THEMES IN SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH POETRY

SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by

ALBERT DAVID ADEY

Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Art in the Department of English in the University of South Africa.

Supervisor: Professor D.R. Beeton.
Joint Supervisor: Professor E. Pereira.

Date Submitted: June, 1976.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetical Development (1821-1940)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Post-war Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiom and Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation and Revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Personal Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life, Love and Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African Scenery and Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Political Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index to Poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY

The aims of this dissertation are, firstly, to investigate themes in South African English poetry written after the second World War, and, secondly, to show the development of a South African voice and tradition between 1945 and 1970.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter I traces the progress of South African poetry in English, from its beginnings, in 1821, to the poetry of Roy Campbell and William Plomer which appeared before 1940. Attention is given to the way in which 'later' poetry, reflecting a maturer 'acceptance of country', replaced the derivative verse of the early colonists. The important role played by William Charles Scully, Francis Carey Slater, Roy Campbell and William Plomer, in establishing a foundation for contemporary writers, is stressed.

Chapter II reflects the emergence of clearly delineated and integrated themes in South African English poetry. The wide-ranging perspective of selected 'war poets' is discussed in detail.

The third chapter is prefaced by a short discussion of the diverse nature of themes found in poetry of the post-war era. In the first part of this chapter, notice is taken of the manner in which poetry developed from a limited depiction of situations peculiarly South African into a concern interpreted in terms of a more universal experience, with a consequent revitalization of idiom. The second part of the chapter deals with the thematic presentation of relationships: the 'nature of being', a 'search for truth', and 'man in nature', all of which are drawn together by the theme, 'consciousness of self'. 
Chapter IV has a short introduction, in which the three sections of the chapter are placed in perspective, and in which mention is made of a new breadth of vision and perception. The first section deals progressively with a variety of universal themes within the context of 'Life, Love and Death'. These are: 'the poets' calling'; 'the necessity of coming to terms with people and life'; 'a new awareness of man in the light of an accumulated memory of civilization'. An attempt is made also to show that contemporary writers are not 'colonial poets' or mere 'moralists'. The second section discusses the prevalence of the 'Adamanstor Myth' (under the heading, 'South African Scenery and Character') in the work of selected poets. The third section deals with a strongly emergent theme: 'Social and Political Engagement'. Mention is made of the limitations and achievement of the poetry in which this theme is to be found.

The Epilogue forms a summary of the conclusions reached in the preceding chapters. There is also a short discussion of 'tradition', and of poetry published after 1970.
INTRODUCTION
The main concern of this dissertation is to investigate and evaluate themes in South African English poetry after the second World War. It is my thesis that the work of nearly all the contemporary South African poets writing in English reflects several clearly evident concerns.

In order to achieve my aims I have not limited this study to a critical appraisal of poetry written since the outbreak of the second World War. Through a close inspection of themes, and a discussion of some of the poems in which these are embodied, I attempt, in the third and fourth chapters, to show the emergence of a genuine voice. I have therefore, in the first chapter, dealt very briefly with the 'early' and 'middle' periods of South African English poetry, periods which together extend from 1821 to 1939, in an attempt to place the achievement of post-war writers in its context, and in terms of a poetical 'heritage'.

The poems included for study have not been chosen randomly, or because they happen to fit into a 'blue-print' of pre-selected themes; a wide and, it is hoped, comprehensive reading of recent South African poetry in English has suggested the presence of several important and well-delineated concerns. Owing to the subjective nature of many decisions involving standards of excellence, I have not always followed the trend of public and critical opinion; nor have I included poetry published after 1970. Thus, poems by Guy Butler, for instance, appear only in Chapter II; this does not imply that he has made no contribution to the body of work which has appeared since the second World War, but that, in my opinion, his best verse is to be found in the 'poetry of war'. Similarly, William Plomer is mentioned almost exclusively in the first chapter, although a great proportion of his work was published after 1945. Furthermore, certain of the poets referred to are not strictly 'South African'; their work has been included because they have South African affinities, or a largely South African background.
Colin Style, for example, is a contemporary writer living in Rhodesia; poets such as Roy Campbell, William Plomer, R.N. Currey, Sydney Clouts and Roy Fuller are 'expatriate' poets who nevertheless make an important contribution to poetry which has its genesis in the South African situation. The quality of poetry written by R. Klopper and Margaret Smith has led to their inclusion in this study, although neither poet is widely recognised as a writer.

As I have incorporated a large number of poems in my discussion, the titles of all poems referred to in the body of my work have been underlined, in an attempt to obviate any confusion on the part of the reader. For the same reason, references, wherever possible, are to collected volumes, even though these collections have, in some instances, appeared after 1970.

Despite the amount of poetry incorporated in my argument, I have attempted to achieve a balance between a survey of themes and trends, and a close appraisal of selected poems. This approach has been necessitated by a desire to stress the quality of South African poetry, rather than merely to enumerate the many themes contained in this literature. My dissertation is thus essentially an exploration of a wide field of writing, and does not pretend to be a comprehensive treatise on contemporary English poetry produced in Southern Africa.

The aims of this dissertation should, ideally, be seen against the background of current literary criticism and opinion (regarding recent South African English poetry), where there seem to be two widely disparate views. The first is that expressed by Peter Wilhelm, who believes 'all attempts to place matters on an academic footing should be resisted as strongly as possible', while the

---

second is typified by Ridley Beeton's belief that 
'the minor laagers of vested artistic interests deserve 
breaking', in other words, that South African poetry 
should be subjected to dispassionate assessment.

Criticism, to be effective, must provide a 'clearer 
sense and deeper enjoyment of what is truly excellent' in poetry; it should, therefore, continually attempt to 
lead the reader to an understanding of the 'essential 
quality of poetry' which '... makes a new effort of 
attention and discovers a new world within the known 
world ...'. An example of this type of criticism is 
Ridley Beeton's attempt to place recently emerged poetry 
in perspective:

Unlike World War I, which had only a very 
limited effect on South African poetry, the 
impact of World War II was astounding. Its 
influence on the output and status of poetry 
in this country has been as great, or perhaps 
more profound, than that of Roy Campbell ... 
[and it has had] an effect very similar to that 
produced by the first World War on men such as 
Wilfred Owen, Rosenberg and Edward Thomas.

In the same series of radio talks he records his 
thoughts on this 'mid-century idiom, and the main [theme]
of Macnab and his contemporaries', who were not, he


2. Matthew Arnold: 'The Study of Poetry', in 

3. Edward D. McDonald (Ed): Phoenix: The Posthumous 
Papers of D.H. Lawrence, Heinemann, London, 

4. D.R. Beeton: From Cape to Zambezi: A Brief Survey 
of South African English Poetry, S.A.B.C., 1966, 
Programme 1. [I am grateful to Professor Beeton 
for permission to use those manuscripts of his 
three-part Radio Series on South African English 
writing which have not been published.]
maintains, 'concerned so much with the problems of war, as with the problems of uneasy peace'.

Howard Sergeant is another who recognises the need for an objective approach to criticism. In his introduction to *Poetry of the 1940s*, for instance, he maintains that

Much has been said about [the poets'] obsession with 'the single poetic theme of Life and Death', but it might be said that by their very acceptance of death, the emphasis was thrown upon life and the interpretation of those values necessary to the fulfilment of the individual.

He follows his statement that 'by 1946 the wartime boom in poetry had spent itself', with this pertinent observation:

For many poets there seemed to be no recognisable pattern of values by which to integrate their experience of both inner and outer worlds. It is not surprising that some poets confined themselves to finding a personal solution to their own problems; or that others, in circumstances so unfavourable to the publication of poetry, were struggling desperately just to make their voices heard. If there were no dominating groups or schools during the period, it is nevertheless possible to distinguish three major trends which exercised a strong influence on what was written. First... the continuing strain of neo-romanticism. Secondly, there was a marked tendency for poets to become increasingly preoccupied with religious and metaphysical subjects (almost as if the poets concerned were intent on renewing or discovering

---


a faith within themselves), approaching at points the Christian existentialism of Kierkegaard, Marcel and Jaspers .... Thirdly, there were various regional and nationalistic tendencies ....\(^1\)

In the small body of criticism relating to the 'Poets of the Aftermath'\(^2\) (roughly, 1945 to 1955), Beeton and Sergeant stand out for the sensitivity and incisiveness of their comment. Thus, if I appear, in my introduction and in Chapter III, to have quoted somewhat extensively from their critical writings, it is in recognition of a signal contribution to this area of criticism, and because I felt this procedure to be more effective than merely assimilating and paraphrasing their views. However, it should be noted that, in specifically South African English poetry, the trends suggested by Sergeant are not limited to the period immediately succeeding the war. 'Neo-romanticism' colours the work of, amongst others, Phyllis Haring and Tania van Zyl; existentialism surfaces in the poetry of Charl J.F. Cilliers written between 1965 and 1970; and 'nationalistic tendencies' emerge in poetry dealing with Africa, whether it be in terms of 'African life and colour',\(^3\) or a 'committed' social and political approach. The manifestation of these trends is to be found in a variety of themes reflecting the growing maturity of a South African poetical tradition, which owes much to the impetus it has received from the work of Roy Campbell and William Plomer, and from the second World War.

---

1. **Ibid.**, p. 69.

2. The title given by Howard Sergeant to the second part of his anthology.

The opinion of G.M. Miller and Howard Sergeant, in their review of R.N. Currey's second volume of poems (This Other Planet), is therefore eminently applicable, not only to the poetry of those writing of war, but to almost the entire generation of post-war poets:

It is as if ... he has found a valid means of crystallizing the thoughts and feelings with which he has been grappling for years. ... This is the result of a new insight into the lives of other people [and a new], imaginative presentation of experience. ¹

---

CHAPTER I

POETICAL DEVELOPMENT (1821 - 1940)
The first poem to be both written and published in South Africa appeared under the pseudonym, 'Coloniensis Anglicus', in 1821. *Emigration*, written by an attorney, Herbert Pugh, was issued by the Government Press, and referred to by Sir Rufane Donkin, the Acting Governor, as 'the first effort of the African muse ... the first production of our Parnassus'.

The poem is a reflection of the conventionally limited South African verse of the early nineteenth century. There is scant evidence, in the lines, of the careful observer, or of an ability on the part of the poet to translate observation, however inexact, into poetry. *Emigration* is characterized by a quaintness that stems largely from a dependence on the poetical conventions of the period. In the following stanza, for instance, the rhetorical intensity of the lines robs it of much of its worth:

And, mourns the Swain, unheeded? Shall his Grief Find, from his Country's Aid, no kind relief? Shall his Complaint, whose ever-toiling Brow Our Food provided, pass unnoticed now; When Pain and Want, with bitter Aspect scowl, And Penury benumbs the wounded Soul?

This poem, comprising eighty-eight couplets, seems to have been the limit of Pugh's involvement in the beginnings of English literature at the Cape. Thomas Pringle, however, is famous for his participation in the literary


and journalistic affairs of the young country. One of his most enduring achievements is the impetus he gave to South African poetry in English. Although his verse is limited and imperfect, the extent of his achievement is best seen in terms of his milieu:

It was a century of pioneering and missionary endeavour; of laying new foundations, of rapid dispersion over a vast hinterland; of insecurity, loss, separation, violence, disunity and ceaseless movement.¹

The 'colonialism' so clearly evident in the verse of Pringle, Dugmore, Longmore, and — to a lesser extent — in the work of Scully and Cripps, can be explained by the observation that 'the old idiom and phrases were totally unsuitable for the new conditions ... the old wine could not be poured into the new bottles and still retain its potency'.² Yet, the Romantic tradition which the settlers brought with them was transposed into their new environment, sometimes with surprising success:

'Pringle made the poetical transition from the rugged glens and fells of Scotland to the wilder, more extravagant, scenery of the Cape with a lyrical elegance that manages to avoid artificiality',³ as in the opening stanza of The Emigrants:

Sweet Teviot, fare thee well! Less gentle themes
Far distant call me from thy pastoral dale,
To climes where Amakosa's woods and streams
Invite, to the fair South, my venturous sail.

---


3. Ibid.
There roaming sad the solitary vale,
From native haunts and early friends exiled,
I tune no more the string for Scottish tale;
For to my aching heart, in accents wild,
Appeals the bitter cry of Afric's race reviled. ¹

The sentiment is clearly 'one of nostalgia for "sweet Teviot" and all the objects and qualities epitomised by the word "home"; there is an emphasis on the aching heart of which he speaks, and to which the very surge of the verse brings support.' ² Lines such as

To climes where Amakosa's woods and streams invite, to the fair South, my venturous sail ...

reveal an attempt to interpret the new environment in terms more readily understood by the young emigrant. This duality, between perception of the new, often brutal, country, and nostalgic recollection of the 'native haunts' of Scotland, is also evident in The Emigrant's Cabin³, and in Afar in the Desert where

... the elephant browses at peace in his wood
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood. ⁴

As Guy Butler has suggested,

Pringle was obviously excited by the landscape, races and beasts of Africa. He set about incorporating them into his poetry, borrowing the local Dutch or Kaffir name and explaining it in a footnote where necessary. In the

² D.R. Beeton: From Cape to Zambezi, Programme.
⁴ Ibid., p. 9.
absence of verbal skill to re-create them
his painstaking catalogues of animals achieve
little beyond a sense of strangeness.¹

However, 'TRUTH' is Pringle's cause, and the 'full
blaze' of 'light' is turned, courageously and unflinchingly,
on to the ignominy of 'Afric's race reviled'. The themes
of Pringle's work focus understandably - in the light
of his evangelistic conviction - on racial injustice and
idealized Christianity. It is, perhaps, the intense
focus of themes which detracts from the quality of his
work, as his poems become too readily a vehicle for
propaganda.

The evangelistic note in poems such as The Caffer²
and The Bechuana Boy³ forms a strong contrast to these
lines from Makanna's Gathering:

Remember how the spoiler's host
       Did through our land like locusts range!
Your herds, your wives, your comrades lost -
       Remember - and revenge: ⁴

The contrast is also evident in this stanza of Afar in
the Desert:

Nor tree, nor cloud, nor misty mount,
Appears, to refresh the aching eye;
But the barren earth, and the burning sky,
And the blank horizon, round and round,
Spread - void of living sight or sound ...

In the former, Pringle has effectively rendered the
chieftain's calling of his men to a war of revenge, while
in the latter - although perhaps revealing an

1. Guy Butler (Ed): A Book of South African Verse,
3. Ibid., p. 1.
   Edinburgh, 1828, p. 40.
undue pre-occupation with 'the landscape' - there is an accurate and moving perception of the awesome extent and barrenness of an 'earth' bounded only by 'blank horizon' and 'burning sky'. Even these lines, however, seem to lack the 'vital soul' to which Wordsworth refers in The Prelude: it is this 'vital soul' which, ultimately, distinguishes the great poet from the writer of verse. As Ridley Beeton says of Afar in the Desert:

> We have in this poem ... the sense of exile, the love of the 'native land' ... the awareness of oppression and corruption. We have also those qualities that ... imprison Pringle in the gaol of minor verse: the medley of ... poor rhymes, the contradictory ... rhythms, and the strident note of the pamphleteer's indignation.

Nevertheless, Pringle's work is significant, and, as G.M. Miller and Howard Sergeant maintain, to understand fully 'the conditions out of which South African poetry is developing, it is necessary to study this legacy of early verse.' Further, they maintain that:

> Until 1909, the year before the passing of the Act of Union, South African poetry in English could show only a succession of somewhat uninspired versifiers, and few poets whose work is worth reading for anything more than its historical significance.

This judgement appears to be correct: the work of writers such as William Rodger Thomson lacks any poetical quality that might engage the interest of the reader,

1. D.R. Beeton: From Cape to Zambezi, Programme 1.


3. Ibid.

while H.H. Dugmore's *The Funeral of Livingstone* is notable for its echoes of late eighteenth century English poetry, than for any intrinsic merit it might have:

List! There is music sounding!
Not airy strains, that lead the mazy dance;
Not trumpet tones that stir the warrior's soul;
But soft, and slow, and solemn, as it swells
And rolls afar and dies, midst its own echoes
From vaulted roof, and lofty aisle dim-lighted,
Where clustering columns rise, and rainbow rays
Gleam in their varied glory o'er the scene.

In this stanza, particularly, Dugmore seems to show no awareness of the contradictions inherent in his description; the courage and vitality which are associated with Livingstone and the pioneers of a vast, untamed land, contrast somewhat oddly with the pompous 'trumpet tones'; trite descriptives, such as 'mazy dance' and 'clustering columns' serve only to heighten the contrast between actuality - in the form of Livingstone's experience - and the poeticizing of Dugmore. This weakness is evident also in the last lines of the poem:

... But 'stamp' of 'rank'  
He needed not, while nature's 'gold' of manhood,  
Solid, and pure, and bright, shone through his soul.

During the same period (1855 - 1865), George Longmore wrote his *Sonnets of the Cape*, of which *The Oak Avenue, Cape Town* is the first. The first two lines are obviously derived from the opening lines of Grays *Elegy*:

Oft, when my feet at evening homeward tread  
The stately cloisters of the oak along ...

In the poem, Table Mountain is referred to as 'the majestic peak upon the west', and the sea becomes 'golden' in the light of the 'sun setting'; the poet's description is conventional and, once again, there is little genuine poetic evocation of the country.

The second sonnet, Night, is similarly undistinguished; Longmore relies on time-worn allusions and descriptions for his effect. His immediate surroundings assume a significance that is merely geographical; the old grey mountains are not central to the poem, but seem merely incidental:

O would that while the old grey mountains sleep
There might be silence in the which to find
Grand music! But if joyous creatures keep
Perpetual chorus, shall my captious mind
Object? ...

In the Droughtlands of South Africa: The Rain was written by Alexander Wilmot in 1880. Although limited by stock images, and a reliance on the concepts of Rosseau's 'naturalism', the poem is more successful than the works of George Longmore and H.H. Dugmore. Indeed, Wilmot seems to have been one of the forerunners of a new attitude to South African poetry in English, accepting and using historical events as the thematic basis of much of his poetry. The first stanza of Wilmot's poem refers, for instance, to 'kloofs', as well as to the climatic conditions implicit in 'loved the rain':

It was a land of rills
Of mountains, kloofs and hills;
High peaks were westward; eastward the great main,
A rich good land and free.
Men lived in liberty,
Worked and had quiet sleep and loved the rain.¹

---

¹. A. Wilmot, comp: The Poetry of South Africa, Juta, Cape Town, 1887, p. 100.
In the last stanza, the poignant description of the effects of drought effectively dispels any element of bathos; the repetition of 'dry', coupled with 'no moisture', 'sterile' and 'empty' makes the fervent prayer of the ultimate line seem completely natural, giving the reader a clearer insight into a countryside where 'the sun glares on with no sweet veil of rain':

And lo: the land lay dry -
No moisture in the sky,
The streams dry - sterile the once fertile plain:
And round the empty tank
The oxen feebly sank -
Alas, why cometh not the wished-for rain!

Charles Barter's *Stray Memories of Natal and Zululand*, which is, in parts, a description of the murder of Retief and his party, also reveals this new awareness of an environmental and historical legacy:

The shatter'd skull, the spouting brain,
The red blood oozing o'er the plain,
The hands outstretched towards the sky
Or clenched in dying agony,
The eyes that with mad phrenzy glare,
The sullen look of dull despair,
All these, and fouler sights, were there!

The poet is concerned with an important occurrence in the history of South Africa, and his recreation of this event holds the reader's attention, despite the emotive language and presentation.

William Hunter, in *To his Grand-daughter: an old Kaffir Garrulises*, is also concerned with the conflict between Boer and Zulu. Unlike Barter, however, he attempts - with partial success - 'to put his imagination into the mould of a black body':

---


0, the grand horns of the battles when they closed
Resistless, black, and splendid on the foe,
And mid a storm of assegais I stood
Upon the Impi's forehead, and drank in
My full of manful strife, for life or death ...

This awareness of the country's history is taken
even further by Rudyard Kipling, in poetry that has not
always been accorded the recognition it would seem to
merit:

Kipling has seldom found a place in South
African anthologies, in spite of the fact that
theses never fail to stand off with Pringle,
whose association with Africa was shorter
than Kipling's .... Africa touched Kipling
to better poetry than Pringle.  

The first two stanzas of **Bridge-Guard in the Karroo** show
clearly that poetic response, in South African English
verse, was becoming more important than the cause of
propaganda:

Sudden the desert changes,
The raw glare softens and clings,
Till the aching Oudtshoorn ranges
Stand up like the thrones of kings -

Ramparts of slaughter and peril -
Blazing, amazing, aglow -
'Twixt the sky-line's belting beryl
And the wine-dark flats below.  

This particular response is to the sudden 'desert changes',
and to the loneliness of the sentry, sharing his solitude
with the aching Oudtshoorn ranges', forming a striking
contrast between the world of man, and the 'natural'
world: 'Ramparts' refers both to the 'blazing' sunset,
and to the Anglo-Boer conflict, becoming the antithesis

---

1. Francis Carey Slater: *The New Centenary Book of


3. **Rudyard Kipling's Verse** (Definitive Edition), Hodder
between creation and destruction; between,

... the sky-line's belt of beryl
And the wine-dark flats below.

It is evident, in the 'South African - inspired' work of Kipling, that natural phenomena assume a deeper significance for the poet: there is an intuitive element in this poem which underscores Kipling's acceptance of the South African landscape as a basis for much of his poetry.

