

A CHRONICLE OF LIVING LITERATURE

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NORMA CRANDALL *The Decline of Liberalism*
WALTER LOWENFELS on poetry

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EDITOR

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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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THE DECLINE OF LIBERALISM AND OF THE MODERN NOVEL

Norma Crandall

PERHAPS the central literary dilemma which currently preoccupies leading reviewers and critics in our more serious-minded and alert literary magazines and in many books of literary criticism is the double foundering of Liberalism as a living, dynamic movement and liberal values and the serious contemporary novel. According to many literary analysts, the decline of Liberalism, the traditional mental climate of our major novelists, during the past few decades, is closely allied to the present emasculation of the serious novel.

But it seems to this writer that there is an additional factor involved: the declining belief in the intrinsic value of the individual and of individual experience in relation to both himself and to Society. Without going into this phase, many outstanding critics have indicated their beliefs that the future of the first rank American novel is in serious doubt. Yet, certainly a factor of importance equal to their purely literary findings has been the increasing emphasis on Social values (i.e. David Reisman's: 'outer-directed man' or William A. White's: 'organisation man' among other standardised human types) pointing towards the gradual death of interest in the unique personality, *per se*. Thus, from the viewpoint of the potential readers of serious novels, provided with ready-made morals, manners, behavior patterns, etc., much like wearing-apparel or automobiles, there is little need to seek real psychic sustenance or inner direction in the serious novel. As a result, the traditional, major novel which explores and illuminates the means by which human beings reach or fail to reach, in individual ways, personal salvation

and happiness, which must be concerned, not with Conformist or Social man, but, as D. H. Lawrence once wrote, with: 'the whole of man, including the inner man,' loses not only in reader interest, but the novelist himself inevitably lacks both incentive and true material.

Returning to the dubious critics: for example, Mr. John W. Aldridge, a particularly acute and perceptive analyst of literary trends, devoted his book, *AFTER THE LOST GENERATION*, to an inquiry into the underlying reasons behind the lack of meaningful moral and spiritual values available to, and inherent in, the work of our serious younger novelists and the consequent stalemate of the current novelist's moral position. Mr. Malcolm Cowley, writing recently in *THE SATURDAY REVIEW* about the unhealthiness of contemporary Literature, including the novel, even suggests that:

It may be that the whole subjective and introspective tendency that has dominated the modern movement in Literature, beginning with Baudelaire and Dostoevski, or whatever great name we choose is now drawing to a close.

Certainly, during the past decades, the serious novel has made few, if any, significant advances. With very few exceptions, our outstanding novels are still being written by those who matured twenty years ago (i.e., James Gould Cozzens: *BY LOVE POSSESSED*, 1957). The more interesting, promising and original, newer novelists, deadened by the current Conformist atmosphere and themselves lacking new and dynamic viewpoints, have retired into depicting private, neurotic, precious problems and experiences; or, to deal, as one reviewer, Mr. Webster Schott, wrote recently in *THE NATION*, with the: 'bizarre, the mysterious, the surrealistic,' i.e., "the beat generation." Or, at another end of the literary scale, the former, so-called 'high-brow' novel has been replaced by, as one critic noted, the 'middle-brow' novel, written by the Sloan Wilsons, the Marquands, the John O'Haras.

In a recent article in *THE NATION*, Mr. Louis Dabney made a particularly telling analysis of the contemporary novelist's underlying dilemma. Mr. Dabney, after reiterating the familiar causes of the Liberal's ideological negation (he 'has lost his targets' and 'is no longer fired by moral convictions'), then asserts that today Liberals are: Apostles of manners, sophistication, of an end to innocence and radical excess and that since: the novel of ideas [is essentially] radically critical, it cannot exist in such a context. Yet, accurate and perceptive as Mr. Dabney's comments are, there remains that additionally and equally important factor. Certainly, the diversion of concern to the Conformist or Social man is a major reason why many current novelists often leave wide and deep areas of human experience (i.e., the Capotes, the Buechners, the Carson McCullers, the Gore Vidals, and their imitators) to dramatise often decadent, often effete areas of experience, frequently mapped by elaborate symbols, presumably to direct initiated readers—but which often are mere window-dressing to hide a fundamental emptiness and vacuity. Thus, many current novels, in dealing with themes and subject matters isolated from main human concerns are inevitably dehumanised. For, we all share, in differing degrees and ways, the same elemental human and inner problems. And certainly, it is the re-creation and illumination of these which have always been the novel's true core. Thus, it seems to me that the novel's future is linked with and depends upon a revived individualism in some form: the unique value of the individual; his experiences, inner life, ideals, etc., and their meaning to him, and only indirectly to Society. Perhaps we must attempt to revive not only, as Mr. Dabney indicates, the Liberal's former mood of social protest and nonConformity, but, equally essential, the basic Liberal tenet: the sacredness of the individual. For surely, if the serious novel is to survive, we must salvage the individualistic approach. Certainly, the novelist's chief task,

even today, is not merely to explore the shadowy byways of experience or to report, however brilliantly, on human behavior in Society, but it is still to recreate personal emotions and lives in such a way as to endow them with a new, spiritual dimension. In a word, to keep the novel the battleground for the deepest problems of the individual soul, which it has been — and still is — for the Hemingways and the Faulkners.

Otherwise, the novel will inevitably become adulterated — so vapid and meaningless that even its most gifted and able practitioners will increasingly turn their creative energies into mass media journalism. Such a gifted novelist as, for example, Gore Vidal is a notable but not unique example. And the novel itself will gradually become merely — and necessarily — a very minor cog in the mass-entertainment machine. Indeed, Mr. Malcolm Cowley, in his above-mentioned article, even predicts that:

printed Literature in the future will be read only by scholars. For the public at large it might give way to spoken and tape-recorded stories or to dramas and serials composed for TV.

Yet, despite this very real probability, it seems to the present writer that there is a hope, if perhaps a limited one, for the contemporary novel. Probably, it lies in the attempts of such writers as Paul Bowles, William Styron, James Baldwin, and the late James Agee, to mention a few outstanding examples, to limit their ranges of observed material and human experience (but not in a decadent or precious sense) and to explore the meaning of personal relationships and inner experiences within this range. Thus, James Baldwin, in his novel *GIOVANNI'S ROOM*, although it deals partly with the special problem of homosexuality, depicts a type of emotional triangle familiar in contemporary life, in such a way that, for this reader at least, it brings a new light and inner meaning both to the relations and to the

people involved and to the milieu. Or, Paul Bowles in *THE SHELTERING SKY*, though that novel is set amidst Arab decadence, unravels the psychic and emotional complexities of a typically modern marriage. And, in so doing, casts an oblique but perceptive light on contemporary mores. More recently, *THE POORHOUSE PAIR*, by John Updike, explores the same central theme, individualism versus collectivism.

Perhaps the most outstandingly triumphant example of the ability to wring deep meanings and insights from limited areas of experience is the late James Agee's *A DEATH IN THE FAMILY*. As readers of Mr. Agee's novel are aware, the novel deals with the great central, universal issues of love (in this case, family love) and death as experienced by members of a small-town, middle-class American family, seen, mostly through the eyes of the narrator, a child. Yet, if Mr. Agee's novel, in a sense, has a comparatively narrow range (nothing much happens in the novel except the death of the Father in an automobile accident), the deepest human truths of living are implied: mainly, that the very core of living is in the manifestations of love—which is residual in the teeth of a cruel, competitive existence and accidental tragedy.

Perhaps there is nothing either very new or revolutionary in the general approach of the above-noted novelists. And, perhaps, their illumination of the central issues and the moral fabric of our time is, at best, indirect. Yet, certainly, these writers are at least continuing in the central tradition of the novel.

Let us hope that these and other similar-minded writers will continue to retain a novelistic niche for personal values, and thus preserve the novel itself.

ISSUE P. 6 · SCAN P. 8

TOWARDS PRINT

by Gil Orlovitz

(THE QUALIFICATION)

EVERY now and then, I run into the charmingly wishful notion that great art, by reason of its universality, is capable of sustained popularity.

