

TRACE

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Towards Print (What is the Answer?)
In New York with Masefield by Fraser Drew

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A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This reading edition preserves the issue's poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence, reviews, and other literary writing in their printed order. Advertising, subscription matter, mastheads, the magazine's own contents pages, annual indexes, address lists, and the running trade directory are omitted as reference apparatus.

The text was checked against newly rendered source pages. Poetry lineation, stanza spacing, shaped indents, and hanging continuations for long lines are retained; prose continuations are joined without false paragraph indents. Conjectural readings are enclosed in square brackets, while original spelling and punctuation are otherwise kept.

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TOWARDS PRINT

by the Editor of Trace

Much recently in print suggests how many are convinced another Dark Age impends, whether or not a super-war explodes. Black signs appear in all cultural areas; and a full survey would cram a fat book. Only creative writing will be examined.

There may be nothing original in affirming that language has been the instrument to advance thought beyond elementary pre-vision for survival, or that the cultural syntheses of the last ten thousand years could not have evolved without written language; however, the importance of this appears poorly understood, when current language trends are scrutinised. These indicate that even the small percentage of writers exercising genuine intellectual or creative effort may not realise that theirs constitute the sole recorded expression of man's will to exceed himself.

Such writings should point where man is going with his late-touted material-scientific discoveries (also achieved through language), and show how he has been significantly influenced by recent theorising of economists, sociologists, and psychologists. And surely, no sign could be more unfavourable than decadence in the very language.

What is meant here by 'decadence?' Well — the definition ensuing immorality's non-orthodox one: whatever tends to abort any components of honest search after non-destructive purposes for change.

Unsurprisingly, in an 'advanced' scientific environment, one pronounced trend is toward the precisely denotative word. This may seem sound enough; yet, when language is focused to sensorial conjurements exclusively — or nearly so — it is bound to convey less emphasis on penetration of the

possible immaterial meanings of existence. Particularly, when abstractions, generalities, and (above all!) intuitive insights, as such, are rejected.

Meantime, the proportionate numbers of those with less objective and pragmatic inclinations fluctuate little. Many are creative writers, perhaps poets, trying to get along in an intellectual climate granting highest esteem to works fulfilling non-abstract concepts. This can be affirmed regardless what these are proposed or what may be underlying themes, and while conceding that positive and broad concepts may be advanced through interplays of narrow objectivities. However — high esteem is today won by works in which even appreciative readers often candidly assert they discover that nothing whatever is meant to be said!

In poetry, the imagist label is indiscriminately affixed to any who shun so-called indefinite or abstract language. Not a few imagists appear to have bid deliberately for believed 'better' readerships, if not actually for popular readerships. Their corruption isn't marked merely because sharply-smart denotative words are less likely to have the same definitions either at later times or even at the same time in other places (excepting international scientific terms), but because their self-conscious limitations to superficially evocative vocabularies are bound to make for neglect of the root concerns of poetry. Although these poets may function intuitively, what is retained in their finished pieces is increasingly restricted in potentials (less and less 'universal') for both contemporary and future readers.

Realisations of individualities are reduced by this sort of discipline — an observation easily verified by scanning certain periodicals or a few anthologies. Forbidding themselves the privilege of anything resembling an expository generalisation, these writers also refrain from posting any but the most vaguely ciphered didactic signs;

and while it's true that perhaps their individualities may be distinguished by some special preferences for words and manners of turning phrases, it is exceedingly difficult to discern differences that reasonably convey any varied personal urgencies in such poets. They are always withholding the flavours of their own peculiar ideas and views.

These imagists must rely for extensions of meanings into philosophical levels, upon specially arranged series or juxtaposed sensory suggestions. That is — those who really do have such intentions. Many seem to move without the power of any poetic oppositions, just stringing clever syllables evoking odors, sights, motor sensations . . . and somehow occasionally leaving an impression of a vagrant hope that afterwards some suppressed idea may be deduced. Of course, this sometimes really is done — quite successfully. But the rarity of the accomplishment only emphasises that to rely exclusively on this technique deprives most poetry of the speculative quality of all far great dreams.

At the same time, there are attempts to compensate for this through exaggerated, if not deranged, play with analogies — often merely verbal. And so, what many critics had declared the prospect of 'taming' poetry by insistence upon fine-drawn exactitudes has backfired. The nonsense exploitation of words as words is being overdone in a great deal of imaginative prose, as well as in this poetry — for instance, precious multiplications of alliterative puns. And again, to concede there sometimes are rare achievements of significant suggestion through words which at first appear to make no sense. Yet, pointing out that most these moderns do not achieve this at all — and usually from lack of first intention.