William Charles Scully also possessed a greater poetic vision than most of the South African poets of the nineteenth century; his poems reveal an aptitude for keen observation, and the ability to translate these insights into poetry. His two volumes of verse, *The Wreck of the Grosvenor*, and *Poems*, are a sensitive response to, and evocation of, facets of South African scenery and character. This is particularly evident in *Namaqualand*:

A land of deathful sleep, where fitful dreams
Of hurrying spring scarce awake swift-fading flowers;
A land of fleckless sky, and sheer-shed beams
Of sun and stars through day's and dark's slow hours,

A land where sand has choked once fluent streams -
Where grassless plains lie girt by granite towers
That fright the swift and heaven-nurtured teams
Of winds that bear afar the sea-gleaned showers.

The Wild Atlantic, fretted by the breath
Of fiery gales o'er leagues of desert sped,
Rolls back, and wrecks in surf its thunderous wrath
On rocks that down the wan, wide shore are spread;
The waves forever roar a song of death,

The shore they roar to is forever dead.

The significance of the poem lies in Scully's description of the Namaqualand desert, and his response to the mood of

---

A land of deathful sleep, where fitful dreams
Of hurrying spring scarce wake swift-fading
flowers ...

The slow, but inexorable encroachment of the desert is
evoked by,

A land where sand has choked once fluent streams

where

The shore [the waves] roar to is for ever dead.

The process of encroachment is more than a decay of life.
It is a living death, for the promise of Spring is not
sustained; the flowers succumb to the 'slow hours' of
relentless sun, shrinking, 'swift-fading', the promise
of future life held only in the fragile security of the
seed. Even potential life remains subject to the vicissitudes
of Fate, in a land 'where grassless plains lie girt by granite
towers ....'

Scully is able to transcend that which is banal and
trite, and although influenced by a romantic tradition,
he does not rely on this to the detriment of his own work.
Indeed,

...if we pierce below the surface of merely
conventional appreciation we shall find a
new accent and a new pattern in process of
being formed.

His description, in 'Nkongane, of an old Zulu man, is
another refreshing departure from the stance of the moralist
and propagandist. Scully's tone is that of one who sees,

and presents, another human being, in terms of that person's own life and attitudes. The last stanza is an extremely penetrating insight into the state of mind of a man who was once a warrior, but is now beset by old age:

And now to this: to cringe for a shilling,
   To skulk round the Mission-house, hungry and lone;
To carry food to the women tilling
   The fields of maize! For ever have flown
The days of the spear that the rust has eaten,
   The days of the ploughshare suit you not;
   Time hath no gift that your life can sweeten,
A living death is your piteous lot.\(^1\)

In the poetry of Arthur Shearly Cripps there is a similar movement away from the over-riding concerns of the earlier versifiers. In *Winter Veld-Fires*, for example, Cripps pictures an African nightscape that is completely natural and uncontrived:

When the June airs are cold,
   And grass is brown and dead -
Flame of the sun-flower's gold,
   Flame of the tulip's red,
Come with the south-east wind \(\ldots\)\(^2\)

Colour is a further example of his close observation of his surroundings, although the description is, itself, coloured by memories not totally South African:

Red kine, pied sheep and goats, and bronze-dyed swanes!
Rise on them, Star most white, this Christmas Night \(\ldots\)\(^3\)

Francis Carey Slater responded perhaps even more forcefully to many aspects of his environment. Although earlier poems reveal the influence of Keats, Shelly and

---


Tennyson, Slater's later work reflects 'the colour and atmosphere of the veld, of Kaffir habits and customs, and of Colonial life generally'. His vivid recollection of the native idiom is succintly expressed in Lament for a Dead Cow:

The black cloud that brought us white rain
Has vanished - the sky is empty;
Our kraal is desolate;
Our calabashes are dry;
And we weep.  

These lines capture and extend the poignant despair of 'and we weep', forming a sharp contrast to the contentment found in Milking Kraal:

When stars begin softly to spatter
Milky drops in the bowl overhead;
And the wings of brown bats shear obliquely
The fleece of dusk;
In the kraal squatting milkers are stitching
Each cow to a pail
With silvery thread.

The remaining two stanzas of the poem continue this mood of burgeoning goodness and quiet fulfilment; the setting is as peaceful as the action of the milkers. The kraal scene is closely related, through 'milky drops' and 'silvery thread', to an image of bounteous nature; the 'milkers' seem to be enveloped in the 'fleece of dusk', which emphasises the link, here, between Nature and man. The closeness of the relationship is further underscored by the suggestion of an oft repeated harvest in:


1. From the preface to Slater's first collection of poems: Footpaths Thro' the Veld.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
... gleanings of milk from reaped udders,
Wisely squeezing last drops
Of delight from spent day.

Into this peacefulness, the idiom of the country intrudes
through the ominous warning of 'a veld ranging jackal',
which

Screws into the silence
His agonized cry.

Throughout the poem there is a tension between fact
and presentation, heightening the effect of Slater's
description. This is also true of the following extract
from Drought; the heat and dryness are pressed into
our senses through repetition, conveying a sense of
dimension:

Winds from the far Kalahari,
Blasts from the furnaces of the sun,
Boom suddenly across the veld,
Blazing hotter as they blow:
Scourged by their devastating breath,
All that drought has spared
Of herb and flower
Shrivels, crumbles and dies.1

Slater's work is that of a careful craftsman. His poetry,
unlike that of Roy Campbell, never 'soars'; it has,
evertheless, an enduring quality that is lacking in the
verse of many of his predecessors.

It was 'on to the rather prosaic world of the
South African 1920's, thus, that Roy Campbell burst with
The Flaming Terrapin'.2

1. Ibid., p. 165.
2. D.R. Beeton: 'Roy Campbell', in Unisa English Studies,
September 1972, p. 43.
The poem, which depicts Noah's voyage and the 'Great Flood', cannot be termed a religious poem. The regeneration depicted is brought about by the Flaming Terrapin, a symbol of the source of life:

The terrapin symbolised for Campbell a kind of dynamic life force which was contained in the bull, the horse, eagle, hawk, and in the storm and the lightning.

The fish is an additional symbol of creation, poised as it is between good and evil, the 'mighty forces in eternal opposition', 2

Across the Ocean's polished floors of gloom. 3

'Gloom', here, suggests more than a negative state, and absence of light; it is a force antagonistic to life, completed: unlike the 'snow-silver' light round in the last line of To the Sun.

In this poem, as in Mithraic Emblems as a whole, there is, as Ridley Beeton has remarked, a 'brilliant marriage of two apparently antithetical concepts ... the cross and the horns': 4

1. From a lecture delivered by Alan Paton to the conference on 'English-speaking South Africa today'. (Quoted, in part, in Grocott's Mail, Grahamstown, July 19, 1974, p. 5.)


Oh let your shining orb grow dim,
Of Christ the mirror and the shield,
That I may gaze through you to Him,
See half the miracle revealed,
And in your seven hues behold
The Blue Man walking on the Sea;
......... Purple in the garden
(As Greco saw); and then the Red
Torero (Him who took the toss
and rode the black horns of the cross -
But rose snow-silver from the dead!)

The poem is especially notable for Campbell's use of symbolism through colour: 'purple' speaks of Gethsemane, 'red' suggests the Blood of Christ, while 'black' and 'silver' are strong reminders of the events that succeeded and preceded the Crucifixion. The symbolic meaning is closely welded to the analogy of the bull-fight, so that El Greco's 'purple' forms a striking contrast to the Torero 'red', focussing attention on the startling 'black horns of the cross'.

Campbell's sense of colour and masterly use of analogy are also evident in The Serf. The 'heart' of the ploughman is like the 'crimson' furrow which he 'grooves'; the 'surly patience' of the serf is as timeless, and as latently explosive as his surroundings. Therefore, the turning of the fallow heart, of field and peasant, seems to lead inexorably to the destruction of 'palaces, thrones and towers'. The Zulu Girl is an ominous evocation of this harvest of destruction which lies, as yet dormant, in

The curbed ferocity of the beaten tribes,
The sullen dignity of their defeat.

2. Ibid., p. 30.
3. Ibid., p. 30.
The harvest implied in *The Serf* is thus a paradoxical reaping, inverting the traditional associations of wheat and grain, so that 'tribal spears became the fatal sheaves of corn'.

The animal vitality of the Zulu girl is strongly suggested by 'tugged', 'grunting', 'prowl' and 'plugged', emphasising the electric tension which, throughout the poem, engenders a sense of 'unsmotherable heat' and smouldering resentment. This is effectively captured by the ominous portent of,

... the first cloud so terrible and still
That bears the coming harvest in its breast.

'Breast' achieves an added resonance through a comparison with the 'slow somnambulist' ploughman in *The Serf*; the natural succour of the breast, like the timeless turning of the fallow, does not yield the expected harvest.

*The Zebras*¹ depicts an animal that is finely and sensuously masculine. In contrast to *The Serf* and *The Zulu Girl*, Campbell,

... gives the scene something of the imaginative richness of classical mythology by suggesting that the zebras are 'harnessed' to the dawn by shafts of light, that they are Phaeton's fiery-footed steeds, drawing the sun behind them as they move across the plains.²

The 'electric tremors' do not, as in *The Zulu Girl*, suggest foreboding, but emphasise the very 'maleness' of the stallion, 'voited with delight', stirring to the call of 'the distant fillies'. The lilies are 'trampled' in erotic love play, while the mist is 'rosy', mirroring, in a sense, the seasonal excitement of the zebras.

---


Autumn is another poem that creates its own imaginative reality, for it does not simply describe autumn; neither does it try to echo the pallid Shelleyan text about spring being round the corner, but intends to thrust aside the 'sun-clouding planes' of superfluous being, to probe the quick of life-in-death ...

The descriptive splendour of

The grape will redden on your fingers
Through the lit crystal of the cup

is charged with the poet's acute perception of autumn, revealing not only an autumnal Africa, but the horizons of a broader universe.

Thus, whereas poems written before the 1920's about the 'South African scene' were often trite and derivative sentimentalities, the poems of Campbell, in contrast, translate perceptive awareness of country into a far richer poetical idiom.

Similarly, William Plomer's South African poems reveal an intensity of vision that is often lacking in the verse that was written by the early poets. In The Scorpion, for instance, the poet does not flinch from recording perceptions such as:

... in the sun one saw
The corpse of a young negress bruised
By rocks and rolling on the shore.

Plomer seems also to discard a mode that had become archaic (in terms of a rapidly developing country),

---

and uses in its place an idiom expressive of real conditions:

... the Africa we knew,
Where, wandering alone,
We saw, heraldic in the heat,
A Scorpion on a stone.

This is an Africa 'able to strike in its own splendid, though destructive manner, and the scorpion, sitting for a moment quiescent on a warm stone, in its propensity for stinging becomes heraldic of this kind of world - a world that we seem to have retained in our contemporary turbulences'.

Namaqualand after Rain, while lacking the realism found in parts of The Scorpion, derives its success from the poet's sensitive evocation of mood, which reference and echo serve to promote. In the fourth stanza, the description of scene is enhanced by the contrasting allusions in

A frou-frou of new flowers,
Puff of unruffling petals,
While rods of sunlight strike pure streams
From rocks beveined with metals.

This quality of universality is founded on a mystique that is essentially South African, or African, as in The Ruined Farm, where

A peacefull, archangelic sun
Sank low, grew larger to the sight

3. Ibid., p. 21.
and in *The Death of a Zulu*, where

The weather is mild
At the house of one of the dead.¹

The impulse is clearly South African, yet distilled, through Plomer's intense poetic vigour and insight, into the essence of imaginative reference.

The 'nameless somethings' of the South African veld are replaced by the genesis of a new and refreshingly coherent poetic tradition; the work of Roy Campbell and William Plomer removes, from contemporary South African poetry, the redolences of Pringle and his immediate successors.

These two poets form through their work, an effective bridge between the nineteenth century South African writers of verse in English, and the poetry which appeared in print after the second World War. The poems of Campbell and Plomer provide the foundation for an expressive and unselfconscious acceptance of country: they write, as do many of the post-war poets, with an authority that comes from a willingness to interpret their milieu in the light of individual experience.

---

CHAPTER II

WAR
The second World War made a greater impression upon South African poetry than did the conflict of 1914-18 and an astonishing quantity (in comparison with other periods) of verse was produced. To some extent this was inevitable, for South Africa was directly involved and in danger. During a totalitarian war, with the loss of personal freedom and the restrictions imposed upon the individual by military discipline, men are driven back upon their private emotion and it is natural that they should seek an outlet, a reality in poetry and music.¹

In this 'poetry of war', men such as Guy Butler, Norman Clothier and F.T. Prince were responding to a situation where 'each man, naked, and in his nakedness near to the manliness of his fellow, bends his purposes to mutilate and destroy'². The situations and sensations which confronted these 'soldier poets' necessitated new and fresh interpretations, resulting in a radical dismissal of traditional attitudes, and consequently a sharper definition of idiom:

... poetry [was] born in this disputed territory between the current formula and the fresh sensation, where new experiences flood and baptize the intellectual frontiers, and where intellect asserts a new and modified control.³

---

The second World War engendered the first clearly delineated theme in South African English poetry, a theme that expresses an awareness of the horrific implications of war, as well as the sanative power of the dignity that often leavens the grim reality of armed conflict. Roy Macnab, in the introduction to his second anthology, observes that:

The war, which opened up new horizons for many of us, gave a new impetus to South African poetry in English, an impetus which has not been lost in the post-war period, when some of the most distinguished verse has come from poets who first began to write on the battlefields of North Africa and Italy.

This observation would seem to be supported by G.M. Miller and Howard Sergeant, who cite Guy Butler, 'one of the most talented of these young men, writing of an Air Raid Before Dawn':

A scrap of shrapnel through the trees
Skids on the stones of the Roman road
Leading to Caesar's trisected Gaul,

1. In an article on the 'New Foundation' (1941), Charles Williams maintains that: 'We may reject, we may rebuke, we may contend against war ... the main fact is that we are compelled to admit it, and to admit that our lives, and often our deaths, depend on it'. (Selected Writings, O.U.P., London, 1961, p. 123.)


Where twilit we ate mulberries,
Stained our fingers, felt no goad
To be going and getting things done at all . . .

The authors remark that in Butler's poem there 'is no glorification of warfare on the one hand, nor retreat into bitterness and despair on the other. His language has an edge and is pleasingly free from the poetic diction which has cramped the style of so many South African would-be poets. Accepting his own circumstances, he is released from egotism to look at the world around him . . .'

Compelled by a similar release from introspection,

Clothier, in Libyan Winter, is troubled by the appearance and atmosphere of war; F.T. Prince [in Soldiers Bathing] is concerned with the men who take part and the perceptions they vivify. Clothier is highly subjective and, possibly, too predictable in his responses. . . Prince, by contrast, penetrates to a new dimension, in that war not only involves him in its conflict . . . but challenges him to look beyond the immediacies of destruction and brutality.\(^1\)

Roy Campbell, in Heartbreak Camp, challenges the hierarchic values of barrack life. Although the mood is one of 'despair integrated into a world of inspections and sentry-go'\(^2\), the attitude of the 'old soldier' is refreshingly absent. Orion and the moon are incorporated into an image that is at once amusing and subtly perceptive, so that the light-heartedness of imagery is delicately

---


balanced by the total effect of boredom and discomfort evoked in the poem.

The hierarchic values of an army, whether in peace or at war, are forcefully stated in these lines:

All joys are privates there
Who seldom go on leave
And only sorrows wear
Three chevrons on their sleeve:

But boredom wears three pips,
A fiend of monstrous size,
With curses on his lips
And circles round his eyes.1

The insistence on rank and the accompanying sense of boredom are clearly shown. The fiendish captain of 'monstrous size', together with the allegorical brigadier of death and the 'ferocious colonel', foreshadow the horsemen of the apocalypse.

The poem highlights what R.J. Smith calls 'a regime of inverted values'2, where Orion, the moon, and 'the slow patrol of stars' are no longer supreme; they are, too, no longer the symbols of man's universal striving towards an ideal beyond the material and temporal; like the 'pale aurora' they are contained 'behind the guardroom grille', subject, it seems, to the whim of earthly commanders. The Sentry becomes an extension of a world of shadowy despair, reflecting the slow movement of the heavens, and the insistent thoughts of the poet:


Here, till the pale aurora
Dismiss the stars from drill,
I dream of my Senora
Behind the guardroom grille.

The rhythm of the line lays a stress on 'my', accentuating the poet's sense of possession, and by contrast, his sense of boredom and frustration.

In the succeeding stanzas, the poet seems to respond to recollections of 'Our vineyard and the terrace/By the Tagus', where, 'fed with the thyme and samphire/That azure days had grown', he was once able to live joyously and fully. In this world, Campbell suggests, there is a freedom denied by his present circumstances; here, the spaces are 'wide and starry', not circumscribed and inhibiting.

Awareness of the futility of war returns in the final stanza:

'And, all illusions killing,
Upon the stillness jars
A far hyaena drilling
His company of stars.

As if in contrast to the preceding thoughts, the hyaena draws together, and symbolizes, the 'infernal' commanders of Heartbreak Camp. The setting is again unnatural, as the 'company of stars' are drilled by the temporal scavenger, jarring the stillness of 'idyllic peace'.

The voice of the Sentry relates a vision of spiritual disintegration as if it were some natural event, hence the immediacy of the poem, which, in turn, compels recognition of the idiom: the hyaena's 'carrion call' imbues Heartbreak Camp with an authority heightened by referential echoes in the lines.
Campbell's intuitive apprehension of unity in nature and the universe, and his recognition of the sheer energy bred by conflict, is also evident in *One Troopship Lost*. The first stanza of the poem evokes, through intelligent use of detail, a realistic picture of the 'violent crowdedness' of the ship. The poet creates an image of the privation suffered by the common soldier, depicting, too, his animality and 'maleness'. The torpedoed ship is described with 'cinematic vividness':

Dashing the bulkheads red with slaughter,
In the steep wash that swept the hold,
Men, corpses, kitbags, blood and water,
Colliding and commingling rolled.\(^1\)

The microcosmic violence and force implicit in the sinking of the ship is contrasted with the macrocosmic calm of the sea, and its natural cycle, which is evident (as R.J. Smith suggests) in the 'sense of tides, and their ebb and flow contained in the rhythm of the lines'.\(^2\)

Paradoxically, the reader's awareness of the turbulence of war is heightened by the title of the poem, which is coldly factual. The description of men as a ship's cargo (and later to perceive them in terms of flies) emphasises the debasement suffered by the soldier, and thus his ultimate inability to have any ideal conception of 'heroic action'. 'Pent explosive airs' evokes a vision of impotent humanity faced with the brutal machinery of war, where

Friend aided friend - but to destruction,
And valour seemed its own reproof.

---


The cynical detachment of 'it was no bunch of flowers' achieves an added resonance through Campbell's use (in earlier poems) of 'flower' and 'pomegranate' to depict the visual effect of shell and bomb-burst. The 'spiracle of Hell' is therefore more than a physical assault on the soldier: the words are imbued with a horror which strikes deeper than the reader's spontaneous reaction to the immediacy of the image.

Anthony Delius, in Naval Bombardment of Pantellaria, and Guy Butler, in December 1944 are concerned, like Campbell, with the 'spiracle of Hell', in terms which are manifestly symbolic of death. Delius depicts death as a 'centaur', breathing blast and metal; Butler suggests the imminence of the 'dumb lout' (Death) through his allusion to 'haunch-squatting guns', itself a portentous image.

In Naval Bombardment of Pantellaria, in a tone as deliberately unimpassioned as the guns which 'lift their grey antennae from the sea', Delius is concerned, not with a real battle, but with the 'one-sided' butchery which emanates from the muzzles of the ship's guns. The traditional element of 'anger' is present, but it is the 'terrible cold anger' of the guns, which 'shake' and 'rave'; this is the 'cold anger' of the executioner concerned solely, and undeviatingly, with his task.

Traditional aesthetic concepts are cleverly inverted, through the use of 'flower' and 'bloom of dirt' to denote the impact of the shells; in this 'garden' of destruction, where 'the iron seed is sown', the results of the bombardment are magnified by the metaphorical effect of:

... a lover's head is blown off like a dandelion in the wind.1

The explosions in the distance are likened to 'sniggers of satanic mirth', emphasising the contrast between

A house where many of our kind, men, woman, loved, and wept, and planned...

and the irresistible force of the 'giant's hand' that 'sweeps up a girl into the sky, until

She's dropped in crimson tears beside the thigh of sundered thighs to earth.

Through his reference to 'a ravaged butterfly', Delius seems to strive towards a balance between profane symbols of war, and a 'romantic' conception of the divine order implicit in nature. This balance is more forcefully expressed in V.E. Day, where the 'dead' in their 'graves' are no longer portrayed as the antithesis of creation, but as the genesis of an awareness of man in relation to nature and the universe:

Saddened by sunlight on this aged hill, my seat a brown stone coined before Silurian times, I hear a bird in thorn-bush drop its water trill and know throughout my ruined age.

A great bell chimes.1

Although the poet seems to feel that his life, and possibly his generation, is 'ruined', he suggests, in the mention of 'Silurian times', a belief in the cyclic, and thus progressive, nature of existence. Therefore, while man is still imprisoned in the harsh reality of the 'Hamelin caves', the redemptive quality of 'stillness' (underscored by surroundings in which the 'kindly blue-gums murmur with a kiss'), promises a replacement for the 'Waste Land' (seen in the allusions to 'water' and 'iron seed') of Naval Bombardment of Pantellaria.

