

A CHRONICLE OF LIVING LITERATURE

●
AGAINST OBSCURITY

Marcel Proust

●

MAR - APR 1960

36

2/- 40c

JAMES BOYER MAY

TRACE

EDITOR

TRACE

No. 36

Living Literature

Essays & Articles · Poetry · Reviews

MAR - APR 1960

Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

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.

CONTENTS

Obscurity*	5
<i>Against</i>	5
Note by the Translator	12
Towards Print	14
<i>(Teeming Prints — in U.S.A. Perspective)</i>	14
The International Guide	20
The Chronicle	21
Editors (and others) Write	27
Clarence Major (the Coercion Review)	29
The Fifties	31
<i>Third Issue</i>	31
The German War Novel	32
The Illusion	40
YOU	53
<i>In the World of Books and Ideas</i>	54
Third Rose . . . and Art by Subtraction.	56
Paragraphs	69

Addenda	70
-------------------	----

ISSUE P. 1 · SCAN P. 3

MARCEL PROUST

OBSCURITY*

AGAINST

‘Do you belong to the young school?’ is a question directed to every twenty-year-old student who writes, by every gentleman of fifty who does not. ‘I haven’t formed an idea about it personally, but I imagine you would really have to spend a good deal of time arriving at one . . . Furthermore, there has never been more talent about; nowadays, nearly everyone is talented.’

In trying to isolate in contemporary literature a few aesthetic truths that I am all the more sure to find because trying to deny them admits to their presence, I know I am going to be accused of taking the part of the fifty-year-old gentleman before my time: nevertheless, I shall not use his type of language. In effect, I am convinced that, as with all mysteries, Poetry can never be entirely penetrated without an expenditure of time and effort; in addition, one must be one of the chosen. As for talent, which has never been a common commodity, it would seem there has rarely been less than at the present time. Of course, if talent consists of a certain pervasive rhetoric that teaches how to compose ‘free verse’ as another rhetoric once taught how to write ‘Latin verse,’ whose ‘princesses’ and ‘melancholic moods,’ whose female figures ‘leaning’ or ‘smiling’ can be appreciated by everyone, then it may be said that today everyone has talent. But such terms are useless shells, sonorous and empty, bits of rotted wood or rusted metal left on the beach after the waters have receded, and which, if he wishes, the first come may take, to the extent that the passage of time has not carried them off. But what can one do with rotted wood, often the remains of a beautiful ancient fleet —

unrecognisable reflexion of Chateaubriand or of Hugo.

But it is time to come to the error in the area of aesthetics which it is my intention to point out here and which seems to strip so many original young men of talent, if, in effect, talent is more than originality of temperament. I mean the ability to reduce an original temperament to expressing itself within the general laws of art, and in language's permanent essence. This ability is certainly lacking in many, but others, sufficiently endowed to acquire it, systematically seem not to claim it as theirs. In literature, can one justify the resulting twofold obscurity in their works, obscurity of ideas and images on one hand and grammatical obscurity on the other? I shall try to examine this question here.

**CONTRE L'OBSCURITE, translated from the French by Christopher Waters, whose bibliographical and historical notes, together with comments, ensue this essay.*

*

Young poets (in prose or poetry) would probably offer a preliminary argument, in order to elude my question.

'Our obscurity,' they might tell us, 'is the same obscurity for which Hugo was reproached, or Racine for that matter. In language, all that is new is obscure. And how could language be new, if thought and feeling are not the same? In order to remain alive, language must change apace with thought, must yield its own new needs, as the feet of water birds become webbed. A great scandal to those who had only ever seen birds walk or fly; but, once the stage in evolution has been completed, one smiles at the thought that it once could have shocked. Some day, the fact that we astonish you will be the surprising thing, as today we are all astonished by the insults with which classicism on the wane greeted romanticism's beginnings.'

That is what the young poets would tell us. But we, first thanking them for these ingenious words, would say in return: 'Desirous no doubt to avoid talk of euphemism, you

have played on the word “obscurity,” in ascribing to your own a long and noble genealogy. To the contrary, your sort of obscurity is quite recent in the history of letters. It is something else again than the astonishment, and, if you will, the uneasiness which Racine’s first tragedies and Victor Hugo’s first odes succeeded in causing. Now, because I am conscious that the laws of the universe are both necessary and constant (which forbids my imagining, in a childish way, that the world is going to change according to my personal desires) I cannot believe that, if the conditions for real art are suddenly modified, masterpieces will be now what they have never been throughout the ages : close to unintelligible.’

*

But the young poets might answer :

‘You are surprised that the master is obliged to explain his ideas to his disciples; but is this not what has always happened in the history of Philosophy, the simple philosophic systems having left no trace, whereas the Kants, the Spinozas, the Hegels, as obscure as they are profound, can be penetrated only with great difficulty. You are probably mistaken about the nature of our poems: they are not fantasies, they are systems.’

