

WHAT SCIENCE IS SAYING ABOUT THE CELTS

Pocock has recently reviewed, in the Times Literary Supplement, Malcolm Crick's Explorations in Language and Meaning. Pocock makes much of the commitment to a full realisation of humanity that the semantic enterprise, in his eyes, represents. Many of us are familiar, by now, with Crick's contrast of the reductive banalities of much conventional social science, to their discredit, with the inexhaustible joys to be found in pondering the works of a creative being. The particularly baneful effect of a narrowly conceived scientific method is much emphasised. That this is a good story with solid and enduring foundations is evidenced by the fact that we have not tired of either telling it or listening to it in Oxford over the last few years. The appeal that this story has for us should not lead us to suppose that it is particularly novel. It is, I think, in some respects, quite old. What I would like to do here is to give some thoughts on the symbolism of the shift from function to meaning, and some indication of the way in which science in particular, and formal systems in general, have been assessed as inimical to a full realisation of humanity, as representing a diminution, or dehumanisation, of man. These reflections arose during an attempt to understand the rationale behind the ascription of certain qualities to the Celtic character and to Celtic social life. I will begin, therefore, by giving some background to the construction of the Celtic character in European literature, a story which really begins in Scotland in the 1760s.

In the first half of the eighteenth century neither the English, nor, more significantly, the Scottish establishment, paid much attention to the Gaelic speaking Highlanders, except as a source of insurrection. The new middle class of Edinburgh was too busy reaping the commercial benefits of the Union to interest itself in a people who were a political embarrassment and an economic irrelevance. Societies like the S.P.C.K. considered it their duty in their Highland activities to spread the English language and to assist in drawing the Highlands fully into the political and economic orbit of Edinburgh. Any suggestion that the Gaelic language was the vehicle of expression of a literature, or that the Highland character or way of life had any particular virtue, would have been treated as a heresy against the economic orthodoxy of 'improvement'. This situation was transformed, at a literary level, in the 1760s by the publication by James MacPherson of a series of epic poems which became popularly known as MacPherson's Ossian. These were, MacPherson claimed, translations from ancient manuscripts of Gaelic poems originally composed by Ossian, the hero bard of the ancient Caledonian kingdom of Morven, in the third century A.D. These poems generated immediate and widespread interest and became involved in a controversy about their authenticity which rumbled on for the next hundred years. Although largely forgotten now outside the world of literary studies or the Highlands, it would be difficult to overestimate their celebrity in the late eighteenth century. The Ossianic poems were translated into almost every European language, Napoleon kept an Italian translation by his bedside during his campaigns, David Hume advised as to the best means of establishing their authenticity, and Doctor Johnson inveighed against them. The progress of the controversy over authenticity, which became very acrimonious, need not concern us here. It is now generally accepted that MacPherson drew some inspiration for his Ossian from the oral tradition in Gaelic speaking areas. It is also held with some confidence, however, that no Gaelic manuscript or text of any kind ever existed which was a simple

original for any of MacPherson's 'translations', and that the unique characteristics of the Ossianic verse can be ascribed largely to MacPherson. Authentic or not, the Ossianic poems obviously spoke with a welcome and recognisable voice. They are now held to be a vital text for an understanding of the beginnings of the Romantic movement in European literature. In assisting at the birth of the Romantic movement the Ossianic poems were defined in opposition to the English language Classical tradition of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, and owed their form far more to a reaction against this tradition than they did to the Gaelic verse tradition on which they were ostensibly based. The reaction against the conventions of style and subject of Classical verse took the form in Ossian and in later Romantic verse of an assumed affinity with nature, simple and unaffected, a praise of the spontaneous rule of the emotions in human conduct, and, later, a political radicalism. That these matters were taken not just as metaphorical criticisms of a state of society but as rules for conduct we can see in, for example, the personal chaos which Shelley created around himself in his attempts to live a full and spontaneous life.