1. Ibid., p. 31.
In December 1944, Guy Butler's theme parallels that of Anthony Delius; Butler depicts the 'pale children' which Delius as introspective visionary, sees 'loosed from the Hamelin caves'. In forceful imagery, where 'even his dreams are hung with curtains of rain', Butler speaks of 'day and night' as:

... two greys washed together,
Run in the web of rain; rocks, guns, men
And mountains we fight for, all woven of weather.

The 'web of rain', in addition to its great visual impact, suggests the weaving together of soldiers and their surroundings in a pattern of destruction; the image suggests, too, camouflage nets and the web of fate. The unnaturalness of the setting is emphasised by the reference to the 'half-saint, half-beast', 'shut from the warmth of women' and 'the glow of suns'. The 'half-beast' symbolises, on one level, a world where man is unable to distinguish between 'day and night', an existence of 'grey days' and total uncertainty. Death is neither 'Lucifer nor Christ', and 'good' and 'evil' are almost indistinguishable.

The religious overtones which permeate the poem ('A quiet nun of snow', 'calm as monks', 'the padre's prayers') form a vivid contrast to the chaos and uncertainty seen through the immediacy of the poet's perception. People and events are observed only as they impress themselves on Butler's unvarying consciousness of what this world is like. He is able, thus, to determine the shape of reality, amid the vast number of associated impressions.

found in the poem. The second symbolic allusion to death ('almost mummy-wrapped for the final night'), is a thematic echo of the earlier reference to 'the scape-ghost of our sins'.

Taken in relation to the last lines of the poem,

( Disturbed the soil, sprung leaves, was bold to grow,
To take up space and air between the sun and earth
Look at the grave-stain in the crib of snow,

Look at our guilty thirty pieces worth.)

these allusions, at a more complex level, introduce a subject more universal than the unconscious patterns that direct human behaviour. Butler confronts the reader with the fundamental problem of human isolation, of man's ultimate separateness from his fellows. Thus, although many of the allusions are religious in character, there is a departure from the tendency to see soldiers as 'avenging angels'; the unsettling, forlorn quality of the last line indicates a moral conflict between the natural loyalty which the soldier owes to his society, and a sense of universal justice that transcends social law and loyalties.

'The crib of snow' is a symbolic form of the Christ-child's cradle; it is a highly evocative and carefully introduced allusion, which recurs - in varying forms - throughout the poem. The introduction of the 'thirty pieces of silver' underlines, by its aureole of religious significance, the necessity of man's individual choice. The strange gods ('dumb beast', 'haunch-squatting guns'), represented in tones of grey, or in terms of the stark blackness of the grave, are easily, if unwillingly, followed. It is the 'white' light of Christ (and all that His birth and death embody) that dispels the 'greys washed together', demanding from each man his own, agonizing response:
... now black print on white, not muffled, dim
In Autumn's camouflage. Crosses show
Stab-sharp to eyes which last night parried them.

As Ian Hamilton has suggested,

... ideas as well as myths were helpless now —
it was a question of survival and sanity in the
face of what seemed to be an irreparable
corruption of human nature, the 'end of history's
thread'. A direct eye, an honest precision of
language, a vitality of the imagination — these
were worth fostering and protecting. As Henry
Reed put it:
Things may be the same again: and we must fight
Not in the hope of winning, but rather of keeping
Something alive.¹

This awareness is evident also in Tobruk Visited,
December 1943, where

... above the harbour airplanes cut
A course of sunlit metal towards a target of blood.²

The 'airplanes' contrast with the serenity of the gulls
which 'weave a leisurely flight' over the harbour. The
freedom of the natural world, implicit in the unrestricted
flight of the gulls, serves to emphasize the bitterness of
the captured officer:

For, cruellest wound of all, why should he now recall
Windmill, window at dusk, house near the wattle tree.
In his heart the past was a ghost: eyes only saw
this coast
Dipping its bone-white fingers in cold dividing seas.

¹ Ian Hamilton (Ed): The Poetry of War (1939-45),
Here, 'bone-white fingers' suggests both actual death and the living death of incarceration, while the 'crucified pride of the leaderless soldier' is in stark contrast to the purpose of Christ's crucifixion. This referential symbolism serves, once again, to expose man's essential humanity and individuality; notwithstanding the soldier's traumatic ordeal, Butler seems to demand of him a consciousness of potential ideals, instead of abject surrender to the barbarous demands of war.

However, the larger, symbolic associations of Butler's war poetry are interwoven with the literal reality which the poet describes. In December 1944, for instance, the clearly etched colours ('black' and 'white') have a dual function; they imply, firstly, the distinction between 'evil' and 'good', and serve, secondly, to heighten the visual contrasts of the winter landscape. In Tobruk Visited, December 1943, the Crucifixion is not used with referential casualness: the 'crucified pride', because of its link with 'bone-white fingers', is the chief structural feature of the poem, lending, through symbolic extension, an added strength to the following lines:

Draw the teeth of the tiger, clip the wings of the hawk. The pride of their being is broken.

Butler's Stranger to Europe, like H.W.D. Manson's Unposted Letter, has as its subject the aftermath of war. The hard-won human insight of these poets enables them to respond artistically, and with exceptionally imaginative and open minds, to the rhythm (of birth and death) which is an integral part of the 'natural' world. The war intrudes into both poems. In Stranger to Europe, the poet refers to 'thunderclouds' which

... made giant graves
Of the black, bare hills of Kerry. ¹

¹. Ibid., p. 25.
Manson, in *Unposted Letter*, presents the effects of war in a denouement:

P.S. And what's the use of posting this to you - now? And how would I address it? Care of some dark hole in the ground? Forgive that last, most desperate quip of all, Old mole, my brother, Make sounds as slight as mice feet skittering And I shall hear. I shall hear If you make sounds like a rose unfurling Or falling snow.¹

Where Manson's desire is 'to record the dislocation and stress of the transition from war to peace'² and to show the human channels through which a renewed vitalization can flow, Butler's poem - similarly untainted by rancour - celebrates the generous simplicity of the Irish countryside.

In both poems there is a human intimacy which is both tender and strong; however, the underlying truth of the poet's condition is always brutally apparent. Butler's heart is 'a torn-up, drying root'; while Manson asserts that

... Nothing's changed, not a single thing, except what's natural and seasonal.

Yet, beneath these assertions, and the tensions so clearly evident in their words, Butler and Manson re-affirm their belief in the healing processes of nature. Manson's feelings are evident in these lines:

One good green day, I feel, is all I need. One good green day.


Butler's affirmation, though not as positively declared, is no less convincing:

But there was something more you meant, -
As if the trees and the clouds had grown
Into a timeless flame that burnt
All worlds of words and left them dust
Through stubble and sedge by the late wind blown:
A love not born and not to be learnt,
But given and taken, an ultimate trust.

In the poetry of Michael Macnamara the inherent qualities of tradition are reflected in an often experimental form. In Field the poet avoids formal restrictions, but is still able to cast side-glances at history and classical mythology. In the poem, the 'I' is non-insistent, so that the pressure of individual focus becomes lightly blurred; the poem gains, thus, an objectivity which enhances the relevance of what has been perceived.

As in Roy Macnab's El Alamein Revisited, the poet is standing at the scene of a past battle. The narrator in each of these poems is the instrument of perception, recalling the past, and interpreting it in the light of fresh insights and new understanding. In Field, the first stanza is a terse evocation of mood:

I stood in France
by a field;
a bird
winged from a cross.¹

The bird (like the gull in Guy Butler's Tobruk Revisited, December 1942) contrasts with the 'cross', the means through which 'Dionic peace' has been won. In the second stanza, there is again a disparity between the 'peace' found in nature, and the calm uneasily maintained by man:

¹. Unisa English Studies, September 1968, p. 77.
Dionic peace:
no wind
jostled the hedgerows, stirred
the merlin sprigs of May.

The 'merlin' magic of burgeoning life stimulates the poet's perception of the 'hollow' victory gained on this battlefield; the mounds, too, if inverted, would be hollow. The poet does not shrink, however, from the 'realities of trench warfare:

A gross of shells
an hour's sacrifice:
reddenened heads;
half-things
spewed from the vortex.

Here, the 'haunch-squatting guns', described by Guy Butler in December 1944, seem to reduce men to 'things', or objects. As the bombardment by innumerable explosives (denoted by 'a gross of shells') progresses, the victims are steadily and inexorably deprived of their humanity; there is frightening escalation in the description: from 'sacrifice', to 'reddenened heads', to the final annihilating truth of

half-things
spewed from the vortex.

The trenches, open at the top (and thus, symbolically, potential graves), give way, becoming 'mounds' paradoxically

hollow staring
in May ...

'Peace', therefore, is 'hollow': 'hollow' for the poet, who has suffered bereavement, and empty of meaning for the soldier whose death has been fashioned by the 'gross of shells'. The ultimate emptiness of this
'Dionic peace' mirrors the dilemma of these South African poets writing of war; namely, that of finding a connection between a specifically national quality of mind, and the international exigencies of a war-torn world. It is especially noticeable in Roy Macnab's *El Alamein Revisited*, for example, that war is not presented as the Shelleyan 'statesman's game', nor is honour referred to as the Spenserian 'meed of victory'. Instead, the poet speaks of an army 'without banners', that

... looked without passion on the cold, grey tanks
And fashioned their deaths with these tools,
They had not come seeking
'Some corner of a foreign field'
To build a bold heroic pose
With painted letters on a shield ... 1

Yet, whatever the motives or attitude, the result is the same:

Six feet is no depth for tragic men
Said the wind and the wind never ceases
To pile up high the soft grey tombs,
And move them where it pleases,

Piling the sand-dunes, piling high
Over the desert where dead men lie,
Up and down against the sky,
Up and down against the sky,

... only the sand and wind forget to die.

F.T. Prince is one of the few South African poets to attempt an explanation, in universal terms, of man's involvement in war. Thus, his concern is very different from that of Roy Macnab. In *Soldiers Bathing*, Prince states that:

Though every human deed concerns our blood,
And even we must know, what nobody has understood,
That some great love is over all we do,
And that is what has driven us to this fury,
for so few
Can suffer all the terror of that love:
The terror of that love has set us spinning in
this groove
Greased with our blood.¹

Prince's view of conflict is clearly metaphysical. Norman
Clothier, by contrast, attempts to reflect the confining
effect which war has on man's sensibilities. In the
opening lines of Libyan Winter the vista of the great
North-African desert is narrowed and compressed:

There is so little earth, and so much cold
Grey sky clamped down upon us that we seem
Cut off from any kinship with the world,
That safe sane world we knew once in a dream.²

Man is alone, isolated and numbed by his situation
and the poet shows, in much the same way as do Butler and
Delius, the consequent inversion of values. Sanity becomes
surreal, a trick of 'poignant dreams', and reality is
the 'hell' of being

... set apart like fallen souls
Without a past or future to fulfil ...

The angry humanity of a Wilfred Owen (as Ridley Beeton
has remarked) is evident in the description of battle as
'blindly a driving destiny that hurls', and culminates in
the carthartic simplicity of these lines:

¹. F.T. Prince: Soldiers Bathing, and other poems,

². Norman Clothier: Libyan Winter, C.N.A., Johannesburg,
Those things are not for us; ours is the way
That lies over the desert under sombre skies
Past rusting blackened wrecks of trucks and tanks
And graves of men who blazed in this guise.

Clothier shows, here, the 'tragedy of war': under the
'sombre skies' the soldier becomes, through the systematic
destruction implied in 'blackened wrecks', one of 'those
things'; his values are, in effect, subverted by the
necessity of partaking in the conflict. This mirrors,
in a Blakean sense,

a tragic scene where the soul drinks murder
and revenge
and applauds its own holiness ...

The 'soul' of society might be able to 'applaud its own
holiness', but the protagonist, as F.T. Prince suggests in
the second stanza of Soldiers Bathing, is involved
in his situation and

... its terrible pressure that begets
A machinery of death and slavery;
Each being a slave and making slaves of others ...

He is forced, through circumstance, to 'play with death
and animality'. Man, 'stripped bare', shares in a brother-
hood which includes Christ, 'stripped, upon the Cross';
thus, his involvement in war must, by definition, also
force upon him responsibility for the state of anarchic
turbulence, negating his kinship with his fellow man:

... a Lear thrust out by his ungrateful daughters
into a world of madness and storm, a Lear who
in his danger surmounts the foolishness of his
age and the grossness of his actions. Prince
puts Lear's 'poor, bare, forked animal' into the
context of his description of the naked soldiers:
All's pathos now. The body that was gross
Rank, ravenous, disgusting in the act or in
repose
All fever, filth and sweat its bestial strength
And bestial decay, by pain and labour grows
at length
Fragile and luminous.¹

The baptismal, or regenerative effect of the water
allows the soldiers a temporary resuscitation, 'their flesh,
owned by the trade of war, revives'. The shortlived
'sweetness of his nakedness' ends almost inevitably in
'the idea of Michelangelo's cartoon,' where men, 'forgetful
of their bodies that are bare', are 'hot to buckle on and
use the weapons lying there.' This theme is an eternal
one; for instance, 'another Florentine, Pallaiolo',

Painted a naked battle: warriors, straddled,
hacked the foe,
Dug their bare toes into the ground and slew
The brother-naked man who lay between their
feet and drew
His lips back from his teeth in a grimace.

The pointlessness of the destruction is emphasised by
'broadth-naked', a pointer to Christ's death and His
divine purpose. In the circumscribed area of violence,
'honour' is the force which motivates men towards their
actions, and it is sheer, rugged animality which carries
them forward, translating muscular strength and co-ordination
into a bizarre machine of death.

Yet, 'there is a martyrdom in this activity that
has been strikingly and sensitively suggested, with the
result that little shock, and ultimately no incongruity,
is experienced in the reference to the Crucifixion':²

¹. D.R. Beeton: 'Soldiers Bathing', in South African Poetry:
   A Critical Anthology, p. 40.
². Ibid., p. 42.
Michelangelo and Pallaiuolo's pictures see 'war's horrible extreme' for what it is. These artists knew war's sorrow and disgrace, and, as reference will show, man's suffering and defeat, 'and showed the thing suspended, stripped'; they also interpret war in terms of their Christian awareness, a deep emotional involvement with the Christian Passion. They see the men stripped to their humanity - yet girding themselves for the purposes of destroying humanity - as a martyrdom of the human purpose, and even of the human desire:

... that rage, that bitterness, those blows,
That hatred of the slain, what could they be
But indirectly or directly a commentary
On the Crucifixion?\(^1\)

Christ, in his gentleness and compassion perhaps the most dedicated 'soldier' seen by the world, stands to humankind as the embodiment of a transcending ideal capable of providing the only logical and completely satisfying standard to which man may rally. Thus, the soldiers, 'rising from the waters' to do battle, represent - in one sense - the Fall of man. In contrast, Christ's emergence from the water after baptism by John, led him to deeper communion with the Infinite. Prince is aware, therefore, that 'some great love is over all we do'; of all the poets discussed he evinces, perhaps, the most complete awareness of man's ultimate foolhardiness, and - paradoxically - the soldier's compelling sacrifice, which is suggested by

... a streak of red that might have issued from Christ's breast ...

In Prince's poem, form and direction do not emanate from a condition of smug contentment. Instead, uncertainty and doubt, transmuting themselves by stages into understanding, lead to the creation of convincing poetry.

---

1. Ibid., p. 42.
This is, indeed, true of most South African 'war poetry': poets such as Prince and Clothier explore their own crises by meeting them in their writing, with the result that they have no need - as did many of the earlier poets - to create 'from the imagination'. As the poems are founded in experience (and tightly disciplined in expression), they carry the reader convincingly from the level of personal description to the larger vista of universal interpretation.

In his essay, 'Poets of the 1939-1945 War', R.N. Currey includes F.T. Prince amongst those 'who have written war poetry which has added to their reputation: Henry Reed, Norman Cameron, Rayner Heppenstall, Paul Dehn, Gavin Ewart and H.B. Mallalieu, as well as the South Africans, F.T. Prince ... Uys Krige and Guy Butler'. Furthermore, Currey refers to Prince's poem, Soldiers Bathing, as 'perhaps the most distinguished single poem of the war'. Of Roy Campbell's volume of war poetry he has this to say:

Talking Bronco, perhaps the most vigorous single book of poems of the war, is the most untypical, owing, as it does, nothing to Owen and very little to Sassoon. Roy Campbell was a South African, nurtured visually in the sight of wild animals and mentally on the myths of early discoverers.

Luis de Camões in an example of the 'untypical' war-poem mentioned by Currey:

Camões, alone, of all the lyric race,  
Born in the black aurora of disaster,  
Can look a common soldier in the face:


2. Ibid., p. 36.

3. Ibid., p. 33.
I find a comrade where I sought a master:
For daily, while the stinking crocodiles
Glide from the mangroves on the swampy shore,
He shares my awning on the dhow, he smiles,
And tells me that he lived it all before.
Through fire and shipwreck, pestilence and loss,
Led by the ignis fatuus of duty
To a dog's death - yet of his sorrows king -
He shouldered high his voluntary Cross,
Wrestled his hardships into forms of beauty,
And taught his gorgon destinies to sing.¹

The 'voluntary Cross' and 'gorgon destinies' are symbols
for those who partake willingly in the 'ignis fatuus of
duty', despite an awareness of the fragility of sanity
and existence. Campbell's poem, like Soldiers Bathing,
has therefore an evocative and philosophical value that
is at once pertinent, and disturbing, to the modern
reader. Roy Campbell, F.T. Prince and Guy Butler each
lay bare a moral question which, R.N. Currey maintains,
lies 'in the ease with which we can divorce our appreciation
of the machine as a machine from its murderous intention ...':²
Campbell, for instance, speaks of a 'dog's death'; Butler,
in December 1944, refers to 'haunch-squatting guns';
Prince writes metaphorically of 'A machinery of death and
slavery'.

Brian Gardner presents, perhaps, the most succinct
statement concerning the effect of the second World War
on the soldier-poet:

² R.N. Currey: Poets of the 1939-1945 War, p. 43.
War is, without doubt, man's most outrageous activity, and yet it draws from him, too, nobility, valour and art.1

The South African poets represented in Gardner's anthology include William Piomer (Father and Son2), R.N. Currey (Unseen Fire3, Local Leave4), and Roy Campbell (Heartbreak Camp5). Howard Sergeant's anthology, Poetry of the 1940s6, records the work of only one 'South African', Roy Fuller.7 Fuller's poetry - by virtue of its clarity of vision, and its new perspectives of reality - is a fine example of the poetic achievement of South African writers of this period.

It is, furthermore, the work of these war-poets which has been the forerunner of much of the later, and post-war poetry, in which poets responded to life in a world of uneasy peace:

1945 heralded history's most cruel and bitter peace. This was not a cause for jubilation. Poets knew this, and accepted it.8

- o o o -

2. p. 9.
3. p. 50.
4. p. 90.
5. p. 156.
7. The two poems most directly concerned with this theme of war are: In Africa (p. 58), and What is Terrible, (p. 63).
CHAPTER III

THE POST-WAR VOICE
INTRODUCTION

The last world war brought with it its violence - in many ways curiously anaesthetized - and, as with poetry all over the world, it would lead to the raw, truncated imagery of the sixties.¹

The temporary release from external danger which marked the end of the second World War occasioned a new, and perhaps even more urgent, search for solutions. This quest was in answer to problems which could no longer be solved by military leaders, but only by a close analysis of man's conduct and attitudes.

The result, in South African English poetry, was a somewhat amorphous collection of poems, ranging widely in idiom, form and content. However, one clear trend does emerge in a reading of this body of work; namely, a movement away from a limited depiction of situations peculiarly South African towards concerns interpreted in terms of a more universal poetic experience. The challenge of the idiosyncratic and the problematical, and the uneasiness of post-war peace, have occasioned a radical questioning of relationships, as well as a consistent attempt to arrive at the nature of 'truth'.

It is perhaps the lack of definition, which characterises the poetry of this period, that has confused many readers and critics. G.M. Miller and Howard Sergeant, for instance, conclude their Critical Survey of South African Poetry in English with the following observation:

... a valid poetic tradition in South Africa can develop to its fullest extent only so far as it incorporates and assimilates the various elements proper to itself .... There can be no doubt that, though the present conditions

are not conducive to the writing of poetry in English, the material is extraordinarily rich and awaits the transforming power of the poet who is dedicated to his task.¹

Although the post-war period has almost certainly seen the emergence of a 'tradition' that could be termed 'South African', the beginnings of this lie not so much in the 'assimilation' of the various elements proper to itself', as in the striking originality of idiom and attitude shown by several poets. Their poetry runs parallel, perhaps, to the themes of those writing in America and England, but its technique produces a thoroughly human (although not always strictly South African) statement, in which people, dialogue and background are instantly and universally recognizable. Thus American poets like May Swenson and Gary Snyder find, in my opinion, counterparts in Eva Bezwoda ² and Ridley Beeton, both of whom are South African writers similarly concerned (in Children's Voices and Children, respectively) with the ephemeral urgencies of the world of children.

1. p. 156

2. Hereafter referred to as Eva Royston: a volume of her poetry appeared under this name in 1973. (One hundred and three poems, Renoster, Johannesburg.)
are not conducive to the writing of poetry in English, the material is extraordinarily rich and awaits the transforming power of the poet who is dedicated to his task. ¹

Although the post-war period has almost certainly seen the emergence of a 'tradition' that could be termed 'South African', the beginnings of this lie not so much in the 'assimilation' of the various elements proper to itself', as in the striking originality of idiom and attitude shown by several poets. Their poetry runs parallel, perhaps, to the themes of those writing in America and England, but its technique produces a thoroughly human (although not always strictly South African) statement, in which people, dialogue and background are instantly and universally recognizable. Thus American poets like May Swenson and Gary Snyder find, in my opinion, counterparts in Eva Bezwoda ² and Ridley Beeton, both of whom are South African writers similarly concerned (in Children's Voices and Children, respectively) with the ephemeral urgencies of the world of children.