So, the backfiring is understandable. Frustrated by repressing limitations of their 'school', they are constrained

to earn more back pats from the 'right' critics by overdoing verbal gymnastics. This is a kind of misbehaving form of protest, not only to attract the attention their frustrations demand, but consciously or unconsciously to release feelings of futility at the composition level.

This sort of activity has progressed until the search for the surprising image, the unexpected word, and the excruciating metaphor has long surpassed need for stimulation. The world has had it, is getting it, and rocks with spasms from the tickle-tickle feathers of 'fresher' clevernesses. Now, the spiny things are coming featherless . . . and needle-sharp, between the rocking ribs, and probing for the mortal heart. The death-wish seems adopting its most deceptive form: to murder sense, enlivening it. Super-lush imagery was decadence from the start. The word-carriages put before the horses' heads of meanings, have conveyed falsely-revolutionary lucubrations, numerous manufacturers of which never had been acquainted with the 'conservatism' they've ostensibly challenged. While sensations' chemistry rightly may be hailed an alchemic master-means of poetising, the scattering of how-shining perceptivities, without conscious preceding relationships to tradition, ends by conjuring what no senses ever meet. Milieu isn't really milieu, lacking all purposive analysis. To perceive what is called the world, one has to recognise that this is identifiable only in the mind of man; and poetry's difference is to communicate special attitudes to other world-knowers.

What are the magic names, truly to alter stones? Reading these phrase-connivers, one worse than dangles — one threshes in a void without an only thread! . . . Ah, shadows on the cave wall there! All self-bound can be freed; yet, never was a larger comprehension won by leaving go the strand the bound one last then hangs upon. This is responsibility, the burning rope that's ever unconsumed. . . . The NAMES, the MAGIC names? One needs but find them, if still clinging

there.

Many are of course aware of the hastening tempo of language corruption and of the significance usually attached to this. They remark upon the threatened crippling of more than just what we call culture. And many recognise how, with component words maimed from outré usages, thought itself meets mayhem. Still — just as outright corruption should not be confused with healthy adaptations popular usage keeps enforcing (the sorts of language changes the academic purists mistakenly oppose) — the decadence that really justifies worry should be worried about for reasons other than those usually stressed. Not, for instance, because of notions that some narrow social morality is threatened. Alleged obscenity is another matter; and most discussion of it, sophomoric. Mere sexual prejudices are involved. Though overuse of certain four-letter words may be tritely vulgar and may indicate a deficient vocabulary, and though resort to pornography surely indicates a less-than-noble mind, no final valid determinations can be reached in this sphere except through investigations of the mental states of the individual authors. Not only is emphasis withdrawn from language, but these dubious subjective probings really could develop no reliable data without hospital supervision! And supposing abnormalities verified — there is plenty of evidence that some ‘nuttier’ ravings have helped in healthy language diversification too.

Needless to state that any language not continuously altering is a dead language; nor that a rather-unimaginable society composed of inalterable conformists already would have passed beyond decadence and into putrefaction. The core of the argument here has to do with misapplication of these patent truths. The comprehensive term ‘change’ has been substituted for ‘alter’, and indiscriminately used in trying to excuse (maybe even to espouse) abuses far beyond the area of freshening nuance, and logically antithetical to

language communication. Another truism already has been noted — that significant alteration of anything requires knowledge of what is being altered. Contextual and contextual information and familiarity make all the difference — plus those less definable components of creative activity rising from the motivations and intentions of the personalities. There is a difference between reaching after words as in a blindfolded drawing of numbers from a lottery barrel and making the most startlingly unexpected uses of words conjured from the well of the so-called subconscious of the selfconscious sincere artist. Valid evidences of vitality in language are not under attack here.

(The second and concluding section of this article, to appear in TRACE No. 28 comprises specific references to illustrative words, and supporting analyses of the above ‘charges’.)

EDITORS WRITE

Mervin Leeds (PERFORMING ARTS): 'Am aiming to record existence of off-beat living stage performances—music, dance, drama—in Western U.S.A.; to chronicle the effort that brings them into being; to speculate on what sustains, gives direction, meaning, motivation. The paradox of the theatre-worker-artist who seeks to earn his living from theatre, while shunning “commercialism” is a challenge to describe, analyse, and resolve.'