Well, offhand, I guess the adherents would immediately cite certain musical examples—Verdi's AIDA, to mention one (note, if you will, that I stretch the formulation of greatness for the purpose of the foray). Unfortunately, a snag presents itself.

Popularity, I believe, is best understood by thinking of it as a kind of psychological embezzlement—in which men all around the globe dip into a given hero and then run off in possession, they claim, of some of his characteristics; or, dip into a Jayne Mansfield for other secret beliefs. Now, outside of Italy, and other scattered locales where opera fanciers may be found here and there, nobody gives very much of a fig for AIDA. As a matter of fact, a musical comedy based on it failed badly in New York, some seasons ago. At this point, I hear some unmistakable bis for Bizet, and something called CARMEN JONES, which was popular for a while—wasn't it? So, indeed, was GONE WITH THE WIND—for which, I think, I cannot quite stretch the idea of greatness wide enough.

But that does bring me to literature, by the little known process of guilt by dissociation.

Lower your hands. Of all the categories of literature, the drama is far and away the most susceptible to popularity. There's OEDIPUS REX, and HAMLET, and ST. JOAN. And there's a good deal of evidence to suggest that each of these plays in its day got top grosses, and that the protagonists of the dramas were practically household words, although Oedipus

hardly committed pardonable sins. But something odd has happened, an inevitable commonplace. Shakespeare's piece continues to be played, in proportion to population growth, to much smaller audiences, and was a miserable financial disappointment as a movie: the masses hardly knew what the Prince was so wrought up over, and didn't give a box-office damn. Sophocles' gasser gives newspaper critics a headache, and they are an exquisite barometer of the reaction of the mediocre. Still, it continues to be revived, for tiny but durable audiences. Shaw's splendid construction has invited a similar pattern.

What seems, then, to be the essence of the matter?

Before I venture an answer, let me touch on the syndrome which I have named Malraux's Mirage, because, apparently, the few sturdy souls who have gone through VOICES OF SILENCE insist that they have Seen. Seen what? Well, the proof of the contention that multiple reproduction of the world's plastic masterpieces by way of various photographic processes hath wrought a revolution in the appreciation of painting and sculpture; that, simply, because more people can lay their eyes on the stuff, Giotto and Rembrandt and Kley and Lipschultz are thereby the more sentiently and extensively perceived.

I don't have to demonstrate that this is a consummate canard. It is obvious that a painting ceases to be a painting once it is reproduced in any form whatever: the colour is not that of the original; the view is the highly selective one of the specific camera angle or angles; the depth-perception (I use this technically) by the human eye of the original is invalidated by reproduction; and the texture is altogether destroyed. . . .

There has been a revolution in art appreciation; indeed, revolution by prostitution, in the sense that, as a prostitute can simulate the ecstasy of his or her favours, so, we may say, does a photograph of a painting. In sum, then, the

passionately loving audience for any original work — woman, art, or man — remains a ruthlessly limited one.

I say, mind you, ‘remains.’

It is undoubtedly true that a large literary achievement can be popular, feverishly so, in the author’s lifetime. It is true that sometimes the author’s death will precipitate universal applause for his great works—upon his demise, or a generation or so later. But it is also true that the really valid work of art must in time yield its popularity, and that its lovers be radically reduced in number.

For good cause.

By definition, a great work can never be popular for substantive and durational reasons; it can only be so for reasons of the time in which it may be popular. Otherwise, the vast catholicity of response would be sustained throughout all time.

EDITORS WRITE

VICTOR S. NAVASKY (MONOCLE): ‘Recently, a psychiatrist out at the University of Southern California noted that “A wit is an angry man in search of a victim. A witticism is his way of releasing repressed hostility. If he doesn’t find a victim, he will probably suffer from a migraine headache attack.” Nobody at MONOCLE suffers from migraine headaches. And this is true even though a reviewer denounced us as “this country’s counterpart of England’s Angry Young Men.” One reason is that this is an age of victims. Another is that the views of our contributors, no matter how conflicting and contradictory, are the views of MONOCLE. A third is that political satire is perhaps a form of legal subversion. A fourth is that we are leisurely—coming out whenever we can. A fifth is that we take aspirin. But actually, our headaches don’t come from a lack of victims. They come from trying to think up pseudonyms for many of our courageous contributors who follow up manuscripts with retrospective notes about how “my mother-in-law wouldn’t understand,” or the boss, or the Secretary of State, or a fellow beatnik. Anyway, we now print 2,500 copies, give away free subscriptions for \$1 (P.O. Box 1269, New Haven, Conn.) and generally solicit new readers and writers. Remember, in the land of the blind, the one-eye is king.’

NORMAN WINSKI (BREAKTHRU): ‘As you can see by the breakdown of our four major areas of concern on the cover, we’re pre-eminently a culture-conscious quarterly with an emphasis on constructiveness (not to be confused with the “Power of Positive Thinking” type of intellectual pabulum which, when imbibed long and often enough, leads on so inexorably into the smug and babbling deliriums of mediocrity). Our contributors can raise the very devil, tearing down the icons of our time, provided they proffer remedial

measures in their stead. We want the negative as well as the positive poles reflected in our writers' thoughts—whether in poetry, fiction, an article from some branch of science, religion, philosophy, or art. The easiest thing in the world is to tear down . . . it's a hell of a lot harder, but proportionately more rewarding, to build, . . . We love polemic in our articles and we insist upon style, lucidity, and depth in our poetry and fiction. No payment at present, but we hope to rectify this unfortunate situation as soon as the progenitors of BREAKTHRU start to earn a little pay. . . . And a final word: We like contributors to send autobiographical data — and so do our readers; we try to compensate our contributors with publicity and free copies.'

Charles Bukowski (former HARLEQUIN Editor): 'Current HARLEQUIN received today. Since I do not publish a magazine and have no voice, I would like to take the following exceptions to the so-called "apology" on page 24:

'1. Mr. Hedley wrote two letters, I wrote two letters. I did not consider them "a long and shocking exchange."'

(Editor: Reference is to Leslie Woolf Hedley, whose previously-accepted work — it is charged by Barbara Fry — had been sent back to him by Mr. Bukowski. Miss Fry has published all of the ten poems, together with an 'explanation' and a note of disclaimer of any accord with 'opinions, political, religious, and literary, expressed . . .')

'2. "one of my former editor-husbands" should read "my former editor-husband." Miss Fry gives the reader a literary-romantic impression here, rather hard to come by.

'3. Miss Fry accepted Mr. Hedley's poems. I did not. Miss Fry mailed the poems back. I did not. Miss Fry was in full agreement and needed no arm-twisting.

'4. Upon mention of a suit by Mr. Hedley, Miss Fry withdrew her horns. I was all for letting Mr. Hedley sue. I do not believe in fear or threat even when I am wrong, and I believe technically I was wrong in attempting to send back

accepted poetry. I too have had poetry returned after acceptance. I made no protest, feeling that if the magazines didn't want me in their pages, I didn't want to be there either. However, this practice by magazines should and must be stopped.

'5. Feeling that she must print Mr. Hedley because of his threat of suit, Miss Fry stated that "now a whole issue would be ruined!" And for some time thought of turning out a cheap

mimeo copy of Mr. Hedley's poems alone, or setting off a special section, pages of mourning, more or less. None of these ideas were mine.

'6. The note that follows the "apology" might give vent to the idea that I rejected the poems because I was a political reactionary. I was not the political reactionary. Miss Fry, at one time, advised me not to appear with the BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL group in the "underground edition," because "some of them are known Communists." I don't know anything about that. I judge a poem or a group by the quality and vitality of its Art. And just what is, pray tell me, "a literary opinion?" In these poems, I mean. These are literary expressions. Our opinions we reserve for articles.

'7. The "apology" is merely a hedge using me as a scapegoat, since Miss Fry evidently still fears suit from Mr. Hedley. The note on opinions literary, political, religious . . . is merely a hedge wherein Miss Fry takes a curtsy to those she feels will somehow sense that Mr. Hedley is a liberal. Miss Fry seems to fear everyone but me.