It is a commonplace of criticism attempting to understand Romantic verse that it gained much of its character as a reaction not just to Classical verse but to a prevailing rationalism, a century of social conformity, and a utilitarian economic order. MacPherson's decision to locate his muse in the Highlands among a race known for their fondness for political independence and lost causes, with all the vague associations of the simple, unaffected, and spontaneous that barbarity has had for civilised society since antiquity, is both creation and confirmation of this view. It is worth noting that it was largely through the poems of Ossian that an interest in things Celtic was awakened in the world of academic discourse. Thus at its origin Celtic studies was concerned not with an 'authentic' Celtic voice but with a vision of a Celtic 'other' that it had conjured up in response to its image of itself. This disjunction is effectively maintained in the uneasy relationship that exists at the present between, to choose an obvious example, the native Gaelic speaker and those societies that exist to protect his language and further his interests. That the inauthenticity in the eighteenth century was profound we can readily appreciate when we observe that this period saw the finest flowering of native Gaelic verse, of which MacPherson and those involved in the Ossianic controversy were largely ignorant. At the time that Ossianic verse was informing the Romantic English language tradition as a supposed import from the Gaelic, Gaelic poets of note like Alexander MacDonald, Duncan Ban, and Rob Donn, were writing verse that seems, in subject and sentiment, to have little about it that could be labelled Romantic. The Ossianic controversy was not, in any simple way, about Gaelic literature. Rather, it was a dialogue between a dominant eighteenth century world view and its own limitations.

The discovery of MacPherson's deceptions did not cause his verse to lose its appeal, and did not lead to any serious attempt to understand and preserve the Gaelic traditional verse that Doctor Johnson had scornfully called 'wandering ballads'. That such an epithet does not now sound scornful is some measure of the distance we have travelled. In the early nineteenth century the 'Celt' became involved in discussions of the philological history of Europe which provided an idiom in which any subject could be discussed, reaching surprising heights of fancy. The most influential of these ethnologies concerning the Celts were supplied, in the middle of the century, not by specialist Celtic scholars, but by two prominent literati, Ernest Renan and Matthew Arnold, the latter bringing the ideas of Renan to an Oxford audience.

Renan published a series of articles in La Revue des Deux Mondes in 1854 called 'La Poésie des Races Celtiques' in which he contrasted the populations of Brittany, Wales and the Highlands with the majority populations of France and Britain. What follows are a few typical quotes, the first describing the entry into Brittany (my translations):

In the place of Norman vulgarity, in the place of a fat and prosperous people, content to live, full of its own interests, egoistical as are all those who make a habit of enjoying life, we find, a timid, a reserved, withdrawn race, clumsy in appearance, but feeling deeply and having an adorable delicacy in their religious instincts (1947 : 252).

The Celtic race has all the faults and all the qualities of the solitary man; at once proud and timid, strong in sentiment and weak in action ... It is par excellence a domestic race, made for the family and the joys of the fireside (1947 : 255).

If we be permitted to assign a sex to nations as well as to individuals, we can say without hesitation that the Celtic race, especially its Cymric or Breton branch, is essentially feminine (1947 : 258).

Perhaps the deepest instinct of the Celtic peoples is the desire to penetrate the unknown (1947 : 258).

Renan was born and brought up in Brittany and retained a great fondness for his birthplace to which he retired in old age. Much of his life was devoted to a consideration of the relationship between religion and science in a modern and rational world. He held a mystical view of the destiny of races, considering that the Celtic race would have finally fulfilled itself by nurturing the imaginative spirit in the breast of those in France and Britain of other racial origin, and then passing quietly out of time and history.

It will perhaps help if I were to give a clearer indication of Renan's ideas of the relationship between science and nature, between man and woman. The following is from the preface to his Recollections of My Youth, published in 1883:

The natural sequence of this book, which is neither more nor less than the sequence in the various periods of my life, brings about a sort of contrast between the anecdotes of Brittany and those of the Seminary, the latter being the details of a darksome struggle, full of reasonings and hard scholasticism, while the recollections of my earlier years are instinct with the impressions of childlike sensitiveness, of candour, of innocence, and of affection. There is nothing surprising about this contrast. Nearly all of us are double. The more a man develops intellectually, the stronger is his attraction to the opposite pole: that is to say, the irrational, to the repose of the mind in absolute ignorance, to the woman who is merely a woman, the instinctive being who acts solely from the impulse of obscure consciousness ... The superiority of modern science consists in the fact that each step forward it takes is a step further in the order of abstractions. We make chemistry from chemistry, algebra from algebra; the very indefatigability with which we fathom nature removes us further from her. This is as it should be, and let no one fear

to prosecute his researches, for out of this merciless dissection comes life. But we need not be surprised at the feverish heat which, after these orgies of dialectics, can only be calmed by the kisses of the artless creature in whom nature lives and smiles. Woman restores us to communication with the eternal spring in which God reflects himself (1883 : xi).