The novelist who stuffs his novel with philosophy, thereby making it assume an unestimable worth in the eyes of philosophers and literary men, does not commit an error more dangerous than the one I have just ascribed to the young poets, an error which they have not only put into practice, but established as theory.

They forget, as such a novelist forgets, that if the prose writer and the poet can, in effect, go as deeply into the reality of things as the metaphysician himself, it is by another route, and that the aid of reason, far from strengthening them, paralyses the burst of feeling which alone may carry them to the heart of existence. MACBETH is not, in its own way, a philosophy by means of any philosophic method, but

rather by some sort of instinctive force inherent in it. Even to the mind of one who throws more and more light onto its meaning, the essence of such a work, like the very essence of life—which it reflects—must remain obscure.

But this is a completely different kind of obscurity, rewarding to investigate; and it would be senseless to make access to it impossible through obscurity in language and style.

Since he does not speak to our logical faculties, the poet cannot profit from the privilege possessed by every profound philosopher—that of seeming at first obscure. But, if he should try to be, all the same, without succeeding in being metaphysical—which which requires another rigorous, definite type language—he ceases to be poetical as well.

Since we are told that the language cannot be separated from the idea, we shall profit from this by pointing out here that if a philosophy with fairly scientific terms must speak a special language, poetry cannot. Words are not pure signs for the poet. The symbolists probably will be the first to grant us that what each word retains, in its appearance and harmony, of the charm of its origin and the grandeur of its past, has an evocative power over our imagination and emotions which is at least as great as the impact of its dictionary meaning. It is these ancient and mysterious affinities between our mother tongue and our emotions which, instead of producing a conventional language, such as foreign tongues are, create out of the word a sort of latent music which the poet can cause to resound within us with an incomparable sweetness. He adds new life to a word by using it in an old way, he reawakens forgotten memories between two separate images, and at any moment he may cause us to breathe with delight the alluring fragrance of one's native land. This is what holds for us the native charm of French speech — which seems to mean today the speech of Mr. Anatole France, since he is one of the very few who

wish, or know how to, still make use of it. The poet surrenders all claims to that almost irresistible power of awakening all the Sleeping Beauties within each one of us if he speaks a language we do not recognise, in which the adjectives, if not incomprehensible (at least too new to mean anything to us) follow untranslatable adverbs in proposals which seem translated from another language. With the help of your special glosses, perhaps I would be able to understand your poem as I would a theorem or riddle. But poetry requires a little more mystery, and you shall not have produced the poetic impression, a completely instinctive and spontaneous phenomenon.

*

I shall barely allude to the third reason that the poets might put forth. I speak of the intrinsic interest of obscure ideas or sensations, which are more difficult, but also rarer, than clear and more usual sensations.

Whatever truth this theory may contain, it is only too evident that if obscure sensations are more interesting to the poet, it is on condition that he clarify them. If he scours the night, let it be as the Angel of Darkness, by bringing it to light.

Finally, I reach the argument most often invoked by the obscure poets in defense of their obscurities, namely the desire to protect their work against the common herd. But in this matter the common herd does not seem to be where one might think it to be. He who conceives of a poem in so naively-material a manner as to believe that it may be reached by means other than thought and feeling (and if the common herd could gain access to it in such a way it would cease to be so called) has exactly the crude, infantile idea of poetry for which the multitude is reproached. Consequently, this precaution against the common herd can in no way help a literary work. Every look backward to a popular audience, either flattering it through writing in a simple way, or baffling

it by writing obscurely, has always caused the divine archer to miss his target. His work will pitilessly retain traces of his desire to please or displease the crowd, desires mutually mediocre, which, alas! will enthrall second-rate readers.

May I also say about symbolism, which, in brief, is the main consideration here, that in claiming to neglect the 'accidents of time and space' in order to show us only eternal truths, it slights another law of life, which is to achieve the universal or eternal, but only in individuals. In literary works, as in life, men, general types though they may be, must also be strongly individual (cf. *WAR AND PEACE*, *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS*), and one can say of such characters, as of each of us, that it is when they are most themselves that they re-create most fully the essence of universality.

Therefore, symbolicist works run the risk of being not only deficient in life, but, because of this first shortcoming, deficient in depth as well. Furthermore, if, instead of appealing to the intelligence, their 'princesses' and 'knights' offer a meaning which is vague and difficult of perception, the poems, which should be living symbols, are no more than cold allegories.