Clarence Major: 'About THE COERCION REVIEW. You did right to say avant-garde. But . . . I will read anything of poetry sent to me, or any short piece of writing. I will consider all of such. But I will publish only what strikes me as good . . . I have to be able to enjoy a piece of writing more than once, before I'm convinced it should be published. . . . Not my surface taste. Of course, coercion means power, force, etc. And that's what I mean. I can't accept material that doesn't have some kind of force, be it intellectual, emotional, spiritual. I would even publish a religious bit . . . if it came home with force, and an ultimate portion of the general truth of mankind.'

IN NEW YORK WITH JOHN MASEFIELD

by Fraser Drew

It was only a three-day holiday in New York, and I had every intention of making it memorable. The fact that I had made no plans of the usual sort added to my anticipation. The plane had brought me in near midnight, and a cab had taken me at once to a small hotel on Gramercy Park. There was the usual urge to see the city, at any hour, but I went directly to bed; the day at college before the plane trip had been a long one.

Saturday morning was clear and bright, and I stepped out of the hotel at nine o'clock. It was a glorious day and April is always lovely in Gramercy Park. I stood quite still on the sidewalk, looking at my favorite place in the city which hundreds of poets have described. The words which came to my mind, however, were prose, although the prose of a poet, and they were the words of an English, not an American, poet: 'That marvelous town', John Masefield called New York — 'that romantic, beautiful, exciting city, the Queen of all Romantic cities, with such a sparkle in her air and in her people.'

I had long been interested in John Masefield, had enjoyed some correspondence with him, made a complete collection of his first editions, and written a doctoral dissertation on his interpretation of England and the English people. Now I had the opportunity for a pilgrimage to Masefield's New York and the recollection of his American experience.

Though there is no specified curriculum for the education of a Poet Laureate, John Masefield's preparation for that post is perhaps the strangest in the annals of the official British poets. Surely he is the only successor to Dryden and

Southey who sailed around Cape Horn as an ordinary seaman and then worked, when a boy of seventeen, in a Greenwich Village hotel and a Yonkers carpet factory. And he must be the only Poet Laureate who ever thought seriously of becoming an American citizen.

I had discovered in a 1919 article in *THE BOOKMAN* that John Masefield's long and varied relationship with the United States began on April 9, 1895, nearly two months before his seventeenth birthday, when the young sailor came ashore in New York City. With him he had five dollars and a small chest of clothes, and for five months he worked at a series of odd jobs: in a bakeshop in Forty-sixth Street, on a chicken farm near Mahopac Lakes, and in the old Columbian Hotel at 5 Greenwich Avenue.

Going to Greenwich Avenue, I found that the hotel where Masefield worked is no longer standing, but I walked through Bleecker Street and other territory mentioned by the poet in his early stories and his later reminiscences of New York days. Strolling down these streets sixty-two years later, in the same month, I could visualise the young sailor whose long hair, 'dull brick colour', and outlandish sailor's garb had made a job difficult to find. In the Village I saw a dozen buildings that might easily have had the very garret which the boy shared with two comrades and from which they once 'sallied forth and sang songs in the street.'

I remembered reading that the Columbian Hotel job had ended when an old Shropshire lad named Billy Booth helped Masefield find an eight-dollar-a-week position in a Yonkers carpet factory where the boy worked for more than a year. In his spare time he studied chemistry and physiology, planning to enter an American medical college when he learned that his nationality would be no bar to college study. In gratitude, he reasoned, he was 'in honour bound to become an American citizen' and 'to give that loyalty in return' for 'these amazing advantages.'

However, the young sailor was destined not for medicine but for poetry, and the instrument of his conversion was a copy of Chaucer's *PARLIAMENT OF BIRDS* picked up in a Yonkers bookshop. I resolved that on the next trip to New York I would save time for a visit to Yonkers and a search for carpet factory and bookshop. After Chaucer, Masfield read Byron, Keats, and other poets, and within a short time he was working his way back to England as a steward's assistant, believing London was the proper place for initiating a writer's career. It was nineteen years before he returned to the United States. Then he returned for lecture tours in 1916 and 1918, and on one of his later visits he came back in 1936 to read his *TERCENTENARY ODE* at the 300th anniversary of Harvard University's founding.