1. p. 156

2. Hereafter referred to as Eva Royston: a volume of her poetry appeared under this name in 1973. (One hundred and three poems, Renoster, Johannesburg.)
a) IDIOM AND ATTITUDE

Both Eva Royston and Ridley Beeton point to the differences between the adult world and the world of the young. The result, in *Children*, is a sharpness of antithesis coupled with the unfolding strangeness of the scene, through which Beeton presents a compelling vision of abnormality; the eye travels, thus, from the boundaries of the 'drowsy' morning to the central figures which shock our humanity. The lines - though seemingly simple statements of varied and progressive observations - are intense evocations of mood, containing both objective and subjective experience:

This morning I walked down to the park
To watch the small children sailing their boats
On the placid pond. The sky was very blue,
The sun was very golden, and the children
Were splashes of brightness against the green.
Then the contented morning was disturbed.
The mad children came running down the street.
Their shrill voices tore at the drowsy air;
They seemed to smear the world with greyness,
And streak it with gross strokes of black.
The small children stood and watched the mad children.
The mad children had no eyes for the small children.

The scene presents no undifferentiated mass of emotion; instead, the concrete description serves as a direct assault on the reader's sensibilities. The first stanza creates a tableau of bright, effusive gaiety; and on this stage, with a backdrop of sharply etched, almost hyperbolic colours ('the sky was very blue'; 'the sun was very golden'), the poet is initially the only moving entity. His one-ness with his surroundings is evident in

the fact that he does not disturb the children at play: the disruption is caused - paradoxically - by other children, whose jarring intrusion into the quiet scene is felt in the suddenness of

Then the contented morning was disturbed ...

As the poet is an intimate part of the morning, the disturbance also affects him; the somnolent quality of the first stanza is rent by the 'shrill voices' which tear at 'the drowsy air', adding a new dimension to the morning. In their grotesque, insensitive wildness, as opposed to the more natural exuberance of the other children, the 'mad children' seem

... to smear the world with greyness,
And streak it with gross strokes of black.

The innocence of 'contented morning', a small, insulated area of calm, is buffeted now by the intrusion of the 'world', symbolic of a Blakean realm of experience. This is a place of tragedy and grossness, where there exists no sensitivity of response to humanity or nature. Thus the 'small children' (suggestive, perhaps, of a particular quality of innocence in which the poet, for the moment, shares) are contrasted with the 'mad children', who are set apart, irrevocably, by their condition:

The small children stood and watched the mad children. The mad children had no eyes for the small children.

As in Children's Voices, 'smallness' refers only to the physical size of the children; their capacity for participating in the world of nature is illimitable, reminding one of the lines from T.S. Eliot's Burnt Norton:
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.

Like Eliot, Beeton places himself alongside the child, so that - in the first stanza - adult and child are co-present. Like the children, the poet is open to the suggestiveness of the morning, and the 'drowsy morning' becomes a perpetual possibility. The 'illusion' is filled with hope and promise, while the 'reality' represented by the 'mad children' becomes a portent of decay and death.

In *Children's Voices*, there is also this compressed and powerful expression of equipoise. The voices which

\[
\text{Trail down the long golden halls}
\text{Of the late afternoon ...}^1
\]

indicate a direction to which the poet is susceptible. And the 'golden' light that 'eulogises upon the lawn' illuminates the poet's willingness to be led down the 'halls' of experience, which culminate in

\[
\text{... a stillness}
\text{Shaken from bird's wing ...}
\]

This is the creative present, in which 'innocence' is implicit, and therefore discoverable; the tension between movement and stillness creates an ideal permanence which is suggested in images that are at once pregnant and symbolic. For instance,

\[
\text{The sun is a ripened apple}
\text{Ready to fall}
\]

while,

... shadows grow huge
To let spill their burden.

Eva Royston depicts a telescoping of experience and the seasons. Seen in their entirety, summer and experience lead inexorably to death, but perceived fragmentarily - as in the lives of children - they represent moments of fulfilment. Thus, as the poet suggests, involvement in the seasons precludes an easy perception of their passing: the 'ripened apple' remains suspended, though 'ready to fall'. Dylan Thomas, in *Fern Hill*, expresses a similar awareness of this fact:

Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means ...

And, as in Eva Royston's poem, there is the recognition that

Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

In *Pippa's Park* Walter Saunders, too, writes of children's excitement:

shoes go up
grubby face, knees,
as she swings

sees it splashing
high in the trees ...

The kaleidoscopic intensity of the description, and the compression of vital ideas within a series of sharply etched images, force upon the reader a heightened perception

of 'park', 'sun', 'geese', 'girl' and 'children'. This is a type of 'television-technique' very similar to that used by Roy Campbell in *One Troopship Lost*: the 'cinematic vividness' of the portrayal focuses on varied aspects of the scene, which in turn serves as a visual stimulus to an apprehension of the 'whole' of the poem. Without using formal connectives, Saunders highlights the relationship between 'girl' and 'grass' (both of which are 'loony'), 'park' and 'pinafore', and 'bird' and 'baby'. All are an integral part of a single, cohesive 'well-spring of existence', of which 'the sun! the sun!' is the genesis.

The presentation of visual perception is hardly sequential, and this - together with the integration of time and space - seems to encourage a response to the child-like outcries:

'now we BEEN!
now we BEEN!'

The technique, here, diverges from that used by poets writing before and during, the second World War (with the exception, perhaps, of Michael Macnamara). More significantly Saunders reveals, with Eva Royston and Ridley Beeton, a fresh response to his society and surroundings, with a concomitant revitalization of idiom: a result, perhaps, of the revolution of technology and ideas which has forced poets to look inward, to focus more attention on their situation and the varied facets of their existence. Thus, in showing a concern for children, these writers examine the possibilities suggested by the innocence and exuberance of the young, and the limits imposed on them by their circumstances. In contrast, the earlier writers seem, largely, to have recorded their sensations in relation to a new and relatively undeveloped land; their attention was forced 'outward', in an attempt to reconcile their situation and perceptions with established norms and attitudes.
The new, and palpably post war, attitude is also revealed in the work of Elias Pater and Robert Dederick, whose dilemma is succinctly stated in these lines from *Children Sleeping*:

And how to relate their simple need of loving  
To the riving world beyond these walls and shutters  
Waiting with alarums set to jangle  
When the candle of childhood splutters and gutters.¹

The poet's acceptance of his, and mankind's, responsibility gives rise to a conscious recollection of *Macbeth*: the harsh 'jangle' of 'alarums' and the guttering candle foreshadow the children's departure from a realm protected by 'walls and shutters', and their rude entry into the 'riving world' of adulthood. This world is fraught with envy, suspicion and danger; it is an area which, the poet suggests, can be likened to Scotland after the death of Duncan, a world which is the antithesis of

... their rackety daylit world where nothing  
For long can live but is crying or laughing.

The poet is writing from his position as an adult, as one who is aware of impending tragedy:

... a wheel around their sleep revolving  
Night after night, ever closer moving?

Unlike Dederick, who moves - in his sympathy - closer to the sleeping children, Elias Pater (in *The Generations*) senses 'his removal from the interest of younger age groups, how they fall silent at his interruption, how he feels his intrusion and old-fogeyness; yet, engagingly, he remembers that he, too, was young; he too was empty and urgent'²:


The way the young pause in distant respect
When you enter the room which had been yours -

The way it will be taken for granted
That you cannot understand their patois -

The way their eyes will fill with a faint stare
When you mention a once reigning poet ... ¹

In Young Lovers Perseus Adams presents a subtle, and
more detailed expression of the feelings of two people:

caught gold-handed in the breathless act ...

Just as Pater depicts a section of humanity which ignores
(or is not aware of) '... the passing Angel of Destruction',
Adams refers to

Children of a changeless present, these;
instantaneous pagans, their only season
summer,
down the great nave of its delphinium - blue
revelation's candles like the red aloe's
choiring;
butterflies and blooms the inconsumable
swift lips,
the tongues that match in supplicant furies
of reposte.²

This poem is, however, a more personal expression than
that of Pater's; in the first stanza, the poet is the
observer, a role which changes in the second and third
stanzas, as he partakes in a wonderfully vivid experience.
The rites referred to are undeniably Dionysion in character:
there is, for the poet, 'no sure oblation but the naked
flesh'; yet the Dionysion elements of irrational emotion
and barbarism are convincingly replaced by a delicate
balance between primeval need and benevolent Nature.

1. Elias Pater: In Praise of Night, Purnell, Cape Town,
1969, p. 28.

Therefore, while the lovers are 'infatuate primitives, light-headed slaves', their act becomes one of 'awed finesse', as they

... feel of the vast unspeakable phenomenally said in blessing above the bent head ...

Adams's achievement is twofold: he reveals a union of two people, in which the human and natural needs are harmoniously blended, adding - simultaneously - a new dimension to our understanding of reality and the authentic nature of man's existence. Although the range of this poem is wider than that of Children, Children's Voices and The Generations, all are undeniably concerned with an insoluble dilemma of life, and in each case children are the corollaries necessary to the poet's intention.

The attitude and idiom found in these poems are revealed, in their newness, perhaps more strongly in poems by Sydney Clouts, Michael Macnamara and Charl J.F. Cilliers. In his 'Hotknife' cycle, for instance, Clouts looks closely at what Ridley Beeton has called 'the idiosyncratic and the problematical';¹ through the idiom of the Cape Coloured, the poet points to an intimate and newly splendid dimension. Furthermore, he sustains a sense of the universal through eyes that seem to disregard 'the grand epic, the portico themes, which often produce grandiose salutation'.²

Macnamara, in Schizo-Age, seems also - through his use of imagery - to venture daringly outside his context, and yet 'never appears to desert his idiom, and never betrays the stark force of his argument'.³ He writes of a phenomenon of the modern age, affirming nevertheless man's horror at needless death.

---


2. Ibid., p. 155.

3. Ibid., p. 155.
The first stanza of the poem, in its flat, non-committal descriptiveness, speaks of the moment of decision:

From twenty faceless storeys she comes twisting down,  
A self-erasing girl.

The second stanza provides a clear picture of the nature of the girl's decision, by first presenting the effect, and then the cause. Both are linked, by the opening line, to the final four lines of the poem. Here is the poem in its entirety:

From twenty faceless storeys she comes twisting down,  
a self-erasing girl.

Embarked upon her course, she midway cries  
a change of mind;  
but there's no writhing from  
the grip of gravity; no prayer can melt  
the glacial cosmic law.

Juts out into her path a horizontal blade  
Where pendant flaps and creaks a florist's sign.

The body bifurcates:  
The upper and the lower halves  
lie sundered in dichotomy.  
Bring double flowers, Madame, for two-fold corse;  
for duplex symbol of our dual milieu;  
bi-sected product of  
this schizo-age.¹

'Dichotomy' - which is both physical and mental - throws the 'dual-milieu' of the city into stark relief. Opposition within the unity of the self - of the girl and of those about her - is well conveyed by the repetition of the division suggested by 'schizo-age'. The inescapable implication is therefore that man carries about with him, and in fact engenders, his inward opposition to himself, since the structure of his fear is founded on ignorance.

The cause of man's self-negation is explicitly stated in the third stanza, where the 'horizontal blade' refers the reader to the senseless execution of the nobility during the French Revolution: 'Madame' brings 'double flowers', which serve the death of the 'executed' as well as the 'death' of freedom. The inversion of grammatical subject and object results, finally, in an inversion of effect and psychological cause, in a manner reminiscent of the confusion of cause and effect in the first stanza.

The inner division of the mind is, as Macnamara asserts, the result not only of ignorance of any cause; it entertains the need for 'self-erosion' because of cowardice, as opposed to the courageous choice which is demanded by a recognition of 'that glacial cosmic law'. Schizo-Age is, however, essentially a poem of observation, in which the poet seems to assume the role of outsider.

Charl J.F. Cilliers, by contrast - in Keeping Darkness Out - is poised in a still isolation that sets him on the very edge of violent commitment, on an 'outward sphere'. Cilliers' imagery is sure and adept, as in 'a sky breaks wide with blue fire'; it is also rhythmically powerful, as is evident in the following line,

as darkness drives smokewards in ...

where the rhythm seems to increase the tension, the coiled strength which is released only in the last line of the poem: 'a slow darkness coming on the town'.

Through their poetry, Cilliers and Macnamara reveal a new approach to their surroundings; they record - in differing ways - the impersonal horror which stalks the twentieth century. Both poets reveal also the private terror induced by a situation where, in the words of Cilliers, the 'futile waves of sound' and 'wavelets of white light' wash relentlessly over 'grey-templed' everyman.

1. New Nation, January 1968, p. 11.
Sydney Clouts writes, with a more deeply moving simplicity, of the same 'tepid silence of freedom'. His attitude springs from the sympathy of one who has 'smiled on tempests', who knows instinctively that

Tragedy the urban
vitamin was in his blood
out of sight ...

In *Wat die hart van vol is* there is a sense of idiom that contrasts strongly with poetry written before the war. Clouts's evocations of the Cape, particularly in the *Hotknife* poems, are expressive of new contours, in much the same way that the poems of Francis Carey Slater vivified new experiences and perceptions. *Wat die hart van vol is*, reveals both the *fullness* of the poet's heart, and his despairing realization that:

I am dying, I am
a free man forever
(a white man amongst the Europeans),

sometimes almost
a cloud or like a cloud
whose features grow crisp to the world,

with love and with murder
storming the heart:
... a true South African.1

The emotion expressed in these lines is an anguished realization of the consequences of a decision, like that of the girl in *Schizo-Age*, who 'midway cries a change of mind'. The poet does not gloss over, or ignore, the problems of race and city slums; instead, by showing how terms have altered (he refers, for instance, to 'the faint screams of slaves'), and by embracing - in

his poetry - the idiom of the Coloured, he emphasises his sense of alienation.

Similarly, in *Sometimes against a long vista*, Eva Royston speaks of the 'deep hunger that prowls' in a large city. It is a hunger born of sharp-seated need and despair, a hunger which becomes, through the poet's graphic description, something huge and mysterious. Furthermore, the brittle integrity of the last line, 'Till I turn irresolutely home', challenges our standards, and highlights the crisis of fundamental faith implicit in 'drowned faces', 'unrewarded waiting', 'remote light' and 'deep hunger'. The 'empty sunlight' and 'hollow gourd of spilled fruit' are a natural extension, thus, of...

... swoon of the night  
And darkness assaulting the city  
Like a tide ...\(^1\)

The emphasis which the rhythm lays on 'assaulting' stresses the undercurrent of vicious impulse underlying the surreal 'long vista', needing only a small impetus to become a concerted pattern of the violence carried in the 'tree's wild shadow'.

Eva Royston expresses, here, but with none of his lambency of interest, the dilemma suggested by Elias Pater in *The Spectator*: that of man in a 'claustral world':

As anonymous as the shrubs  
In the jasmine-scented gardens,  
He passes on, neither giving  
Nor receiving sign or salute ...\(^2\)

But, where Eva Royston turns 'irresolutely home', and Pater reflects mankind 'lost to ambition and desire',

\(^1\) *Unisa English Studies*, November 1968, p. 48.  
\(^2\) Elias Pater: *In Praise of Night*, p. 17.
Lola Watter reverts to the 'unashamedly sensuous, earthly love for what is the earth's and life's'. Remembered Serenities is 'one of the quietest and warmest, and a characteristically sensuous example, of Lola Watter's evocations'. Whereas Sydney Clouts poses the question,

Spring has come,
What shall we do now?

and Pater evokes a shadow which 'jostles the shadows',
she recalls, with simple delight, how

My mother liked to see us eat
the mellow sweets she called -
yellow-fish trapped as they slipped
down the river at the bottom of the garden,
then fried amber; or little tarts
glazed at the top with apricots.
She sat serene, hands open on her lap.

The abundance of the poet's joy in recollection is obvious. She presents her memories as an abstraction, and thus as a means of liberation from the urgency of the 'self'. This is a technique used by Ridley Beeton in his poem, Autumn; here the central figure is his father, who is seen through a recondite stream of consciousness:

Patterns of old green-gold trees,
Patterns of aloes dipped in blood;
The khaki veld hums, a long singing
Late-noon dream. And I shall come

Up to the house and its purple shades,
And talk to my father, and he will
Tell me of the world that has been,
And I shall tell him of the world

2. Ibid., p. 72.
3. Ibid., p. 72.
That will come, and he will tell me
That it is wrong, wrong, and 1
Shall think that he is wrong, old and wrong.
But when I emerge into the khaki veld
And feel the fine air stabbing out at me,
And the night that is sweeping up
Across the world, I shall sometimes
Think that he is right, young and right. 1

The similarity between the attitude of Beeton and that of
Lola Walter is very striking. Both writers move, in
their sureness, towards an interpretation of relationships
often obscured by undefined emotion. As Guy Butler has
observed:

... it is as if the intense pressures of a
society in conflict have driven poets beyond
satire, sentiment and aesthetic pleasure to a
radical questioning of the basis of action and
conviction, of the nature of being itself.
To some this may appear as escape; to others,
as a penetration of tap roots through the topsoil
of local sense data, history, sentiment and
prejudice into the universal subsoil of reality.
It is certainly true that much of the most
promising recent verse has ceased to be primarily
concerned with local colour, with geographical
or historical accidents. Taking these for
granted, it is asking 'What is truth?' 2
It is this search for 'truth', and the demand for greater realism and involvement in issues confronting mankind, which ultimately distinguishes the idiom and attitude of the modern South African poet from that of most of his predecessors. Without completely abandoning the claims of traditional forms, the post-war writer is striving towards a synthesis with timeless, yet ever urgent, problems. Although this is an undertaking that is unoriginal (in terms of our literary heritage), it has resulted in work that is truly aesthetic - and therefore permanent. The result of this metamorphosis in attitude is succinctly stated by G.D. Killam in African Writers on African Writing:

Our literary young men can now begin to write prose and verse that flows from the wells of the creative spirit ...¹

Sydney Clouts comes closest to the critical core of this attitude, through poems - such as Hotknife I and II - in which he draws contrasts between the needs and norms of the different races in Southern Africa. The poems neither attack nor affirm the values of any race; instead, Clouts uses the idiom of the Coloured to expose the anguish of a man imprisoned for murder:

She newwe tol' me she was married sir.  
She was hot for me, hot.  
I'm sorrie sir: are you married, maaster.²

The pathos of the first stanza of part II,

Where you Nellie
blerrie mischief.
Ten years is not a fency fawtnight.
God is my fa'rer Nellie
an he won' make it bad for me.
He knows my tenancies is honorabl
but except' sometimes I blow up

is effectively balanced by a telling couplet in part I:

I'm a man sir
enemytime, bu' dis was ekstra special condiseshns.

Clouts, through this metaphor - a summation of anguish and courage - seems to confirm the basic integrity of a man faced with the microcosmic totality of ritual represented by the courts. Thus, 'Hotknife' is able to say:

I'm saving all my blood for you
I'm Kannie-worries greatest living man.¹

In similar fashion, the 'poets' in Hitler Still Lives are revealed by Sinclair Beiles as the indefatigable and irrepressible custodians of freedom and integrity. Despite being 'beaten with rubber truncheons' they will not relinquish the struggle:

Undiscouraged they retired to the toilets
And floated groundnut shells in the pans
Or danced naked in pairs ...²

_____________________


This is an idiom which aids the poet in making new and completely acceptable social statements without recourse to simplistic didacticism; an idiom which parallels a new attitude of both private and public concern, and which manifests itself most strongly in a radical questioning of the 'nature of being itself'. Ridley Beeton speaks of the perspective of Nadine Gordimer:

... in _A Guest of Honour_, she is concerned with the depiction of African nationalism and African (and European) internationalism. She has grown beyond the border of this country - this was already apparent in the short stories ... that immediately preceded the appearance of her novel. She is reaching into a wider world, but still in terms of the continent that repels and attracts with the intensity of a genuine love. Her growing sense of an international spirit, is her sense of the exciting kinship of all people, the reassuring sameness that underlies their differences, and the assertive differences that underlie their sameness.

Beeton refers also to the undoubted achievement of Athol Fugard in his play, _Boesman and Lena_, with its 'concentrated depiction of the personal-human term, a term that because of this can expand so immediately, and so naturally into the universal ...'. In this, for South Africa, there is ... a newly achieved dimension.'

These observations, although primarily related to the works of a novelist and a playwright, are also true of poetry in which there emerges a fresh and sharply defined awareness of 'man', and his need to understand, and express the knowledge of, his existence. In the final line of _The Glass Dragon_, for example, Macnamara states that he will 'take the dragon', and thus assimilate the emblematic legends which 'indicate a common root/ in far antiquity'. Abrahams, in _Thresholds_, displays an

---

equal readiness to seek inwardly the *spiritus mundi* inexplicably clouded by a 'climate of storms'; his choice is no less strongly stated:

Behind my door, in the quiet,
I hunt my private grief.

In addition to his cerebral decision, the latter reveals a fierce and dominant humanity which is born of a desire to relieve the overwhelming pressures generated by the realisation of his responsibility as an artist. This need is expressed through lines such as,

'That poet's naked nerves!
thunder ...

where his statement is reinforced by its directness: the alliterative 'naked nerves' is a subtly construed image of jagged lightning flashes which are linked, through 'thunder', to the 'climate of storms'. The poet's all-encompassing anguish moves from the level of the particular to a cosmic plane, in which consciousness of being is transcendant, and which does not rely on any immanent power. Macnamara by contrast - and mainly through the angularity of his images - highlights the elemental division between social circumstance and natural instinct. It is significant, therefore, that the 'glassblower' starts his task with 'hesitance', and that once he has begun,

Image and counter-image flash and fuse
in melting glass.

