

H.B. FALKENA and J.D.U. GELDENHUYS. *Fool's Enterprise*.
Johannesburg: Taurus, 1981. 110 pp. Paperback.R5,75.

'With few exceptions', writes Sheldon Sacks, in his preface to *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, 'friends who have read ... this book seem to fall into two classes: those who dislike the first and last chapters, and those who dislike the chapters in between'. Although one of the authors of *Fool's Enterprise* is a friend to readers of *English Usage*, Sacks' claim in relation to his own book is, of course, not true in this instance. But there are similarities, and interesting ones at that. Sacks distinguishes between two large fictional types: satire and apologue. Falkena and Geldenhuys employ them.

Fool's Enterprise presents an explicit statement of theme, using narrative for illustrative purposes. Characters appear in episodes, serve their turn, and disappear from the pages. Similarly, the satire in the book concentrates on the general, on the species known as the family physician.

For the purposes of *English Usage*, however, it is the language, rather than literary content that should interest us. And, as we are informed in the 'Publisher's Notes', there is a 'veritable mire of economic and literary associations' (p.8) to titillate the reader:

For example, already in the first paragraph of Chapter 1 in 'numerous abortive attempts', 'abortive' refers to 'unsuccessful' as well as the procured miscarriage of a birth. (p. 9)

One might, in pondering the way in which a woman is able to miscarry a 'birth', recall – along with the authors – 'the old question of "*Quis custodiet custodes?*"'

The book is about the 'illovable' Dr Shlomo Shlock and abounds in 'reverse takeovers' and 'inadvertent ambiguities'. It's a rollicking good read and well worth the price.

A.D.A.

K. RAYAN. *Advanced Reading Comprehension: a Post-Secondary Course*. London: Evans, 1979. xix. 218pp. Paperback n.p.

The title of this book takes some grammatical deciphering. What precisely does 'Advanced' qualify? Is 'Reading' a noun, a verbal