This, while we might laugh, is nonetheless familiar enough. These ideas in French Celtic studies are still flourishing in a recent work entitled Women of the Celts by Jean Markale, Professor of Celtic History in the Sorbonne. He says:

Until now, only poets have really understood woman. This is probably because woman, like poetry, is a continuous creation, a crucible in which scattered energies are melted down, and which embraces the unique act that resolves all contradictions, abolishes time, breaks the chains of loneliness, and leads back to a lost unity (1975 : 284).

I will delay discussing Renan's Celt further until I have given Matthew Arnold's version of the same myth. Arnold gave a series of lectures in Oxford as Professor of Poetry in 1865, in which he drew heavily on Renan. It has been justly observed that Arnold's first hand knowledge of things Celtic was limited to a short holiday at an Eisteddfod in Llandudno. This did not prevent his arousing much interest and argument. The argument recapitulated with remarkable fidelity that over Ossian in the previous century, and the interest was such that eventually a chair in Celtic was founded in Oxford. Forty years after the lectures Alfred Nutt, judging an Eisteddfod essay competition on the subject of the contribution of the various races to the literature of the British Isles, found that every entry was a mere repetition of Arnold's imaginative tale.

Arnold tells us how, after attending an Eisteddfod meeting, he came out into the street and met

... an acquaintance fresh from London and the parliamentary session. In a moment the spell of the Celtic genius was forgotten, the Philistinism of our Saxon nature made itself felt; and my friend and I walked up and down by the roaring waves, talking not of ovates and bards, and triads and englyns, but of the sewage question, and the glories of our local self-government, and the mysterious perfections of the Metropolitan Board of Works (1891 : 8).

It is clear that the world of tangible, material affairs, of instrumental activity, is opposed to creativity and the world of ideas as Anglo-Saxon to Celt. Arnold is quite ruthless in his affirmation of the spirituality of the Celtic race (language, muse) and its irrelevance for the affairs of the material world, arguing that 'The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better' (1891 : 10); 'the Celtic genius cannot count appreciably now as a material power; but ... it may count for a good deal ... as a spiritual power' (1891 : 13).

He elaborates this in his exposition of the German genius, which he describes as:

Steadiness with honesty; the danger for a national spirit thus composed is the humdrum ... The excellence of a national spirit thus composed is freedom from whim; flightiness, perverseness; patient fidelity to Nature, -- in a word, science -- leading it at last, though slowly, and not by the most brilliant road, out of the bondage of the humdrum and common, into the better life. The universal dead-level of plainness and homeliness, the lack of all beauty and distinction in form and feature, the slowness and clumsiness of the language, the eternal beer, sausage, and bad tobacco, the blank commonness everywhere, pressing at last like a weight on the spirits of the traveller in Northern Germany, and making him impatient to be gone, -- this is the weak side; the industry, the well-doing, the patient steady elaboration of things, the idea of science governing all departments of human activity, -- this is the strong side (1891 : 82).

To this he opposes an assessment of the Celtic genius: 'Sentiment is ... the word which marks where the Celtic races really touch and are one'. The Celtic nature is

An organisation quick to feel impressions, and feeling them very strongly; a lively personality therefore, keenly sensitive to joy and to sorrow ... it may be seen in wistful regret, it may be seen in passionate penetrating melancholy; but its essence is to aspire ardently after life, light, and emotion, to be expansive, adventurous, and gay (1891 : 84).

The German, say the physiologists, has a larger volume of intestine (and who that has ever seen a German at a table d'hote will not readily believe this?), ... For good and for bad, the Celtic genius is more airy and unsubstantial, goes less near the ground, than the German. The Celt is often called sensual; but it is not so much the vulgar satisfactions of sense that attract him as emotion and excitement; he is truly, as I began by saying, sentimental ... always ready to react against the despotism of fact (1891 : 85).

If his rebellion against fact has [thus] lamed the Celt even in spiritual work, how much more must it have lamed him in the world of business and politics. The skilful and resolute appliance of means to ends which is needed both to make progress in material civilisation, and also to form powerful states, is just what the Celt has least turn for (1891 : 88).

... the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have something feminine in them, and the Celt is thus peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from its secret. Again, his sensibility gives him a peculiarly near and intimate feeling of nature and the life of nature (1891 : 91).

