope-value. Its themes are mostly modelled on themes in a certain class of popular English fiction which performs a similar function among English-speaking communities. An educated young man of the Colombo upper classes falls in love with a village girl, or a young girl of high birth loses her heart to a street-boy. Often a dashing Prince Charming encounters an unsophisticated village lass. The course of true love, as usual, never runs smooth, there being many obstacles in the shape of the parents of the high-born, but in the end, as usual again, all goes well, and the couple live happily ever afterwards in a wealthy mansion. W. A, Silva's novels follow closely their European patterns in their depiction of love Here there is no hocus-pocus of the Sirisena type, no conflict between a desire to write a novel, and the desire to reform society. In a certain sense Sirisena was the first man to attempt to adapt the European novel to its new environment, for he saw that the yearning of a wife for her absent husband was more likely to happen in Ceylon and less likely to wound the moral susceptibilities of the Sinhalese. But unfortunately he was no artist, and he could not even relate a story properly. W. A Silva could at least relate a fairy tale, but he takes care in the process not to upset the social order. It is true his sympathies are always with the trials of young lovers He makes statements like the following enough to damn him and the novel forever: "When a man is intoxicated by love, his whole behaviour changes. It is love that makes the proud humble, tames the wicked heart, subdues the violent, and turns men's minds from worldly to transcendental thoughts." What would the literary man educated in the Sinhalese tradition have to say to this kind of balderdash? Would he ever think of recognising writing that expressed such sentiments as good literature? But at the same time, W. A. Silva sees to it that his high-born characters do not marry the low-born until some family connection is discovered by which the apparently low-born are seen to be really high-born. His lovers are not so rash as to fling wealth and position to the winds, along with irate parents, and seek solace in each other's arms in a thatched hut by the brook. All good people

must be assuaged, and the parents consent must be won, and what distinguishes one novel from another is how these are achieved in each case. W. A. Silva has no stories in which the rich youth goes down to the village and chooses to till the fields for the sake of the girl he loves. This would be adding insult to injury, for romantic love is bad enough, but it might be tolerated as long as it does not interfere with class and caste. His novels end with a "climb," and naturally provide the poorer classes with a fantasy-mechanism to compensate for their sadder lot. Of the dangers in such kinds of literature I need not comment.

The Sinhalese novel, I believe, has to make a fresh beginning, and, fortunately for us, a beginning has been made in the only long novel which bids fair to earning a permanent place in our literature. I am referring to Wickremasinghe's *The Changing Village* which appeared about three or four years ago. This is a novel that springs from the soil, a story whose characters cannot afford to make voyages on magic carpets, for they are oppressed, and oppressed tragically by the weight of clan taboos and social prejudices. They have no opportunity for self-expression, and it is against their nature and upbringing to seek for such. They cannot marry the people they love, though they know what it is to love. Wickremasinghe is not, in this novel, standing up for established order in another form. He shows the tragedy in the lives of people whose entire individuality is dominated by the social conventions of the group. While being a novel therefore, to which moral objection cannot be raised, it is at the same time truly revolutionary. It depicts the passive Sinhalese character, unique in its own way, the outwardly calm but inwardly turbulent nature of the Sinhalese village woman whose only outlook on life is through a wooden window, and the stoic comfort that Buddhism brings to these people in their uneventful lives. Into the midst of this comes the influence of modern education, the social critic who laughs at the village customs, and the youth who wishes to woo in the European fashion. Nothing very much happens except an occasional pilgrimage by bullock cart in the moonlight (not for lovers in these climes) to a distant shrine. And still the story goes on, and the petty ambitions of these people, their worries over social opinion, their attempts to whitewash their crumbling position and the broken walls of their family house, hold the interest of the reader.

S. SANMUGANATHAN

SINHALESE ART

Sinhalese art is an interesting study. For Ceylon's size its artistic contribution is overwhelming. Yet it has many a a gap to fill in. No new knowledge has been added to this aspect of culture for well over half a century. The days of the Civil Servant as a research worker are gone. Fortunately a handful of younger men of the University of Ceylon are opening up new ground. The new little magazines that are appearing as quarterlies are added features.

It is now opportune to question ourselves as to what is Sinhalese art. It is obvious we mean, the art of the Sinhalese people. From the beginning Ceylon has had a tortuous history. Her contacts with the in-coming people left their imprints in turn on Sinhalese art. Without such contact and drift of culture we are aware that there will be no progress but stagnation and suffocation

The story of the Sinhalese people start with the coming of Vijaya to Ceylon in 543 B.C. Evidence has been mounting up in recent years that Ceylon was populated several centuries ago by peoples of the mainland. Among them the the Tamils were in the majority by reason of being the nearest neighbours and the greatest sea farers of the ancient world. The pieces of pot sherds picked up by Dr. Andreas Nell in the Jaffna Peninsula were recognised by the late Sir Flinders Petrie as early Egyptian. The type of pot-sherds found at the ancient world famous trading mart at Mantota and some symbols in our coins show earlier occupation of Ceylon by civilised people than hitherto envisaged. Readers may be referred to the *Ceylon Journal of Science*, October 18th, 1949, Section G., on the Anthrometry of Sinhalese and Tamils of Ceylon.

The estimated population of Ceylon in 1949 was a little over seven millions. Of this about two-thirds were Kandyan and Low-Country Sinhalese. The rest was composed of Tamils, Moors, Malays, Portuguese, Dutch and British. Of these the Tamils have had contacts with the Sinhalese people from the beginning of history as traders supplying queens and their retinues, artisans, invaders and conquerers. The Moors too from the earliest times traded in these shores. Thus it is but natural to witness in Sinhalese Art impact of the early civilisations.

Next, when it comes to art "I know what I like" is often the ruling. Our artistic standards are very much in a turmoil. There is a distinctive barrier between the Fine Arts and Arts and Crafts. Fortunately this barrier is gradually broken up throughout the world. The Victoria and Albert Museum of

London has gone to the extent of spotlighting small objects week by week purely for their merits as a work of art and called each object the "masterpiece of the week." To appreciate such art certain intrinsic qualities are necessary—artistic sensitiveness, keen observation, experience and environment. The object itself should possess a significant form, designed, colour, vision and the capacity to keep the spectator interested. The material, place of origin, time and its author are immaterial. Though when all these conditions are satisfied it is possible that the place of origin and its character reveal themselves.

Now we are in a position to examine the character of Sinhalese art. The Sinhalese people we see is an ever-changing quantity, has had periods of rise and fall which in time left its imprint in the Art. When everything else has failed it is the art that reflects like a mirror truthfully the culture of a nation. Over a generation ago, with the discovery of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruma, Sinhalese Art was brought to the fore-front by Ferguson, Vincent Smith and Havell. They devoted in their major works on Indian Art a chapter on Sinhalese Art. They well characterised the then known architectural monuments, their peculiar assembling of parts quite unknown elsewhere, the monumental sculpture, the fortresses and mural paintings.