Let poets derive more of their inspiration from nature, where, if the basic meaning of everything is one and obscure, the form of everything is individual and clear. With the secret of life, she will teach them to disdain obscurity. Does nature hide the sun from us, or the thousands of stars that shine undisguised, glittering and indecipherable, into the eyes of nearly everyone? Does not nature bring us into harsh, physical contact with the power of the sea and the west wind? Her gift to each man during his stay on earth, is his ability to express the profoundest mysteries of life and death. And these mysteries, because of this, penetrated by the common herd, despite the vigorous and expressive language of the desires, of the muscles, of suffering, of rotting, florid flesh. And I should cite especially, since it is nature's most

artistic moment, moonlight nights, when for initiates alone, though the moon may shine so gently upon everyone, for so many centuries, nature has constantly created light from obscurity and played its silent music for certain ears.

Such are the remarks that I think it useful to make, in regard to contemporary poetry and prose. Their severity on young writers — and the more one likes them, the more one would like to see them doing a better job — would have made the remarks seem more appropriate coming from an old man. May their frankness be excused, perhaps a more commendable quality in a young man.

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR

Christopher Waters

AGAINST OBSCURITY (CONTRE L'OBSCURITE) first appeared in print in the July, 1896, issue of LA REVUE BLANCHE. Proust had already placed other items there, but none during the thirty months directly preceding the publication of AGAINST OBSCURITY, presumably because the review began to cater more and more to a type of literature objectionable to him. The article was reprinted in 1927 in CHRONIQUES, a collection of some of his journal pieces.

After accepting his article, the REVUE BLANCHE editors asked their colleague, Lucien Muhlfeld, a naturalist novelist, to write a rebuttal. It would appear that Proust did not know that he was due to be rebutted, much less in the very issue in which his own article was to appear. Also, it is not clear under whose initiative he submitted an article attacking decadents, to a review manned by them.

Muhlfeld produced a prolix (an adjective with which Proust is often taxed) article twice the length of Proust's, ON CLARITY (SUR LA CLARTE), and if it seems that some of Proust's foes are more in his mind than out, Muhlfeld sins much more in this area. In regard to the chevalresque language Proust disdains, according to Muhlfeld it represented a temporary but perhaps necessary stage in the evolution of decadent or symbolist poetry. Muhlfeld's counter-attack, when it is distinguishable, claims that the literature Proust criticises was intelligible, and that contemporary audiences were far more literate than those of any previous age: 'difficult' literature was not so difficult for them. It may seem odd that the naturalist Muhlfeld saw fit to defend symbolist and decadent poetry formally. Naturalism, however, is not in essence antithetical to decadence and symbolism.

Proust's maximum praise of Anatole France is remindful of how the narrator of *REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST* is described by the Baron de Norpons as a 'half-hysterical flatterer.' There is perhaps a connection between the compliment in question and the fact that 1896 also marks the appearance of Proust's first published volume, *LES PLAISIRS ET LES JOURS*, which was enhanced with a preface signed by the grand man himself (though some say it was really written by France's mistress, Mme. Caillavet).

In July 1896, Proust turned twenty-five, and he was of course much more naïve than the polished, mature author of *REMEMBRANCE*, the first part of which was not to see print for almost two decades. He is indeed still obviously under the spell of his amazing conquest of Parisian high society, and Muhlfeld, in effect, accuses him of being their spokesman. One has but to examine *REMEMBRANCE* for the remarks about literature that Proust places satirically in the mouths of his nobles, to see that Muhlfeld is correct. Where he possibly is wrong is in supposing Proust as birdbrained as the eagles he was flying with in 1896.

The article has further historical interest, in that it shows Proust's reaction against the literature of his day, a reaction which, just or not, served as one of the main catalysts of his own unique masterpiece. It was probably that very year that he began what bears the title *JEAN SANTEUIL*, the preliminary work that acted as a sounding board for much of the beauty, the thought, and the details of *REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST*.

TOWARDS PRINT

by Gil Orlovitz

(TEEMING PRINTS — IN U.S.A. PERSPECTIVE)

CLARENCE MAJOR's letter in this issue advocates what TRACE's Editor facetiously once called the philosophy of the fence-loose and footsie-free. Someone had inquired whether endorsement of individual expression meant that every poet should publish his own magazine; and Mr. Major hails exactly this notion, in a sense also radically affirming another TRACE pronouncement: that the competitive principle doesn't apply in the arts.

Before suggesting why the ultimate in poetical anarchism would be self-defeating, other portions of the letter should be noted. Mr. Major rhetorically asks whether continued discussion of a 'beat generation' is important, asserting what 'does not exist in actuality' should be recognised 'as the myth it is.' Accepting burgeoning little magazines in America as events-in-reality, he inconsistently denies (through dubious use of the word 'myth') reality to beat-generation publicity. The Editor's exceptions to Mr. Major's arguments are not based on any contention that beat-nikism is in fact anything except a semantical gag (see FLIPPING THE COIN(AGE) in TRACE 34), but on a conviction that thousands of lines of alleged poetry in little mags no more signify 'existences' of so many Poets than LIFE's photo-spreads and TIME's ill-cooked articles prove there's a 'beat generation.'