One could make a fine little anthology of Masfield's comments on America and Americans, ranging from his approval of Niagara and his praise of the Hudson Palisades and the 'brief and beautiful' American spring to his repeated appreciation of New York City and the friendliness of the American people. Perhaps the most moving tribute of an English poet to his American friends is the final page of Masfield's *IN THE MILL*. Looking back with nostalgia on that unlikeliest of cradles of the Muse, the carpet factory, he recalls the men who were his friends and companions: 'They made allowances for me, they taught me my jobs; we saved each other from trouble many and many a time. More than this, we did many a rousing good day's work together, and the bond between us was still strong . . . I dedicate this book to them. I remember one of them saying: 'John is English, but we take him in as one of the people.' I hope that I shewed my gratitude to them then; I declare it now.'

In New York on my April holiday (I was concerned now with John Masfield and New York. When I had finished a walk through the Village, I had tea with one of our finest contemporary poets. As a young reporter, she had

interviewed Masfield on one of his visits to New York, had browsed through bookshops with him, and had heard him read and lecture. Over our tea she told me how he looked and how he spoke, explaining how he alone could read *THE WEST WIND*, and the slight lifting of his voice at the end of a line. This was the highest point of my Masfield holiday, as I heard her lovely poet's-voice re-creating the experience of hearing his voice.

Early Monday morning before plane time, I went down to South Street to see the Seamen's Church Institute, of which

John Masfield is an honorary member and from which he had penned a farewell message to Billy Booth when he sailed for England on July 4, 1897. It was another glorious day and I remembered the poet's paeon to that 'hard, clear, rapturous New York light and that exhilaration in the air which impels all New Yorkers to do twice a man's normal work on half the food and a third of the sleep.'

'I could not love London as I loved New York', the Poet Laureate wrote in 1952; 'she never had the beauty and the sparkle of New York'. I have never seen London, but at the end of my three-day holiday, as the plane took off from La Guardia Airport and I saw the great bridges and the New York skyline, I was sure that John Masfield was right.

(Quotations from *IN THE MILL*, 1941, and *SO LONG TO LEARN*, 1952, are used with the permission of THE MACMILLAN Co.)

HINTS ON THE USES OF BOOKS, LIBRARIES, ETC.

by Felix Singer

The public libraries are necessities for most of us, but often they're great nuisances. All of us who truly love books are occasionally acting as conspirators to improve the libraries in spite of the librarians. You and I don't have a word to say about how public libraries are run with our tax money. The aldermen let the librarians handle it, and the librarians (this has been my experience in several States) will receive your suggestions politely and with many thanks—and then ignore them. Therefore, our conspiracy: we have centuries of anti-authoritarian, anti-librarian-mentality tradition behind us and we won't be licked. They should join us, of course: they could hold mass meetings at which card holders could make suggestions and vote on policy. But that's a dream . . .

The most sensible policy is to let adults take as many books as they like for four weeks each and no renewals. But, sometimes out of the best of motives, sometimes not, librarians will give you a hard time about how many books you may take for how long. They do, in time, yield to stubborn individual disobedience. If enough people simply ignore a regulation, it fades away.

But meanwhile you may have an urgent need for certain books and need them longer than the library will allow. (Or need more of them than the library will allow you to take out.) And you may lack the cash for fees or for buying the books. By 'need' I mean either an urgent college term paper or a literary project or a purely emotional-intellectual craving. If everyone had such 'needs' and insisted on categorical fulfillment of them, the public library as an institution would disintegrate. But few, very few do have this

type of need; very few can even understand how deep and urgent such a need may be to a bookish person. If your need is truly urgent, I say you are justified in using your wits to break the spirit of library regulations, and, at times, even the letter. There's no need to detail the ways. They're obvious to anyone with a little ingenuity.

This sort of thing is justifiable only in emergencies. Because it is your library, and, to the extent that you abuse it, you spoil it for others and for yourself. But either the library exists to serve certain needs or it exists to observe certain regulations. Chances are, the librarian will not waive a regulation, on the ridiculous grounds that making a dozen or so exceptions a year might start a trend. So—you waive the regulation yourself.

If your library isn't carrying books and magazines which you think it should carry, campaign long and hard and often for these acquisitions. But never, never campaign to get a book taken off the shelf, not even if it's *MEIN KAMPF* or literary criticism.