The 'images' which impinge on the mind of the reader, are not dissimilar to the 'strident voices' which haunt Eva Royston's poem (*Strident Voices are Shouting*) in that they convey an impression of impersonal destiny.
Macuamara refers, with a referential exactness, to 'dragons' which have been viewed 'down the ages' in 'various lights':

Chaldean goddess Tiamt
the Principle of Primaeval Chaos,
was a dragon -
four legs, scaly body, wings;
Chimaera and Hydra were names of terror
for ancient Greeks;
the Anglo-Saxon *draca* was always slain;
Sigurd, Beowulf, Tristan, Lancelot - all fought
dragons ...

The 'dragon' conveys a strong sense of something half-realised, an extension of primordial darkness. The poet hovers between a tension of opposites, between the 'names of terror' and the 'kindly serpents' typified by the sacri *draco*ntes; he is ultimately impelled towards a decision by the perceptivity of the craftsman:

'When it is finished,
you need not take it unless you wish'.

There is, therefore, a dynamic interdependence between 'image' and 'counter-image', between truth and counter-truth. The result is a fusion of opposites, and an emergence of the poet's natural (and 'primaeval') instinct from within the recesses of his social and 'civilized' mind.

In Eva Royston's *Strident Voices are Shouting*, there is a similar tension, and need to make a choice; there is also a kind of double vision which encompasses regret as well as hope. Although the summons, 'Come back', is ignored, it is only the strong 'allure' of the 'woods' which carries the poet forward:
But the woods allure me,
Hives of darkness and leaves
And forgotten memories.¹

Realistic and imaginative visions are co-present, and
although the 'hives of darkness' are perhaps romantically
contrived, the 'silence' of aloneness is presented in
compelling imagery:

And silence rings in my ears
Like the blows of an axe.

In the lines which follow, Eva Royston seems to suggest
that the past can be destructive, and prevent a balance
within the 'self'. Accordingly, the sequential pleas,
'let me follow the loops of light', and 'let me stand',
do not imply an ambivalent attitude, but a deeply felt
want of the final and cataclysmic insight into 'the nature
of being itself':

But strike me
In a sudden crash of night
As when a great tree descends.

The element of affirmation in these lines, despite
being filtered through painful despair, elicits an
understanding in which society partakes, just as Wordsworth's
experience as a boy, on a stolen boat on a lake, or his
guilt at stealing from another's traps and hearing

... among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod ...²

². William Wordsworth: The Preludes (Book 1, II. 322-325)
becomes our experience. The horror and the guilt, the superstition of the moment, run within our veins, as they did in Wordsworth's. The delicacy and responsiveness of the verse, the sounds and rhythms of only half-human treads and breathings, are completely communicated, to the extent that we appear to hear them ourselves. The poet is both prophet and visionary, replacing stark (and thus familiar) realism with an imaginative and idealized unity and affording his audience a glimpse of a world eternally existent. Through the same process, Eva Royston receives an answer to her penetrating questioning, despite the 'bird call' which - momentarily - 'evokes no answer' from an unresponsive milieu.

Ridley Beeton, in *Defeat and Reward*, compels a somewhat different approach to fundamental relationships. As opposed to the foregoing writers, who point to problems originating in the individual, he brings a sensitive and delicately stated intelligence to bear on aspects of a reciprocal bond between friends. In poetry which disregards any scrupulously inductive investigation, he lays a stress on simple (and profound) values and the comfort they afford:

We sat talking. The fire licked gold
Up its funnel of black. The claret
Gleamed like glossy rubies. We talked
Of friends and their fine round qualities
And then of their brave searches thrust
Like sapling spears against the plated gloom.1

The open warmth and generosity of mutual acceptance of kinship is readily suggested by the 'fire', the 'claret' and the charitable (yet quietly perceptive) discussion 'of friends and their fine round qualities'. And it is this warmth, this 'reward' after the often repeated

---

'defeat' by 'the plated gloom', which leads the poet - in the second stanza - to his declaration:

... I was glad
That we had talked of friends.

Because his feelings are not insulated from a sympathetic sense of their implications, they have the power to move the audience from objective appraisal to subjective involvement. It is important to see that he does not shirk his responsibility to 'absent friends', who are drawn inevitably within the circle of this regenerative alliance. The poet's pleasure presupposes a 'public' privacy, unlike that of Charl J.F. Cilliers, who asserts, in Beach Retreat, the need for a sort of 'existential vacuum' as the means towards spiritual recuperation:

This is a private place.
Day after day I come.¹

The only other living organism in the 'Retreat' is a crab, watched by the poet with detachment. Cilliers seeks an escape from his milieu: the beach is 'devoid of bathers' and he is completely alone. He is therefore able to escape for a while the society which 'collectively compels individuals to be what they expect him to be in dress, behaviour, opinions, standards ....'²

In addition to advocating a type of monastic seclusion Cilliers refers to the traditional notion of the redemptive qualities of nature. The wind that 'rasps across the land' implies a scouring out and cleansing of the unsound and sullied. Consequently, a calm - and almost cathartic - acceptance of inevitability is evident in his quiet statement :

Seasons must come again.

This acquiescence, in the face of a predestined course of events, is also revealed by Roy Macnab, in Awakening, where his assurance is particularly striking:

My blood in time would learn to mime Intricate movements of the day, my brow Grow wet with labour's sweat, from ancient spoors Of diligence the local earth endow My mind, leak drop by drop its histories In a bold transfusion to the senses, Speak secrets of its mysteries Of how the earth works its defences.

From the outset, the poem is concerned with an association and oscillation between man and creator, and the distinction between physical and spiritual growth. The first line of this extract evokes, through its rhythm and internal rhyme, a sense of the closeness between man and nature. The rhythm suggests the beating of a heart, while 'mysteries' later speaks of a coming to fruition, and a diligent 'transfusion' of awareness. The hierarchical structure, of 'labour's sweat' and processes of mind, fuses - in this instance - through the coming together of 'histories' and 'ancient spoors'. Macnab thus highlights man's timeless search for meaning, and shows a way in which understanding is to be found: through an openness to the past, which in turn permits a conjunction of mind with the supreme intensity of creation.

Adèle Naudé has a similar concern for an understanding of life. This is apparent in Summer's Ending, where her 'delicately filigreed' perceptivity focuses on the 'climacteric' moment of being. The bleak resignation expressed in the first stanza changes, almost imperceptibly,

to the recognition and discovery which unfolds in the last lines of the poem:

The sweet-sour tang of suurvy stirs
My childhood summers into growth
Whose lichen-softness lends my limbs
The lost resilience of youth. ¹

The unforced equilibrium between the transitory and the enduring is caught in the contrasts, 'sweet-sour' (which effectively expresses the characteristic 'tang' of the fruit), 'growth' and 'lends', 'lost' and 'youth'. Despite this, the physical immediacy of 'limbs' and 'summers' gives a subtle shading to the message of these lines, impelling the reader towards a recognition of the thoughts contained in the opening stanza:

Suddenly the wind is blowing
The summer from the calendar
On parchment shore where sea wrack trails
Finality of signature.

The contrasting allusions to summer, where the first is indicative of transistoriness and the second of quintessential joy and growth, remind one of the 'everlastings' which Sydney Clouts uses, in The Game, to signal the ephemorality of childhood experience. The child's play assumes an additional significance in that the poet - in his search for himself - is highly sensitive to the distinction between the physical (albeit carefree) bondage of the child, and the intellectual seeking of the adult:

I'll find myself as well,
hidden where truth has eyes.²

¹ Adèle Naudé: Only a Setting Forth, Human and Rousseau, Cape Town, 1965, p. 22.
The complexity of truths found in these lines provides a stimulating response to the query formulated, but not directly stated in:

the future flicks your faces.

Whereas Cilliers, in *Beach Retreat*, suggests the necessity for an interlude of suspension from active involvement in living, Clouts declares the need for both a looking backward and a recognition of the future. Like Macnab, he qualifies the present in terms of the past, simultaneously looking towards that which is to come. This ambivalence has its origin in a transmuted acceptance of the evanescence of life, seen in words such as 'flicks', 'spring' and 'abruptly', which form a cumulative expression of the impermanence of experience and understanding. The 'everlastings', which 'bustle at the foot of the wall' constitute an uncontrived analogy of the plant that 'grows only to die'; the irony of name is forcefully underscored by the positioning of the flowers at the 'foot' of the wall, provoking a question which is partially answered in the final couplet. The fact that the top of the 'wall' is never likely to be reached is not a negation of ambition and progression, but serves to emphasise the supreme difficulty experienced in achieving total understanding

... hidden where truth has eyes.

It is, ultimately, this tension between sense and intellectual sensation that leads to a progressive transformation, from acute perception of actuality, to an inspired reaction to the demands of the intellect.

The intention, for Clouts, is to 'find himself'; for R. Klopper it is, in *Eve, O Eve*, to recreate the drama of the Fall, and show man's involvement in the
passage of Adam and Eve through innocence, sin and eventual repentance:

Eve, o Eve
how shiny and sweet
and curved the fruit

but Adam, o Adam
how dark and deep
and bitter the root.

The sexual implications contained in 'deep' and 'root' are closely related to the disillusionment implicit in 'bitter', focusing attention on the interaction of theme and poetic expression. The poem seems to embody, therefore, a search for some kind of cosmic reassurance which is denied by man's inherent weakness and mutability.

Robert Dederick displays a similar need for reassurance in Page from a Diary, by virtue of a sophisticated view of the eternal nature of the search:

Metaphysically out-of-sorts,
Resolved (a.m.) to think deep thoughts
But watched a squirrel an hour or more
Knuckling vertical to store.

To lunch at K's. Cloudy with thought,
Some cosmic catenations sought...
... Now squares of light fall flatly through
Half-open doors and gas burns blue.
NB: tomorrow, must try again.

Here, Dederick employs a series of antitheses or contrasts which add to the vigour of his lines: 'The grand possibility', as Ridley Beeton states in The Widerinr Search (Programme 2), is contrasted to the mundane fact. "Metaphysically" is qualified by "out of sorts", or even by those tritely

designated "deep thoughts"; the "cosmic catenations" of the next stanza are put beside an apparently commonplace observation, "But the road was up, old tramlines bared"; in the third stanza it is a "big square-shouldered gin" - and how compact and actual his pictures are - that obscures "eternity" and "sin" ...

This prepares the reader for the last stanza, which indicates something of the poet's condition: the 'half-open' doors refer to the half-realised searching; the 'half-light' of the gas seems to back up this impression:

'And soe to bedde' is presented in archaic spelling, and in conjunction with the repeated 'amen', affirms that this quest for assurance and understanding is not a new one. Once again, the contrast provides the effect: the archaic - indicative as it is of the eternity of the search - is confronted by a hurried line, the fragment of the moment ... like so much of the poem, presented in a verbal shorthand: 'NB: tomorrow, must try again'.

Sydney Clouts, through a strongly intellectual, yet not always cerebral, unity, creates (in Animal Kingdom) a malleable landscape which embodies the dimensions of 'earth', 'sun' and 'heaven'. Just as Dederick seeks 'cosmic catenations' in thought and experience, and Klopper attempts to affirm a universal foundation for man's existence, Clouts turns outward for an answer to his question,

What happens when the sun dewed with such joy, shines on, spills down ... 2

The abundance suggested by the cornucopian qualities of 'joy' emanates naturally from the opening lines of the poem:

Spading earth
I thought of the earth.

Roy Macnab touches on this elemental and organic relationship in his poem, *Awakening*, when he refers to 'labour's sweat'; in *Talking Bronco*, Roy Campbell speaks of 'learned labour' as the impetus or volition necessary to initiate a process of communion with nature. In the last stanza of *Animal Kingdom*, Clouts mentions his achievement of this communion involving man, nature and - implicitly - the cosmos:

I want I have I give I love
I answer the senior core of the sun
I speed the body of the warm gazelle
I lift the elephant high in my thought
like a cloud of heaven that moves so slow,
and the fly I follow, the dustheap find
my plumtree grows from a clod of sleep.
Locust locust leap with me
Water flow and mirror me.

The use of 'senior core', 'high in my thought', and 'cloud of heaven', speaks of the height of understanding he has attained, and his closeness to the natural world; his 'plumtree' grows, and the 'locust' is entreated - in joyous supplication - to 'leap' with him. This rapport conveys the vitality, and extent, of the change undergone by the poet, which is near to that experienced by Roy Campbell in *Talking Bronco*:

We catch the madness they have caught,
Stand on the footrests, and guffaw -
Till shadowed by the looming thought
And visited with sudden awe,
We close our throttles, clench the curb,
And hush the rumble of our tyres,
Abashed and fearful to disturb
The City of the Dreaming Spires

Clouts and Campbell find a partial and fleeting answer to their questions. But, as Campbell points out, this sudden and almost cataclysmic awareness is not enduring:

But someone kicks his starter back:
Anachronism cocks its ears.

The 'machine' reasserts itself, startling the 'phantom tread' of understanding:

Their bloodstream with a yeastly leaven
Exalts them to the stars above,
As we are raised, though not to heaven,
By drink - or when we fall in love.

As Clouts suggests, it is in the 'dust-heap' of memories and perceptions that the 'plumtree grows', and it is often the 'clod of sleep' which originates a fresh understanding of existence.

Ruth Miller, in Voice, Silence, Echo and Spider, speaks in a more personal voice. The former poem vivifies much of the experience evoked by Sydney Clouts and Roy Campbell, but focuses our attention on the mutability, and failings, of the individual:

I am the child who is born
Of strong father, pale mother.
My voice whether proud or forlorn
They created. And smother.

The desire to establish the basis of life elicits a question similar to that in *Animal Kingdom*, although in Ruth Miller's poem, it is asked of an overwhelming silence: 'What does the Silence say?' The answer lies - momentarily - in a rhetorical continuation of the original enquiry:

... What does the singer
Sing that is more accurate and pure
Than the silence after the echoes have fallen?\(^1\)

In *Burnt Norton*, T.S. Eliot observes that: 'Words, after speech, reach into the silence'. Although his thought is expressed in a somewhat more compressed form, both Eliot and Ruth Miller point to a need, and search, for certainty; and where the former finds a permanence in the perfection of art, Ruth Miller discovers only uncertainty in the 'Echo', which must always remain unknown and indiscernible. This 'echo', embodied in various art forms ('arch', 'soaring arabesque'), assumes the characteristics of Dunbar's 'fowil monster gluttony', threatening to 'throat and engulf' all that is fine and distinguished. Even the teachings of Christ are not immune to this dark force; neither can they provide a full and satisfying answer. Thus the Passion, suggested in the words, 'Kyrie and Credo', merely evokes a further question: 'who shall determine what the echo is?'

The tension created by understatement in this line is very like the effect of these lines (from Yeats's *The Gyres*) which are preceded by the question, 'what matter?':

... Out of the cavern comes a voice,  
And all it knows is that one word 'Rejoice'.

The 'cavern' indicates, perhaps, a creative force, fecund and half-known. In Voice, Silence, Echo this power remains in 'darkness', represented by a 'spider ... or a shadow', 'beating like a heart in the forest'.

Against, and within, this omnipotence, the poet stands in a paradoxically 'white' silence, open to an experience which demands the same response given it by Clouts in The Game:

I'll find myself as well, hidden where truth has eyes.

However, whereas Sydney Clouts adamantly asserts his intention, Ruth Miller appears to be a receptive and quiescent 'instrument' of this force outside self:

I am the instrument, I
Am the timbre, the shiver,
I answer as I reply
And seeking, discover.

The repeated 'I', implying perhaps an innate consciousness of self (which is also evident in Animal Kingdom, 'I want I have I give I love', as a form of incantation), reveals 'the pure necessity - a shroud'. In Spider, the arachnid stands not for impenetrable 'darkness', but is suggested as an embodiment of natural surety, which is self-regenerative:

Born to the purple of his need
He has no unsolved problems. He
Suffers no dichotomy,
But wakes to work and works to kill.  

1. Ibid., p. 18
Unlike the girl in *Schizo-Age*, the spider 'suffers no dichotomy', but carries out a pre-ordained role, bound by the 'grip of gravity' and 'that glacial cosmic law'. In the face of this immutability, man is seen, by comparison, to lack certainty:

... yet my hands  
Fashion with artifice and ruse  
Not wily web, but witless strands ...

The final truth of the 'shroud' - as ultimately the only certain fact of existence - is arrived at progressively, through 'the poor cold corpse of words', the 'candled bier' and a silence, 'grave and bowed'.

Ruth Miller reflects, with great accuracy, what seems to be her personal situation. All the writers mentioned in this chapter, in fact, reveal a conscience that compels them to question a reality that is accessible to them, and that they are able to influence. Elias Pater exemplifies this concern - and the consequent vitality of idiom and freshness of attitude - found in his work and in that of many of his contemporaries:

... An object of nature, to become part of a poem, must be lifted, really, into the Nous. All its further destiny as an image is there, and nowhere else. The image can never be really meant to rival the natural object .... Man is never continuous with nature. There are similarities, but there must be a point where the human asserts its essential difference.¹

The impact of post-war poetry lies, I think, in the human concerns revealed in its themes. Through evocations of relationships and situations, writers such as Ruth Miller and Elias Pater focus upon problems and circumstances

which are always with us, and yet are often overshadowed by seemingly larger, and more important, events.

- 0 0 0 -
CHAPTER IV

THE PERSONAL VOICE
As there is always an effective time-lag between the formulation of new ideas and their dissemination throughout the world, the colonial poets tended to concentrate upon ideas and attitudes which, in many cases, had already been superseded in the 'homeland' from which they had been borrowed.

Despite the individual characteristics of these countries ... the same broad phases can be distinguished in the development of their poetic traditions. They can be summarized as follows:

1. The initial stage, dominated by a sense of exile, with its concomitant moods of nostalgia and melancholy;

2. The gradual recognition of the new country, marked by an increasing attention to its landscape and prominent characteristics;

3. The growth of a national outlook, often aggressively self-conscious and insistent upon the exploitation of local colour and the use of stock symbols of a superficial nature;

4. Finally, the emergence of an indigenous tradition ... ¹

Howard Sergeant, in making these observations on the development of a poetical tradition in the Commonwealth countries, reveals that he is not unaware of 'some overlapping of these phases, and individual poets here and there who anticipated later trends'. He quotes Northrop Frye's statement: 'it is not a nation but an environment that makes an impact on poets, and poetry can deal only with the imaginative aspect of that environment'.²


² Ibid., p. 19
Sergeant's thesis seems, however, to ignore an important phenomenon of later South African poetry: a concern that is not grounded in any singular environment, but which—in its breadth of vision and perception—moves in a more universal realm. This broadness of outlook is found, for instance, in H.W.D. Manson's Prologue to Pat Mulholland'spay, where the poet's statement of man's fundamental uncertainty is very striking:

Nothing is certain but that dawn begins
And night ends day.
And who among us shall see the next dawn certainly
No man can say.¹

These lines, though perhaps more closely allied, in thought and attitude, to the poems discussed in the previous chapter, work on an intuitive level, and would seem to support the view of T.S. Eliot that 'art may be affirmed to serve ends beyond itself; but art is not required to be aware of these ends ....'² Similarly, Sydney Clouts escapes the limits of his surroundings through depiction, in The Hawk, of a force that is instrument and functional ... neither a beginning nor an end³:

Flowers are toppling,
the earth burbles blood.
0 scholars of Mercy, 4
interpret the flood!

---

Others have drawn strength and vitality from the 'local soil', through roots 'thrust firmly downwards, [and have come] to terms with their new modes of existence and recognized their responsibilities, both to themselves and their creative medium ... to identify themselves sufficiently with their new country to be able to express its distinctive character.'¹ This identification is evident in the final stanza of Anne Welsh's *Autumn Cloth*:

Not fold of hill  
Or pleat of rock  
Faults this rich stuff,  
But I'm unfinished  
If I cannot greet  
The shadow's curving lip  
Across the street ... ²

The sheer simplicity of expression in the lines is a testimony to Anne Welsh's recognition of the 'distinctive' character of her country, and to the fact that she has come to terms with the 'mode' of her existence. With a similar thoughtful perception, Colin Style - in *Last Watch* - evokes a picture of Rhodesian winter:

The cold is naked and unbroken  
It sears the grass and broken fields  
And hangs the skin of frost on the fading beams.³

Colin Style and Anne Welsh reveal an Africa which demands 'an assent of the whole being, springing from some deeply felt relationship'⁴, and vividly described by Chaim Lewis in *Shadow in the Sun*:

---


Africa's my book of Genesis:
it's skies big with God's talk,
it's earth a hunter's, bleeding
to Adam's footprint.

From this 'relationship' there has also emerged a
'sense of specific political obligation ... acquired
through nationality, the necessity of opposing a govern-
mental policy ... seen as a calculated evil'.

This particular sense of obligation, with its strident voice
and often self-negating polemicism, has found a mouth-
piece in poetry magazines such as Ophir and Bolt, and
has led to publications typified by Wopko Jensma's
Sing for our Execution, and Peter Horn's less substantial
volume, Walking through our Sleep.

Jensma and Horn, despite their over-riding political
concern, speak in a voice as personal as those who focus,
in their works, on problems of life and death, and those
who highlight aspects of South African scenery and character.
Collectively, these poets answer Wordsworth's dictum in
his 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface':

The appropriate business of poetry ... is to
treat of things not as they are, but as they
appear; not as they exist in themselves, but
as they seem to exist to the senses, and to
the passions.

