

worth, Babbitt opposed the humanist who knew Aristotle's "golden mean" of human behavior, who could exercise an "inner check" over his whims and passions:

The humanist, as opposed to the humanitarian, is interested in the perfecting of the individual rather than in schemes for the elevation of mankind as a whole; and although he allows largely for sympathy, he insists that it be disciplined and tempered by judgment.

The dominant thought of his time, claimed Babbitt, had "gone wrong on first principles." To say that, he continued, "will be found to be only another way of saying that we are living in a world that has been betrayed by its leaders." One of the delusions, held by the majority of intellectuals, was that some proximate solution to the economic or political problem would be able to serve as the ultimate solution for every issue of life. But that view, said Babbitt, was both misguided and superficial. He wrote:

When studied with any degree of thoroughness, the economic problem will be found to run into the political problem, the political problem in turn into the philosophical problem, and the philosophical problem itself to be almost indissolubly bound up at last with the religious problem.

Unfortunately, Babbitt, and others like him, could not halt the spread of cant. In any event, Babbitt knew he was fighting for unpopular causes; but he also recognized, as his student at Harvard, T. S. Eliot, recognized, that

there is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause. We fight for lost causes because we know our defeat and dismay may be the preface to our successor's victory, though that victory itself will be temporary; we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph.

Reviewed by HAVEN BRADFORD GOW

## *The World That Was Lost*

**A Victorian Son: An Autobiography, 1897-1922**, by Stuart Cloete, *London: Collins, 1972. 319 pp. £2.25.*

DISTINGUISHED by precision, selectivity and an extraordinary clarity of recall mediated by reflection, this first volume in the autobiography of one of South Africa's most distinguished novelists is a memorable reflection of life in the Victorian era.

Born to upper-middle class parents in Paris in 1897, Edward Fairley Stuart Graham, as he was christened, spent his childhood and youth enjoyably in France and less so in English public schools. In World War I, he became one of England's youngest combat company commanders, was invalided home after the ordeal of the Somme, but returned to duty to be wounded again, this time almost fatally, at St. Leger.

The War marked a sharp demarcation line in his life. For him, it was both the visible end of Europe's stable political and social order and a breach with his father. Upon the son's enlistment, the latter confessed in tears that he had been sent to prison for financial misfeasance and had then changed his name and skipped to Paris. Discovering that his real name was Stuart Cloete and his heritage South African, the son decided to reclaim both. The fact that his father, whom he had always respected and feared, had bolted in a crisis and refused to face the music came as a severe shock.

A dominant theme of *A Victorian Son* is the contrast between the homogenized, mechanized world of today and life in the first decades of this century with its strong individualism, with man's intimate relationship to the sights, sounds, odors and stench of nature, with its cruelty and squalor, with its harsh class distinctions and glaring contrasts between ostentatious opulence and starving misery. Stuart

Cloete's nostalgia for this vanished world does not make him gloss over such of its facets as child prostitution or the bloody French abattoirs with their terrible

lines of blood drinkers, women and girls, black-shawled, whitefaced, all suffering from anemia, who had been ordered by their doctors to drink hot blood [and who] held cups and glasses in their hands which the butchers filled, catching the blood as it ran out of the severed arteries, staining the vessels with the blood on their hands as the women stained their own through holding them.

On the other hand, Cloete writes,

people sang lullabies to children when I was a baby, but then everybody 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.

Mechanization and urbanization had not yet produced a world of ease and opulence and discontent in which man's alienation from his natural habitat would reach historically unprecedented levels.

Stuart Cloete's most intense boyhood experiences involved riding, hunting, studying animal habits or digging for prehistoric artefacts. Horses and dogs are individualized and loom large in these early years.

I learned little at school which served any useful purpose when I left except simple arithmetic, which I was badly taught. . . . My chief memories of school are of boredom. I was not good at anything.