Be prepared, as part of our conspiracy to improve libraries and humanity, to lend your own library card to those who can't get one. If a few white men had not let him use their library cards (while pretending to fetch books for them), it's doubtful that Richard Wright would have become a writer. And there are still places in the South where a Negro needs this type of white help. And, no doubt about it, many adolescents still need help to get the books they want to read, but which it pleases their stupid elders to lock away from them. There may be trouble for you if you're discovered helping a sixteen-year-old to find Kraft-Ebbing . . . But these are risks one ought to take.

In doing library research, don't be overawed by encyclopedias. The entries were written by people and people may err. It must have happened more than once (damn near happened to me several times) that a researcher takes the

authority of Encyclopedia A over that of Book B, not realising both were written by the same man, who is contradicting himself. For the key facts, try several sources. And trust your intuition. If it doesn't sound right, doesn't ring true, look into it further. Lean on the side of a presumptuous skepticism when doing research. Most of the best scholars are themselves pretty skeptical and presumptuous.

Also, don't fret about becoming sidetracked. 'Becoming sidetracked' means looking up SPINOZA and becoming fascinated by the article on SPINACH and consequently gobbling up SPINACH for hours. If you can't do this once in a while, you're far too goal-obsessed, and your use of your research notes will lack imagination. Some fascinating discoveries have no doubt been made by a researcher who happened on SATIRE while researching to glorify SHAKESPEARE, or who detoured by COITUS while collecting material on COMMERCE. The practical thing, of course, is to make a note of the digression-tempting material's location, stick the note in your pocket, and get back to work. And most of the time you'd better be practical, for the time is limited and curiosity infinite.

No need to worship a batch of paper, cardboard and glue, but you should treat it with some care. You don't lay a book flat on its face when you're through with it any more than you lay a woman flat on her face when you're through with her. You use all gently, with respect and consideration; you give and receive, and gratefully, affectionately, and with a certain gentleness, detach yourself.

It's easy and pleasant to sentimentalise the world of books. That there's much grossness and ugliness and sham in it you need not delve deep to discover. But there's so much good and healthy in it, still. England, with perhaps 30 per cent of our population, averages nearly half again as many books published a year; but there's still a great variety in the U.S., and the 'offbeat' still appears between covers

occasionally.

The librarians do have their obnoxious occupational traits, many of them, but they did come out fighting when freedom was seriously challenged a few years ago. (Oh, well, so they came out quoting Ike, than which there is no safer 'radicalism' today.) Reading remains an essentially personal, solitary experience, and such experiences mean self-discovery and self-enrichment of a kind badly needed these days.

SOME ITEMS RECEIVED

by the Editor

A new edition of a little known book, apparently unavailable since author-published in 1885, THE PHILOSOPHY OF ALL POSSIBLE REVELATION, Robert Matheson (GREENWICH, \$2.50) through one George Matheson, presumably a descendant, will prove not only of immediate philosophical importance, but of high value in appraising confused present trends in poetry and experimental prose. No living writer read by this reviewer has so well pierced definitive issues, nor supplied such irrefutable answers to those ranting in terms of rejecting society, while in fact rejecting themselves, and denying validity of their own existences. Excluding portions of Matheson which obviously were concessions to his Presbyterian milieu, and his somewhat naive 'inspirational' reflections, one of the best minds of any time sets down in deceptively simple phrases profound suggestions. He was a genius whose clarity of insights and lucidity of reason shunned all pseudo-philosophic doubletalk. In fact, he wrote so simply that it would seem he failed to gain appreciation by this very virtue, at a time when the favored metaphysic was the more devious, and the most admired prose, the more ornate. His close friendship with Robert Burns is noted on the jacket — and perhaps, unhappily, the confused moderns calling themselves existentialists will get as little from Matheson as our 'beat' or 'disaffiliated' or 'disassociated' poets get from Burns. However, others may discover the 'revelation' of contemporary error, the 'all possible' of Matheson, simply man's need for discovery of himself, vastly more difficult than it sounds, the never-won struggle of every creative mind toward comprehension of universal identification in self-realisation.

Much more space than available could be used to show that Matheson was a greater philosopher than most of those studied in the present courses in the subject; but his profound understanding how individual creativity is of the 'manifold' which yet is 'one spirit' giving meaning to existence, together with his sharp definement of perpetual change, how all things that are, are not in the larger sense, and how there can be no duration where nothing endures.