'8. The statement that I am no longer with the magazine is true. WITH HUZZAHS!'

(Once more, the Editor: To the best of our fairly intimate knowledge, Mr. Hedley and most contributors to that issue of BELOIT P.J.—which carried this same editor's foreword—are strongly anti-Communitic and most emphatic individualists.)

Charl Van Horn (palinurus):

TRACE No 30, opening salvo under EDITORS WRITE, takes up a problem with which this house is very much interested. Both I and my editor, Herbert Schaumann, have long maintained, along with Joseph Joel Keith, that young poets and new fiction writers should be paid, not according to circulation of our “little magazines,” but by the more permanent gauge of quality, which does not change with the vogue or promotion of the publication. This will be the policy of PALINURUS. While understanding the critical condition of this field of publication and the more often limited finances of such endeavours, it is always sad to see such begging—especially from writers whose work could easily justify and receive adequate payment. It has been my experience that poets and authors (usually) respect the magazine to which they entrust their works and know something of the ability it has to make sufficient payment for their labours. Certainly, such respect should be on a reciprocal basis.’

Clarence Major (THE COERCION REVIEW): ‘The policy of TCR is growing. At first, there was hardly one. It’s growing wider — into nothing. So that now, I’m open to everything. Which means you have a chance. But — it also means something vaster than everything. Literary freedom, in a way. Although, you’ll never get by me with a poem about how tender the grass is.

‘Though the CR has high standards (Patchen, DeJong, May, Ferlinghetti, Miller, Crews, Creeley, Ginsberg), new young poets appear often for the first time — a blazing new one coming in No. 3. . . . Some other things — The price is going to settle down: 75c. from here to eternity. Variety — and I’m fighting this monster in me, insisting on a mood setting in. . . . And thanks for all the letters of love and hate: they let me know that people are not dead. I want to hear from everybody in the world who’s creating — I mean it! Let’s make contact!’

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GEORGE STILLMAN

A PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH W. H. AUDEN

ARRIVING at the residence of Mr. Auden located at 77th St.

Marks Place in the Village, I quickly conquered the steps of a long hallway leading up to his second-floor apartment.

With patience I awaited the opening of the door. It happened!

The door opened, and there stood Mr. Auden in person. 'Mr.

Stillman,' he said, 'please come in.' After the proper and informal

introduction, we commenced the interview. The time flew

quickly, but I did manage to cover a majority of the questions.

The original dialogue follows:

Mr. Stillman: How should a poem be composed?

Mr. Auden: Each poem should have a special problem. Poems

should be different. Each must be built and constructed, to

be of expression.

Mr. Stillman: When do you like to write?

Mr. Auden: I like to work in the morning. I am a day worker

in between tea and cocktails. I like to be alone while working.

Mr. Stillman: Can the urge for poetry be born from some type of occurrence?

Mr. Auden: This is a type of mystery. I will say that one must

possess a love for the language in which one writes. He also

must enjoy the freedom of thinking. But a series of events will affect this situation — which involves a life-time leading

to death.

Mr. Stillman: Do you think that the government should take

a more forward look toward the poets of this country? For example: scholarships, paid exchanges, and other educational

expenses?

Mr. Auden: I would say no, because it's impossible. The state cannot afford to waste money or have any bounding ties with men of poetry.

Mr. Stillman: Do you think poets make a lot of money?

Mr. Auden: No poet will really make a lot of money. Perhaps small sums, later in their life of establishment.

Mr. Stillman: What can a poet do in order to safeguard himself against society while working on a permanent job—if his talent is found out?

Mr. Auden: As a general rule, a person must solve this. I would say: be good on the job.

Mr. Stillman: Do you think poets have a place in the world of today?

Mr. Auden: Not of today. The poet has no official status. It has completely changed since ancient times.

Mr. Stillman: What sort of group does the poet speak to in regard to his writings today?

Mr. Auden: The poets speak to private individuals.

Mr. Stillman: What is everlasting—a good poem, or a good play?

Mr. Auden: If both are good, both will last.

Mr. Stillman: Do you consider most poets to be daydreamers?

Mr. Auden: No—not if they are good. People who are daydreamers are not good poets.

Mr. Stillman: Do you think that poets have more to offer humanity than political statesmen?

Mr. Auden: The statesmen must exist. Some must be good and some bad. But the works of a good poet will last. However, you cannot compare the two types of individuals. The life of action (essential) of a political statesman, and that of creation (extra pleasure) of a poet are both required in this world.

Mr. Stillman: Do you think that man can find a medium of stronger expression, besides poetry, painting, or music?

Mr. Auden: No, I do not; but it's all different. Poetry is not stronger than music or painting.

Mr. Stillman: Do you think poets are different from other people?

ISSUE P. 21 · SCAN P. 23

A PARODY

by James Boyer May

on certain contemporary critical writings (with strong secondary intentions of criticising certain contemporary ‘creativity’ too)

AFTER deductions from the dosage of barbiturates mustered and self-administered by the female principal, a number of general (but likewise accurate, if oceanlike) observations can be deciphered on the log. For one, the victim of her own dissatisfaction with the reachable shore’s topography may be concluded to have lacked insights of her hindsight’s reckonings. And the author left her with nothing to warm the huckles of her cart (to intrude a clashing, vicious, and quite unsociable metaphor). And there lay shadows on that bathroom slab, tokening the depths of anchor-loosened thought — say, mindrift. And parlously, a bated mast, of course, was missing. Credibly disturbing—this. And rescue-funds, unrabbitlike, leaped from no small sea’s chapeau (she wore none in the lavender of the sunken tub, hatlessly evidencing a most delicate postmortem taste).

The crux of this narrative is shaped like a funnel . . . but only in the flare. The vital instrumentality of the part to probe the appreciatively-libidinous reader (not lascivious, mind you) is absent. Quite. This corresponds, in a not-unexpected manner, to a drowning without virile psychological solace; and one remains undisturbed by morale-compensation in the usual form of mortal repetition of some long-sung mode of approaching the orgasm. Of the last, it may be said, such has a mortal usefulness, notwithstanding, if only to distract the mind from prescience of the organic irrelevance of immortality.

However, our deviating drift is exceeding that of the corpse. The prawned indenture is (and was) unchained. The question rises: Does a meddle of byplay ever dredge deeply enough to justify the complete reconstruction of a soaking mind? Isn't this just prattle-did? The latter — addled — may heat the rationality of recapitulation; yet, scarcely ever may it rechart the course of unbaled libido.

And still, when all is swill considered, we do adjure the more prittling amongst the prospective privacious readers to take a brief scud across the scented bubbles of this lengthy brine. Yes — its very tub-span of unlaidd (while not inexpensive, it is priced-to-untruth) paper is broadly unrepresed, and well may be a rather awesome proof both of the assiduous energies and the inestimable self-control of the writer who not only contemplated this creation, but of course endured it. Such a sampling sail, not adventitiously (and particularly, if anticipated by a cash purchase) could, in many covert hearts, blow up a prickling storm of odyssey, and lead to a chartless voyage of hitherto-unbeknownst vicarious regret.

In other words: do not utterly disdain the loosening of this moorion venture through a fripper sea of perfumed whorer. The margins are never far from taxed and tiring hand — though soapy . . . as we've tried to indicate, without spoiling (the verdict of prior spoilage is just our own test-occlusion) the reader's personal recovery of this skainless plot.

ANOTHER LOOK AT THORNTON WILDER

His 'Grand Theme' and the Pinch of Time, by Fraser Drew

In recent years, Thornton Wilder has been so good a playwright and lecturer that it has been easy to forget his novels. They are five in number (THE CABALA, 1926; THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY, 1927; THE WOMAN OF ANDROS, 1930; HEAVEN'S MY DESTINATION, 1935; and THE IDES OF MARCH, 1948). A few weeks ago, I reread the first three; they are books to which I like to return frequently, and they stand up under repeated reading more successfully than the novels of almost any other modern writer.