Having constructed this edifice of opposites Arnold remarks that 'if one sets about constituting an ideal genius, what a great deal of the Celt does one find oneself drawn to put into it' (1891 : 89).

Faced with this sort of thing one of the pleasures open to us is simple amusement, but the problem of what to do with these writings is more interesting than any mere assumption of theoretical advance in anthropology since the bad old days of racial explanations. Neither Renan nor Arnold knew much about Celtic literature, which was in any case only in the early stages of its 'discovery'. For both, the most prominent examples of Celtic literature were MacPherson's *Ossian*, and Lady Charlotte Guest's recent translations from the Welsh, published in 1838 as the *Mabinogion*. We have already observed that the style of *Ossian* was determined in response to an established and dominant tradition, rather than as a representation of anything particularly Celtic. In discovering in *Ossian* the Celt that they have imagined as their alter ego Renan and Arnold are gathering the flesh of the myth about itself. This same anticipation, this same internal confirmation, we find in a more obvious form in Renan's appreciation of Lady Guest's translation, of which he says: 'In order to render the graceful imagination of a people so eminently endowed with feminine tact, it requires the pen of a woman. Simple, animated, without affectation or vulgarity, Lady Charlotte Guest's translation is a faithful mirror of the original Welsh' (Renan 1947 : 264). Renan was quite correct in attributing the tact of the *Mabinogion* to femininity, but it was that of Lady Charlotte rather than that of the Celts, whose rough edges were much smoothed in translation.

We are dealing in these writings with certain familiar dualities. The congruence between this picture of the Celt and that with which women were burdened hardly needs further exposition. The areas of competence of the Celt, the domestic sphere, religion, emotionality, and the minor arts, and more significantly, the areas of his incompetence, those of politics and economics, and the scientific manipulation of the material world, are precisely those that the middle class Victorian woman lived in and with. The adjectives appropriate to the Celt, whimsical, fickle, nervous, unsteady, emotional, fanciful, still form a potent vocabulary for female belittlement.

We can also clearly see other dualisms that so vexed the nineteenth century mind and, in different ways, some more, some less concealed, continue to vex us today. The relationships between science and religion, between science and the arts, between the intellect and the emotions, the rational and the intuitive, between instrumentality and creativity, between facts and ideas, between materialism and idealism, objectivity and subjectivity, all appear to be capable of sliding easily into one another. It is difficult to avoid the temptation, even if only as a rhetorical device, to take one of these as a foundation stone for the edifice and explain the others by standing them on top of it. There are, however, no obvious priorities in these texts. Each item gains strength and colour from its association with the others, and all can be given prominence without necessarily having more than a fragile status in dependence on the rest. Certainly, some of the oppositions are so compounded of one another that they almost represent common sense for us, and enable us to construct knowledges which it does not immediately occur to us to question. It might be thought necessary in considering this picture of the Celts, particularly since women slide so easily into the Celtic world, to consider it as a picture of economic and political oppression. Certainly, at the time, Celts in both Ireland and Scotland were suffering such oppression, and their political status was marginal.

The real physical marginality of the Celtic world has a clear, practical similarity to the internal enclosure which insulated women from the society around them. Renan remarked of the Breton Celts that they were 'the last to defend their religious independence against Rome, and have become the firmest adherents of Catholicism; they were the last in France to defend their political independence against the king, and have given to the world the last royalists' (1947 : 256). Exactly the same could be said of the Scottish Gaels, and, with reservations, of European women, in their political and religious conservatism. The infolding of vision and reality in the relation of women and the Celts is given a further twist when we consider that because the division of labour in Celtic speaking areas displayed the familiar pattern, women were more likely to remain monolingual, and men more likely to take part in activities where English was essential. Consequently Scottish Gaelic is now much restricted in use to those very areas in which Arnold gave the Celt a peculiar competence, the home, the church, the arts, and close personal relationships. Gaelic is considered to be a very appropriate medium for these activities, and its suitability for scientific or business use is a matter for doubt, not surprisingly since it has been attenuated by disuse in the areas of vocabulary which it would require. It is often said of the Celts that myth and history, myth and reality, become entwined in their lives. We can see that there are some fairly prosaic reasons why this should be so.