Furthermore, these South Africans invite the response
to their art, which William Plomer elicits in his poem
dedicated to Ingrid Jonker and Nathaniel Nakosa:

2. John F. Povey: Intention in the African Poet,
3. Thomas Hutchinson (Ed): Wordsworth: Poetical Works,
Let those who savour
Ripeness and sweetness,
Let them taste and remember
Him, her, and all others
Secreted in the juices\(^1\).
a) PROBLEMS OF LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH

In a letter to Thomas Butts in 1803, Blake makes the following remark: 'I regard Fashion in Poetry as little as I do in Painting'.\(^1\) A reading of poems by Macnamara, Cilliers and Colin Style, in which they comment on, and question, the function of a poet, reveals a similar disregard for 'Fashion' and a refreshing absence of self-conscious introspection. A high awareness of calling, in Macnamara's *Exile*, replaces what D.H. Lawrence has referred to as 'the sentimentalism and the niggling analysis, often self-analysis, of most of our modern literature'.\(^2\) Macnamara escapes the 'vicious circle of himself'\(^3\) through the quiet integrity of his opening lines:

\[
\text{the poet has eternal knowing in his bones.} \quad \text{\(^4\)}
\]

The emphatic, but unassertive statement achieves much of its effect through the juxtaposition of 'has' and 'eternal', which are, in turn, linked to 'bones', and suggest an 'eternal' and intuitive receptivity towards a flood of stimuli:

---

expanding shores
dreams buried in his skull
but has
the horror twisting in the gargoyle leer
lurking in laughing eyes
the fact
of tyburn hills
the hangman’s brilliant hand
clutching the torn out pulsing heart
a job well done ...

The lyrical quality of the opening lines is abruptly dispelled by the intrusion of ‘but’. And, in a subtle inversion of the first line, ‘has’ serves now as a qualification of the initial mood of gentle certainty; ‘knowing’ becomes a state of dilemma, as the poet is caught between the lurking ‘horror’ of appearance, and the reality of ‘a job well done’.

The ominous overtones of ‘tyburn hills’, and ‘the hangman’s brilliant hand’ (which are ‘fact’) are contrasted with the poet’s recognition of their existence on one level only of human experience. Dreams ‘buried in his skull’ allow him a certain perspective which, while they do not allow him to circumvent the ‘horror’, lead him partially towards the ‘cosmic exile’ occasioned by vitality of perception and interpretation.

The poet is set apart by his ‘calling’, a vocation seen constantly to assert itself over the obvious humanity in which it is embodied. Thus, in Does a Poem need words, Charl J.F. Cilliers shows a spontaneous and human reaction coloured by unrelenting intellect:

Here there are only sounds,
and images in the smoke
that drifts up into the branches.

We have watched a snake
making comical patterns in the sand
and a bird high in a branch,
just in the sunlight,
terrifyingly – singing.

1. New Nation, May 1969, p. 16.
Once again, the 'comical' is contrasted with the 'terrifying', as though the poet is aware of different, and irreconcilable, levels of response. The apparent contradiction, and the accompanying tension which it produces, distinguishes the poet from his fellow (and specifically non-creative) man. In Cilliers's poem, a single instant of perception transmutes a bird's call into an anguish, or 'terror', sharpening the reader's awareness that 'human kind cannot bear too much reality'.

The problem for these two poets is that of containing within themselves - and expressing - their many half-glimpses of reality. As Henry Williamson writes in *Lucifer before Sunrise*: 'The bird's song was perfection; were it a little less so, it would touch all human hearts at once'. Thus, Colin Style conveys, in *Poet*, a sense of the ephemeral nature of his achievement:

My concepts stroke the air  
Like a bat in starlight;  
A Poet's a vagrant  
Joining mud and stones with copulars of trust.  
If we died tomorrow  
Would any comets go out?  
Would any war stop?  
Or the rhythm of death shrink and halt?  
Would my page of snarling words  
Frighten off the sun?  
Or stop forever from breeding fields  
The motherhoods of rain?

Through the 'snarling words', Style admits the ineffectiveness of his belief in terms of an absolute interpretation of life, but confirms the necessity of this attitude by a reference to 'breeding fields' and 'motherhoods of rain'. This attitude implies a choice, a coming to terms with people and life, revealed by Roy Fuller in the last stanzas of *Nino, the Wonder Dog*:

No doubt behind this ugly dog,  
Frai, fairly small, and white,  
Stands some beneficent protector,  
Some life outside the night,

But this is not apparent as  
It goes, in the glare alone,  
Through what it must to serve absurd-

ties beyond its own.

In *A Piece of Coral*\(^2\), Perseus Adams

... describes discovery and vision in curiously unpresumptuous terms. As his hand feels, explores the shape of the hard coral it holds, he reaches into sensation and a new revelation comes on him as he looks with characteristic calm, at his acts and desires. He has climbed the 'ladder of knowledge', all his experience gathers to touch the encrustation, 'The margins of my soul lie salted in this flower', and yet what he is being drawn into is not another sensation, another experience, but the very fact of purity, 'the same beauty'.\(^4\)

In the neat, penetrating phrasing of *The Pure Act*, Adams once again points to the function of art; namely to reflect the fullest sense of things. By resisting the demands of relentless Circumstance, he comes to see earthly beauty - 'the foul rag - and - bone - shop of the heart'\(^4\) - refined to a point of spirituality:

---

1. Maurice Wollman (Ed): *7 Themes in Modern Verse*, p. 81


And this is the pure, the native act:
To plumb your chosen ground beneath ground
Till wherever you go, whatever you touch
Unfolds like a tree in those acres of light.

The poet, in moving towards a Romantic conception of nature, interweaves a perception of human feelings with his reminder that 'acres of light', a splendid condition of purity, remains the reward of those who seek,

In valleys that echo and re-echo my singing,
More simply than shadows a stone has made.

The rareness of this reward (a comment perhaps on man's seeming reluctance to seek this state of 'purity'), is reiterated in *Pomegranate*. Here, Adams states initially that 'It is hard to bring it off ....'. The pregnant ambiguity of the line combines an intellectual and metaphysical complexity with the impact of simple statement. The reader is introduced to the fact of the pomegranate's hard and awkward skin, as well as to several connected images. The fruit,

ensanguined by
voluminous abundance

forms a link between the poet's thoughts concerning men of 'unspotted royalty'; simultaneously, the universal nature of all experience is emphasised. The pomegranate, 'embracing a treasure trove', turns Adams's mind to the state of being implied by

---


To be
Croesus or Midas
And feel the rain of heaven
as simply as any child.

Two aspects of greatness - the might of 'Croesus or Midas',
and the unquestioning simplicity of 'any child' - are
set side by side, inviting comparison and contrast.
In the same way, the colour of the fruit kernels becomes
the 'red' of Jesus' 'fitting chariot'. The recurrence
of red also suggests a 'literal and Holy' communion
between the spiritual and physical aspects of Christ's
teachings and Passion. 'Red', with its overtly Christian
connotations of blood and wine is, furthermore, linked
to a more readily recognizable manifestation of His
triumph:

the donkey put out to feed, that extreme
humility left to follow
the snail's silver track on the grass.

The outcome of the poet's thinking is contained in the
final stanza, where emotion is supplanted by, or becomes,
the contemplative serenity of:

Surely
that must be the sort of grace,
the natural, unspotted royalty
some long-forgotten leader of old had -
or one still to be born
will attain; at least I like to imagine it so.

Through his recognition of 'liberating truth', Adams
refers to the Second Coming, to 'one still to be born'.
He presupposes therefore the necessity of a human link
between all actions, a point of departure in strong con-
tраст to the idea expressed in the stanza which opens
The Leviathans:
Foliage or flesh can sheathe a blade; never the pure winter, the honed and scollopied cold of a liberating truth.¹

A fundamental universe is depicted in these lines, one in which the elements of truth lie very near the surface, and close to Plato's 'Idea of the Absolute'. In this way, the central concerns of Pomegranate and The Leviathans are - paradoxically - very similar: both poems refer to the existence of fineness and integrity, and demand some organic process of human volition to bring these qualities into being.

Ridley Beeton lays a similar stress on the ability of man to shape the forms of his life. In The Destroyer, for example, the poet links life, destruction and divinity in simple visual images:

My mother, a white figure in a green garden, Bends with her busy scissors, Drops the heads of flowers; a Madame Defarge, A Madame Defarge with lovely hands.

The flowers lie at her feet covered by the gaze of her love. No wonder her scissors shone with the sun.²

Lola Watter, by contrast, illumines the elusiveness of this 'light', or truth, in I am the Ringmaster:

I am the ringmaster, cracking my whip wide over the marked bars of my will. The fanged beasts leap or stride as I point, but edge within flight-distance, taunting me still.³

¹ Unisa English Studies, September 1970, p. 25.
³ Unisa English Studies, September 1968, p. 74.
'Fanged beasts', symbolising the inescapable realities of life, remain unsubdued by the writer's strength of will. Complete unity with forces outside the self, the 'marked bars' of will, stands enticingly out of reach, 'taunting me still'. This is an enigma expressed also by Anthony Delius in four crucial stanzas from Time in Africa:  

Noarsely a cock crows from a dead epoch  
Gone with sunreddened individuals  
and days that were colonial afternoon ...  

Once more the heart that is the kernel of the skull  
looks out into the inwardness of time  
and drags the brain from its red still of dreams.  

It sees the logic of decaying rock, maturing soil  
and fumbling root concluding in  
the fragrance of the Kafir-tree ...  

This is the secret bud. What flower stirs?  
The sun removes its arm, reluctant, leaves;  
the day becomes a shadowed skull ...  

A masterly contrasting of the new and old, in the first stanza quoted, encourages a glance beyond the heritage of a 'colonial afternoon', to the future founded on this achievement of 'sunreddened individuals'.  

'If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close', T.S. Eliot says in East Coker, 'then on a Summer midnight you can hear the music / of the weak pipe and the little drum'; the considerable resonance of Delius's reference to the 'cock', and the evocation of locality in the stanzas which follow, draw the audience within the poet's quintessence - at the same time, the nebulousness of 'the future that may come too soon' prevents reader and poet from coming 'too close'. 'Logic of decaying rock',

3. From Part IV, p. 11.  
and 'the fragrance of the Kafir-tree' inhibit any close relationship, proving that a 'search for an identifying spiritual concordance is nothing but a futile exercise'. Delius cannot find an explanation in 'logic', nor can he find a satisfying answer in the 'secret bud' of intuition. Life, for him, remains a 'shadowed skull'.

Adèle Naudé reaches the same conclusion, in *Olive Trees - Majorca*, where she states that 'knowledge twists the bone'. Her quest, 'wry-rooted'

For moisture in the stone...

is one that, for Delius, comes 'out of the blue throat of eternity'. The latter's picture of an accumulated memory of civilization displays an awareness of tradition very like that contained in Adèle Naudé's unobtrusive comment:

A thousand years and more
The torture trees have stood...

At first glance, *Time in Africa* and *Olive Trees - Majorca* seem - in their lack of any ostensible affirmation - to form a strong contrast to Macnamara's conviction that

The poet has
eternal knowing in his bones.

The essential link between these poems should be seen in the similarity of their response to the challenge of the poet's calling, a challenge


3. From 'Farm Cemetery', *An Unknown Door*, p. 37.
starkly - and, at times, humorously - delineated by Douglas Livingstone in Giovanni Jacopo Meditates:

The Poet's or Playwright's Function is to embark physically upon the Consciousness of his Generation; Not merely as a Conscience of his Time; nor solely to reflect Disintegration, if Disintegration is the Shaker of his Time's Stormy Seas But to anchor a Present, Nail to its Mast One Vision, one Integrity in a Manner so memorable it fills Part of a Past ...

It is the duty of a poet, thus, to 'anchor a Present', and - in Roy Macnab's terms - to 'speak secrets of earth's mysteries'. That the search is 'nothing but a futile exercise' assumes less significance in the face of 'One Vision, one Integrity'. This is an integrity, or compulsion which leads Sydney Clouts to his declaration that

I'll find myself as well, hidden where truth has eyes ...

and which compels Delius and Adèle Naudé to record the tumult of their 'Consciousness of ... Generation'. Above all, it results in an attempt to penetrate the hazy outlines of subjective experience. And, as Anne Welsh suggests in A Cloudy Wind, this compulsion

1. Douglas Livingstone: A Rosary of Bone, David Philip, Cape Town, 1975, p. 3.

2. See p. 83 of this dissertation.
springs also from an awareness of man's ultimate need for definition of his existence:

A reeded river in the dry day
Fluid moments spill
Over the stone of the end wall
of the last hill,
Launching a stillness
That delights in Change.'

Robert Berold, in a letter to *New Nation* (March 1973, p. 24.), states that Sheila Fugard and Wopko Jensma are 'the only poets here whose work contains even a breath of affirmation'. In the course of his discussion he maintains, further, that 'the colonial mentality' so clearly shown in the work of South African writers (for instance: Perseus Adams in *The Leviathans*), results in the 'guilt of the colonial style ... revealed in a slight tendency to moralise in order to justify my dry description.' Berold's final prognosis is that 'only some-one like Whitman, writing in the language of the people, can stabilize and provide a starting point for a real tradition in English South African poetry'. While one would hesitate to compare any 'modern' South African writers to Walt Whitman (except perhaps Roy Campbell, in that he had an effect on South African poetry similar to the impetus which Whitman gave to American writing), it is abundantly clear that Anthony Delius and Douglas Livingstone, amongst others, are not 'colonial poets'. Nor is Ruth Miller who, in *Birds*, controverts the stance of the 'moralist' through the directness of her statement:

There is nothing majestic about death ...^2

---

2. Ruth Miller: *Selected Poems*, p. 34.
Her sensitive comparison of the 'royal' lion to the 'tiniest things' serves as a qualification of the original assertion, revealing also the interdependence of natural life:

... How royally they would bedizen
His beggarman bones with the charity of their wings.

'Their fur / Rising in silken shivers' captures effectively the reaction of the 'smaller animals' to the threat of the lion's 'message on the dry air'. The poet presents no moral, nor does she evidence any bitterness at the fact of the beast's death. Instead, she records with telling specificity, her emotions sublimated to an understanding of the cyclic processes of nature. This is an achievement revealed, too, by Douglas Livingstone in the last stanza of Gentling a Wildcat:

I placed her peaceful ungrinning corpse
and that of her firstborn in the topgallants
of a young tree, out of ground reach, to grow;

a cycle of maybe something more pastoral,
commencing with beetles, then maggots, then ants.1

Freshness of contrast, between 'something more pastoral' and the body of the wildcat, highlights the instant of something newly seen. As a result, the nature of the cycle, 'commencing with beetles, then maggots, then ants', has the effect of an extended metaphor, through which physical rebirth becomes spiritual metamorphosis.

This ability to join the natural and the symbolic

---

is seen also in a short poem by Roy Macnab, in which 'tempest and tornado' recall the holocaust of Delville Wood, where

... shattered woods lay out their dead ... ¹

Death in nature is seen to be closely allied to the havoc which man wreaks upon himself, and upon his kind. F.H. Langman, in his article, 'Dramatic Form in the Poetry of D.H. Lawrence', speaks of a dialectic which leads to 'an extension of reference and a shift of attitude' so that 'the observer changes and perceives the thing as it really is'.² This poetic phenomenon is also to be found in the poems under discussion. For instance, the dialogue, in after the storm, between 'a curious whisper' and the result of the 'tempest', 'where now the homeless birds complain',³ lays bare the mindlessness of the 'heyday' of the storm. Similarly, in Autumn, Charl J.F. Cilliers maintains an interplay between autumn

... like a sad girl
speaking of childhood,
whisper in her eyes ... ⁴

and the quiet endurance of men,

... huddling in their years,
(defying) death in time ...

¹ 'after the storm' in New Nation, August 1967, p. 9.
⁴ Unisa English Studies, May 1968, p. 66.
The 'dialectic', here, as in Ruth Miller's *Rat*, leads to a modification of previous conceptions, a readjustment of the self of the world. The final statement of *Rat* loses, thus, some of its fundamental terror:

The rats are fat and warm,  
They bide their time until  
Without motive or will,  
They deliver us from harm.

The result is a new clearness of vision, which leads - in *Mantis* - to a mature expression of equipoise:

Now that I am brittle as a twig  
Time having squeezed the sap and wrung me dry  
To the bone, to the outdistancing brain  
Being careful to be quiet and restrained,  
Would the terrible triangle of my face  
Make him afraid?

In *Middle Age*, Lola Watter movingly portrays her realisation of the evanescence of life. Like Ruth Miller who reacts instinctively and naturally - in *Rat* - to the 'beating barrage and thud' of approaching death, she 'knows haste',

... as the clock of cells  
beat out moles and hairs upon my skin  
in blasts of age.

---

Their reaction is similar to that of Elias Pater in *Tempest before Dawn*, where he 'realises as forcibly as anywhere else in his work, that life is not only something for him to observe, but to face. In the stillness he may well be poised in isolation, but he is also at the beginning of his own more violent commitment'[^1]:

You rise, recognizing, in the stillness, 
That, just at a moment like this, 
When you are convinced 
You have not yet begun to live, 
Death could smash the window 
And let the storm rage in your room.[^2]

It is perhaps this uncompromising 'commitment' which distinguishes the work of poets writing of love, life and death; through their desire to come to terms with aspects of their existence they follow, like Livingstone's *The Visionary*, 'something alone';[^3] or react like Ridley Beeton does (in *On the Beach*) to the death of his father:

I sat helplessly, hard and withdrawn, as he suffered away into the sea of death, Which I could see splashing its waves over his face. [^4]

---

Or, like Tania van Zyl, they accept gloriously the finality of death:

   Behind them were the ones they had destroyed:
child, woman, man, goats, bulls
and birds.
He slept and knew that earth
was good. 1

---

Africa can offer no help or encouragement: 'there is nothing but the forms and colours'. It has no history, no gods, no sages, no art capable of winning our consent or allegiance. It rejects us.

... In 'Rounding the Cape' Campbell revived the Portuguese myth of Adamastor, a figure absent from English South African poetry until he saw its usefulness. Adamastor is the spirit of a barbarous continent resentful of any attempt to disturb its ancient ignorance and gloom .... The last two stanzas of the poem reveal Campbell's ambivalent attitude towards Africa which is both 'hated and adored', and his forebodings in the ominous uncase of:

And Night, the Negro, murmurs in his sleep.¹

The most significant feature of South African poetry concerned with the country's scenery and character is its expression of the mythos poetica referred to by Guy Butler. Adèle Naudé, for instance, writes of an Africa which

... speaks in voices varying with the wind;
To and fro the swirling accents veer.
The murmurs rise and breaking, fling
The spindrift of their phrases on the air.

We listen in but from this scattering
Of unfamiliar sounds upon the ear
We draw no meaning till the whorl of shell
Receiving, unifies and then we hear

Deep-throated warnings from an ocean bell,  
Telling in tones that were not heard before  
Of great seas moving darkly to a swell  
And breakers thundering upon a shore.  

This is a land similar to that described by William Plomer in *Scorpion*, with its suggestion of an environment both harsh and savage. But, like Roy Campbell, Adèle Naudé reveals more than this; in her lines there is a suggestion of darkness and excitement, of 'unfamiliar sounds upon the ear'. Thus, besides its profound acknowledgement of a difficult and sometimes oppressive land, the poem speaks of the turbulence which lies beneath 'great seas moving darkly to a swell': 'deep-throated warnings from an ocean bell' add to our sense of the imminent and barely restrained violence, of which we are reminded by Douglas Livingstone in the following stanza from *Sax and Marimbas*:

Coals frowning in the half-sawn petrol drum  
flick sparks from the darkness of intent eyes,  
an orange sheen from the glared teeth,  
under a starpocked April - cloudless sky.  

In contrast to Adèle Naudé's poem, in which there is no mention of people, Livingstone's verse brings to life the Africa of the 'location' and street-alley. The whole continent seems to share - through 'starpocked April - cloudless sky' - in the seamy and vicious undercurrents inherent in the African night. Yet, the refreshing perception of the poet's lines, 'which move with assurance between toughness and compassion', also illuminates the sheer joy, the 'harsh' innocence of the musicians in their task:

---

1. 'Africa', in Adèle Naudé: *No Longer at Ease*, p. 40
2. See: Part IV of *The Flaming Terrapin*; also: *The Zebras* and *The Zulu Girl*.
The two marimba players squat drumming, sweating grandly; robustly mallet-spilled, the cracked machine-gun notes are scattering, round, xylophonic and unscaleable.

Throughout the poem, though, Livingstone's attention to detail, and honesty of description are linked to his depiction of the 'spirit of a barbarous continent'. This is particularly evident in the last stanza:

And over all that crouching motionless watchful land webs an incandescence of watchful skeins, stitching skulls, threading diaphragms: cow blues for harsh and ancient innocence.

A similar theme runs through Preludes, which reveals more powerfully his perception of the primordial and 'ancient' that seems to be an inevitable part of Africa and her peoples: an omnipotence that 'waits'

... like a clubbed fist. The stubbed fingers uncurl bright rings aloft. Out of the sea climbs tonight: a curtain's up.