Whilst in Ceylon, most meritorious work was done by Bell by bringing to light most of our art treasures. His reports are replete with analytical details. It is to him we owe our greatest debt for our knowledge of the early periods of Sinhalese art. As recently as a couple of years ago a paper was sent to London to the Royal Society of Arts on Sinhalese Art. This contained very little outside what Bell had discovered even to the illustration. This paper was reprinted in the Souvenir of the International Art Exhibition held in Colombo in last February alongside the Colombo Exhibition. This does not mean there is no more art of the early period. This does not also mean that the Sangha, the kings and princes and administrators were the sole patrons of Sinhalese art as seen in the stone, brick and motor excavations we are busy with.

The new angle as to how the people lived, what their cultural attainments were, their jewellery, their utensils, dress etc., are still awaiting to be revealed. Art alone can depict this. Fortuately we are not without examples. If we do not know how to find them, we do get a fraction of the articles used buried with the relics in the chambers within the *garbhe* of the stupa. We have obtained some from the Ruwanveliseya. The golden 'thodu' is of unusual size to house into large distended ear-lobes. The workmanship, technical advancement, and its design is as good as any made in the twentieth century. Similarly there were chains of beads, broken bangles, household articles which were arranged for the Buddhist World Congress to view a few years

ago. These still have not received the study they deserve, nor have they any comprehensive labels. This new angle in the study of early Sinhalese art is a virgin field in which many a specialist can be engaged upon. Then there is the study of the evolution of patterns which would tell us how they have migrated to and fro. The patterns evolved out of the lotus flower as the source of inspiration are a revelation of their variety. No other country, not even Egypt can show such variety. Reference may be made to Flinders Petrie's corpus on the *Patterns of the Ancient World*.

We have so far not mentioned one scholar in the realm of Sinhalese art. He is the author of *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, Dr. Ananda Cumaraswamy. This doyen of Orientalists made known incidentally to the world the entire output and its symbolism in Indian and Ceylon art. His volume on Sinhalese art has been a monumental contribution. It is without reserve a fountain of inspiration. However the art of the Kandyan Period subsequent to this book is over emphasised. It has not only the art of other periods, but also older ones evolved and married into the incoming art of the Nayakkars. Kirti Sri's period needs a detailed study. So are the lacquer turned columns which were magnificently used in the Maritime Provinces, earthenware, shell, horn, and mica-wares. Metal work will need a separate study. Spinning, weaving, embroidery, dress are a reflection of art and culture. The changes in dress, jewellery, domestic architecture, Dutch Colonial furniture and pillow laces are indeed objects that speak highly of the art of the Sinhalese in European museums and private collections.

The present impetus given by the Government is most creditable. There are few to guide and direct the artists. This fact was fully brought out at the recent Colombo Exhibition. All the First Prizes should have been bought for the nation and housed. They marked periods good, bad or indifferent. Similar action was taken after the great Exhibition at Hyde Park, London, and formed the nucleus for the Victoria and Albert Museum. So it was in the great exhibition at Delhi; an illustrated catalogue was produced at government expense running up to nearly a thousand pages.

It will not be too late to collect the first prizes for a record even now. *The Cottage Industries* have the artists' addresses.

P. BANDARA

THE 1952 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN CEYLON: SOME ASPECTS

The four political parties that really mattered in the 1952 Parliamentary Elections in Ceylon namely, the U.N.P., S.L.F.P., L.S.S.P., and the C.P.—L.S.S.P. coalition; placed their respective programmes before the country. Discussion of these programmes took place, but these discussions were confined to a tiny minority—the politically educated intelligentsia. The large masses in the country remained ignorant or indifferent. There were however certain issues that came to the forefront, that came to be discussed by the majority of voters in the country and on which decisions vitally affecting the result of the election came to be taken. Whether these issues were real or imaginary, important or unimportant, is a different matter that will be considered later; but the fact remains that they were "issues" in that the large mass of voters considered them in some way and were ultimately affected by them. These issues may be stated as :

1. Democracy vs. Totalitarianism.
2. The question of the national languages.
3. The question of Buddhism.
4. The question of Ayurveda.
5. Marxists and their attitude to religion.

I would like to examine each of these issues with special reference to the attitude adopted by the political parties.

Demoracy vs Totalitarianism was the principal issue raised by the U,N·P , and exaggerated to such monstrous proportions by the daily press which backed the U.N.P. The argument on this issue as put forward by the U.N.P. ran something like this: "The U.N.P. is the one and only party that stood for democracy in this country. All the important opposition parties including the S. L. F. P. were directly or indirectly opposed to demoracy and wanted instead a totalitarian form of government. This struggle between totalitarianism and democracy was taking place the world over and this local struggle was only a part of that world struggle. A victory for totalitarianism will mean the destruction of everything you value. Therefore it was the duty of every voter to vote

U.N.P., whatver its other shortcomings may be." Now, it does not require much thinking to realise that this line of argument is heavily exposed to criticism. But this did not present the generation of a great deal of heat and voters being genuinely scared by the bugbear of totalitarianism. I suppose it is one of the less discussed aspects of democracy that although in theory the voter is free to make his own independent choice, in practice the choice is seriously limited by other factors, most important of which is his own ignorance. Judging by the public speeches of those who claim to be on the side of democracy, it was not quite clear what exactly they meant by democracy. It apparently meant different things to different people. The fundamental unity however of these diverse and sometimes contradictory statements in defence of democracy lay in the commanly shared desire of these propagandists to maintain themselves in power. Democracy therefore was an effective political slogan which like all political slogans must be handled with care. If by democracy was meant a parliamentary system of government, with one party in power and others opposing it, then it is something we have. But the mere existence of a party in power and other parties opposing it do not mean very much unless this particular arrangement has been conducive to the solution of the social and economic problems of society. Democracy becomes a catch-word and a largely meaningless ideal, unless those advocating it are prepared to extend the liberty and freedom that has been granted in the political sphere to which it is now confined, to the larger social and economic fields. From the point of view of the present writer democracy in Ceylon has not extended the democratic principles in any satisfying manner to the economic and social problems of the country. Democratic ideals like "equality of opportunity" will remain absurdities as long as poverty and unemployment remain major problems—as long as wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few. These problems cannot be solved without certain radical measures which the U.N.P.. is not prepared to adopt. (By "radical measures" I do not mean the kind of political action contemplated by the Marxists. In fact, the Marxists claim that only their programme can solve these problems, is to my mind false). Only in one field was the record of the last U.N.P. Government impressive—the field of agricultural development. In other vital questions like housing, rent restriction, high cost of living, the transport and hospital services, no worthwhile progress was made despite consistent public agitation. The last government was fully aware of these questions and paid attention to them, but it failed to make any appreciable progress because the fundamental approach to these problems was wrong, unimaginative and undemocractic. Therefore the claim of the U.N.P , to be the one and only guardian of democracy could not be accepted without serious reservations. By raising the cry of "save