Our correspondent's declarations about style-as-manifestation are sound; but their very applications confuse his other ideas! How could he, in the light of this wisdom, maintain that over a tiny percentage of writings already comprised in already-teeming prints testify to poetically-significant personalities? And TRACE's Editor does

believe individual freedom vital to the diversification which is life, against group tendencies toward uniformity, standardisation, and self-perpetuating rituals. There's great need, too, for overstatement of the case for creative writing. But unlimited births of little magazines? After all, there can be too much of any good thing!

And a fundamental law of life itself is involved: life is predicated on death, the essential opposite counter for resistance. Without death, how could there be life? Major's dream would bring chaotic finis to meaningful individuality, which would lose abstract definition, lacking well-defined traditions and organised conservatisms to resist.

The TRACE purpose in attacking developments which had closed outlets for imaginatively-different writings, and in seeking out and aiding smaller presses and magazines, never had been (as Major words it) to 'put poetry back into the streets' or to instil poetry into the 'mind of the people' (a pretty questionable concept), or even to try to 'improve the American mind' (a yet-more questionable concept). The purpose has been to help preserve leavening elements.

From the hundreds of writers of recent decades, few may justify their innovations, either temporarily or historically. And, in retrospect, the literary historians often appear to have been as important as their subjects; TRACE has provided a recording-place for dissidents amongst them. No radical alteration of policy's direction is intended; however — since participants in flux must change continuously, the 'Trace line' changes too. The balance no longer seems overweighted against individual creativities. Though commercial houses may be less open than ever to new writers, in the U.S.A. (see No. 35's editorial by Gil Orlovitz), the outlets through little magazines and small publishers are unprecedented. Social man still may maintain the advantage over Personal Man, and Everyman still be threatened by conformities; but in this area, the balance has been tipped

the other way. If attention is not directed to integrities of the purposes behind the experimentations, a disintegrative promiscuity may result.

Consideration also should be given actually effectiveness of circulations as such. All circulations by no means are consequential. In truth, enlarged 1959 circulations may have weakened several of the livelier independent magazines (those in Britain mostly excepted). Editors have waxed audience-conscious and fallen to selecting material by scales from the rules of the big-magazine editors who must maintain mass-circulations for advertisers. And births of new periodicals have been less and less jubilantly celebrated, occurring at shorter and shorter intervals. Accelerated production from smaller presses everywhere throughout America, appears to have caused a jam of avant-logs where the garde got stuck, until appreciative attention can't be focused.

Super-abundant new writers are bringing varied confusion rather than stimulating varieties. Many in fact offer nothing new; and genuine talents are as frustratingly obscured as when there were no teeming offbeat prints. Too much of the stuff patently is meaningless; and percipient reader-minorities become distracted — and disgusted.

The adverse results from what indeed begins to be too much of too many doubtfully 'good things' are reflected in articles by reactionaries. Their frequently warranted attacks upon the avant garde are turning readers back toward conservatism. Progressive editors and independent critics should tighten discriminative belts. And, rather than added outlets, maybe there should be fewer. Amongst those already present — on the American scene, at any rate — hearings may be obtained for virtually any kinds of neoteric endeavours.

Numerous articles of the type mentioned are current. Last December, John Wilcock (in some ways, a quite liberal

columnist for THE VILLAGE VOICE, one larger-circulation medium which long has granted space to offbeat comment) declared: ‘... the worst fate that could happen to an otherwise competent writer is when he channels his energies into what are commonly known as “the little magazines,” of which from any point of view — aesthetic or economic — there are far too many.’ His concluding large grain of truth diverts attention from the non sequitur: transition from an undefined ‘worst fate’ to allegations in re ‘misguided’ little-mag ‘choked expression.’ The last is likewise unsubstantiated. He quotes from the PROVINCETOWN ANNUAL; but the force of this illustration is negated by Wilcock’s own exemplification of clumsy journalese! And yet — impressed by an obviously good argument — few may note Columnist Wilcock’s dangling phrases and meandrous (while not profound enough to be abstruse) sentences.