More important, perhaps, is the poet's depth of understanding, which is seen in his depiction of the many facets of people in their search for pleasure and distraction. He shows the 'gorged men' in 'fat hotel lounges', the 'sad drinkers of wind', 'hunched over bottles like toads', and the young girls, 'raging at their mirrors'. In Night Starts, his sensitive admonishment of the 'old woman, birdlike, small-boned' is further evidence of his warm, and never bathetic, humanity:

The night will be long, frail mother, 
this tamed religion not one that gives 
suspension of space, of centuries lived, 
but, soulless in the night, black bridges.

Although the lonely vigil of the 'old woman' is 
contrasted with the unceasing activities of the city's 
inhabitants, all partake in a common search for meaning 
and reassurance:

Callgirls stretch nylon 
on enchanting legs. Police check truncheons. 
... The sherry-drinkers make 
for the dunes, the lovers for the lake.

Through a sustained sense of analogy, and by virtue 
of Livingstone's preoccupation with specific detail, the 
implications of the poem expand to encompass more than 
the woman at prayer and the restless excitements (or 
routines) of those outside the cathedral walls. The 
contrast between the level, subdued tone of the poem and 
the factual description, contained in all but the final 
stanza, brings the whole theme into a lurid perspective: 
that of the vast anonymity and uncertainty of life.

Despite my contention that Livingstone's concern 
for the men and women about him is more important than 
the incidence - in many of his poems - of the Adamastor 
'myth', his work remains a signal example of the relevance 
of this myth to South African poets. For instance, 
although she writes in an altogether different vein to 
that of Livingstone, Ruth Miller refers to a similar 
'dark force' in Sterkfontein:

1. Ibid., p. 2.

2. Further poems by Douglas Livingstone dealing with 
this theme include: The Almighty and the Hammerheads, 
Vanderdecken, Gentling a Wildcat, and The Heritage.
Our caves do not go Boom! and make one nervy,
For they are underground, and dark and hard ... 1

The prevalence of this 'myth of Adamastor' in South African English poetry is an indication of the artist's need, as Auden expresses it, to pay 'homage by naming':

The impulse to create a work of art is felt when, in certain persons, the passive awe provoked by sacred beings or events is transformed into a desire to express that awe in a rite of worship or homage, and to be fit homage this rite must be 'beautiful'. This rite has no magical or idolatrous intention; it expects nothing in return. 2

In his poem Seed, for example, Herman Charles Bosman presents a compulsive evocation of feeling 'long in love-hate carried': 3

The farmer ploughs into the ground
More than the wheat-seed strewn on the ground
The farmer ploughs into the ground
The plough and the oxen and his body ... 4

Thus, through the emblematic continuity of the poem, we arrive at

... a commitment far beyond the 'song of the straining span' or the primitive evangelism evident in 'Afric's race reviled'. The completeness of this writing, its direct, tough simplicity - united in the spare quality of its evocation, in the power of the love it

4. Ibid., p. 73.
celebrates - make it a remarkable poem. In
Bosman's verse is spelt something of the origin
of our possessive fear, a fear that would be
unequivocally stated by Ingrid Jonker, and
crudely actualised by Wopko Jensa.

F.D. Sinclair, referring in *Zimbabwe*, to 'stranger
walls, that shell no violent presence'; imbues this
ancient symbol with a new 'meaning', 'earthed in the
feeling heart':

There is no face beneath the broken stones,
No searching of decay to bring the heart
Nearer to history of blood, and cut
The desolation spun, without, within,
Only silent emptiness of wind
That covers time and crumbles down the walls.

The visionary quality of Sinclair's poem is also to be
found in *Benoni* by Hubert Jennings; here the poet gives
utterance, through the hebraic resonances of the title and
concluding lines, to his contemplation of evolutionary
trends:

In a thousand thousand years
We'll creep back, the gemsbok and I,
And stamp our feet o'er the rifled earth,
Where miles of red-brick ruins lie;
And go down to the lake by the white silt
Where a rusting crane like a starved bird
Creaks wearily in the moonlight, and there
We'll put our muzzles to the lake,
And taste its waters, bitter still with tears.

1. D.R. Beeton: 'Concise and Evocation', in *English
2. F.D. Sinclair: *Lovers and Hermits*, Balkema, Cape Town,
(n.d.), p. 54.
3. Ibid., p. 54.
4. Roy Macnab am! Charles Gulston (Ed.): *South African
By establishing an oblique connection between the emotive suggestiveness of 'Son-of-my-sorrow' and the water, 'bitter still with tears', the poet reveals the impotence of man (seen in the dissipation, as well, of his technological achievements: 'red-brick ruins'; 'rusting crane') as opposed to the endurance of more 'natural' life forms. The poem is therefore in effect a sustained metaphor of a spiritual search for reality.

Jennings presents a view, then, of the obscure, enigmatic - yet palpably inimical - face of his country. Sinclair's *Karroo*, by contrast, is an example of the backward-looking 'rite of worship', in that Sinclair reveals extremes of emotion and sensation that point to a complex relationship:

O not but to the town it takes
The hurt of beauty lost, foregone,
For in my eager dreaming now
The far reality awakes;

Awakes, and turning like a knife
Makes my heart hate the beauty here
Where still with memory and its wound
I choose to live, and love my life.\(^2\)

The concept of a continent 'stronger than men's wills' appears, too, in varying forms, in the poetry of Anthony Delius and Sydney Cluirs, in which they attempt to weld unity out of diversity - while preserving a sense of the rich variety and complexity of life. *Pretoria Afternoon* is an exceptionally fine embodiment of this strenuous union of emotion and intellect:

---

1. 'Benoni'.

But vast now in a passionate sky
a praying-mantis reaches down
stretching its pious claws to seize
the helpless insect of the town.

Scared refugees of light and shade
Flee west across the startled hills,
men stare from shelters they have made,
feel earth grow stronger than their wills.

The dry air cracks - and from it comes
a black tremendous man that's dressed
in plumes and ox-tails, urged by drums,
with spears of lightning in his fist.¹

The purpose of the line, 'a black tremendous man ...'
is twofold: it serves, firstly, to suggest something of
the awesome and latently ferocious might of Africa's
aboriginal inhabitants, and, secondly, it would appear
to

... break down barriers of rank, habit and
convention, and develop into a kind of primal
sympathy through which the individual is
connected with 'the heart of the world', the
deepest mysteries of nature.²

'Spears of lightning', which seem ultimately to
originate in the positive hostility of nature, can also
be traced in the third stanza of Dawn Hippo by Sydney
Clouts:

A fine froth scums his sides like primitive acid,
birds with sharp beaks fly over him;
he bulges landward
choosing a shelved approach,
the water shallows where he wants it to,

¹ Anthony Delius: An Unknown Border, p. 58.
² Andrew Turnbull (Ed): The Poems of John Davidson,
p. xvii. (In his introduction, Turnbull refers to
the 'staple Romantic positives of love and nature'.
Significantly, in the context of my thesis, he sees
love as a unifying power, capable of bringing both
external and internal harmony; 'earth' is discussed
as a 'pagan, as savage as fair'.)
pushes in savage rings that smash
high reeds and rock the river. Mud swarms,
mud slimes his paddling belly as he climbs
heavily waggling the water away.
The full ridiculous splendour mobs the stones:
thunder and lightning jostle on his bones.  

Clouts's poem depicts the ponderous grandeur and 'ridiculous splendour' of the hippo, in common with Pretoria Afternoon - points to the 'primitive' and deepest 'mysteries of nature' which lie beneath the thin veneer of civilization. And it is these 'mysteries' which cause men, in Delius's poem, to 'flee West across the startled hills', or which lead - in Currey's Rand Mine - to a repressive fear and uncertainty:

'You can tell by the note when they're going to burst,
Rocketing inwards;
This is still the warning jabber!'  

A prick in the earth's crust,
Two of the four thousand miles to earth's centre;
But the piled plateau of the Highveld,
The Drakensberg mountains,
The South Atlantic and Indian oceans
Press on me as the walls
Jabber, jabber.  

In The Woman and the Aloc, Perseus Adams conveys his consciousness of the 'native ferocity' of Africa through the picture of a woman 'ultimately influenced and conditioned by the all-powerful magnetism of nature itself'. He refers, for instance, to the 'prosecuting sun that has


one in the witness box, all day", and to a 'place ... desolate and raw'. Unlike the fear-filled men of *Pretoria Afternoon*, however, the woman, despite having 'lost her youth', discovers a resilience that makes her almost impervious to her circumstances:

Here time has time to make itself felt
And there's no running off to your mother
When trouble coils you in. You might say a mate
And growing children are enough to rock
A woman's demands to sleep, but I tell you here
It's not so, though the silence and the loneliness
Have spun

Their web of doom over me and fallen.\(^1\)

By no means all the poets writing of the South African landscape are filled with a sense of the ominous 'desert' which 'broods over Africa'. In *The African Tramp*, for example, Geoffrey Haresnapse seems to ignore metaphysical vision in his convincing portrait of the tramp:

No, to hell with it!
He didn't want the flowers, he didn't need to worry about them,
They looked after themselves, thank God.
All he had to have was a good sleep:
Such a slumber, far, far gone,
With darkness to cradle his brains.\(^2\)

Like Robert Dederick, in *Karoo Town*, Haresnapse speaks of the present, 'which is our urgent care'.\(^3\) However, whether the poems are actuated by a need for the poet to 'express awe in a rite of worship', or whether they reveal a close observation of the countryside and its inhabitants, they all, I feel, originate in the poet's profound awareness of their very African-ness:

---


3. Ibid., p. 72.
Sense of the arum lily
Sense of the crimson and blueness
camelia of words, the hours clashing
together like ice on the autumn river,
flowers without roots, flowers of air:
if you should come seeking by its scent
in the grass the secret babiaantjie
what should I say?¹

---

¹. Ibid., p. 85. ('If you come back', by Jack Cope)
... much South African poetry is charged with protest. It represents points around the compass of the politically conscious writer. There are the political activists who have suffered trial, injury, torture and prison; there are those who have experienced artistic strangulation and personal humiliation; there are others who saw and felt. Some of these poems were written at home, some in exile. But in general, their point of departure is public concern and their value, social compassion.

Cosmo Pieterse is correct in his assertion that the 'politically-' or 'socially-committed' poet is motivated by a concern for the society in which he lives. He is right, too, in believing, like Professor R.V. Davis, that 'the vision of a great artist is always inspired and clarified by love'. However, Pieterse - in the introduction to his anthology of verse - too easily equates the writing of 'engaged' poetry with poetic consequence, and is unable, satisfactorily, to answer the question he asks himself: 'does South African poetry become shrill, hysterical, thinly disguised political propaganda?'

In an attempt to establish whether the 'thee... of engagement', as it is manifested in recent South African English poetry, has a poetic validity, one must look closely at the quality of the poetry, and at some of the prevailing critical opinion. Nadine Gordimer, in an interview reproduced in 'Writing in Africa' maintains that there are 'areas of life white writers can't enter into, even given the intuitive and imaginative powers


2. 'Where is the Passion and Tragedy', in The Star, Johannesburg, 5th May, 1960, p. 5.
that writers have'. Later she asserts: 'white writers are cut off from the proletariat'.

A comparison of Oswald Mtshali's *Portrait of a Loaf of Bread*\(^2\) and *In a Bakery*, written by Vi Driver-Jowett, reveals that Nadine Gordimer is incorrect in her assumptions. Mtshali points, with an all-too-studied attitude, to the different eating habits of White ('to butter and to marmalade/for the food-bedecked breakfast table') and Black ('Whilst the labourer .../mauls a hunk and a cold drink'); in contrast to these preconceptions, Vi Driver-Jowett speaks with compassion and anger, and in a more widely human context:

\begin{verbatim}
A floury ferment. Dough-filled bakery
Of crusty customers. And I a part
Of this sickly mobocracy,
Whose holiday was just about to start.
I watched the farinaceous faces twitch -
'I think I'll take the ten instead of nine'.
(How dare she change her mind, the little bitch! She should have guessed the tenth one would be mine.
I listened to the prattle: 'Is it fresh? I'll bring it back on Tuesday if its not.'
Assistants stacking pies on to mesh,
Assured the queue that these were piping hot.

A half-heard whisper from a dried-out husk;
A pinched black face: 'How much ONE rusk?'\(^3\)
\end{verbatim}

Whereas, in *Portrait of a Loaf of Bread*, one is left wondering at the poet's intention in his use of the similes,

\begin{verbatim}
... pans as red hot
as Satan's cauldron
\end{verbatim}


and in the referential casualness of the last line ('Man can live on bread alone'), there is no mistaking the metaphors through which Vi Driver-Jowett arrives at the moving pathos of her final couplet. Similarly, it is clear that In a Bakery reveals a close awareness of the suffering experienced by members of the 'proletariat', while, significantly, the experience conveyed is not dependent on any restrictive locality for its effect on the reader.

Thus, when Nadine Gordimer says, in an introduction to Mtshali's volume, that 'only a fine poet could write so well as Mtshali does; only an African could convey this experience', she seems unfortunately to lessen the impact of her later, and more finely critical statement relating to the poetry of Oswald Mtshali: 'it contains a sting that finally shrivels the verbal magic away, leaving a question or statement burning in the mind'.

Although Mtshali's 'songs of innocence and experience' do not, I feel,

... place him somewhere along with Blake, and his gifts of colloquial irony with the tradition of Auden, and his, almost surgical imagery with Sylvia Plath ...

they do encourage a fresh insight into particular aspects of the native (and Black) South African mind and situation. This leads one, in a sense, 'to enter into the lives we are giving the blacks, and to throb with their feelings'.

2. Ibid., p. vi.
3. Ibid., p. v.
4. Ibid., p. v.
One cannot argue, for example, that through his own idiom, a 'colloquial base of free alliterative verse', the poet draws us to his description of the old woman in *The Washerwoman's Prayer*:

Look at her hands
raw, knobbly and calloused.
Look at her face
Like a bean skin soaked in brine.

For countless years she has toiled
to wash her master's clothes.
Soiled by a lord's luxuries.

Once again, though, the absence of sophistication - which lends the opening lines a certain harsh integrity - gives place to bitter generalization. As a result, the poignancy of the first stanza is filtered away in the weary and glib mediocrity of

'Suffer for those who live in gilded sin,
Toil for those who swim in a bowl of pink gin.'

Mtshali's work is more significant if one disregards the sweeping statement, and focuses attention on the sharp, simple insights which are apparent in a great number of his poems. Thus, the 'verbal magic' of *The Shepherd and his Flock* enhances the poet's description of pastoral simplicity:

The rays of the sun
are like a pair of scissors
cutting the blanket
of dawn from the sky.
The young shepherd

---

drives the master's sheep
from the paddock
into the veld.
His bare feet
kick the grass
and spill the dew like diamonds
on a cutter's table.
A lamb strays away
enchanted by the marvels of a summer
morning;
... The sun wings up
on flaming petals
of a sunflower ...

The achievement of 'Black' South African 'poets of
protest' (such as Oswald Mtshali, Dennis Brutus, and
Dollar Brand) is well summarized by Philip Birkinshaw,
in his article, 'Afro-English Poetry':

They describe the dreadful plosives of African
life ... and their bitter details. Reading
them, one knows the truth, in a fresh context,
of Owen's 'the poetry is in the pity'. They
lift the scabs off the complacencies of our
poxy society, and ... And What?"

The query, 'And What?', suggests that he is unable
to place these writers, or their verse, in full perspective.
Indeed, their work seems to lack the enduring quality of
'good' poetry, having an application that draws its
immediacy almost solely from its context as a comment on
aspects of the racial and political structure in Southern
Africa. As C.J. Driver states in the refrain of
A Ballad of Hunters:

1. Ibid., p. 1.
The theme's the same, the method changes -
Time has planned the ending,
Has turned the sniper to the target
And bred the next from nothing.¹

Those who more successfully distil 'political'
concern through the rigorous demands of verse include
Perseus Adams and Walter Saunders, who reveal - in
*The Murder Trial* and *Vrystaat!* - situations easily recog-
nizable as a part of the South African heritage. Saunders
achieves his effect partly through an allusion to the
'Horsemen of the Apocalypse', and partly through his
satire, which has neither the insidious undertones of the
political commentator, nor the ranting, abrasive overtones
associated with the writings of the committed poet. His
concern is patently a human one, for an event in which

PURITY
NATIONHOOD ²

assume a false importance, and which prevent people from
recognizing the warning:

The spectators are still looking up,
there seems to be something else;
Can you make it out, Chick?

'All I can see are black clouds coming up.'

Chick is busy with his field-glasses.

'Wait a minute, as a matter of fact
there is something over to the right.
It looks like FOUR HORSEMEN.'

Four Horsemen?

'It must be some kind of trick.'

¹ Cosmo Pieterse: *Seven South African Poets*, p. 3.
² *New Nation*, December 1968, p. 25.
Do you think the, the deity would play a trick?

'Well, not exactly.'

Perseus Adams ranges somewhat further in five stanzas (The Murder Trial) which he has dedicated to 'a young coloured man who attacked and robbed a white man'. He has set down his thoughts, which developed during the trial, and which culminate in the haunting anguish of the 'last day':

The judge walked in, the people stood
The judge sat and the people listened
Hearing a widow consoled with additional blood.
Can a trapdoor swallow want
As the grave lets in light?
Black is my cry, black to the roots of sight.

The repetition of 'black' serves, here, to heighten perception of the poet's mood, and his sense of kinship with the condemned man. Adams's mood is one compounded by an intelligence that perceives the supreme irony of a 'widow consoled with additional blood', and by a heart which is affected by the oft-repeated tragedy of 'bedsprings' murmuring of 'obituaries'. The poet sees too, the 'bandaged dark' of ignorance and want.

In contrast, 'the law ... such an unrealistic thing' ignores the young man's background, that of a

Bastard dreamer
Whose life had always hung by a thread.

It is against this seemingly uncaring attitude that the poet rails, and against which he is able - through the quality of his verse - to invoke our concern.

2. Ibid., p. 40.
If anything, Anne Welsh refers more sharply to the hatred and misunderstanding engendered by the legal system, and the political and social structure which it serves. Sharpeville Inquiry forms, with the poems of Adams, Saunders and Wopko Jensma, an interesting record of the turbulence which has been a part of the South African situation since 1960. However, Anne Welsh’s poems have more than a mere historical value: she brings a freshness of perception to bear on a familiar theme. Her poems lack, as well, the debilitating bitterness of The Washerwoman; the motivation for Sharpeville Inquiry was clearly a rational attempt to render the feelings, and reactions, of those who suffer at the hands of society:

Hate is stripped to its lean
Dead trunk by a winter of words.
It stands nakedly
In the public gardens.¹

An absence of overt emotionalism in Anne Welsh’s lines creates the impression of a coldly articulate anger as she contrasts the world of normality and the situation of those on the ‘public benches’. In the first stanza we see, ‘outside the courtroom’, a pattern of ‘everyday’ occurrence:

Outside the courtroom
Winter sun is warm.
The streets are quiet,
A child comes out of school.

In the last stanza, which constitutes - in terms of the development of the poem - a complete antithesis to ‘warmth’ and ‘quiet’, the ‘line of suffering’ grows to encompass all humanity:

And between the curled contempt
Of the 'public' benches
The line of suffering is growing.
The bright sun sharpens it.

Reference to 'public benches' removes the poem from the
realm of any circumscribed locality; it becomes, then, a
subtle warning to the uncaring, and a form of admonishment
to those who, while caring, do nothing to alter the
situation.

Chaim Lewis has a similar ability to translate his
perceptions into a form that strikes quickly and honestly.
In the stanzas which follow he writes forcefully of the
'White man's ... troubled conscience':

... Dogs here
are surly stay-at-homes,
kennelled burglar
alarms nursing
a White man's
malice ...

... Dogs here
are my troubled
conscience, carry
doom notched
in their ears,
no care-free nosy
provers of country
smells.1

He is able, also, in Jemima, the Laundry Woman, in Jeppe
Street, to recreate the jovial vigour of a Black woman:

Jemima's joy has run
to cradling bosoms,
her sex expansive
in the rounded happiness
of her hips. There is
no guile, no malice
in her - her truth
is in her smiling teeth.2

1. 'Dogs are different here', in Shadow in the Sun, p. 14.

Lewis has, conceivably, more than any other poet using this theme of 'engagement' (except Sydney Clouts in his 'Hotknife' cycle and Perseus Adams in The Murder Trial), achieved a fine balance between 'anger' and 'compassion', between objective perception and subjective interpretation. The relevance and commitment of his work is found in its underlying distinction between reality and illusion. Lewis therefore fulfils what John Povey feels is one of the most important obligations of the poet writing in a land where politics

...is a constant backdrop to all that he must be and feel, although it does not exclude the common human possibilities of love and tenderness, and remains a counterpoint to these feelings.¹

Guardian of the Night² and At Zoo Lake exemplify his rejection of the 'negative' polemic in favour of a natural lyricism which indicates the path to be followed to a better understanding among people: in the latter poem, for instance, he pictures the unselfconscious ebullience of a boy at play:

He, the black outsider, playing ball with the others, discovering childhood's playtime togetherness his face lit-up a sky's gladness in his eyes, the wind in his breath, the green swirl of the earth rolling into a dizzy ball at his feet.³

3. Ibid., p. 13.
The poet shows the world (of reality) - with its inherent pain and injustice - shrinking for a few ecstatic moments into a 'dizzy ball' of illusory happiness. 'Green', 'gladness', 'swirl' are all synthesized, by the rhythm, in a liberating instant of brotherhood that takes no cognizance of the colour of the boys' skins.

The spontaneous nature of this event, with its promise of an eventual utopia, is mirrored in the cataclysmic moment of illumination depicted in Jensma's *Manje Manje*:

long ago
you whiplashed thru my shock
that time i was nightwatch. i
my woman crying inside for. i
the my droll off sleep. fires
drooping
my weary
eyes. i am alone in this worl.