After I had closed THE WOMAN OF ANDROS, two recurrent themes—the inequality and incommunicability of human love, and the meaninglessness of life, except at certain rare moments of illumination—particularly haunted my thoughts. The three early novels are filled with people whose deep love for others cannot be rightly expressed, and usually cannot be reciprocated: in THE CABALA, Alix d'Espoli, the delight of all her friends, falls in love, unerringly, with 'the very type of youth that could not be attracted to her, with cool, impersonal learned or athletic young Northerners,'¹ and eventually with the archaeologist James Blair, her last and most bitter failure; Astree-Luce and the Cardinal, in the same novel, are more fortunate in their separation from Alix, in their discovery that they are 'living in a world where . . . no actions were too complicated but that love could understand, and dismiss them'² and in their hope for reconciliation; Camila Perichole in THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY cannot 'speak once to Uncle Pio and tell him of her love and just once offer her courage to Jaime in his sufferings . . . "I fail everybody," she cried, "They love me and I fail them"'³

Perhaps the most moving of these unhappy relationships is the tragic story of the twin brothers, Manuel and Esteban, in *THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY*. Their 'profound identity' and 'tacit, almost ashamed oneness' is broken first by Esteban's discovery of 'that secret from which one never quite recovers, that even in the most perfect love one person loves less profoundly than the other,' and then by Manuel's death. In *THE WOMAN OF ANDROS*, Chrysis is oppressed by her failure to help those whom she loves, and Pamphilus comes to understand her reiterated belief that life's 'most difficult burden is the incommunicability of love.'

This theme of the isolated and inarticulate mortal blends with the theme of the meaninglessness of life in the fable which Chrysis tells to her guests in one of the novel's most beautifully written passages, the fable of the hero who had his wish to return from death for one day to the land of the living, and to a day in his own past. In several of Wilder's novels and plays, there is mention of the return of the dead to this world, beginning with the early one-act play *PROSERPINA AND THE DEVIL*. Malchus, in *NOW THE SERVANT'S NAME WAS MALCHUS*, is not 'very interested' in the earth, yet 'would like to see it again,' and Satan, in *HAST THOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT, JOB?* speaks of what he would do if he could return to the earth in his own person.

Thrice, however, Wilder has his characters come back to the world of the living, only to experience disillusion or frustration or pain. The teller of the story in *THE CABALA*, in his capacity as successor to Mercury, evokes the glittering shade of Virgil, who is displeased at his recall to the world of time and beating hearts. Yet, for a moment, before he begs for dismissal, Virgil's spirit exclaims at the beauty of the Mediterranean's waters.

The fable told by Chrysis in *THE WOMAN OF ANDROS* is the story of a hero who had requested of Zeus, in return for a favour done in this life, the power to return to the world of

the living. Eventually, through Zeus' intercession with the King of the Dead, the hero was permitted to return, but only to live over again that 'day in all the twenty-two thousand days of his lifetime that had been least eventful' and 'with a mind divided into two persons — the participant who does the deeds and says the words of so many years before, and the onlooker who foresees the end.' It is a terrible experience for the hero, who returns to his boyhood and to the undemonstrable affection of his busy and care-filled parents. He realises that 'the living too are dead and that we can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasure; for our hearts are not strong enough to love every moment.' The hero calls on Zeus to release him from so terrible a dream; but before leaving the earth, he falls upon the ground and kisses the soil of 'the world that is too dear to be realised.'

In the play *OUR TOWN*, published eight years later, Wilder has Emily Webb suffer the same experience, in spite of the efforts of the Stage Manager and Mrs. Gibbs, who advise her to choose an unimportant day and warn that even such a day will be painful. Emily can bear the pain only a short time, and begs to be taken back 'up the hill.' But before she goes, like the hero in Chrysis' fable, she bids farewell to the world: 'Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realise you.' Of the Stage Manager, she asks: 'Do any human beings ever realise life while they live it? — every, every minute?' His answer suggests two later lines from T. S. Eliot's *THE COCKTAIL PARTY*, as he tells Emily: 'The saints and poets, maybe — they do some.'

Wilder's books offer us some of these supreme moments 'when our hearts are conscious of our treasure.' The selfish old Marquesa de Montemayor, taught by little Pepita, throws off her burden of pride and vanity, writes her first letter in courage, and that night asks 'Let me live now. Let me begin again.' Alix d'Espoli in *THE CABALA*, half-mad with the long

grief of her hopeless love for Blair, hears him praised by an unknown archaeologist as a new Leonardo, and faints in an excess of joy and understanding. 'with a happy smile upon her face.' Chrysis, dying, and Pamphilus, finding courage to begin a new life after the death of Glycerium and their child, both cry out

*'I praise all living, the bright and the dark.'*¹¹

Moments of illumination such as these, and the shining surface of his early prose, untarnished after thirty years, are two of the reasons for recommending another look at Thornton Wilder.

notes

¹ THE CABALA, N.Y., 1926, p. 113.

² Ibid., pp. 211-212.

³ THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY, N.Y., 1927, p. 226.

Ibid., p. 100.

THE WOMAN OF ANDROS, N.Y., 1930, p. 37.

Three plays included in THE ANGEL THAT TROUBLED THE WATERS, N.Y., 1928.

THE WOMAN OF ANDROS, pp. 33-36.

OUR TOWN, N.Y., 1938, pp. 113-136.

THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY, p. 86.

¹ THE CABALA, p. 163.

¹¹ THE WOMAN OF ANDROS, pp. 107; 150; 162.

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A FABLE

A PARABLE

Marion Montgomery

I

A FABLE for the creative writer, concerning the beginning, middle, and end.

Story Teller: Once upon a time there was a little red fox named Little Red Charlie; and one night Little Red Charlie decided that he would trot out in the moonlight to see which way the rabbits were running. He left his hole in the side of an old sawdust pile, so long neglected that briars and persimmons and honeysuckle had begun creeping up toward the top and the sawdust was turning black.

But he hadn't gotten very far before a pack of fox hounds struck his trail and began chasing him.

Well, he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran . . .

Listener: But what — . . .

Story Teller: . . . and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and . . .

Listener: But what happened?

Story Teller: He ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and he . . .

Listener: BUT WHAT HAPPENED?

Story Teller: What happened? Why the dogs caught him and killed him before morning, within twenty-five yards of his den at the sawdust pile. But I'm coming to that. . . . and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran . . .

II

A PARABLE for the creative writer, concerning the beginning, middle, and end.

Story Teller: Once upon a time in the deep swamp there lived an owl in the hollow of a live oak. But he got terribly tired of hunting only at night, the way he was supposed to, and so one afternoon he slept till morning. Then, just as it was getting light, he flew out of the swamp and lit in a big pine tree on the side of the hill, so that he could see what went on in the daytime.

And he sat and he sat and he sat and he sat and he sat and he sat and he sat . . .

Listener: But we've gone through all this. What happened?

Story Teller: . . . and he sat and he sat and he sat and he sat and he . . .

Listener: All right. All right. Now, stop it. What happened to him?

Story Teller: What happened! The crows found him, of course, and pecked out his eyes and then when he tried to fly back to the swamp in the dark, he ran headon into another pine tree. And then he fell down on the ground, knocked silly. While he was lying there, a little red fox named Little Red Charlie happened along and finished him off.

Listener: But you've already killed off Little Red Charlie.

Story Teller: I'm coming to that.

MORAL: I have read these over rather carefully a number of times, and I can't decide exactly what the moral is. I know that there is at least one, and very likely more. Is it that (1) the story writer is the one who can make the sitting and running keep the what happened in suspense without irritating the reader beyond endurance? Or that (2) anybody can write the beginning and end, but only a story teller can write a middle? Or that (3) either running or sitting can be action? Or that (4) the story teller shouldn't be required to write a 'moral?'

Or that

(5) one must be his own emperor? Or that

(6)

?