Clearly, Arnold's work is neither a simple description of a reality, or a naive apologetics for central political oppression and chauvinism. It has been observed by Rachel Bromwich, in the O'Donnell lecture in Oxford in 1964, that in spite of considerable ignorance of Celtic literature, Arnold managed to anticipate in many ways the direction that Celtic studies was going to take over the following century. Yeats and the others in the Celtic twilight at the end of the last century adopted his picture of the Celt with little modification. He laid down the rules by which the Celts were dispraised and dismissed as well as exalted. It took Bernard Shaw to point out that the Anglo-Saxon race that could believe such a story would need to display all the fanciful credulity normally attributed to the Celt.

To what can we attribute Arnold's foresight, his ability to conjure up a discourse of such creativity? We cannot simply appeal to a prescience. Let us consider the problem of interpretation from the priorities that Arnold established. He considered his lectures to be a means of weaning the English middle class away from a smug and vulgar materialism, from the Philistinism of the Anglo-Saxon, to culture, to sweetness and light. Perhaps the most prominent expression of the Anglo-Saxon inclination is its aptitude for science. To this is opposed the Celt, who has sentiment and taste. Just as we could argue that Ossian was an attempt to supply a missing dimension to the eighteenth century intellectual world, so we can argue for Arnold and his Celt, who appears as a creative attempt to repair the ravages that the dominant intellectual self-image was inflicting on itself. Henri Martin's phrase, 'revolt against the tyranny of facts', which Arnold borrowed, reminds us of the overwhelming pre-eminence of a restrictive notion of scientific method and an associated idea of what constituted 'fact' that was, and still is, a tyranny in the human sciences. The very success of Victorian science, achieved in spite of this self-image, confirmed this science as the only sufficient rationality. Arnold's work was widely held to be one long heresy against the obvious truth and power of materialism, wherein was money, progress, and well-being. His metaphor to express the defects

of materialism, the German with over-developed intestines, and the Frenchman with large lungs, the one dull and plodding, the other mercurial, provides us with a clear moral picture as well as with an ethnological type-casting that we can still recognise. To redeem the British from the scourge of Philistinism, Arnold could pin his faith on the Celtic admixture. In locating outside the Anglo-Saxon the qualities of imagination, taste, whimsy, sensibility, femininity, creativity, beauty, artistry, Arnold was doing no more than the Victorian public school. The 'Germanic' qualities of patience and steadiness were just those that the educational establishment wished to encourage. By locating in the Celt all the qualities that the materialist world view regarded as epiphenomenal, Arnold provided a means whereby the tyrannical and debilitating duality of facts and ideas could be broken down, by the benign miscegenation of Celt and Anglo-Saxon, producing the Briton of the future, a whole man, with both the Celt and the German left floundering in half worlds.

Arnold's conception of science and its inadequacies is central to his work. Clearly, his science is opposed, as the stronghold of rationality, truth, fact, and the world of action, to the arts, fiction, symbolism, the world of ideas. At the same time, science, the same science that is the handmaid of industrial capitalism, becomes inhuman, amoral, cold, and un sentimental. The world in his hands becomes a conjuror's box from which twin dualities can be drawn in the dark with the certainty of getting a matching pair every time. To attempt even a suggestion of the easy combinatory powers of these various symbolic devices would require far more space than I have here. Since this is a paper in social anthropology I will attempt to draw some of the more obviously anthropological conclusions.

It has been suggested, in the great nature/culture debate, that the problem that femininity commonly presents to a male model of society, as a permanent threat to attempts to define clearly a nature/culture boundary, can be explained, in part, by the lack of male control over female reproductive capacity. To this we can attribute characteristics as we please -- mystery and irrationality suggest themselves fairly readily. The relative internality of the capacities and activities of woman at every stage of the reproductive process lends itself only too readily to association with certain overtly analytical categories of human physical and mental activity. The externality of the area in which science was thought competent, and the externality of that with which it dealt, facts and the material world; the qualities with which it was associated, rationality, the intellect; the areas in which it operated, industry, business; all these provide, in a number of different ways, a confirmation of their opposite -- woman in her internal enclosure; in place of rationality and instrumental powers she has emotions and intuitive faculties; her strictly biological creativity and its mystery becomes a locus for all that is non-scientific, she is fanciful, open to the influence of wandering ideas. There could hardly have been anyone better qualified than Yeats's wife to reach the cosmic beyond through intuition, and display it in automatic writing. We draw from recent anthropology an opposition between nature and culture to stabilise our understanding of our own literature. However the 'nature' of the nature/culture couple as applied to women in modern anthropology is no simple location but a moral assessment with three hundred years of thoughts on rationality packed into it. There can be no doubt that these words have been answering back loudly throughout

their use in anthropology, and that to treat their recent application to male/female symbolism as of the order of discovery is to deny them their rich and creative history.