Whether little-magazine authors are or are not, in the aggregate, torturing language more scandalously than such columnists and the feature writers for big magazines, is beside the issue. The crux may be suggested through another approach — a reference to David Rafael Wang’s letter in TRACE 35: he opposes cultural desegregation, in effect contending that vital differentiating surges would be mutually lost in a vast heterogeneous melting-pot . . . ‘to dissolve into uniformity.’ Just so, eclecticism becomes non-existent amidst such a profusion of individually different (while not genuinely individualised) contributions in the profusion of little magazines. Significant choices are revealed to have been nearly impossible. Amidst these trends, this Editor also has been guilty — of misusing the word ‘eclectic,’ by applications to some miserable hodgepodes, not correctly restricting it to how-varied selections of literary materials recognisably gathered to ascend some hoped height.

In general relation to human activities, the main issue may further be clarified by analysing the balance between

‘survival struggle’ and ‘progressive diversification’—between purposive concentrated exercises of tried functions and trials of modifications and alternatives. Widespread symptoms indicate that the balance is weighted toward the latter.

Notes for another article observe the world’s expanding population: that, while many more old men endure than in past generations, Wise Old Men remain rare. Which nudged the query: If ‘wise-man’ candidates (by superficial deduction) are dying young, ought not their incipient sagacities be doubted? But, an apparent paucity of sages in these proliferating populations may evidence—not that the wise are dying young—simply the failure of proportionate increase in numbers of potential savants. Of course, there is the argument that increasing numbers of elders aren’t preserved by their own wisdoms, but by improved medical care provided by their societies; and yet, it still would seem—by accepted logic—that larger populations should produce more Wise Old Men.

This leads to a speculation by no means irrelevant, as may first appear: that Man, through excessive division, multiplying individual men, may have exceeded his expansion-potential for bettering intelligence in the biosphere, the comprehensive terrestrial Life. If so, the percentages of intelligent individuals certainly would shrink. Increases in nervous debilities throughout mankind—and much else—may be explained by this.

Applied to literary production, and especially to the teeming little-mag prints,—just as statistical studies have not demonstrated that preservation of more persons sick in mind and/or body has been offset by occasional preservation of otherwise-lost genius, mere quantities of works seem unjustified by a few possibly otherwise-lost pieces of literature. Applicability to little magazines is enhanced, because—unlike proliferating cheap novels or sensational tabloids—these have their *raison d’être* in hoped

strengthening of literary vitality. Numerous available studies indicate no more talented individuals bud from big family trees than from those of fewer progeny. May not the little-mag family have grown too large? The studies of people show that percentages of incidence of talent actually drop lower than numerical ratios suggest.

Argument that better opportunities may be open to persons from small families—enjoying, as they do, better individual attention—seems not to invalidate the significances of the foregoing. For, besides that statistics are available for comparisons between individuals with like cultural opportunities, a bit of investigation of the backgrounds of famous persons shows that ‘advantages’ of pampered childhoods are not frequently found. Obviously then, this factor really works against percentages favouring small families, amongst which, on the average, individual children possess economic advantage. Little-magazine history reveals a disproportionately large part of more valuable contributions in the field have been made by half-starved members at intervals when the little-mag family was decimated.

At present, TRACE consequently is not advocating increased little-mag progeny. Surely not a magazine for every poet! Evidence is that added and ever-added outlets will prove as deleterious to literature as the world’s population-explosion is threatening to Man’s total welfare. Needed today, are better discriminatory judgements amongst more finicky editors. And enough different editors with enough different approaches — worthy of approval or not — already are functioning to ensure that reactionaries cannot soon smother worthy talents. Hearings are available. The immediate threat is from too many being heard — so many, that worthiest talents soon may be lost in pandemonium.

THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE

A new annual created to fill the needs of writers, librarians, students and little magazine readers.

Listing detailed data on approximately 400 literary and art magazines published around the globe — summarizing content, editorial policy, writer information, editor biography, cost per copy, etc.

Featuring the story behind the University of Wisconsin's purchase of the Sukov Collection of Little Magazines by Felix Pollak; James Boyer May's *The Non-Definitude of Art*; and David Gunston's *The Art of Reading Aloud*.

\$1.00 per copy — The International Guide — P.O. Box 1068 — Hollywood 28, California — U.S.A.

Europe — Great Britain — 5/- per copy — The International Guide — Villiers Publications — Ingestre Rd. — Tufnell Park — London, N.W.5, England.

THE CHRONICLE

... of new periodicals and presses, important plans, changes, removals, and suspensions ... since preparation of TRACE No. 35 ... for use in conjunction with the current INTERNATIONAL GUIDE and the final 1959 listing of the presses.