(TRACE Editor: Leaving No. 6 blank for the reader to answer 'yes' to No. 4. Surely not to be required to 'write a "moral";' and also 'yes'—that 'one must be his own emperor' in decreeing some truth by conveying his own individualised interest in the material. Background and skill, of course, determine the degree of artistry; and some moral then may be supplied by the Listener. . . . Besides for an unique ambiguity of fable-parable linkage, Mr. Montgomery achieves a brevity-for-itself with the basic qualities of Frank R. Stockton's *THE LADY OR THE TIGER?*—with the Story Teller in the Princess role and the Listener a remarkable composite lady-and-tiger! His error lies (as, in a sense, did Mr. Stockton's) in suggesting a sequel. For, this is the sort of teaching-error he acknowledges by stating the fourth question negatively.)

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BY THEIR BONERS

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YE SHALL KNOW THEM

by Pauline Bell

Walter Lowenfels

CONSCIENTIOUS teachers are often sorely burdened by the abundance of students who are failures because they refuse to face the facts. These teachers could do well to examine the motivation behind this refusal; for among these students are some who see clearly—they think—the value of impressions, emotions, imagination, humour, drama, fantasy, and the like, but who see nothing in the bleakness of fact save an obstacle to the passing grade. These students will go to any length to avoid recording the unvarnished facts. They dislike facts, they are bored with facts, they are repelled by facts. They are by nature unwilling or unable to set down a fact and let it alone.

This is the first symptom of the creative writer.

In the social sciences (where the fact is of paramount importance and where it must be recorded faithfully) teachers are in an enviable position to detect this first symptom. And if it is detected early, something can be done about it. The student can be removed to a class in creative writing.

This would be the simplest solution to the teacher's problem and the one of greatest benefit to the student; for here, he would learn to respect the facts and to make proper use of them. If, however, a course in creative writing is not available, and if the symptom must therefore remain in the classroom of the social sciences, it becomes the minimum duty of the teacher to encourage the student in his talent. The social science teacher who is not a creative writer will himself need guidance in order to distinguish those students who are suited to creative writing, those who are suited to

other kinds of writing, and those who are suited to no writing.

The following quotations from term papers and examinations have been compiled as a brief guide for the teacher engaged in this endeavour. The quotations have not been chosen at random; they have been carefully selected from the writings of a large group of students who have gone down in the pages of a grade book as failures. The examples, together with my commentary, are submitted as conclusive evidence of this dual truth: that not all 'flunkers' are failures — some are merely writers.

The students' names are of course withheld for my own protection.

'In 455 Rome was taken in a sack.'

This student failed in the examination because he neglected to note that it was the Vandals who were holding the bag. His special talent, however, is obvious. He has conceived a truly graphic image to describe the historical situation; and the teacher's obligation is clear. The student must be encouraged to become a literary historian.

'The Boston Mascara, which occurred in 1770, was a very exciting event.'

The student is in error. There was no mascara in Boston in 1770. There is very little even today. Although this student shows himself to be careless in the verification of facts, he obviously has a real grasp on the character of a city and its probable vulnerability to an event of this nature. He might in time become an astute social commentator. Should he show any bent toward creative writing, the role of the teacher would be to point out to him the folly of explaining what he has written. No creative writer should take it upon himself to tell the reader what feeling is expected of him. If the fact is well chosen, the feeling, unprodded, will come. No better example could be found to illustrate this point than the one which the student has unwittingly provided. The thing, the

place, the date—mascara, Boston, 1770. Mere mention of this is exciting, and the recorded fact is sufficient.

‘Helen Hunt Jackson was a noted author. She wrote A HUNDRED YEARS IN SIN.’

The work cited is, of course, A CENTURY OF DISHONOR; and the student is, without doubt, gifted in humour. It will not be necessary for the teacher to encourage him.

‘The background was as foodstuff to a starved individual. By that I mean the data is relatively important.’

This student shows great promise. He has a certain aptitude for analogies; he has developed a considerable skill in exposition; and he sees clearly that there are two sides to every question. He will undoubtedly become a non-partisan ghostwriter for senators.

‘Wild Bill Hickok was shot from the hip and he rarely missed his mark during one of the episodes.’

This statement was not documented, and it seems likely that it was not Wild Bill but the student who was having an attack of episodes. In a case of this kind, the teacher should immediately and unhesitatingly have the student quarantined, lest the entire class become episodic. ‘The Forty Miners invaded California and exhausted practically all of the free gold that that region had to offer.’ This student has a natural talent for drama which should be encouraged. His tendency toward over-simplification, however, is another matter. In this, he is under-estimating the knowledge and intelligence of his readers. Everyone knows that there were not forty but thousands of miners who invaded California. If possible, the student must be made to see that this kind of alteration of basic data is not in itself creative and that if he cannot overcome this fault, he must write scripts for television. The creative writer who cannot be truly creative should at least be successful. ‘George Washington died not knowing that he had discovered America.’ The teacher must weep. Although the pathos of this situation has never before

been so eloquently put, there is a sad finality about this sentence which suggests that in these few well-chosen words the student has said all that he has to say on this or any other subject. He will therefore never become a writer, though his sympathetic nature will afford him an immediate kinship with writers everywhere who, like George Washington, will die without knowing that they have discovered America. 'Among the British people if your father had been some type of big person then maybe you could be something but if some of your people had not been anything then you would not be anything.' The style is imitative, but that is no cause for concern. All young writers have their idols. 'The post-Civil War era can best be described as a period of Moral Laxative. The people of this era had an Altitude of Unpleasant Behavior. That is to say, they enjoyed seeing one's Reputation being involved in a Scandal.' Although this student demonstrates unquestioned veracity in spotlighting the key words in a sentence, his potential as a writer is not clear. His own Altitude smacks unpleasantly of Smugness, which has no Place either in art or in Art; yet, he has a discerning Mind. If, through the teacher's Guidance, this Mind could be influenced to concentrate more upon the Scandal and less upon the Laxative, it might well produce a Best-Seller. 'The New Englanders turned to the sea for a lively hood.' Five hundred times on the blackboard is still the best remedy.

PARAGRAPHS

A poem comes from a new misreading of history. * You have to write quickly these days. Otherwise your style changes and your particular theme loses itself. * What does Gautier's "arcana of daily travail" mean? That you have to get closer to the point where the poem writes itself automatically. * For me poems have been a way of living rather than a way of literature. It was only when I quit thinking that poems were actually possible that I began to make them. * Something in every poem escapes the moment it has been created — the underlying totality the poet carries with him. On the other hand — something is added — the totality the reader carries with him. When the two are close to one you have the minimum basis for a poem. * The poem ought to be read to end the instant it begins. * Millions of people 'feel' poems; a few with nimble fingers construct them — not once — not twice — but over and again. * The poem has to get worse and worse. Only so it gets better and better. As the grass of the world goes dead, the grass of the poem goes whiter. *

SOME ITEMS RECEIVED

by the Editor

DONALD DAVIDSON'S *SOUTHERN WRITERS IN THE MODERN WORLD* (U. of GEORGIA PRESS, \$2.50) wins priority among TRACE volumes-of-the-year. In less than 25,000 words of unstuffy prose, he makes at least eight valuable contributions. Though all may not assent on every point, most readers will find more than literary source material here.

First — the creative stress is indicated by attention to poetry; and while the technical slant is conservative, general ideas are not reactionary, but forward a liberal social conservatism. The author's definition of this distinction is the second reason for recommending the book. The third ties closely: his hard look at educational trends, which he mercilessly, yet not arbitrarily, criticises. The question of the 'good' of modern curricula to the creative artist, is thrown wide open.

Fourth — and most obviously — hitherto-unavailable data on the so-called Fugitives (or Agrarians) responsible for the New Criticism. These have exerted tremendous influence, the past quarter century, on both British and American literature. Next — the clarification of 'responsibilities' of prominent critics outside this, first firmly-, later loosely-knit, movement. And sixth, Donald Davidson himself having been a 'charter member,' amusing personal lights on the editors of *THE FUGITIVE*, the little magazine which tagged them. A chapter of little-mag history is enhanced.