His work holds special value for writers. He makes exceedingly plain the differences between the phrase-repeaters and preservers of what had been manifestations of meaningful growth in Mind, and those free explorers of new meanings who are at present the living prophets, rejected by the majority (always) and actively fought by the academists who would, if they could, actually stop life by denying differentiation and change. For an idea how much he packs into one sentence: 'In the progress of self realisation, spirit must annul by transcending its every stage of attainment, and this it can only do by giving opposition to itself, for it is only in a resisting medium that energy is possible'. The implications of this will be found to extend not only into the reaches of infinity but back to his specific analysis of the poetic act. Early in his book, he prepares for such packed abstractions by carefully detailed and almost shockingly simple demonstrations having to do both with such fundamentals as the necessity of language for categorising and naming, and the external nonexistences of space and time (mere convenient inventions for man's exclusively-subjective mental processes). Also through showing how man invents by necessary temporal-space 'plans', everything from ploughs to astronomic ships, remaining as yet quite incapable of comprehending that all of what his mind calls a 'plan' is a mere fiction of limited dimension defined by what he is compelled to call 'beginning' and 'ending'—where there are none! And finally, how the

wondered-upon seeming illogical manifestations of existence outside man's frame cannot be humanly recognised as part of a design, because the design here is 'unspeakably' higher in kind.

Thoughtfully read in his delightful realistic analogies and his brilliant abstract speculations from these, Matheson can aid every contemporary honest seeker of the 'Somewhat' (he calls God) amidst the confusions we are little pleased to call our 'times'. The book could not have appeared at a better juncture, in regard to the silly man-related, man-invented, suicidal situs, where nont thinkers prate catastrophe.

IMPERISHABLE GENE, Ruth Forbes Sherry (OUT-POSTS PUBLICATIONS, London, and HENNY PENNY PRESS, U.S.A., 5/- and \$1.) proves an outstanding, if limited, selection of one of the important living poets. And even this less-experimental group, obviously chosen for easier reading and from lyrical preference, shows she perhaps employs the widest variety of material of any woman, and has one of the more significant stylistic contributions. Mrs. Sherry, in her later years, evidences livelier youthfulness of vision and expression than ninety per cent. of the youngsters; and she has a background of scientific and philosophical knowledge, validating with adroit unexpectednesses her mature views on people and society. Fire and spontaneity are operative, along with a vast range of learning. However, and lest any be awed, her most complex poems achieve lucid simplicity. Her ways of using words, besides for sound and measure and layers of meaning, make for clarity; and she's also not in the least afraid to employ phrases which, in other contexts and unfreshly applied (by a lesser poet, that is) might be damned as echoes. She succeeds in the high originality of rendering old expressions new, by their unique skilled integrations into unanticipated combinations. Let her state it: 'Let me connote the music / Let me master the image / Converse with time /

I embrace the earth / I answer death / I equate the nature of being — / Dance ritual of mind'. And she does!

Without wasting space and energy on the other contents, most of which earn little notice, calling attention to two prose pieces in No. 4 EVERGREEN REVIEW (\$1). Alexander Trocchi (FROM 'CAIN'S BOOK') stands out in the earnest vein, with that element of sensitive intelligence identifying all strivings toward artistic realisation. His writing is both solid and percipient, lyrical and philosophical. The true story of drugs and the mind, is his theme. Charles Foster's story, THE TROUBLED MAKERS, has a much lighter surface treatment; but again, a brilliant talent achieves genuine individuality. And rarity of rarities in these troubled days of sad young humourless exhibitionistic geniuses, the foregone strain of contemporary madness finds release through uninhibited therapeutic laughter.

' . . . the fight for the inner imagination against outer mechanisation:—the fight for the private life', is Peter Viereck's subject in PENDLE HILL Pamphlet No. 95 (35c.), sharply condensing the theme of his THE UNADJUSTED MAN. Titled INNER LIBERTY: the stubborn grit in the machine, this essay rejects superficial revolt. He penetrates the conformism in the spurious nonconformism supplying 'hot' copy for popular consumption. Pointing how 'easy conformity-baiting of adolescent radicalism refuses to adjust even to deep and valid norms', he distinguishes between 'archetypes . . . grown out of the soil of history' and the 'stereotypes' embraced by the 'ostentatious professional nonconformist'. By remarking that 'certain kinds of diversity are perfectly dreadful', he sees that 'substitution of technique for art' may be valuelessly employed in modernities as well as in old patterns. He distinguishes between remaining healthily unadjusted and becoming maladjusted or psychotic. But such profusion of quotable passages means the pamphlet itself must be enjoyed; and

stating this makes redundant a closing remark that, besides putting down sound thoughts, Mr. Viereck writes entertainingly.