ALTHOUGH neither an art nor a literary magazine in itself, ACTIVITIES (P.O. Box 696, San Bruno, Calif.) subtitled 'leisure time,' contains book reviews, data on discussion groups, and much about music and theatre, besides to list (only) California art galleries, and to discuss cinema, food and various beverages. A monthly, edited by John McCreary, it is priced at 35c.... A few complaints in re late reports on mss. have been accumulating — with somewhat blasting references to AUDIENCE (Mass.)... BETWEEN WORLDS, edited by Gilbert Neiman for Inter-American U., San German, Puerto Rico, W.I. is due in spring with 1st issue containing Herbert Read, Henry Miller, and other 'names' along with young West Indies writers — and in 6 languages.... The AUERHAHN PRESS, announcing Philip Lamantia's NARCOTICA (75c), refers — as have a number of the magazines and other presses — to national bookstore distribution (U.S.A.) via PAPER EDITIONS Corp.... These include CITY LIGHTS — releasing the ANTI-POEMS of Nicanor Parra soon after appearance of this issue of TRACE. Kenneth Patchen's MEMOIRS OF A SHY PORNOGRAPHER is available again from this source (\$1.75), as well as several other reprints and new editions, making available nearly the entire list of pocketbooks under this imprint. And a new BREAD AND PRESS (501 Greenwich St., San Francisco) is to publish a poets series.

CONCERN is advertised as 'a magazine of dynamic poetry' — a bi-monthly, the first issue of which was dated Dec. 1959. Priced 1/8 per copy, this may be ordered from 34 Essex St., Oxford, Engl.... THE CORDUROY PATCH is no longer

publishing.... Mail recently addressed to COUNTERPOINT has been returned, marked: 'removed to address unknown.'... The former CUMMINGTON PRESS has consolidated with THE STONE WALL PRESS (see below, for more details)... Although no announcements of new releases had been received as this was written, THE DEAD LANGUAGE editor, Piero Heliczer, reports transfer of operations to : La Picaudiere, St. Jean la Foret, Canton de Nocé, Orne, France.... Another new periodical (as yet unexamined) is DEUCE, St. Anne's Cottages, St. Anne's Terr., Cheltenham—announced as a monthly printing 'poetry and general.' . . . Former address/es remain valid, but mss. for ENVOI should go to: W. H. Boore, 6 Beauchamp Ave. Leamington Spa. This magazine now has assumed letterpress format, expanded through additional financial support, and states further prize awards in prospect. Price per copy is 2/-; \$1 for 3 copies is suggested as more convenient from overseas.

Freelance submissions (but no payment) are solicited by EXTRA VERSE, 80 Sutton Oak Rd., Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire. This one sells for 8d. . . . Returned from the hinterlands to the vicinity of its origin is GOLDEN GATE—another issue received from: Box 982, San Francisco 1, Calif. . . . GRAPHIC ARTPRESS (a periodical), mentioned as having been planned, has materialised (Eastern Washington College, Cheney, Wash., U.S.A.). . . . Reported 'now inactive' is the (Texas) GUSHER.

One of the most interesting new American magazine projects promises to be that of August Derleth (ARKHAM HOUSE, Sauk City, Wisc. editor). Titled HAWK & WHIPPOORWILL (Poems of Man and Nature), stress will be along lines the subtitle suggests; however, Mr. Derleth writes: 'Not any twittery jingles or bathetic pieces' will be welcomed. Payment is to be in contributor-copies—semi-annual, to start, perhaps quarterly later—50c per copy and \$2 for four.

Charles Broad, head of Typefounders, Inc., writes concerning his 'hobby' HOUSE OF DINGBATS (P.O. Box 11313, Phoenix, Arizona), stating he operates his own open C. & P.—though chiefly for personal purposes and contributing to NAPA and APA. Rather than printing, he offers varied 'ding-bats'—which is to say 'furniture' to other printers; and through the corporation, fine foundry types—Antique, a speciality.

The No. 1 of KALEIDOSCOPE, a quarterly journal with a preference for poetry, arrived from Melbourne, Australia at the close of December. P. Brian Cox, who acted as overseas editor of this issue (specially edited by Cyril E. Goode), will edit the second issue in entirety. 'Acceptable poems may be traditional or experimental in form, but should present society with a definite challenge. Mss. will be reported on within a week of receipt, only if accompanied by correct r.p. etc.' writes Dr. Cox. No payment—articles or fiction not sought. 2/6 per copy is asked—or 35c from Canada and U.S.A. Address, as originally announced.

Noted as publishing some contemporary Canadian fiction of noncommercial sorts, is: KLANAK PRESS, 613 Rayside Ave, North Burnaby, B.C. . . . LE PETIT SPHINX has not appeared in some while, and has not answered correspondence. ARTPRESS — name so prefixed, and current issue shown as a 'No. 1,' to distinguish the series from GRAPHIC ARTPRESS (see above).