democracy" the U.N.P. was able to divert the attention of the country from the social and economic realities to an abstraction which proved to be a magic formula. The success with which this was done is largely explained by the fact that democracy was offered as the alternative to totalitarianism. This opposition as far as Ceylon was concerned was really a distortion of the political situation. To what extent was this threat of totalitarianism real and to what extent was it artificially worked up? Judging by events in Russia and the Communist controlled countries, the Communist Party in Ceylon can be called a party aiming at a totalitarian form of government. Therefore the policy of that party had to be vigorously resisted. But it was obvious to everyone that the C P—L S S P. coalition was not making a bid for power and at no time was it a serious threat. Its total strength of four seats in the present parliament gives a slightly exaggerated indication of their strength in the country. The C.P. can come to power in Ceylon only on the shoulders of foreign Communist armies. The C P.—L S S.P. coalition could not therefore have been the source of totalitarian danger. By no stretch of imagination could the S.L.F.P., be considered a "revolutionary party" although election propaganda somewhat maliciously attempted to place it along the L S S.P., on the ground that Mr. Bandaranaike had come to an electoral agreement with the L.S.S.P. There is nothing peculiar about agreements of this nature; they have become part of power politics the world over. Churchill and Stalin addressed each other in endearing terms when they were opposed to Hitler, but this did not make Churchill a Communist bureaucrat nor Stalin a Conservative parliamentarian. Mr. Bandaranaike's alliance was on similar lines. The threat of totalitarianism was not from the S.L.F.P.

The bogey of totalitarianism was really the political weapon used to undermine the L S.S.P. led by Dr. N. M. Perera, the party that offered a genuine threat to the U N.P. and despite depleted numbers in parliament, remains the most powerful opposition party. During the last five years the L S.S.P, has shown an interesting shift in attitude to parliamentary work. At the elections to Ceylon's first parliament, the L.S.S.P. maintained the classic Marxist position that parliamentary government was a farce and that it had no desire to form a government or accept office in a government formed under a bourgeois parliamentary structure. Parliament was only another platform from which to carry on the revolutionary struggle, the outcome of which would be decided outside parliament. Having entered parliament with this attitude the L.S.S P. members spent nearly five years in the opposition; years which from their point of view were largely wasted. The L.S.S.P, as an opposition party did an excellent job of work within parliament; but there were no signs of working class struggles to which the work within parliament could be related.

The five years of the first parliament is made noteworty by the absence of any major strikes or political agitations. The strikes in the harbour, the general strike of the clerical servants, the periodic labour unrest in the estates were things of the past. This may be explained by saying that the material conditions necessary for such unrest and agitation were absent; that Ceylon was passing through an economic boom. But this is not the total explanation. Within the five years the L S.S.P. worked in parliament, the party itself was becoming more conscious of parliamentary power. The broad masses that had voted for the L.S.S.P. expected some form of redress for their immediate economic problems. Except for a thin layer of "class conscious" workers and a thinner layer of middle class "educated" in revolutionary Marxism, the larger masses cannot and will not bear the economic burden of the present, hoping for a workers' and peasants' government in the future. Those who had voted for the L.S.S.P. at the first parliamentary elections felt a sense of disappointment. The disappointment was in a way natural because the high expectations with which a fair number of L.S S.P. members were sent to the first parliament faded away with the realisation that this party could do little in the matter of much needed economic reforms, until it was prepared to accept office. This in itself indicates that the mass support given to this party at the first elections, was given not for its revolutionary programme but on the conviction that the L.S S.P. would carry out the most progressive reforms by working within the structure of parliamentary government. The L.S.S.P. itself was not insensitive to the peculiar position in which it was placed after the first parliamentnry elections. With no international connections worth mentioning, the L.S S.P. had to survive by adopting itself to local conditions. It was forced to withdraw from certain positions and shift its position in others The complete change of front (at least outwardly) at the recent elections in regard to parliamentary government, is only one of the important shifts in the L.S.S P. policy. This time, the party that had considered parliamentary work only as a side issue and refused to accept office in a "bourgeois parliament', put forward the clear straightforward slogan of a "Workers' and Peasants' Samasamaja government" based on a specific fourteen point programme. To all intents and purposes the L.S S P. appeared therefore as a party willing to form a government in parliament. (Whether it is called parliament or Constituent Assembly makes no material difference). But this willingness to form a government was not coupled with a desire to become a "parliamentary party." The attitude to parliamentary government remained the same as at the first parliamentary elections; but now it was thought politically expedient to gloss over it, except when the defeats came. When a party which has consistently maintained a theoretical position hostile to parliamentary form of government, asks for power within parliament, the voters have a right

to ask whether this party has changed its attitude to parliamentary government and if so in what way. It was I think the duty of the L.S.S.P when asking for parliamentary power to declare its attitude to parliamentary government in general without leaving it for others to conjecture. Failure or reluctance to do this created a justifiable suspicion which was exploited fully by the U.N.P. propaganda. It was through this gap that totalitarianism was made to appear a real threat. A party that had maintained that parliamentary government was a farce was asking for power within parliament. In the absence of any explanation from the L S.S.P, political opponents were able to make sinister inferences and enlarge on them for public consumption. Even though L S S.P propaganda camouflaged their basic attitude to parliamentary government, any thinking voter could have realised that the alternative of totalitarianism was a tremendous distortion. Even if the L.S.S P was able to form a government without the support of any other opposition party, any attempt to "liquidate" the other parties or to rule without the consent of parliament would have led to a situation which the L.S.S.P. could not have tackled without foreign assistance and there is no source from which such assistance could have been obtained. In the light of these facts it cannot seriously be maintained that because the L.S.S.P. did not declare that it was a "parliamentary party", the totalitarian danger was any the more real. The cry of democracy vs. totalitarianism was therefore a clever slogan with little relation to political facts. But it was the principal slogan on which the L.S S P. was defeated.