For contrasting reasons, *BEER AND ANGELS*, Richard Rubenstein (THE CYPRESS PRESS, 75c.) is recommended. An outstanding offering of light verse in contemporary, distinguished from the commoner old, versifications. Besides demonstrating verbal imagination (which, true enough, can be done in old patterns also), Mr Rubenstein displays ingenious dexterities of modified contrivance. And besides that fresher effects are obtainable with modern techniques, much longer vistas are opened — structurally, and not merely through phrase textures.

In conformance with announcement that only what the Editor feels are 'must's' be reviewed, perhaps *POEMS* (NAPS, 75c.), featuring Stephen Berg, Ronald Goodman, and Robert Mezey, should not be discussed. However, there is other cause to recommend this, than from 'softness' toward young poets. All three are, no doubt whatever, poets; though they've scarcely begun to seek their own voices, and scarcely seem trying, here. One reason the book earns attention is that it demonstrates by example, better than an exposition, the 'academy blight'. The works might well have been turned off by three grade-A students in the same advanced class — three good friends helping one another with compositions, which indubitably are grade-A. But these men no longer are in school (except for Mr Mezey) and seem matured enough to try valid self-translations. Only the one undergraduate presents poems showing this kind of effort — albeit, in cautiously reconsidered and trimmed lines. Otherwise, all is rather ponderous, if not embarrassingly selfconscious artifice, skilled though it is, with echoes from works of proficient imitators of yet other talented echoers of twice- or thrice-removed originals.

ADDENDA

Short interval before TRACE No. 26 did not allow report on reactions to No. 25's appeal that magazines compensate contributors. Criticism primarily was levelled at school—and group-financed periodicals spending liberally for promotions and formats. For, it was conceded that editor-publishers lacking support (many, their own printers) could pay little — perhaps just in copies. The gist was that literary contents should be regarded as much an inevitable expense of publishing as essential postage (which, by the way, looms large for a struggling writer).

The tidings are overwhelmingly affirmative. In nearly 100 responses, only three editors and one writer took outright except (about 40 per cent. were from editors), with two other editors expressing reservations and three other writers, partial disapproval. Except for these two, the non-paying editors resolved to start paying; and only three pleaded that such an adjustment might have to be delayed. Some school magazines will apply for budget increases, one hoping to cover former contributors as well. In passing — the letters revealed that not a few so-called little magazines' rates are higher than those of average commercials.

The prestige of little magazines will be enhanced, whether or not this ideally should be. One happy prospect is for expanded circulations; for, the general public not only is contemptuous of unpaid writers, but may be deduced to believe that a magazine composed from gratis mss. cannot offer contents of the quality found in one buying what it prints. In other words, many refuse to subscribe on this ground, to periodicals carrying squibs: 'No pay at present' . . . 'Contributions welcomed, but . . .' Etc. And, undeniably, it's logical to reason that an editor relying on 'handouts' from big names, along with amateur works assumed (often

mistakenly, we realise) to have been rejected by paying markets, is likely to assemble a poor reading's worth.

Another probable result will be that certain editors will be more decently careful in fulfilling commitments. Because — sadly — not only has the Babbit-public shown slight respect for no-pay periodicals, some editors reveal even less respect for those donating mss. They 'accept' items, only to return them long after, or never returning them, though never printing them either . . . hold masses of material for months and years, without reports . . . vaguely report mss. retained for 'possible' later availability, and plainly procrastinating to see whether similar mss. they like better may not drift in.

A recent writers' conference brochure baldly underlines a rather common attitude: while announcing arbitrary limitation of admissions on a measure of interest and ability, the application form asks only whether the candidate has been published, and, if so, where. The assumption must be that the answers are primary in ascertaining interest and ability. We'd like to hear from any director who maintains fair comparative judgments can be reached in this manner. And NB — that the form makes no request for copies of said publications; and thus, implicit reliance must be placed on the always-unfailing discriminalization of certain editors? We can guess which ones. And when it's also specified that a mere recommendation from 'a' (translate 'any') college or university English department member or a publisher is acceptable in lieu of sample writings, lack of enthusiasm for these gatherings deepens.