Another new large review is appearing from the University of Massachusetts (THE MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW, U. of Mass., Amherst, etc.). This one appears somewhat academically weighted, and with New England emphasis (\$1.25 per copy) . . . Publications of poetry books are announced by NINE (as a press, at the Fairwarp, Nr Uckfield, Sussex address). And back issues of the magazine may be had for 75c (to overseas). . . . NOMAD's special double-number of poets' credos, along with their own selections of samples of their works (Nos. 5-6), was through its prenatal period just as this

was written. Publication scheduled for a couple of weeks after TRACE 36 (\$1 — to : Box 626, Culver City, California). . . . NONPLUS (1 Wilton Place, Dublin, Ireland) is the enigmatic name of a new general review edited by Patricia Murphy. It is priced at an approximate 75c on present exchange in various currencies.

Announcing a wide variety of creative materials, and 'even radio and TV' (but no reviews or essays of criticism) is the new PRISM, 3492 West 35 Ave., Vancouver 13, B.C., Canada (\$3.50 per annum, only). . . . The previously-announced PULSE (Chicago, Ill.) not only has not appeared here, but mail has been returned, unclaimed. . . . Another new one is RAVEN, 1025 N. Sheridan, Memphis, Tenn., U.S.A. . . . Considerable slowness in handling mss. has been indicated of RECUERDO. . . . STAND (founded in 1952) has been announced to be revived in February, from: 144 Otley Road, Leeds, 16, Jon Silkin wrote: 'I felt then (in 1952) as now, that I lived in a society marked by its casual indifference to the individual and his suffering. . . . A facile orthodoxy of language and a wish to be entirely original, both are insensitive; both evade the responsibilities of the writer. But the desire to create values, where there are none — this is something different.' The magazine was to sell for 2/6 (or 65c) per copy, 10/- (\$2.50) per year. The new STUDIES ON THE LEFT (see TRACE 35) was just received — and well justifies its announcements (priced 85c).

THE STONE WALL PRESS (ensuing the CUMMINGTON consolidation noted above) has issued a luxurious list of all remaining stocks of books under the retiring imprint. This includes works by Allen Tate, Francis Golffing, William Carlos Williams, R. P. Blackmur, James Feibleman, Harvey Shapiro, and others. Featured (and with a sample page of its outstanding typography) is VALENTINES TO THE WIDE WORLD by Mona Van Duyn, illustrated by Fred Becker, in an edition limited to 180 numbered copies, bound in full linen, and

much else (1959 — \$10). The important coming book from STONE WALL is THE COLLECTED POEMS OF WELDON KEES, with preface by Donald Justice (details later). Address : 1819 G Street, Iowa City, Ia.

TARGETS, Casabuelo, Sandia Park, New Mexico (50c per copy) is described by Editor W. L. Garner : ‘. . . we publish only poetry . . . no restrictions on form or content. We wish to belong to no “school,” and we hope to show a distinct preference for new or relatively new poets. We also have no desire to be local, either in contributors or aspect.’ ‘As yet,’ it seems, there is no pay for contributors. First issue was duplicated, but print is promised. . . . TOMORROW (of Keble College, Oxford) has increased its price to 1/3 per copy — and was announced as a continuing series by Editors Ian Hamilton and Susil Pieris. This reader was mildly dismayed to see that, despite emphasis on poetry and intended poetry in No. 2, this number comprised works definitely indicative of tendencies to imitate some San Francisco eruptions — and ‘postkeyed’ in this bent by a mixed parody of indeterminate intentions, except that it closed with a direct reference to Allen Ginsberg.

Although the outlook for 21st CENTURY has become so drab that this outstanding experimental Australian periodical should be noted as at least temporarily suspended, its editor, Harry Hooton, has issued DIRECTION-1960 for subscribers — well worth a few shillings or a dollar to those who will prize an unusual selection from this modern thinker. The address is : Box 3015, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W. Besides new work and reprints of his choice, the booklet contains extracts from THE INHUMAN RACE (‘Oh Manity of manity, all is manity’—which Hooton readers never forget). Cards for the future all may not be down, but this Editor is certain the lively anarchistic philosopher will score, and score again. . . . From 97 Little Park St., Coventry, it appears there’s something called

UMBRELLA — protection against what rain remains unstated, varied articles, criticisms, stories, poetry, and travel items (2/- per copy). . . . And VIEWS, formerly noted from Washington, D.C., mysteriously is again present at Louisville, Kentucky (Box 34, Zone 8). A huge new No. 2 of Vol. V has arrived with some not-too-goodies. And yet, it does contain nearly 100 percent of creative endeavours; and that is something. Another commendable thing : the 'RE : VIEWS' of a wide range of books have been pared down to modest thumbnails.