In a country like Ceylon which is not predominantly working class, the L.S.S.P. which claims to represent the working class can never hope to win a parliamentary majority with out the active support of the middle class. It is precisely this class that was frightened by the alternative of totalitarianism. The L.S.S.P. cannot attract this class without dispensing with the cynicism and snobbery with which they at present approach their problems and needs. This snobbery cannot be dropped like a used garment because it gets its drive and power from an important tenet of Marxist theory—a tenet which history has disproved not only in its fundamentals but also in its details. An attempt to win the middle class will mean not only a change in attitude, but also a change in the structure and organisation of the party. It will have to broaden its base so that an average middle class man can work within the party without being made to feel that he is there by "grace and not by right". All this of course means that the L.S.S.P. will have to stop calling itself a revolutionary party. This may sound fantastic but to my mind there are only three possible courses of action open to the L.S.S.P. It can declare itself a party ready to work within the structure of parliamentary government, or it can join the C.P. (as a small section has already done), or exist as an isolated Trotskyist group without

the power of effective politicial action. Within the last few years the L.S.S.P. has shown increasing interest in parliamentary power; it can proceed on this path only by breaking the prison walls of revolutionary theory. The recent elections pointed to the difficulty of trying to win a majority in parliament without having the appropriate propaganda or the party organisation. The slogan of a "Samasamaja government" was the correct slogan, but it could not win because the propaganda, the party, the preparation were all those of a Marxist party which had not yet attempted the creation of a popular base. (The specialised vocabulary in the L.S.S.P. (English) paper illustrates well how the terminology of revolutionary Marxism can be a serious hindrance to communication with non-party readers. The *Trine* on the other hand can influence layers because it addresses in an idiom that is easily understood). Dr. Colivin R. de Silva in his pamphlet *The Why and the Wherefore* says that this time the capitalist class in Ceylon fought the elections as a class conscious organised force. He adds: "With the bourgoeisie went whole layers of the petty bourgeoisie." This is correct, but the story is not complete unless we add that the bourgeoisie was able to carry away the petty bourgeoisie so readily and successfully due to confusions in the L-S S.P. policy itself.

Issues 2, 3 and 4, listed at the beginning of this essay, namely, the question of the national languages, the question of Buddhism and the question of Ayurveda can be considered together. The C.P. and the L.S,S P, paid little attention to those issues and rightly too, because compared to the economic issues on which the L.S S.P fourteen point programme had a great deal to say, these were unimportant. Even the most ardent advocates of those causes rarely made themselves explicit as to what precisely they wanted. Of these three issues, only the issue of the national languages merits serious consideration. This is not the place to go into this question, but it is sufficient to say that not one of the political parties had a clearly formulated attitude to this question in all its aspects. Point 3 of the L.S.S.P. programme stated thus: "Use of the national languages with immediate effect in all spheres of the administration" Now this statement is a guarded one, it does not say anything about the use of the national languages in the sphere of 'educatiom." This caution is to a great extent a virtue. It is better to have a clear attitude to an aspect of the question, than to talk nonsense about the whole thing. What is objectionable in point 3 however is the use of the expression "with immediate effect." Anyone who has considered ways and means of introducing the national languages in the sphere of the administration would have realised certain practical difficulties. These can perhaps be overcome but certainly not "with immediate effect." Do "all spheres of administration" include the courts of justice and if so can the national languages be introduced in

of justice and if so can the national languages be introduced in these places "with immediate effect" The L.S.S.P. attitude as formulated in point 3 though clear and cautious, attempts to pander to the haste and excitement of these reactionary layers that insisted on establishing overnight if possible the supremacy of the Sinhalese language. The national languages, Buddhism, and Ayurveda were problems that were presented without any clarity. Their vague emotional appeal, exploited by the S.L.F.P. diverted the attention of the voters from the concrete economic and social issues of the day; issues on which the S.L.F.P had no satisfactory programme different in any important way from the programme of the U.N.P. Although these issues were relatively unimportant in themselves, they had an important political meaning. Under the cover of Buddhism and national languages, certain middle class layers in this country which had hitherto been denied political power were attempting to obtain this power for the first time. They wanted their voices to be heard in the affairs of government. The U.N.P. met this challenge by giving certain moderate concessions and winning over large numbers and thereby isolating the extremist elements. This proved a wise political move because the U.N.P. won over certain sections of the middle class which were agitating on these issues and also undermined the three main points of support on which the S.L.F.P. stood. These issues though raised to prominent position by propaganda are not vital issues on which a political party could function for any considerable time. Just as these issues will disappear in a short time, a party that relied mainly on these issues for support will also have to disappear. The electcion achivements of the S.L.F.P. fell far short of its aspirations. This party will either have to adopt a more radical economic programme, in which case it comes close to the L.S.S.P. or it will have to join the U.N.P. or else perish.

The L.S.S.P. was not unware that considerable middle class support could be had by campaigning on the issues of Buddhism, Ayurveda and national languages. But though they rightly felt that these were not the real issues, they attempted by that uneasy alliance with the S.L.F.P. to derive some benefits even indirectly from the middle class support that the S.L.F.P. expected. The L.S.S.P. was not prepared to woo the middle classes directly. Claiming to be a "revolutionary party" it had neither the adequate orgnisation nor the overwhelming desire to do so. It is my feeling that if the L.S.S.P. had prepared in time to win the confidence of the middle classes, it would not have permitted the S.L.F.P. to fool about as it did. The limited electoral agreement with the S.L.F.P. was really an attempt to enlist middle class support by indirect means, without discarding the theoretical pre-suppositions that were hampering direct contact with this class,

The question of "L.S.S.P. attitude to religion" revealed some interesting things. The accepted Marxist position about religion defined by men like Lenin in relation to conditions existing at the time in Russia To attack the Tsarist government and the feudal system meant attacking the established church, an important feudal overlord. Economically and politically the two stood or fell together. It is dificult to think how the Marxist attitude to religion formulated under different conditions could be applied wholesale to conditions in Ceylon where the Church is certainly not an oppressive feudal overlord. Although conditions were different in Ceylon, the L.S.S.P. clung loyally to the traditional position I cannot see any reason why the L. S. S P. should be hostile to Church and religion in Ceylon, if it forms a government. The Church however has a right to be suspicious as long as the L.S.S.P. does not state anything contrary to the attitudes handed down so rigidly by men like Lenin and Trotsky. At the height of the recent elections when the religious question assumed grave political importance, L.S.S.P. spokesmen made certain pronouncements defining their attitude to religion. If these pronouncements are to be taken seriously, they substantially modify the position held by revolutionary Marxists all along the line. How far these statements were due to the immediate political situation or to a genuine desire to modify their attitude, is difficult to say. The important thing is that the "religious question" like many other questions showed how the L.S.S.P. in its reluctance discard or modify theoretical assumptions, had to fight its political opponents with numerous unnecessary disadvantages.

These five issues on which I have offered some comments really blinded the voters to the real and important questions to which they should have addressed themselves. The press was always able to relegate the economic issues to the background and mobilise public opinion on comparatively superficial issues. Ceylon is not the only country where voters are regularly cheated by abstractions like "Democracy" and "The will of the people."

Foreign policy was another important question that should have been discussed a great deal at the elections, but was not. Apart from the fact that the unsettled international situation demanded a clear and forthright definition of the foreign policy of this country, the question of finding foreign markets on which our economy rests, is bound up with foreign policy. The only parties that had clearly defined attitudes to foreign policy were the U.N.P. and the C.P. At the present the government of Ceylon is averse to any extensive trade with China and Soviet Russia. This aversion based on political grounds appears funny when these countries are prepared to buy our rubber at prices not obtainable anywhere else. Extensive trade or a trade agreement does not mean a political alliance.