That the world poetry revival is manifest in Canada is advertised not only by the periodicals and publications within that country, but by increasing appearances of Canadian work in other countries. What was announced would be the largest anthology of Canadian poetry ever published in the U.S.A. will be due before this TRACE arrives—in the form of a special issue of PAN. Edited by

Irving Layton, author of the U.S.-published *IMPROVED BINOCULARS*, it was to contain fifty pages, with twenty-one poets. And *AMERICAN LETTERS* had planned two issues of Canadian poetry, one English, one French.

An extended persistent policy of *REWRITE* in exposing questionable practices of U.S. vanity presses doubtless has been in part responsible for an historic Consent Decree ending Federal Trade Commission action against one press, and new actions begun against others. This is good news for writers, since terms of this decree comprise acknowledgements of said practices—now ceasing. The same magazine also seems to have drawn the Commission's attention to the ethical need for clear-cut distinction between bona fide literary agents and those who read mss. and advise writers for fees.

Experiments with poetry readings to, with, or combined with jazz improvised on the poetry are being tried all about the world as this is written. The Editor's listening has been restricted to Southern California presentations, the latest having been that of Langston Hughes, with Ralph Pena's quartette. The particular things used were especially appropriate to the idea, and poet and musicians established remarkable rapport, having had almost no rehearsal. But audience reactions largely continue as separate evaluations of poetry and music, most hearers declaring that the two clash more often than they 'jell'. . . .

And, meantime, readings by other sorts of music also are being tried — nearby efforts including those under Jack Freed auspices, and on the same billing with whose trio Alva Cunningham read early this year.

George Stillman reports on *GREENWICH VILLAGE POETS* reciting in the park by day and at the *FOLKSAY THEATRE AND STUDIO* by night. Again, background music, plus folksongs. Not only poets, themselves, have been reciting, but actors such as Will Geer and Clair Schrum, from famous poets,

living and dead. Those offering their own poems are given 'merit cards' on the basis of audience approval; and even the bestowing of honorary 'doctor's degrees' is contemplated.

Activity of course does not abate in San Francisco — comprising wider latitude in POETRY CENTER readings, recently extending from Critic Kenneth Burke to poetry of Leslie Woolf Hedley. . . . But, getting on around the world, the BHARTI (India) idea of international presentations of literature there, places first stress on poetry, with translations into Hindi, and annual cash awards, the books considered, to be submitted from anywhere. And there, as for long in Japan, stress is placed on experimental visual 'literary' presentations via cinema. Further details, as well as a delayed report on what corresponds to little-mag activity in Soviet countries, are hoped will be available for next issue. . . . In reference to films, briefly to note that one judge reversed another in the Los Angeles 'obscenity' charges detailed in earlier issues — on technical grounds, however, that a pictured nudity is not the same as the actual flesh, that a film is not a 'play' under the statute invoked.

Presses news is slight: the UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS solicits mss. of 'nonfiction or folklore, adding to knowledge of permanent value'; THE STONE WALL PRESS is not presently soliciting material, but announces hand-set and hand-printed first poetry editions on fine papers — address now: c/o K. Merker, 304 S. Summit, Iowa City, Ia., U.S.A.

Note on new height of the ridiculous in book pricing: GREENWICH release of FOUR STORIES by Amelia Foreman, priced \$2, containing only eighteen actual pages of type matter, slightly over 5,700 words of banal prose. . . . CORRECTION: Martha Millet's name was misspelled with a final 'r' in the recent 1957 TRACE Index.

First of the new chapbook series under HEARSE imprint is Carl Larsen's ARROWS OF LONGING (\$1), not received this date. Portions of this were read on the U. of Southern California's

POETRY AND TALK programme over KUSC. Another new series will be limited-edition paperbacks under new imprint: M BOOKS (queries to Lachlan MacDonald, 625 Baseline Rd., Claremont, Calif., U.S.A.). And yet another, under auspices of the new ODYSSEY (see magazine listing). Glen Coffield announces his new BAY AREA POEMS (25c., from GOLDEN GATE magazine). Peter Yates plans a book publication, of poets who read under POETRY LOS ANGELES aegis the last season.

Outstanding books just received, or not yet here, include: ANOTHER SEPTEMBER, Thomas Kinsella (Choice of The Poetry Book Society, THE DOLMEN PRESS, 10/6, and special signed edition, 2 guineas); WESTERN REACHES, Leonard Nathan (TALISMAN, \$2.25); TURBULENCE OF WONDER, Dorothy Quick (special issue of WISCONSIN POETRY MAGAZINE, \$1); MAGELLAN, Ann Stanford (TALISMAN, \$5).