Arnold built his vision of the Celt without repeated reference to an overt male/female symbolism. Probably his image of science and its exclusions was the most creative of the symbols that he employed, and one might understand the characteristics assigned to both Celt and woman as in many ways an artefact of a scientific theory of truth. It would have been helpful for the exposition of the qualities of the Celt if I had been able to demonstrate a physical binarism like left and right to build on. There is, unfortunately, little evidence that Celts are predominantly left-handed. The undoubted fact that they all live on the left-hand side, looking north, of the European continent might be thought to be an accident of geography rather than a symbolic statement. Students of binary symbolism will be relieved to note, however, that the left hand is not entirely without a place in the argument. The qualities, both Celtic and feminine, of intuition, imagination, and nervous sensibility, are exactly those with which left-handed people are accredited, as I am familiar from my own primary school experience.

It has been found necessary, in considering 'the Celt' and more generally, the moral discourse that science has gathered round itself, to situate a person or argument by reference to a pervading intellectual mood. Rationalism, utilitarianism, and romanticism all provide landmarks, bearings to locate a person or text. The citation of authorities with dates provides us with the illusion and security of a linear succession of ideas, in proper chronology, the one influencing the next. I have tried to dispel any such notions about the ideas that I have been examining, although I personally find that constantly risking a relapse into that which I am attempting to deconstruct is rather tiring. When Markale says 'In the Celtic sphere, history is the myth; that is to say, a knowledge of history is already to be found on a mythical level, and at this point the thought provoked by the myth takes on an active power because it influences real life' (Markale 1975 : 17), we can take this not as a racist mysticism, which it is, but as an accurate assessment of the creative potentialities of discourse. To attempt, as we are by our training inclined to do, to sort out fact from fiction in studying Arnold's Celtic Literature, its sources, and its effects (in literature and among those who considered themselves to be Celts) very quickly induces an intellectual vertigo. It is one of the ironies of the Celtic example that the very confusion of fact and fiction of which the Celts are accused provides so ready an example, in its various developments, of a history inaccessible to an 'objective' mode of enquiry. We might generalise the dialectic of myth and history of which Markale speaks, and render it both more fertile and more mundane, as 'a certain legitimate ambiguity in the concept of the consciousness of history ... This ambiguity is that it is used to mean at once the consciousness obtained in the course of history and determined by history, and the very consciousness of the gaining and determining' (Gadamer 1975 : xxi).

If we move from the Celts to the metaphors from which they are built, the task of enquiry becomes even more daunting. We can have recourse to the easy habit of anchoring history in a few great names of the past, and satisfactorily root the Victorian conception of scientific method in Kant, for example, and Mill. This humble temptation to seize on ostensibly philosophical texts to pin down an otherwise fluid history that shifts every time it is disturbed is,

however, particularly inappropriate in this area. In trying to display the symbolic world in which an idea of science has an important part, we are reaching into an ethnography in which philosophical texts are a small, perhaps insignificant, part. While agreeing with Gadamer that we can only 'begin the great task that faces investigators as an aid to philosophical enquiry. Concepts such as 'art', 'history', 'the creative', 'Weltanschauung', 'experience', 'genius', 'external world', 'inferiority', 'expression', 'style', 'symbol', which we use automatically, contain a wealth of history' (1975 : 11), we must emphasise the last statement, and point out that this wealth of history is not found in any particularly privileged, concise, or creative form in the books that a library will shelve as philosophical. Gadamer says:

If we now examine the importance of Kant's Critique of Judgement for the history of the human sciences, we must say that his giving to aesthetics a transcendental philosophical basis had major consequences and constituted a turning point. It was the end of a tradition, but also the beginning of a new development. It limited the idea of taste to an area in which, as a special principal of judgement, it could claim independent validity -- and by so doing, limited the concept of knowledge to the theoretical and practical use of reason (1975 : 38).

