

This is a book written with moderation and without fanaticism. It is an addition to our stock of evidence that proves that the ability of many ethnic and other subdivisions of mankind are affected by heredity rather than environment.

R. GAYRE OF GAYRE

A VICTORIAN SON: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By Stuart Cloete. Collins, London, 1972. Pp. 319. Price £2.25.

This brilliantly written book is the first volume of the autobiography of Stuart Cloete, South Africa's most distinguished novelist. Born in Paris in 1897, Cloete spent his childhood and youth between France and England. Volunteering for the First World War, he became one of Britain's youngest combat commanders. Twice wounded in action, the second time almost mortally, he recuperated from the psychic trauma of war with his young wife in a Normandy village.

A Victorian Son has as its dominant theme the contrast between life in the first decades of this century with its strong individualism, with man's close relationship to the world of nature and with its cruelty and harsh contrasts between opulence and squalid misery, and the homogenized mechanized world of today.

"People sang lullabies to children when I was a baby," Cloete writes, "but everyone sang then. The servants sang when they cleaned the windows or did the laundry; house-painters sang on their ladders. . . . They had eaten no de-natured foods. They had no DDT in their livers, no strontium-90 in their bones."

Sharp class gradations, a consciousness of duty, and a refusal to accept failure, inculcated early in the young, produced individualists of an eminence and mental and moral power that is seldom replicated in this age of collective work and anonymous achievement.

"The hero is out today," Cloete writes. "In books and plays we find a new cult — that of the non-hero, of the drug addict, the alcoholic, the criminal. This is the day of the failure. He fails because he is under-privileged, comes from a broken home, or is a Negro. His excuses are endless — his parents, his teachers, society in general. The only person he never blames is himself. It is the *reductio ad absurdum* of democracy."

American reviewers of Cloete's First World War novel, *How Young They Died*, found its hero's pride in country and soldiering incomprehensible. They could not understand why a young man should hazard his life to protect a nation that was "beautiful, orderly and powerful," imbued with the tradition of glory and governed by men who had not lost the will to rule.

"But if I were a young man today," Cloete concedes, "I cannot imagine myself fighting for England or the Commonwealth. . . ."

The Magna Carta; the first successful parliament after Iceland; the first successful revolt that ended in the execution of a King; the forced abdication of another; the first socialist government: these are major political achievements. Even the American Republic — though most Americans would deny it — the greatest political success the world has yet seen, was designed and executed by English rebels. But to me the present situation of government by the blackmail of the masses — Labour, students, coloured immigrants — must end in disaster. It took a thousand years to create the English people, possibly the finest relatively homogeneous race yet to be formed. What madness therefore to dilute these x genes with those of

people of alien tropic origin. Nor do I believe that the present components of the English population could withstand the hardships suffered in the Second World War.

Mr Enoch Powell's popularity seems to prove that I am not alone in this opinion. *I do not believe that all men and all races are equal in ability, there is nothing in history to suggest that this is true* [my emphasis] though it is the popularly accepted theory, and history is being falsified in an effort to prove this thesis.

These views make me in modern parlance a racist. But racism and patriotism must be and are to a great extent synonymous. A patriot is a man who loves and serves his King, country and people. There can be no abstract patriotism. The Kenyans and people of Uganda are racist when they throw out the Asiatics. The Zanzibari were racist when they killed the Arabs and Indians on the island. . . . Racism in fact exists wherever two races find themselves in competition.

Racism appears to be a built-in characteristic of the human race and the complete integration hoped for by the social scientists of today a wishful dream rooted in unreality.

This first volume of Stuart Cloete's autobiography is not merely a record of sensations, emotions and events, though these are recorded superbly and in precise detail, but the re-evocation of an age dedicated to achievement, excellence and freedom.

NATHANIEL WEYL

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF LEARNING AND THINKING: AN EXPLORATION IN EXPERIMENTAL ANTHROPOLOGY

By Michael Cole, John Gay, Joseph A. Glick and Donald W. Sharp.
Methuen, London, 1972. Pp. 304, 12 illustrations. Price £3.50.

This book uses as its basis of study the Kpelle people in the Republic of Liberia, in West Africa.

The book sets out to be a cross-cultural study claiming to combine anthropological, linguistic and experimental psychological techniques. In point of fact, since it ignores the whole question of heredity and the effect of ethno-genetics on the cultures, thinking and learning of these people, its conclusions can by no means be accepted as objective, as the authors' interpretation of anthropology is social anthropology.

Only at page 6 is race mentioned at all, and that is in the context of Boas's attack upon the concept that differences of a cultural and belief nature are "evidence of fundamental differences in thought processes." It attacks the views of Herbert Spencer, E. B. Tyler and L. H. Morgan for holding to the argument bolstered by the biological theories of Darwin and Huxley, which assumed that the evolution of intellect can be inferred from the assumed evolution of culture (p. 4).

It draws attention to the fact that Boas's major target was the French sociologist Lucien Levy-Bruhl, who "held that every culture is characterised by a set of general beliefs which he called 'collective representations'." They consider it unfortunate that Levy-Bruhl coined the term *prelogical* to characterise rules by which basic ideas are combined. "In addition, Levy-Bruhl assumed, contrary to Boas, that primitivity of material and religious culture is sufficient evidence to prove the existence of primitive mental processes" (p. 6).

With such an "anthropological" basis to the book, and with an assault upon such great thinkers as Huxley, Tyler, Morgan, and Herbert Spencer, not to mention, from the sociological side, Levy-Bruhl, it can