He learned political history, and retrospectively concludes that history, geography and economics could be advantageously combined. Mathematics seems to have been a closed book to him. "Sports and pastimes did not interest me." One wonders how many creative people have found for-

mal schooling a procrustean bed. Interestingly, Stuart Cloete seems to look back without disapproval on the monastic austerity of the English public school with its practice of having its inmates shiver with cold and suffer the pangs of hunger. Fagging seems to him a fairly good way of teaching youth two arts which are necessary in the adult world, those of obedience and command.

If alienation from nature is one basic theme of the book, retreat from responsibility and power is another. American reviewers of Stuart Cloete's World War I novel, *How Young They Died*, could not understand why its hero should willingly risk his life to protect a nation and a society which he thought "beautiful, orderly and powerful," imbued with a sense of honor, and governed by men who had not yet lost the will to rule. The fact that the protagonist of that book was a hero was in itself anachronistic. "This is the day of the failure," Cloete writes,

He fails because he is underprivileged, 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.

The English people, the writer observes, gave the world Magna Carta, the first successful parliament after Iceland, the first orderly regicidal revolution, the American Constitution, "the greatest political success the world has yet seen." Today, the English people are governed by

the blackmail of the masses—Labour, students, coloured immigrants. . . . 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 genes with those of people of alien tropic origin . . . I do not believe that all men and all races are equal in ability, 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.

This is a book on several levels. If Stuart Cloete's superb memory for crucial detail makes it immensely evocative, it is also a retrospective search for the significance of a man's life based on the implicit premise that "the unexamined life is not worth living."

Reviewed by NATHANIEL WEYL

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### *The Noble Savage Again*

**The Love of Possession Is a Disease With Them**, by Tom Hayden, *New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.* 127 pp. \$5.95 and \$1.95.

THIS IS A CURIOUS tract indeed! Parts of it seem to have been written by Russell Kirk, Gus Hall, Phyllis Schlafly, Sitting Bull, J. Evetts Haley, Frank L. Kluckhohn, Wm. F. Buckley, Jr., and Dr. Frank Buchman. Certainly it would be easy enough to write a scathing, perhaps even humorous, review. But the first 96½ pages are quite disturbing, and since I am wholly in sympathy with Wm. Buckley's confession ("I for one wish that we had never entered Indochina, rather than conduct ourselves as we have conducted ourselves there."), what follows is more in the nature of a cry than a review.

Americans are notorious for trying their best to do the right thing almost all the time. We like to be liked, and so from the beginning have tried to maintain "a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind." Quite often we have done the wrong thing, as at Yalta; but just as often—in fact, more often—I believe we have done the right, or rightest thing possible in the circumstances.

In Indochina, I doubt if it can be said of any given moment that we were either altogether right or wrong: we have been both, and sometimes both simultaneously.

Now, as James Burnham has written:

When fighting no longer has political meaning, it becomes butchery . . . (and) since the end to which the military action was the means has been renounced, it is irrelevant . . . The only remaining strategic objective is to get out.

Tom Hayden agrees (though not, of course, for the reasons given in Burnham's article), and in searching around for villains to blame, somehow manages to come up with the very same list we have seen before in Phyllis Schlafly's or Frank L. Kluckhohn's books: George Ball, McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Dean, Abe Fortas, Arthur Goldberg, Henry Cabot Lodge, *et al.* These are the men (together with Nixon and Kissinger and Johnson and Kennedy and Eisenhower and that "deluded and murderous adventurer Christopher Columbus") responsible for virtually all the ills to which flesh is heir. The whole mess began when Columbus came here in the first place; after Columbus, the white race in its various forms moved in and sullied the Noble Savage.

Moreover, Hayden alleges, America has been from the beginning a nation bent upon extermination of "dinks," "Japs," "niggers," "slopes," "gooks," and so on; we have elected to the presidency one murderer after another, one liar after another, one traitor after another. Indeed, according to the thesis put forward here, virtually every public official born within the past hundred years or so has been a liar—at the very least a criminal of some sort. We *think* we have a democracy, but actually we are governed by men who are "shielded from public scrutiny"—secret men who make decisions contrary to the will of the people.

Well, true enough, America has worked to impose a good deal of its culture on Vietnam. True enough, we have erred in destroying many of the ancestral graves and