Although the government maintains the attitude of "no trade with Communist countries," it has not done anything to prevent private exporters from sending seven shipments of rubber to Red China, even at the risk of incurring American displeasure. The daily press has made several attacks on Ceylonese who intend participating in the Peiking Peace Congress, saying that under the cover of "peace" these men are helping the war plans of the Communists. But I have yet to see an attack against the rubber kings who help Communist war plans by selling a strategic war material. These are questions that should have been placed with sufficient force before the people; but the L.S.S.P., the only party that could have done this, itself moves on slippery ground when it comes to foreign policy. In fact the resolutions on foreign policy contained in the Fourteen Point Programme are beautifully vague. Withdrawal from the British Commonwealth, and the establishment of an independent republic is only one aspect of the question. This independent republic must have a foreign policy. An "independent foreign policy," particularly for a small country like Ceylon is a meaningless proposition. The Nehru Government in India with all the resources at its disposal finds it difficult to maintain an "independent foreign policy." If in national politics an independent candidate is attacked from the "right" as well as from the "left" it is more so in international politics. Even if an L S.S.P, government sets out to consolidate an indipendent foreign policy, it will ultimately have to keep alliances and associations with either the " Anglo-American bloc" or the Communist controlled countries. Since an L.S.S.P. government will not allign itself with the countries led by America and England, it will have to look towards China, and Soviet Russia. The repeated failures of the L.S S.P. and the C.P. to come to an agreement only indicate the impossibility of a Trotskyist government in Ceylon finding support from Communist countries. It is by no means satisfactory to say as point 12 of the L.S.S.P. programme did, that it would enter into pacts of mutual friendship with neighbouring states like India, Burma and China. Does this mean that the L.S.S.P. will enter into pacts with the existing governments in those countries? If so we need not take this seriously, for Nehru's government in India, Thakin Nu's in Burma and Mao-Tse-Tung's in China will not be prepared to enter into pacts with an L S.S.P. government in Ceylon as long as it claims to hold a Trotskyist position. If the L.S.S.P. did not mean the existing government, then what particular forces in those countries were they referring to? The only political forces outside the existing governments of these countries are those organised and controlled by the Communists. The central difficulty of the L.S.S.P. attitude to foreign policy lies in that while opposing the "Anglo-American bloc," it has no alternative power with which to oppose that bloc. It is not prepared to accept the leadership of Russia and Red China because that would be giving into Stalinism. To

attack the bureaucracy in Russia and at the same time be willing to defend the "first workers' state" is an interesting theoretical distinction that has led the L.S.S.P. to enormous difficulties in the field of practical politics. The absence of satisfactory explanations on foreign policy is just another indication how the minds of the voters were diverted from relevant to irrelevant issues.

K. N. JAYATILLEKE

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

When the Editor of the *Mind* announced in the issue of July 1951 that Ludwig Wittgenstein had died at Cambridge on 29th. April 1951, the question uppermost in the minds of his few friends and students who knew him in the years 1945 to 1947, when he lectured (informally in his room on the third floor of Wnewell's Court) at Cambridge, would have been "Did he write that book that he intended to write?" For Wittgenstein resigned from Cambridge in 1947 and the philosophical world which was complaining that it had no direct access to the thoughts of Wittgenstein eagerly awaited a new work that would supplement or supersede his epoch making *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* published in 1922. We are now assured that he did leave a work"in a fairly finished state" (see *Mind*, October 1951) and that we needn't dip into the unauthorised notes (of the lectures) in private circulation, called the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book* in order to be acquainted with the post-*Tractatus* Wittgenstein.

But Wittgenstein, the man and the philospher cannot be understood by mere acquaintance or description. He is a paradox, and like all paradoxes cannot be easily explained by (what used to be called) the Laws of thought. He shunned the company of most people (which is not strange for a pilosopher) but specially that of philosophers, although he was one of the foremost figures of modern philosophy. He published only one book and one article and both the man and the work were unknown outside the world of academic philosophy. Yet the book gave the inspiration and formed the basis of one of the most powerful movements in modern philosophy now known as Logical Positivism. After the formation of the Vienna Circle in 1926, it swept across Europe. Oxford, that ancient citadel of conservative learning, was taken by storm when in the 1930s Wittgenstein met Gilbert Ryle, now Waynflete, Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford, who sub

sequently proclaimed to the Aristotelian Society that he was reluctantly converted to the view that "the main business of philosophy is the detection of the sources in linguistic idiom of recurrent misconceptions and absurd theories". And lastly London was captured when Ryle's pupil, A. J. Ayer, author of *Language, Truth and Logic* who popularised the movement in England was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy. And later, the movement was spreading in America.

In the meantime since 1929 Wittgenstein was mostly at Cambridge lecturing to students and wondering what was really wrong with the *Tractatus* which he had recommended so strongly in his preface as containing in essence the final solutions to the problems dealt with, however imperfect it may have been in other respects. Now let us see how he came there.

Born in 1889 of Jewish parents, his mother Catholic and father Protestant, Wittgenstein comes to Manchester to study engineering. He is not content with merely learning up the mathematical formulae of engineering and begins to inquire about the very fundamentals and foundations of mathematical symbolism. He is directed to Russell who is soon convinced that he is a genius (and not a crank in spite of eccentric views he held at times) for he soon mastered all that he had to teach him on the subject of Mathematical logic. Russell introduces him to Frege as well, and Wittgenstein's mastery of the subject is so profound that it would not be incorrect to say that Wittgenstein was both the pupil and teacher of Russell at this stage. As Russell himself confesses "Getting to know Wittgenstein was one of the most exciting intellectual adventures of my life.....in early years I was as willing to learn from him as he from me" ..... When his thoughts were finally settled he writes the *Tractatus* but the war takes him to the Austrian front with an unfinished manuscript and it is only after the armistice that Russell could meet him, discuss the work line by line and arrange for its publication. He now gives up philosophy for teaching in several village schools of Austria and moves to Vienna in 1926, where Moritz Schlick discusses the *Tractatus* in detail with him and founds the Vienna Circle, along with Rudolph Carnap (who is considered the leader of the left wing of this group), Otto Neurath, Friedrich Waismann and others. A few years later Wittgenstein returns to Cambridge.

Philosophically, I think there are four Wittgensteins worth knowing. First, Wittgenstein the presiding genius and inspirer of the modern Positivistic movement though standing aloof and holding views different from the members of the movement itself. Secondly the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus who is really known only to Russell and a few others who can comprehend the subtleties of symbolic logic and mathematical symbolism, especially as embodied in the *Principia Mathematica* of Whitehead and Russell—note that Wittgenstein says in

the Preface that "its (*Tractatus*) object would be attained if there were one person who read it with understanding and to whom it afforded pleasure". Thirdly the post-*Tractatus* Wittgenstein who, dissatisfied with his work, is actively engaged in fresh inquiry; and lastly Wittgenstein the mystic who is a subject of speculation among 'mystics', theologians and religious propagandists I shall say a few words on each aspect.