In saying this he denies the breadth of history, the every day discourse on whose energy a single text, however original, must draw. The chronology is in a sense irrelevant, but the beginnings of the 'romantic' movement are lost in the early eighteenth century. Ossian was published in the 1760s, and Kant's Critique of Judgement in 1787. What Gadamer calls, with ready symbolism, the 'cold rationalism of the enlightenment' (1975 : 57) was freezing the blood of the thoughtful long before Kant gave it his attention.

Within social anthropology, where we cherish a certain pride in a more than usually acute sensitivity to the meaning of the words we employ, the depth and coherence of the metaphors in which 'science' is involved simply asks that we exercise this sensitivity over a very large area. This request might sound like that valedictory generosity so common among social scientists, the allocation of an impossible task to other researchers. It is certainly that, but also a request that we take seriously a sensitivity to the rich symbolic history that many of our words of self-understanding have. When we consider that the institutionalisation of social anthropology took place at a period when the subject was in the grip of a reductive materialism, and besotted by a notion of scientific method that might, but for the Darwinian counter-reformation, have found its way into the history books some time before, we should not be surprised that the emergence from this twilight is accompanied by an appeal for the broadening of intellectual horizons, advocated by Malcolm Crick as by Matthew Arnold, for largely similar reasons. Nor should we think it an accident of the 1970s that a criticism of formal analysis should appear like an appeal for a humanitarian and moral approach to the study of man.

To return to where we started, let us look again at the shift from function to meaning. Pocock says 'One had hoped that the mood of introspection and concern with epistemology which set in during the 1960s would result in a more educated, more philosophically sensitive anthropology which could both contain the emerging specialisations and justify the emergence of the subject in the undergraduate curriculum as an education for life.' He says that our concern is with 'problems which are ultimately moral ones', that 'Dr. Crick's

prime quarrel is with functionalism because it left out this most basic human characteristic of humanity, and so disfigured the nature that it claimed to study' (Pocock 1977 : 596). We are hoping to find, through a mood of introspection, a sensitive and moral education for life, a re-establishment of an undisfigured natural humanity. Certainly, we might be listening to the Matthew Arnold of Culture and Anarchy. One feature of the argument towards semantic anthropology is the ease with which any attempt to undermine the dualities that logical positivism offered encourages an untimely subsidence into the same old entrenchment. The temptation to subjectivism, idealism, humanism, is difficult to avoid in ordinary language. I have tried to give some illustration of the commonly unacknowledged symbolic baggage that the most apparently innocent of these dualities carry around, that helps perhaps to give them a strength and substance not immediately obvious. When Crick says that 'most of what is important to us is spoken about in discourse which mixes inextricably the analytical oppositions which logical positivism offered' (1976 : 159), he is quite right. It remains the case, however, that the analytical oppositions of logical positivism are themselves only one rescension of a symbolism of enormous scope on which we continually draw. The unpleasant flavour with which 'function' invades our vocabulary is not difficult to account for. To be merely functional was never high praise, and the mere functionary never an enviable person. Bodily functions and civic functions are the most material of mundanities. The appeal of the shift to meaning is equally clear. What more could we ask than that our work should become meaningful? Why ever did we establish our field as a science at all, with such an ugly name? I am led to believe that we owe our thirty years of functionalist tedium to the fact that Radcliffe-Brown was an Anglo-Saxon, and probably right handed. When Pocock says of Crick that his 'passion [is] disciplined by an insistence on meticulously careful exposition' (my emphasis) we can see that Crick represents the first of that generation of which Matthew Arnold dreamed, where the Celt and the Anglo-Saxon join to shed their defects and become the complete man.

REFERENCES

- Arnold, Matthew. 1891. Celtic Literature. London : Smith, Elder & Co.
- Crick, Malcolm. 1976. Explorations in Language and Meaning. London : Malaby Press.
- Gadamer, Hans Georg. 1975. Truth and Method (Trans. Garret Barden and John Cumming). London: Sheed and Ward.
- Markale, Jean. 1975. Women of the Celts (Trans. A. Mygind, C. Hauch and P. Henry). London: Gordon Cremonesi.
- Pocock, David. 1977. Review of Explorations in Language and Meaning by Malcolm Crick. Times Literary Supplement, May 13th 1977.
- Renan, Joseph Ernest. 1883. Recollections of My Youth (Trans. C.B. Pitman). London: Chapman and Hall.
- 1947-64. Oeuvres Complètes (Tome II). Calmann-Lévy Eds. Paris.

Malcolm Chapman