And then, a fair, if not unpartisan, view of Southern letters generally: a powerful (even political) 'case' for the South's attitudes. The author declares Southern thought has a vital share in combating materialistic tendencies toward mass-solutions and particularly Communistic and Fascistic

theories. He details how the latter have penetrated the U.S.A. at cultural levels, markedly in the North — and underlines elements he believes destructive to Western civilisation, with specific references to large-scale publishing. . . . An index (missing) should have been a must for such a book.

A far swing perhaps, from a 20th Century cultural dilemma to that once facing the Third Century B.C. philosopher-poet, Ch'ü Yüan (Li SAO—prose transl. by Jerah Johnson, OLIVANT, \$4). However, besides that the problems are 'universals,' those time-distant conditions, as well as inner personal contradictions, leading this ancient to poetise and then to drown himself, parallel today's. Particularly, the need to rediscover purposes beyond food, sex, and shelter: this Editor's own recurrent theme of search for the meaning of individual consciousness.

So, this is not just another scholarly work, but holds close psychological significance. Of earlier translations, one or two seen by this reviewer left meanings quite unexplicated, and the other was ruined by 'prettified' versification with which the dull notes did not seem to jibe. The Johnson version doesn't warp effects, to meet English rhymes or metrics, but simply and beautifully adopts fairly literal equivalents, placing clear notes with each numbered section. The Introduction is a fine article in itself.

Again, a far leap — to the latest by Tram Combs, West Indies poet (ceremonies in mind — mind trammels printed, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, \$3). Yet, beyond respect for Combs' success in evolving his own meaningful relationships of evocative words into these drumlike celebrations of unique sensualities, it's noteworthy how a man of academic learning can so joyously and unpretentiously phrase the identifications of selfhood in the physical world. His metaphysic is there, but not in abstractions of the kinds commonly associated with philosophy. Often, the very sound carries it; and one may gain many new implications by

reading this work aloud at a somewhat tense pitch, with a semi-feverish stroking of the sharp syllables. And with music in mind — music of heart and blood — better appreciating the ‘right’ colours of these magical words about artists, boys, cats, lovers, judges, priests.

Bringing Mina Loy to print again, after nearly thirty-five years, with work from her 1923 book, 1925 CONTACT contributions, and some later poems (LUNAR BADECKER & TIME-TABLES, JARGON, \$3.50), Jonathan Williams both may be vindicating young contemporaries more indebted to her than to those elder betterknowns who have deferred to her respectfully, but who have not (doubtless could not have) really risked emulating her . . . and by placing the younger works in better perspective, may be revealing that some disturbing ‘originalities’ aren’t entirely without precedent after all.

The point is best made by quotations from Miss Loy’s ‘packed’ analogically-metaphoric uses of tight internal sound-puns and multiplex allusions from classical myths and modern sciences, together, and together with her own images:

**FROM THE TITLE PIECE: DELIRIOUS AVENUES LIT
WITH CHANDELIER SOULS OF INFUSORIA FROM
PHARAOH’S TOMBSTONES**

lead to mercurial doomsdays Odious oasis in furrowed
phosphorous

the eye-white sky-light white-light district of lunar lusts

Stlectric signs

‘Wing shows on Starway’

‘Zodiac carrousel’

Onyx-eyed Odalisques and ornithologists observe the
flight of Eros obsolete

and ‘Immortality’

mildews . . .

**FROM JOYCE'S ULYSSES MASTER OF METEORIC
IDIOM PRESENT**

The word made flesh and feeding upon itself with erudite
fangs The sanguine introspection of the womb
Don Juan of Judea upon a pilgrimage to the Libido
The Press purring its lullabyes to sanity
Christ capitalized scourging incontrite usurers of destiny
—in hole and corner temples
And hang the soul's advertisements

IN THE MUSEUMS OF THE MOON

'Nocturnal cyclops'
'Crystal concubine'
Pocked with personification
the fossil virgin of the skies
waxes and wanes

OUTSIDE THE ECCLESIAST'S ZOO

Empyrian emporium
where the
rejector-recreator
Joyce
flashes the giant reflector
on the sub rosa

No need to remark on the rarity of successful work of this
genus by others, not a few of whom may not even know their
preceptress, who could write of 'this breast of revelation / in
incandescent curve / licked by chromatic flames / in
labyrinths of reflections / This gong / of polished
hyperaesthesia . . .'

There are those who, like Robert Beum (ORPHEUS and
other poems, ODYSSEY, \$1), undertake this only occasionally
and referentially. Surface simplicity keys the Beum selection;
always happily lucid, he at times appears merely descriptive.

But closer reading of the tight imageries shows many levels in the briefest pieces. For example: 'More than our figurehead past-master: / each an Orpheus: dark walls toward / the torn away half of love and the world: / Orpheus in the traffic, in line at counters, / filing in triplicate, ducking the slogans, / darkness a neon . . . but here yet: / when you were torn to pieces you still sang.' And one—SYBARIS, the first of a SEASCAPES Series — stands alone, employing what may be called the 'Loy method:'

Charming asymmetries of the blue plane:
liaisoned in the sand, in the sweet salt pain,
they talk of the nymph-harem Proteus pulls,
and wallow beautiful polysyllables.

And likewise providing explanation of what was meant above by 'referentially.'

Numerous poets are doing valuable 'asides' on major trends. One is—not irrelevantly—an excellent translator: Guy Daniels (POEMS & translations, INFERNO PRESS, \$1.50). Not just a linguist, Daniels is a keen verse satirist, dealing with the 'social lies.' Such works are obvious—as are the relationships to this bent of the French and Russian poets he chooses. And fairly obvious, too, why his inner dissatisfactions (and uncertainties) cause him to hold mainly to traditional forms. However, it may be less clear that his own tiny output of poetry (as distinguished from verse) darkly manifests what appears at times a desperately avoided struggle to animadvert significantly upon world confusion. This is all present in POEM:

THE FLAUNTINGS OF THAT BLOODY FLOWER

in secret suburbs, asked a prayer
of motion without words. I saw
its whiteness was a lie, conceived
in ignorance of flowers. I breathed
its fragrance, felt through thorns its raw
velvet, and knelt to pray.

The flower

began, in slow weavings, a prayer
to match my own. The suburbs went
suddenly savage: pavements cracked
absurdly open; cars were sent
sprawling, and lay still on their backs
like dead cockroaches. The once blue
sky blackened. Floods came, and the hour
of death for all who had refused
sweet prayer with that bloody flower.

Among his Russian studies, Mr. Daniels must have read the littleknown Vsevolod Garshin's *THE SCARLET FLOWER*, dedicated to Turgenev (his nihilist portraits, no doubt); and, instead of conceiving himself as a martyr in destroying what Garshin described as 'the incarnation of all evil,' he surrenders to oncoming holocaust, and even suggests that by doing so, he may (accepting through prayer, the knowledge of fate) escape imminent Armageddon.

Another of Jonathan Williams' outstanding typographical presentations is *LETTERS* (Poems 1953-56), Robert Duncan (*JARGON*, \$8). And Mr. Duncan is yet-more confused — aesthetically, logically, and morally. If at a high level, this book chiefly reflects the frustrated searchings that characterise the art works of our time — and which often erroneously are declared prime indications of decadence, when in fact they are signs of hope. This poet holds a large store of knowledge, and has learned to think straighter than most of the more widely known and older writers. Yet, so far

as shown here, he remains insufficiently integrated to start to gain effective self-comprehension; his unusually supple ego only feigns repeated surrenders, which are little more than acknowledgments of projected surface dissatisfactions over what another part of him does recognise blocks the purposes he failed to centre upon. He does not come through for himself — not even as a partly-realised personality.