There has been a tendency sometimes to identify and at other times to disassociate the views of Wittgenstein from those of logical Positivism. I think a middle view would be nearer the truth. It is a historical fact that the initial and essential views of the Vienna Circle are contained in the *Tractatus*, whatever modifications the theory undergoes in the hands of Carnap, Tarski and others. It is also well-known how many Positivists especially in England drew their inspiration from the utterances of Wittgenstein. One need only point to the Preface of a recent work (*Logic and Language*, ed. by Antony Flew, Oxford. 1951) containing a collection of philosophical articles by nine English Positivists including Gilbert Ryle of Oxford and John Wisdom of Cambridge, where the Editor says that "everyone... .....will see through this volume marks of the enormous influence, direct and indirect, of the oral teachings of Prof. Wittgenstein." I wonder whether any other philosopher had such a distinguished "following" in his own lifetime and yet with no special effort on his part to teach or preach !

Nevertheless logical Positivism has within it many strains and many springs. Perhaps Hume was the first great Positivist who tried to give a death-blow to deductive metaphysics by his psychological analysis of the origins of knowledge. He recommended that the books on theology and metaphysics, which did not contain propositions concerning "relations of ideas" (logic and mathematics) or "matters of fact" (common-sense and science), had better be committed to the flames as they contained nothing but sophistry and illusion. This psychological empiricism of Hume along with the logical methods of Leibniz (who distinguished truths of fact from truths of reasoning), Kant's critique of metaphysics and the anti-metaphysical doctrines of Mach in respect of physics and psychology prepared the way. But the stage was not set till the developments in symbolic logic by the pioneers Boole and De Morgan followed up by Pierce and Schroeder (who dealt with the logic of relations) and the logical foundations of mathematics were investigated by Peano and Gottlob Frege. For the essential difference between the Positivism of Hume (or Comte) and that of the moderns is the employment by the latter of a powerful logical technique for the elimination of metaphysics and this would not have been realised without the work of Frege and Russell.

The Principia Mathematica of Russell and Whitehead was the first clear attempt to develop this logic into a well organised

system. Its main task was to show that the disciplines of logic and pure mathematics were fundamentally the same and both could be deduced from a few simple premises and certain ideas (e.g. "proposition", "negation") left undefined within the limits of the system. Its principle defect was that it was not sufficiently formalised so as to be a logically autonomous pure symbolism and in any case the relation between logic and experience was left unclarified. It was the genius of Wittgenstein to have been quick enough to grasp the merits of the symbolism as a sign language and undo its defect by establishing the connections of logic and experience, which was necessary in order to insure the significance and applicability of logic to experience.

How he does this is the story of the *Tractatus*. It is an aphoristic work which is also apocalyptic. And it is beautifully obscure. Yet its obscurity lies merely in its depth of insight and breadth of outlook: its beauty in its simplification of the logic of propositions and the unwasteful use of words. In it he is concerned with the conditions that a logically perfect language had to fulfil. A sentence (whatever the language) to assert a fact must have a common structure. Now the world consists of facts which may or may not contain parts which are facts. Such facts which have no parts (eg: "Socrates is wise") are atomic facts and are asserted by atomic propositions which are all logically independent of each other (ie cannot imply or be inconsistent with each other). The world is the totality of such facts but the world of propositions is far richer since we have positive and negative propositions, conjunctions and disjunctions of propositions etc. It is to the credit of Wittgenstein to have shown by an amazingly simplified process of logic that the truth or falsity of all propositions depend entirely on the truth or falsity of elementary propositions which in turn are exclcsively concerned with picturing empirical reality. In other words all propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions, with the exception of the propositions of logic and mathematics which are tautologies. (as could be shown by a purely symbolic system).

We now find that there are two types of propositions, the significant propositions which are reducible to the above elementary propositions and the tautologies which have no reference to experience or any form of reality. All significant thoughts (about reality) must therefore be expressible through the first type alone and where this is not possible no assertions are possible. "Whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent. (The last sentence of *Tractatus*). "The book" said Wittgenstein in the Preface "will, therefore, draw a limit to thinking or rather —not to thinking but to the expression of thoughts."

Now to which type do the questions or propositions of philosophers or metaphysicians belong? Obviously to neither. "Most propositions and questions that have been written about

philosophical matters are not false but senseless. We cannot, therefore, answer questions of this kind at all, but only state their senselessness. Most questions and propositions of the philosopher result from the fact that we do not understand the logic of our language. They are of the same kind as the question whether the Good is more or less identical than the Beautiful". (*Tractatus* 4.003). The task of modern philosophy would therefore be to show this, namely that classical philosophy was nonsense and metaphysics was impossible since it was a product of the misunderstanding of the logic of language (6.53). Thus there is no body of knowledge that could be deemed philosophical existing side by side with the knowledge of the natural science (4.111). So "the object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. *Philosophy is not a theory but an activity.* A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of "philosophical propositions", but to make propositions clear" (4.112).

Such were the conclusions of the *Tractatus.* Some of them were shocking enough but the natural sciences were quite reconciled to these and so they pass without comment. For instance, it follows from the logical independence of atomic propositions that there is no causal nexus and logical inference is not possible: "that the sun will rise tomorrow is an hypothesis and that means that we do not know whether it will rise (6.36311). A necessity for one thing to happen because another has happened does not exist (6,37)."

But there were two difficulties which could not be so easily accommodated. If reality is limited by empirical data it was not only impossible to assert significantly the existence of anything which cannot be described in experiential terms but also the existence of something which was not described in terms of *my* experience This meant Solipsism, which for Wittgenstein was not a dffficulty nor a doctrine implied by the system as the final truth about reality. "In fact what solipsism *means* is quite correct only it cannot be *said* but it shows itself (5 62)". But then ' Solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism". (5.64). Secondly there was the difficulty of classifying the propositions of the *Tractatus* itself. As they were neither of the first sort nor of the second sort they should strictly be termed "senseless" and metaphysical. But they were propositions about propositions, indicating their logical structure and relation to reality and were therefore important though strictly 'meaningless' and not to be taken literally. "My propsitions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognises them as senseless when he has climbed out through them, on them. He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it. He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly" (6.54).

It was to "escape" the above two "difficulties" that the radical section of the Vienna Circle improvised Radical Physicalism with its dual language theory. Wittgenstein himself possibly felt uneasy. It was no good creating metaphysics to oust metaphysics and indulge in popular crusades against metaphysicians like Ayer. More analytic investigation was necessary into the logic of the concepts of metaphysics.