Wopko Jensma moves outside 'usual' verse forms in seeking poetic expression of his insights. In fact, as Ridley Beeton has suggested, we find '... in the writer's concern with jazz music, a deeper concern: a concern with the condition of music that in range and tempo of suggestion achieves as full a statement as possible.' ¹ 'i' becomes, thus, a dirgelike refrain, indicative of the inner torment of the poet, 'alone in this worl'. The patois of the slum-dweller adds new dimensions to an unusual 'blues', a song that alters its form as its passion varies in intensity:

Some night
gloomy and soul
he was the man around. hear
his dreary wail now. slowly
metronomes we are here too
a monotony a bloodshot eye
some night.

¹.  *Ophir*, July 1969, p. 2. (The poem also appears in his volume, *White is the Colour, Black is the Number*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1974, under the title: 'Manje for Now'.)

The function of these lines is to continue the theme of disintegration introduced in the preceding stanza, and to point, effectively, to the eternity of 'some night/gloomy and soul'. This confusion and uncertainty is contrasted with the short periods of understanding that occur throughout the poem, as 'the man around' succumbs to an alter ego and some 'spirit' beyond 'monotony'.

With a similar relevance to this theme of disintegration, Michael Macnamara identifies, in Digits of Hell, the universality of suffering:

In a great cavern,
babbling delegates sit out eternity
with fingers pointing ...

... From time to time, each delegate jumps up
and shouts:
'Your guilt's no jot the less
for mine.'

I bid the devil good day. 1

The poet's evidence of a cumulative social guilt hinges on his reference to the 'devil', and the supreme irony with which the latter is greeted. This 'social' conscience implied by the title, and the accusatory 'fingers pointing' is a reaction (in a purely South African context) to 'our law' and its denial of many fundamental human rights. Peter Horn refers to this insidious invasion of freedom in Spiritual:

our law
is fear: eyes eyes eyes
silent in the vaults
o lord lord
in the vaults of this city
fear and hate

burn
burn
burn

o lord lord
burn
away fear and hate.¹

The sincerity of Horn's 'prayer' is accentuated by the ambivalence of the repeated word, 'burn', which suggests simultaneously both supplication and foreboding. In the same way, the repetition of 'fear and hate' becomes a portent of violence and disruption, the last resort of a race frustrated and tormented by repressive laws. As Wopko Jensma has stated in Sometime Next Time:

i plant my corn on the rocks
it does not grow
i plant my corn on fertile land
it does not grow
next time i plant
i'll start beyond
i'll start beyond the bread.²

Here, the inversion of traditional associations, coupled with the fierce emotion of the last lines, underscores the possibility of an ultimate recourse to violent means.

In conclusion, it is important, I think, to see the poetry (and theme) discussed here in relation to Ezra Pound's dictum that:

If we never write anything save what is already understood, the field of understanding will never be extended. One demands the right, now and again, to write for a few people with special interests and whose curiosity reaches into greater detail.³

---

1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Wopko Jensma: Sing for our Execution, p. 91.
If a justification is needed for the poetry which has its beginnings in commitment, but does not display the broader perspective evinced by Chaim Lewis, Sydney Clouts, Perseus Adams and Anne Welsh, it is certainly to be found in Pound's assertion. Although Jenisma, for instance, seems to concentrate on what John Lehmann calls 'South Africa's own peculiarities, colour, tension and idiom', he nevertheless maintains a standard of craftsmanship that effectively extends our 'field of understanding'. Thus, Lopsided Cycle (part 4) is an apt example of a theme that has '... its roots in the traditions, beliefs, and way of life of the people, and reflects somehow the whole racial and social pattern of the nation':

our cutlass regime hollers praise for the whip
dumbfounded
prisoners a
scratching a
prison walls
until blood
drips outa'
their nails
a log chain
a ma leg, oh
neverending
pit a agony
set me free
Lod, i heen't
yours iGoli
leaves the gap for poor souls to die forever.  

---


Writers whose use of this theme in their poetry is also deserving of attention include:

Rui Knopfi: 'Monotonous Song, Ophir, April 1968 p. 2
Pascal Gwala: 'An attempt at Communication',
Ophir, April 1970, p. 3.
Russian Savant: 'Nursery Rhyme', Ibid., p. 23.
Ruth Keech: 'Living in a Highveld Village',
New Coin, September 1968, p. 4.
EPILOGUE
Wordsworth, in the 'Appendix' to his Preface to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads, maintains that

The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring and figurative.

The truth of this statement, regarding South African poetry in English, can be found in the fervour of Pringle's verse, and in the vigorous descriptive contained in Alexander Wilmot's In the Droughtlands of South Africa: The Rain. Thomas Pringle, in Afar in the Desert, writes, for example, of plains compounded of 'barren earth, and the burning sky'; the situation is undeniably 'real', just as his humanity is evident in the commentary understatement of: 'void of living sight and sound'. Passion and 'powerful feeling' are recognisable in the following lines from The Emigrants:

For to my aching heart, in accents wild,
Appeals the bitter cry of Afric's race reviled.

This 'passion excited by real events' is also a phenomenon of the poetry written more than a century after that of Pringle and his immediate successors. Margaret Smith recreates for her reader the 'strange strangling fear' induced in her during a visit to the ruins of Zimbabwe, and Christopher Hope enunciates explicitly - in The Flight of the White South Africans - the fear of White South Africans, that '... we'll be gutted where we fall'. Coupled with the continued concern for 'real' events is an important change in the direction of the thought and focus in much South African poetry written

---

1. Thomas Hutchinson, op cit, p. 741.

2. 'Zimbabwe Dream', by Margaret Smith: A Box of Beads and Zimbabwe Dream, The Mafeking Mail, Mafeking, 1959, p. 28.

since the second World War. The idiom and attitude of contemporary writing diverges strongly from that found in the verse of the earliest writers; thus, whereas both 'periods' incorporate themes embodied in poems such as The Caffer, Bridge-Guard in the Karoo and Namaqualand, the war seems to have broadened the scope of poetry in Southern Africa.

Charles Williams has remarked that poetry, in one way or another, is 'about' human experience, for 'there is nothing else that it can be about'. It is this 'human experience' which lies at the centre of poems by, amongst others, Ridley Beeton, Sydney Clouts and Michael Macnamara; although they do not dismiss the overt reality of circumstances, their attention is directed upon a human response and reaction, rather than upon a flat depiction of appearance. However, although the emphasis in their poetry has shifted from the narrower 'real event' to the broader (and more difficult to assimilate) truths or imponderables underlying these 'events', their work is undoubtedly coloured and textured by its environment. Thus,

What Pierneef has chosen to call the smell of a South African dung-fire cannot be ignored.

Charles Barter, for instance, in his long poem, Stray Memories of Natal and Zululand, focused (in parts) on the experience of Retief and his followers. Thomas Pringle wrote of the hopes and despair of the early settlers, in

1. See p. 16 of this dissertation.
2. As above, p. 21.
3. As above, p. 22.
4. 'A Note on Great Poetry', in Charles Williams: Select Writings, p. 2.
Emigrant's Song. Later, Cripps and Slater reflected the varied activities and aspirations of the established colonists. More recently, Jennifer Davids relies on her reader's sense of locality for the effect of her lines written for Albert Luthuli:

You a fragment of the sun
go turn the world
in the long strength
of your fingers

Bounded
you gave me
knowledge of freedom

Silenced
you taught me
how to speak ... 1

Themes which have emerged from the events and demands of the twentieth century continue the overwhelming reaction felt by the soldier and his society in the second World War. Many of the poems which contain these themes (I think, specifically, of H.W.D. Manson's Unposted Letter; Eva Royston's Children's Voices; and Sydney Clouts's Hotknife cycle of poems) reveal a sometimes muted, but nevertheless undeniable, South African-ness.

It is significant that, since the second World War, the indigenous tradition in South African poetry has developed as an integrated, rather than as a pioneer, concern. T.S. Eliot, in his essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', says that:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone;

you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them.  

Therefore, although a South African poetic tradition owes much to its European heritage (and, indeed, exemplifies many of the 'Western' philosophies), it has evolved in a specifically African context; a number of its themes, as well as subject matter and style, carry the influence and integration of local colour and idiom.

Despite my awareness of the risks of generalisation, I feel that many of the themes (such as those implicit in my titles, Sensation and Revelation, and Love, Life and Death) used by American and British writers, are reflected in the work of South African poets - with a similar universality, but with an (often) distinctive concern formed by particular exigencies and needs.

This 'tradition' recurs thematically in poetry published after 1970. Furthermore, the differences in style and technique, which distinguish the poems of post-war writers, are to be found in the poetry of, amongst others, Robert Dederick, Stephen Gray and Steve Heinemann. In Durban, for instance, Heinemann employs a truncated form to convey the strength of his emotion:

```
we make
a black
torch in
the city
```


Helen Segal is another who relies on a shortness of line for the impact of her statement:

... only grace
  can catch
  a tear
  and give it back
  a pearl ...¹

By contrast, Stephen Gray underscores the validity of his concern through a more conventional use of blank verse:

Under the lens of God's sun
between onion skins of veld and sky
locked between oceans closing south
we avoid His scrutiny ...²

His technique, which is especially remarkable for its choice of metaphor, serves to revitalize our perception of a situation frequently treated, but rarely approached with such freshness of vision. In the same way, the insistent logic of Bi-focal reinforces the vitality of Dederick's insight:

Some survey the wood beyond the trees.
Do not, while seeing eye-to-eye with these,
Overlook those whose scrutiny perceives
Within the trees within the wood the leaves.³

One should observe, finally, that the achievement of these poets must be seen in an historical perspective. Those writings after the second World War have built on

---


foundations laid by Scully, Campbell and Plomer and have engendered a South African voice and tradition; within this framework of idiom and attitude they have, furthermore, achieved a striking universality of expression:

We have too something of a universal linguistic commitment, and imagery that is alien to people other than ourselves must by the force of its context and in the act of retaining an indigenous vitality give life to a meaning beyond our borders. The indigenous should by its appropriateness and intensity prove an unchauvinistic insight; even when we are most intensely engaged, a certain ironical detachment remains part of the English heritage. Here we arrive at the persistent paradox of art: by deeply being itself art achieves self-release; by trying to be everything it is in fact very little.1

- o o o -

This bibliography is divided into six sections. The first section is arranged chronologically. The works in the remaining sections are listed in alphabetical order. Of necessity, all sections provide only select lists of the material and sources available.
SECTION I

ANTHOLOGIES
WILMOT, A., comp.: The Poetry of South Africa, Juta, Cape Town, 1887.


TUCKER, Herbert, comp.: Songs of Love and Nature, Juta, Cape Town, 1909.


The Eisteddford Poetry Book, Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1912.


LYNN, Mike, editor: Our Century thus far, James Thomson, Durban, 1943.


SECTION II

INDIVIDUAL VOLUMES


ARNOT, A.E.: Lyrics from Libya, Mowbray Presbyterian Church Tract Society, Mowbray, 1942.


BARR, Robert: Martha in the Kitchen and other poems, Mowbray Presbyterian Church Tract Society, Mowbray, 1943.

: Nurse Please!, Cowens, Cape Town, 1946.

BARRY, Neoline: A Book of Verse from Rhodesia, Ditchling Press, -, 196-.

BARTER, Charles: Stray Memories of Natal and Zululand, Munro, Pietermaritzburg, 1897.


BOURKE, Myles: The Koppie on a Plain, Howard Timmins, Cape Town, 1951.


BROOKES, Edgar Harry: The House of Bread, Knox, Durban, 1944.


BUTLER, Guy: Stranger to Europe, Balkema, Cape Town, 1952.

: Stranger to Europe, with additional poems, Balkema, Cape Town, 1960.


CAMPBELL, Norman: The Quiet Voice and other poems, van Schaik, Pretoria, 1944.


: The Africa We Knew, (Editor, Jack Cope), David Philip, Cape Town, 1973. (Mantis Editions of Southern African Poets, 1)


DE WAAL, Daphne: Soldiers Immortal, Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1917.

DEDERICK, Robert: The Quest, and Other Poems, Purnell, Cape Town, 1968.

: Bilingual, David Philip, Cape Town, 1974.


DU TOIT, C.J.J.: Ignorance; or, The Guest and other Fragments, Unie-Volkpers, Cape Town, 1940.


FOOT, Henry Martyn: Cutting Capers: Caper Sauce and other poems, Maskev Miller, Cape Town, 1896.

GALLOWAY, Jane: The Eye is quicker than the Hand, The author, Johannesburg, 1941.


GRAY, Stephen: Its about time, (Editor, Lougias Livingstone), David Philip, Cape Town, 1974. (Mantis Editions of Southern African Poets, 4)


HALL, Arthur Vine: A Voyage to the Cape and other poems, Darter, Cape Town, 1934.


INNES, Inez Rose: As the Wind Blows, Balkema, Cape Town, 1959.


: Where White is the Colour, Where Black is the Number, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1974.

KELP, Jane: Lines to James, Balkema, Cape Town, 1953.

KONING, Juliet: Southwind, C.N.A. Johannesburg, 1943.


LEFEBVRE, Denys: War and other poems, Hortors, Johannesburg, 1918.


LEVITON, Nathan: The Song that is Lost : poems and lyrics, van Schaik, Pretoria, 1943.

LEWIS, Chaim: Shadow in the Sun, Juta, Cape Town, 1972.

LIPKIN, Jean: Among Stones, (Editor, Sydney Clouts), David Philip, Cape Town, 1975. (Mantis Editions of Southern African Poets, 8).


MADGE, Charles: The Father Found, Faber and Faber, London, 1941.


MUIR, Daphne C.A.: Curious Beasts and Tragic Tales, Juta, Cape Town, 1925.

NAUDE Adèle: Pity the Spring: poems, Balkema, Cape Town, 1953.
: No longer at ease: poems, Balkema, Cape Town, 1956.
: Time and Memory, Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1974.


PATER, Elias: In praise of night, Purnell, Cape Town, 1969.


RICHARDS, Alexander Osborne: Convoy, George and Knysna Herald, George, 1943.

RIDDLE, George: Ditties from the Veld, by Esses Tok, William Smith, Aberdeen, 1937.


ROSE, Brian: No Mean City, Balkema, Cape Town, 1954.

ROWLAND, Gwen: The Soldier and other poems, Howard Timmins, Cape Town, 1945.


SMITH, Margaret: A Box of Beads and Zimbabwe Dream, The Mafeking Mail, Mafeking, 1959.


TITLESTAD, Rico Martin: Salmagundi, a clerk's vacation, van Schaik, Pretoria, 1942.


SECTION III

CRITICAL COMMENTARY


LENNOX-SHORT, Alan, editor: English and South Africa, Nasou, Cape Town, no date.


ABRAHAMS, Lionel: 'Ruth Miller and Harley Manson', The Purple Penoster, No. 9, 1969.


  : 'English Literature in South Africa', Trek, March 1959, p. 16.


  : 'Exile and the Aboriginal', *Standpunte*, June 1953, pp. 77-93.


HORN, Peter: 'Poet at every street corner', *Wurm*, Vol. 10, pp. 91-93.


M.G., pseud.: 'About a Guy called Butler', Outspan, November 14th, 1952.


RENAULT, Mary: 'Art in Protest - A Writer's Viewpoint', Contrast, Autumn 1960, p. 73.

RITVE, Richard: 'No Common Factor', Contrast, April 1964, p. 52.


TAYLOR, Dora: 'Prelude to Plomer', Trek, Vol. 8, nos. 1, 2, and 3, 1943.


WALKER, Oliver: 'Footnote to Voorslag', *Trek*, December 1942, p. 23.


'Passage to Africa' (Editorial), *Contrast*, Autumn 1962, p. 7.


JAMES, Alan: 'Oswald Mtshali', New Nation, October 1971, p. 17.

J.C., pseud.: 'Rock, Leaf and Grass by Tania van Zyl', Contrast, November 1968.


SECTION IV

THESES AND DISSERTATIONS


SECTION V

BIBLIOGRAPHIES
Index to South African Periodicals, Public Library, Johannesburg, 1940.


MILLER, Fey: First Line and Title Index to the poetry of Roy Campbell, University of the Witwatersrand, School of Librarianship, Johannesburg, 1961.


SECTION VI

A list of South African magazines and journals containing poetry or critical commentary in English.
AFRICA SOUTH, Cape Town, 1956-1960.
BOLT, University of Natal, Durban, 1970-.
CAPE MONTHLY MAGAZINE, Cape Town, 1857-1881.
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE LITERARY GAZETTE, Cape Town, 1830-1835.
CLASSIC, Johannesburg, 1963-.
CONTRAST, Cape Town, 1960-.
CRUX, Pretoria, 1967-.
DE ARTE, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1967-.
(Pilot Edition, 1965)
E.P. MAGAZINE, Grahamstown, 1892-1898.
ENGLISH STUDIES IN AFRICA, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1958-.
FORUM, Johannesburg, 1938-1964.
LANTERN, Pretoria, 1949-.
NEW COIN POETRY, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1965-.
OPHIR, Pretoria, 1967-.
OUTSPAN, Bloemfontein, 1927-1957.
POETRY SOUTH, Cape Town, 1972-.
RHODESIAN POETRY, Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1972-.
SOUTH AFRICAN BOOKMAN, Pretoria, 1910-1915.
SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES, Potchefstroom, 1933-.
SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY. QUARTERLY BULLETIN, Cape Town, 1946-.
SOUTH AFRICAN MAGAZINE, Cape Town, 1906-1907.
SOUTH AFRICAN PANORAMA, Pretoria, 1956-.
(Yearbook: 1954-56)
SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLISHER AND BOOKSELLER, Johannesburg, 1951-1968.

SOUTH AFRICAN QUARTERLY, Johannesburg, 1914-1916; 1919-1926.

STANDPUNTE, Cape Town, 1945-.

SUÍD-AFRIKAANSE AKADEMIE VIR WETENSkap EN KUNS, 1910-1938; 1961-.

THEORIA, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1947-.

TREK, Johannesburg, 1936-1951.

TWO TONE, Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1969; 1973-.

UNISA ENGLISH STUDIES, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1963-.

VEER, Port Elizabeth University, 1969-.

VOORSLAG, Durban, June 1926 - May 1927.

ABRAHAMS, Lionel 76, 77
ADAMS, Perseus 66, 67, 102-5, 109, 123, 124, 131, 132, 135, 139

BARTER, Charles 20, 142
BEETON, Ridley 59-62, 64, 67, 72, 73, 80, 81, 105, 113, 145
BELLES, Sinclair 75
BEZWODA, Eva See Royston, Eva
BOSMAN, Herman Charles 119
BRAND, Dollar 130
BRUTUS, Dennis 130
BUTLER, Guy 6, 34-6, 42-8, 50, 54, 55

CAMPBELL, Roy 7, 10, 26-30, 32, 36-9, 54-6, 64, 87, 88, 109, 115, 146
CILLIERS, Charl J.F. 10, 67, 69, 81, 84, 99-101, 111
CLOTHIER, Norman 34, 36, 50, 51, 54
CLOOUTS, Sydney 7, 67, 70, 74, 75, 83, 84, 86-90, 121-3, 135, 139, 142, 143
COPE, Jack 125
CRIPPS, Arthur Shearly 14, 24, 143
CURREY, R.N. 7, 11, 56, 123

DAVIDS, Jennifer 143
DEDERICK, Robert 65, 85, 86, 124, 144, 145
DELIUS, Anthony 40, 41, 50, 106, 107, 109, 121-4
DRIVER, C.J. 130, 131
DRIVER-JOWETT, Vi 127, 128
DUGMORE, H.H. 14, 18, 19

FULLER, Roy 7, 56, 101, 102

GRAY, Stephen 144, 145

HARENSPAKE, Geoffrey 124
HARING, Phyllis 10
HEINEMANN, Steve 144
HOPE, Christopher 144
HORN, Peter 97, 137, 138
HUNTER, William Elijah 20
JENNINGS, Hubert 120, 121
JENSMA, Wopko 97, 136-9

KIPLING, Rudyard 21, 22, 142
KLOPPER, R. 7, 84-6

LEWIS, Chaim 96, 134-6, 139
LIVINGSTONE, Douglas 109-11, 113, 116-8
LONGMORE, George 14, 18, 19

MACNAB, Roy 47, 49, 82, 84, 87
MACNAMARA, Michael 47, 48, 67-9, 76-8, 91, 99, 100, 137, 142
Manson, H.W.D. 45, 46, 143
MILLER, Ruth 88-91, 109, 110, 112, 118, 119
MTSHALI, Oswald 127-130, 133

NAUDE, Adelé 82, 83, 107, 108, 115, 116

PATER, Elias 65-7, 71, 72, 91, 113
PILOMER, William 6, 7, 10, 30-2, 56, 97, 116, 146
PRINCE, F.T. 34, 49, 50-5
PRINGLE, Thomas 13-17, 141-3
PUGH, Herbert 13

ROYSTON, Eva 59-64, 67, 71, 77-9, 143

SAUNDERS, Walter 63, 64, 131, 132
SCULLY, William Charles 14, 22-4, 146
SEGAL, Helen 145
SINCLAIR, F.D. 120, 121
SLATER, Francis Carey 24-6, 70, 142, 143
SMITH, Margaret 7, 141
STYLE, Colin 7, 96, 99, 101

THOMSON, William Rodger 17

VAN ZYL, Tania 10, 114
WATTER, Lola  72, 73, 105, 112
WELSH, Anne  96, 133, 134, 139
WILMOT, Alexander  19, 20, 141