Little of the work shows undiluted influence of any other single personality, either — though it is loaded with takeoffs on (or from) dozens of others. Duncan outstandingly demonstrates only facile versatilities ‘in the manners of’ Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, etc. Flashingly. The reader keeps asking why this is so. And it doesn’t appear that Duncan even has propounded this fundamental question to himself! Quoting: ‘ . . . their deepest dark. / A derived poetry!’ He ‘confesses’ the entire error: ‘Set like a crying girl to sift cinders / out of old passions. For a first fire. / For a light in old age to burn in the skull / that lit youth’s loins? / Covetous brain! / But read further, read further. / Beloved Shakespeare, beloved Lao Tse, / beloved Virginia Woolf! / My heart is submerged as I read.’ . . .

Which selected literary bathos is not unfair — Duncan fails to practice restraint of sentiment. And one method he of course does not attempt is that of the concentrated multiple analogy, as in Mina Loy.

PERSONAL & IMPERSONAL

Provocation at least to healthy controversy is in *PERSONAL & IMPERSONAL*, 6 Aesthetic Realists (THE TERRAIN GALLERY, \$1.45, soft-covered, \$3, hardb.) — more than may be said for 90 per cent of such presentations. Eli Siegel, leader of this school, makes several statements about the nature of poetry, in an extended preface. Not a few are valid; but, besides that some are debatable, he says little about what poetry is not. And poetry is not mere statement, however poetical.

Over half these writings are poetic prose; and one of Mr. Siegel's assertions accounts for it: ' . . . life is repetitious; poetry is repetitious.' This is indefensible, aesthetically or philosophically. Poetry takes account of eternal change, and it springs from recognition that what is not everlastingly different is not life at all—but death . . . which is precisely what dogma embraces. Later Mr. Siegel shockingly declares that dogma 'can be pretty and salutary!'

This is depressing. While disinterestedly moved by admirable intentions, he gets muddled in rationalising a vague special kind of poetics. His '6 Aesthetic Realists' might gain readier praises, without Mr. Siegel's pedestrian 'illuminations' of each. And he patronises readers by 'writing down.' He is more intelligent than he tries to sound; and even some minds less keen than his may take umbrage at being seriously addressed as high-school frosh. Lucid simplicity may be a virtue; but artificially-simple lucidities of elementary enlightenment can be insulting, addressed to the types of persons likely to pick up such a book in the first place.

Louis Diennes' work vindicates the entire publication. Mr. Siegel rightly says Mr. Diennes has creative literary imagination; and this contribution comprises nearly all of the true poems here. Nancy Starrrels' subtle indirection lifts

hers above the general level—though hers are more impressions than vital poems, due to lack of internal oppositions and her frequent uses of obvious analogies. This last is not the trouble with pieces by Nat Herz—but the failure of convincingness in his analogies. He seems to have struggled too hard for farfetched contrasts; and he doesn't register the honest individuation conveyed, despite triteness, from Miss Starrrels' warm personality.

Walter Lowenfels (SONG OF PEACE, translations and arrangements of Eluard, Guillen, Horace, Lukenin, Mistral, Nezval, Tu Fu, with original blockprints by Anton Refregier—introduced by Linus Pauling—ROVING EYE PRESS, cloth, \$5, paperb., \$1.35) shows little of the Loy complexity. Yet, here, a mature poet who has found himself, makes protests sing. Often, in his own (there's just one in this book—a CODA) and in the inspired manner of arranging his selections here, a tight freshness is achieved. Designed by Martin Levitt, the volume's title comes from Vítězslav Nezval; verses from his poem of that name ring the refrains on pages featuring, besides from those mentioned above, a song from the Sioux, an adaptation from the French translation by Charles Dobzinsky of Nazim Hikmet's DON'T LET CLOUDS KILL OTHERS, and (in addition to Tu Fu) both Li Ling and Su Wu, used for A SOLDIER'S LOVE LETTERS. Nine large Refregier blockprints are separately presented — a tenth in the cover design. Lines from George Hitchcock are the preface.

Another unusual book, and with many translations (from the Yiddish), is CROSSING THE BORDERLAND, by Aaron Schmuller (VILLIERS — in U.S.A.: from the author, 935 Hancock St., Brooklyn 33, N.Y.). Both prose and poetry; and although the offering is not concentrated on protest as such, the problems of our unhappy age are recurrent themes. Among translations is DAYBREAK AT AUSCHWITZ, by Karol Cetynski, who suffered at Auschwitz. Twenty-one Jewish writers are represented, besides from the translator's own

newer work and a large section of an unpublished early book, *PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG POET*. Though such an abbreviated description may suggest it, this is not a 'special interest' publication, but covers Aaron Schmuller's broad range of involvements with literature. The dedication, significantly, is to the memory of Rexford W. Sharp, whose catholicity in editing *THE AMERICAN BARD* for twenty-two years uniquely served thousands thereby provided with an outlet for their creativities.

Four recommended items cannot be detailed in the remaining space. Herbert Schaumann's new translation of *ODYSSEUS AND CALYPSO* (OMNIBUS STUDIO ENTERPRISES, introduced by Edith Hamilton, drawings by Richard Hall) is a superb large boxed edition, unpriced and dated 1956 — but only just arrived. . . . Henry Miller's long-presaged *THE RED NOTEBOOK*, is an attractively-jacketed soft-back of photo-reproductions of pages made circa the 'air-conditioned nightmare' journey (*JARGON*, \$2.50). . . . And from the same, a similar production in *JARGON* 31, a brochure of holographs of fourteen poets, with Bob Brown drawings, had been mentioned in an earlier *TRACE* — now identified as *NEW YORK PORTFOLIO* (\$1). . . . A personal philosophical exploration in fantasy, nine prose-poem sequences, contains thoughts of Forrest Anderson while on sea duty: *IN THE FORESTS OF HELL AND OF HEAVEN* (PAN-GRAPHIC PRESS, 693 Mission St., San Francisco 5, Calif. — also via *CITY LIGHTS*, \$5, and with discounts to libraries).

Finally—not here, but published in London and to be reviewed this fall—a comprehensive selection of Felix Singer's prose ("as good as any I've done," he states), *THESE SEVENTEEN*, one essay and 16 stories (VILLIERS, but from author in U.S.A.: 1210 E. 53rd St., Chicago, Ill., \$3.50). . . . Same situation: *THE FLIGHT OF MR. SUN* by John Hart. Numerous sections of this have appeared in magazines in the past few years; and those whose interest has been

aroused should write the author at: (Apt. 6-D) 20-40 Seagirt Ave., Far Rockaway 91, N.Y. (\$1.75.)

Arrived just as typescript prepared for mailing!—another outstanding Tuli Kupferberg achievement in No. 2 BIRTH. This is a large fat collection of children's writings (current), a Little Anthology of same (with early bits from famous people, 'A Little Museum'—and with illustrations, facsimiles—most unusual (\$1, from: One Douglas Drive, Toronto 5, Can.).

ADDENDA . . .

A DEADLINE for submissions of 'formulations of aesthetic principles, critical evaluations of the current scene, free-swinging blasts at existing conditions, and manifestoes of general literary interest . . . to be accompanied by original creative works in demonstration or support of the stated theories' has been set for Oct. 15th, by Editor Anthony Linick, NOMAD. In a double issue, the editors are 'hopeful of presenting a controversial panorama of contemporary opinion, not with the idea of establishing a consensus, but with the hope that the sharing of ideas may lead to more fruitful endeavours.'

The element leading the Editor to feature this rises from knowledge that the little magazine of thirty years ago often had at its point of origin a closely knit and magnetic geographic community (reviews in Greenwich Village or by groups of Paris expatriates had semblances of community styles, derived from close interchanges and conscious strivings towards hoped-universal standards); but now, when the hemisphere can be spanned in less than a day, it's rather surprising that there are no widely respected national or international canons . . . the two old geographical centres maintain themselves without majority recognition, and centres of creativity are scattered far over the earth — in the New Mexico desert, the coastal villages of California, Tokyo, Tangiers — almost anywhere the lone poet has chosen to live.