I do not know very much about the formative years of the post-*Tractatus* Wittgenstein as I knew him only during his last two years at Cambridge (1945—47) when I was previleged to attend his lectures. But I do not think he made a radical departure from the central thesis of the *Tractatus*, although he once remarked at the Moral Sciences Club that "most of it was haywire". In fact I think he believed to the very end that the solution of a philosophical puzzle was to be sought not in the discovery of a new and a final theory but in its ultimate dissolution — through a clarity achieved by the discovery of the nature (or the logic) of philosophical concepts, theories, and arguments. It was necessary to see how the logic of 'picked' concepts necessitate certain lines of philosophical reasoning. So in a sense this was a radical departure from the *Tractatus* in that it involved a far more acute and minute an analysis of the logical background of metaphysics than was deemed necessary at the time. Philosophy still remained an activity and it was the duty of the philosopher not to play the game but to study the rules and see how skilled competitors must play it. But the elimination of metaphysics through anti-metaphysical metaphysics ceased to have any attractions for Wittgenstein. He was now making statements which were far more shocking to his philosophical audience. "Metaphysics is impossible" had given place to "I hold no opinions in philosophy" and the Verification Principle (i.e. "the meaning of statement is the method of its verification") to "Don't ask for the meaning ask for the use." But let us wait. For Wittgenstein is not dead and may yet come to life in his posthumous work.

I know nothing about Wittgenstein the mystic but I do know that when I was in Cambridge it was rumoured at Oxford (which is some distance form Cambridge) that Wittgenstein was a Catholic, while in Cambridge theological circles he was still the atheist to be avoided by theological students. When my first tutor at Christ's gave me a note to Wittgenstein recommending that I may follow his lectures, the first question he asked me was "But he is a theologian isn't he?". Russell has remarked that "during or perhaps just before the first war he changed his outlook and became more or less of a mystic as may be seen here and there in the *Tractatus*. He had been dogmatically anti-Christian but in this respect he changed completely." Whether his mysticism developed a more positive content than is to be found in the *Tractatus* (where he says " there is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself;

it is the mystical.") I do not know, but there was certainly no trace of either atheism or Catholicism in his 'lectures' although they had their own eccentricities which make it well nigh impossible for me, to try them out here without undergoing the risk of being taken to task or certified a crank by both students and authorities.

Vertical the Blood Leaps

Vertical the blood leaps,
Pulsebeat is the register
Of regular attendances my heart keeps—
Vertical, vertical the blood leaps.

Central the grip over sleep and surrender.
Vigil watchmen keep down under
Straining to arrest the smallest breach.
While it lasts
Vertical, vertical the blood leaps.

The mercurial column grows
Lateral lateral the pressure flows
Yet governing all the thinker at the head
Is coming to terms—
The problem is the dead, we dead.
While the decision waits, however,
Central the breath,
Vertical the hour.

W.

Books of Interest

THE ART OF TEACHING—By Gilbert Highet

(Methuen & Co. Ltd., London.)

Education is much in the news these days—in Ceylon especially. Everybody is talking about it. The old order is giving place to the new, they say. Practical education, vocational guidance, selective tests, teachers' salaries, the validity of the latest analysis of the national character—all these form topics of discussion wherever teachers meet. Yet no one seems to pay much attention to one of the most important aspects of education—the teacher-pupil relationship. What traits go to make the ideal teacher? What should be the teacher's attitude to his students? What are the most effective methods of teaching? In his book, Professor Highet Anthon, Professor of the Latin Language and Literature at Columbia University New York, attempts to focus attention on these problems centering round the teacher-pupil relationship and discusses them in language that is perfectly intelligible to both professional and layman alike. The book, as the author himself says in his Introduction "*is concerned only with methods of teaching.*" (p. 6.) For this reason alone, if for nothing else, Prof. Highet's book is to be welcomed

Broadly, the book can be divided into two main sections. The first deals with the author's own view of what constitutes teaching, indicating its nature and scope. Prof. Highet enumerates the characteristics of a good teacher such as 'knowing the pupils' and 'liking his subject', and comments on the specific abilities that a teacher should possess such as memory, will-power, and kindness. He then proceeds to suggest and examine methods that a teacher should adopt to communicate his knowledge of a subject to his pupils. He examines separately the three methods known to all teachers—lecturing, tutoring, and class-room work, remarking very rightly that "they are all equally good for different purposes." (p, 88). This main portion of the book is concluded with a discussion of such vexed questions as examination and punishment. In the second portion, Prof. Highet tries to show who the chief teachers of the world have been and how they have influenced the history of mankind. Some of the most powerful teachers of the past such as the great Greek philosophers are subjected to scrutiny with a view to showing the aim of good teaching. The author ends his book by showing that there is hardly any situation in life that does not involve a learner-teacher relation ship, thus emphasising the heavy responsibility that lies on those who undertake to teach their fellow-men.

Professor Highet's book should appeal, primarily, to professional teachers in both schools and universities. For, it is

in these institutions that teaching is done on the most highly organised scale. However, the author himself would be the first to admit that such teaching is not necessarily the most important. (see p. 4,) The Professor argues, and quite rightly too —though many might disagree—that the teacher is essentially an artist. This is the central theme of his book. To teach is not merely to pass on information. And yet, this is what most of us do in both schools and universities, although we know that only teachers who establish rapport or communion with their students achieve anything of permanent value. Teaching "*is not like injecting 500 c.c. of serum, or administering a year's dose of vitamins. You take the living mind, and mould it. It resists sometimes. It may lie passive and apparently refuse to accept any imprint. Sometimes it takes the mould too easily and then seems to melt again and become featureless. But often it comes into firmer shape as you work, and gives you the incomparable happiness of helping to create a human being. To teach a boy the difference between truth and lies in print, to start him thinking about the meaning of poetry or patriotism, to hear him hammering back at you with the facts and arguments you have helped him to find, sharpened by himself and fitted to his own powers, gives the sort of satisfaction that an artist has when he makes a picture out of blank canvas and chemical colourings, or a doctor when he hears a sick pulse pick up and carry the energies of new life under his hand.*". (p. 10.) Well said, and it needs saying a thousand times over today. To teach is to create Yet, I wonder whether it is quite correct to explain the teacher-pupil relationship by the artist and blank canvas analogy. To do so would be to imply that the young—the material of the teacher—are passive. But they are not. They are dynamic. They cannot be moulded as the potter moulds his clay. It would be nearer the truth to say that the teacher is to his pupil what the gardner is to the plant.* The gardner's job is to help the plant to grow without interferring with its normal and proper development. The teachers's job is to lead the student to the fulfilment of his potentialities. It is his task to help the student to grow up into a balanced and happy young man conscious of his station and duties in life. Therein lies the teacher's joy of creation. Of course there is no gainsaying the fact that the satisfaction derived in the case of both the artist and the teacher is the same.

The Professor's comments on the qualities of a good teacher are also topical. He rates 'liking the pupil, third in line of importance—the first two being 'knowing the subject', and 'liking the subject.' I should think the Professor would have done better to reverse the order. You may like your subject and know it thoroughly but they are no guarantee that you will be successful as a teacher. The author himself confesses—"*if you*

*See "*The child at school*"—*N. A. Newsom* (Pelican)

do not actually like boys, and girls, or young men and young women, give up teaching." (p.24.) How true his words are, when one realises what miserable failures in teaching great scholars have been just because they hated meeting people. As a case in point the author quotes the case of A. E. Housman. In fact, this chapter on "The Teacher" raises a very important problem for us in Ceylon—implicitly though. It is admitted that not all learned men can teach. A teacher requires special aptitudes. Moreover, his is a calling. Then, should there not be some method for testing a person's suitability for a teaching post in any institution? Hardly any attention has been given to this problem in our own country, though it is one that merits the serious consideration of individuals and organisations that employ teachers.

Taken in this light, the book is a challenge to those already in the profession to mend their ways and perfect their technique, and a warning to these who intend to enter the profession for want of any thing better to do, to keep away lest they do immeasurable harm to those entrusted to their care.

But for another reason Prof: Highet's book should appeal not only to professionals b it to laymen as well. It reminds us that we are all learners and teachers inspite of ourselves. There is hardly any situation in life that is not a learning-teaching situation. "Foremen, secretaries, shop-stewards, production-managers, departmental heads, all these essential persons have been taught and have learnt, and are teaching others", (p. 235.) Particularly is this so of parents. "*The father who never says more than "Hello" to his son and goes out to the nearest pub every evening is teaching the boy just as emphatically as though he were standing over him with a strap.*". (p. 4.) And such teaching is the most important. It is such teaching that has peen responsible for the many crippled characters we have in society today. Most of us do not realise that much of our private lives is taken up with this type of amateurish teaching. But, of course such teaching is largely unconscious. Hence it is all the more important. For this reason I recommend Prof. Highet's book even to those who are not directly involved in professional teaching—parents, in particular. The chapter entitled "Great Teachers and their Pupils" contains a section on 'the fathers of great men.' All parents will find this portion illuminating and instructive. The author considers celebrities like Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart to show how they were influenced by their fathers. Too often have we heard the complaint in Ceylon recently that the home background of most children is not conducive to their balanced development. Every teacher who has probed into the family environments of maladjusted students knows this to be profoundly true.

I cannot think of any other book that a lecturer, schoolmaster, father, mother, clergyman, or doctor could read with greater profit without having to wade through the technical

jargon of academic psychology. It is extremely readable. And the fact that the author has based his conclusions on his day-to day experience of handling students is one of the intrinsic merits of "*The Art of Teaching*."

STANLEY JAYAWEERA.

"THE FORGOTTEN LANGUAGE"—By Eric Fromm

(Victor Gollancz Ltd.)

The name of Eric Fromm is familiar to many readers in Ceylon as the author of "*The Fear of Freedom*." The forgotten language he speaks of is the language of myths and dreams. In fact the book is sub-titled, "An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths". The book is a clearly written introductory work meant for the lay-man interested in psychiatry and psychology. Examined from this angle it is eminently successful. Fromm, while recognising the importance and the brilliance of Freud's researches into dreams, maintains a different standpoint. For Freud the dream is the fulfilment of irrational passions, repressed during our waking life. Fromm maintains that the feelings and aspirations of the dreamer as expressed in his dreams are not necessarily irrational and can even be very rational and sensible. Dreaming he maintains is a "a meaningful and significant expression of any kind of mental activity under the condition of sleep." This departure from Freud's position may not be original (Fromm makes no such claim) but the manner in which Fromm develops his main contention with specific analyses of dreams, is certain-ly interesting.

There are four chapters entitled "Tha Nature of Dreams", "Freud and Jung", "The History of Dream Interpretation" and "The Art of Dream Interpretation" which set out the ideas in broad generalised terms. The most interesting section of the book is that devoted to analysing the Oedipus myth, the myth of creation, the fairly tale of the little Red Cap, the Sabbath Ritual and Kafka's "*The Trial*". Fromm makes a detailed and acute examination of the Oedipus myth with a view to showing that the conclusions drawn by Freud after analysing this myth are incorrect. For Freud this myth was a fine illustration of his theory that unconscious incestuous desires towards the mother and the resulting hate against the father-rival are to be found in any male child. This theory has been contested from another standpoint by Malinowaski. Fromm's thesis however is that the Oedipus myth as seen in Sophocles' tragedy on which Freud depended shows something quite different from what Freud intended showing—namely the conflict between

Patriarchal and Matriarchal society. Fromm's arguments in support of this interpretation will prove of interest even to those who disagree. The comments on Kafka's *'The Trial'*, show that Fromm making an approach quite different from that of the literary critic has realised the central experience in the novel.

This book will undoubtedly interest those like the present writer who as laymen have some serious interest in the methods of Psycho-analysis.

"Nick"

"The Sinhalese Novel and its Readers" by Dr. E. R. de S. Sarathchandra is reprinted from *Asian Horizon*

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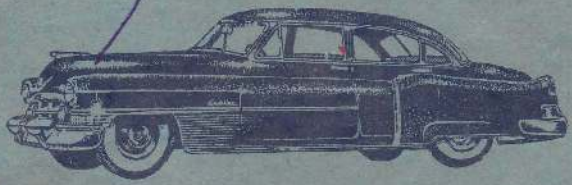

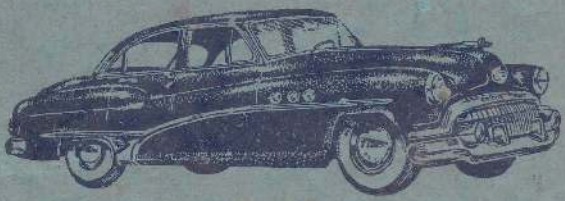

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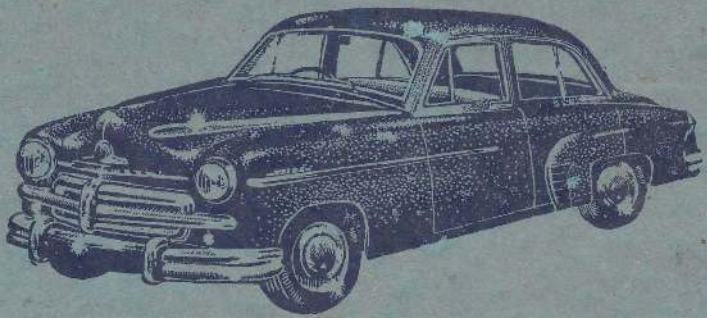

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