Mr. Linick says: 'Isolated in a thousand apartments, the artist must often maintain standards set only by a quorum of one. This tendency toward separation is not entirely beneficial for art; for the interchange of ideas has always been a stimulus to creative activity. And the poet's organ of another era, the little magazine, must now often reflect

nothing more than a barren eclecticism. It is becoming increasingly difficult to point to trends in style, to single out men and women whose works can be considered profoundly influential.'

In Los Angeles, where there is little contact amongst creative people, the NOMAD editors are keenly sensitive to this problem; and their magazine has taken the same eclectic attitude described — to 'discover the best in modern poetry, regardless of school or style.' It therefore seems they are more than ordinarily aware of the paucity of discipline and focus which conceivably might even now be present in a community of authors, in the sense suggested above.

Also of general interest — if not to the public at large, to all who buy literary magazines and books, and to the often-impractical publishers of same — that scores of periodicals and small books are appearing with their prices lifted, but without many changes in their faces. See current Directory Supplement, etc. TRACE goes to 2/- and 40c., for all issues — annual subscription unchanged. Such boosts have lagged far behind actual cost rises.

Happy reversal (cash assistance, when Jonathan Williams announced a 'quondam future' list in last TRACE) means JARGON BOOKS series resumption. Meantime, CITY LIGHTS, ROVING EYE, HAWKS WELL PRESS . . . others have ambitious plans. . . . Just received — a HAWKS WELL Miniature (poems, new and old), first of several to be issued irregularly (25c.). . . . Announcement of THE WHITE RABBIT SERIES, from Joseph Dunn, 1211 Polk St., San Francisco 9 — featuring Jack Spicer's AFTER LORCA (\$1.50), and nine others, smaller (25c.), including Richard Brautigan, Denise Levertov, and Robert Duncan. . . . A new MINNESOTA PRESS series is of critical nature (Introductions to American Writers, \$1 ea.), the first three: Philip Young on Hemingway; Lawrence Thompson on Frost; William Van O'Connor on Faulkner.

‘Obscenity’ again aids letters: arbitrary U.S.P.O. seizure of THE BIG TABLE (No. 1). Court battle was reported in prospect, ensuing a hearing the outcome of which was unlikely to release the magazine.

Kenneth Patchen, the poet who was the ‘original’ of the contemporary Music-and-Poetry experiments, has borne straight ahead with his work in this field. Having appeared at several nightclubs in the North and in Canada, and again on radio and TV—also LIVING THEATER in New York—he recently resumed his work with jazz in the San Francisco Bay area, this time with the JAZZ V group, and augmented by FOUR SHINING TRUMPETS. New books and new recordings (FOLKWAYS) are soon to be forthcoming.

Not fitting any of our categories—yet, no doubt of interest to many readers—is the continuing publication of IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY (DOLMEN PRESS, 23 Upper Mt. St., Dublin, 8/6 or \$1.50 for four), and the last issue of which has a curious history of old houses on Henrietta St.... also, A PLEA FOR THE GATES, by Mark Bence-Jones.... Also somewhat afield—PENDLE HILL BULLETIN (April Issue, available on request), has a fine brief well-documented piece, SHARPENING THE SENSES, by Alexandra Docili, on the close relevance of poetry and other arts to the thought of the Friends.

News of various organisations includes a change of address for the organiser of CONTEMPORARY POETRY AND MUSIC CIRCLE, Alec Craig, now at: 4, Princes Court, Worsley Rd., London, N.W.3.... At St. Peter’s Hall, Oxford, a second conference on science and religion, 1st to 4th July, was declared the ‘ultimate school for editors and writers.’.... New Orlando, sessions (Greenwich Village Poetry Society, etc.) continue in New York; and under the combined auspices, some poetic drama is being produced in off-Broadway theatres.... A summer programme of readings at THE POETRY CENTER in San Francisco has included William Stafford and Theodore Roethke.... Louisiana State Poetry Society has

taken the initiative in endeavouring to form a loose national federation of state societies. Letters have been sent to key persons, and it is anticipated some definite action will be formulated on 12th Oct. at the Baton Rouge session.... The Biennial Convention of the National Catholic Theatre Conference (U.S.A.) was scheduled for St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, in mid-August.

Leading news on the Pacific Coast this summer was opening of the large new Los Angeles subscription radio (FM) station, KPFK. Programmes are to be 100 per cent cultural, and will include all branches of literature, and comprising a Radio Poetry Los Angeles, under supervision of Peter Yates.... British and French poets are reported contributing to the International Poets' Shrine at Paterson, N.J. (under supervision of Henry Picola—see SONNET SEQUENCES address). Autographed material, etc., solicited; and leading poets, both living and dead, are represented.... The usual HARPER & BROTHERS Prize Novel Contest opened for entries last June (closing date, June 1, 1960). It is open to others than U.S. citizens.

Changed addresses, new projects among the smaller presses, and other etcetera ensue: AUERHAHN PRESS—not at 1334 Franklin, San Francisco 9, Calif.; CARP PRESS, 461 Mississippi St., San Francisco 7; THE GUILD PRESS—mail has been returned; HEMLOCK PRESS, R.D., Alburtis, Pa., U.S.A. announces new Chapbook Series; Las AMERICAS PUBL. HOUSE, 249 W. 13th St., New York City; OMNIBUS STUDIO ENTERPRISES, 119 Central Ave., Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A.; POETS OF AMERICA PRESS, 373 W. 52 St., New York City 19; UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PRESS, Athens, Ga.—with works of more general lit. interest; WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, Detroit 2, Michigan; THE WHITE RABBIT PRESS, 1211 Polk St., San Francisco 9.

Among new miscellaneous forthcoming projects is that of a portfolio by Robert Vaughan, 'other ends than these,' to

include holographs, watercolours, and ink-drawings (\$12.50—made up, on order from: 228 East Ada, Glendora, Calif.). . . . And A NEW FOLDER—Americans: Poems and Drawings, with foreword by Wallace Fowlie, 128 pp, hardc., \$4.50—but a notice received at the last minute, unfortunately without an address!

New prose received or now available includes: THE CHARACTER OF A QUAKER, Henry J. Cadbury (PENDLE HILL, 35c.); THE LIGHT OF THE SOUL, Alice A. Bailey (new gift edit., LUCIS PUBL. CO., 11 W. 42nd St., N.Y.C. 36, \$6); FROM ONE TO ANOTHER, Norma Jacob (PENDLE HILL, 35c.); MYTHS & MEN, Bernard Mayo (U. of GA. PRESS, \$2.50); THE WRITER IN EXTREMIS, Walter H. Sokel (STANFORD U. PRESS, \$5); WORDS & LINES, F. N. Souza (VILLIERS, 11/6, £3. 3. 0 for ltd. signed edit.); THE METAMORPHOSIS OF DON JUAN, Leon Weinstein (STANFORD U. PRESS, \$5). Also received was OF TIME AND ETERNITY, Charles Cryer (GREENWICH, \$2.50).

Current new poetry of note: CONTEMPORARY OHIO POETRY, ed. by George Abbe (POETS OF AMERICA, \$5); onions and cucumbers and plums, 46 Yiddish poems transl. by Sarah Zweig Betsky (WAYNE STATE U., \$5); LAY THE MARBLE TEA, Richard Brautigan (CARP, 75c.) I FEED YOU FROM MY CUP, Hans Juergensen (Privately: 140 Cottage St., New Haven 11, Conn., \$1.50); EKSTASIS, Philip Lamantia (AUERHAHN, \$1.50). Other poetry received: COLONEL JOHNSON'S RIDE Etc., Robert Huff (WAYNE STATE U., \$2.75); PRAIRIE CHILD, Paul Scott Mowrer (WISCONSIN POETRY MAG, \$1); 1958 POETS OF AMERICA ANTHOLOGY (P. of A. PRESS, \$4); THE WAYWARD QUEEN, George Walton (CONTACT PRESS, \$1.50). And finally: an unpriced item titled THE BOOK COUNSELLOR, Proverbs of Living Wisdom, poems transl. from Johannes Theophilus—and queries on which should go to: Meidoornlaan 19, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.