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

CHARLES BUKOWSKI (former HARLEQUIN editor): 'Anyone can be an editor, but not everyone should be. The least these fly-by-nighters, who mostly have money dreams and dreams of under-the-counter recognition by fellow (?) editors, could do is to return submissions. You list them in TRACE, and we send—many of us not egotistical enough to keep carbons. Or energetic enough. How cold can a man or woman be, simply to wastebasket poetry sent in good faith, with return postage and envelope? And this is not an ordinary occurrence, it is a continuous one.

Furthermore, many of the editors of so-called avant-gardes, besides racking one with delays of years in actual publication or, finally, no publication at all, except (during this yawn of nothingness) an exchange of correspondence and ideas and general b.s.,—and often, when not coinciding with their thought-patterns, a return of accepted material ensues.

I have often taken the isolationist stand that all that matters is the creation of the poem, the pure art form. What my character is or how many jails I have lounged in, or wards or walls or wassails, how many lonely-heart poetry readings I have dodged—all this is beside the point. A man's soul or lack of it will be evident with what he can (or can't) carve upon a white sheet of paper. And if I can see more poetry in the Santa Anita stretch or drunk under the banana tree than in a smoky room of lavender rhyming, that is up to me; and only time will judge which climate was proper,—not some jackass second-rate editor afraid of a printer's bill and trying to ham it on subscriptions and coddling contributors. If the boys are trying to make a million, there's always the market, the lonely widows, or the John Dillinger approach.

‘Let’s not find out some day that Dillinger’s poetry was better than ours and that the KENYON REVIEW was right. Right now, under the banana tree, I’m beginning to see sparrows where I once saw hawks; and their song is not too bitter for me.’

Parm Mayer (a teaching writer):

‘Could TRACE do something to encourage editors (God bless’m) to refold poems separately (especially if folded thus and so requested), thereby reducing permanent waves in one or more pages?

‘One doesn’t necessarily fold three or four poems in a packet, immediately prior to sending. Often they are from separate ‘packets’ and hence folded in different-sized thirds.

‘Or, is this unreasonable to request?

*I am assuming, of course, that editors (God bless
’em again)*

*read TRACE with more regularity and sanctity than
they do my
to-enclose-or-not notes.*

‘With malice toward none.’

(In reply to the fourth paragraph of this letter: No — the magazine editors obviously do not read TRACE with any greater regularity than this writer guesses they read contributors’ notes. Since the years when we mailed free copies to magazines, the percentage of subscribing editors has grown little; and at present, editors of commercial publications, newspapers, and larger publishing houses outnumber editors in the categories of publishing TRACE had undertaken to serve, on our subscription lists. Questions about the kinds of people who are paying-subscribers are frequent; and the answer usually surprises the askers. In their decreasing order of preponderance, TRACE subscribers are: teachers, schools, libraries, professional persons, individual librarians, writers or aspiring writers — and at the very bottom, littlemag and smaller presses editors.)

CLARENCE MAJOR (THE COERCION REVIEW)

I would like to make a suggestion. Every poet who can afford to do so should publish a little magazine for as long as he can. This, I know, sounds wild to some; but it would be of great significance! It would promote poetry, in that there would be more outlets, therefore more readers. America has, I believe an unusual number of 'littles'—but we could (The Poets of America—I speak to you) start a glorious revolution! Some have wanted to put poetry back into the streets. Well, this would be a step toward putting the poem back into the mind of the people. I realise that more people read poetry than they did, say fifteen years back. But this is not enough. Each poet should put out as fine a magazine as he can, whether mimeographed or printed, to publish good poems by poets known or unknown. Circulate the magazine—advertize it—talk about it—believe in it. Non-poets should, if they are lovers of the poem, benefit in some way. I do not believe that a sensation would seriously damage poetry. In the long run, the good poem always survives. The poor even helps the strong to survive. For almost every poet in America, there would be a little magazine; and the power behind this might even equal or overthrow the big commercial mags—i.e., we'd get many of their readers! And thus improve the American mind. I know that if I can publish a little magazine myself, while on unemployment compensation, half the time on relief, a wife, two children, no bank account — absolutely nothing but hope — Anybody can do it. Absolutely anybody! No more should be said about the beat generation. If it is not important, need we discuss it? It is a myth, as someone has said. Why not accept it as such, and thus forget it. My word to the wise and wouldbe-wise is : what does not exist in actuality, recognise it, and accept it as the myth it is. So,

accept the 'beat generation' in this way only.

'William Carlos Williams once, in a letter to me, said that the construction of verse is the most important of its attributes. He underlined construction. And in another letter, style, he wrote, is all a writer has in the long run . . . and the man behind it who has sweated his heart out to obtain it.

If style is all we have, then we are doomed. To my mind, style is no more, no less significant than the stuff of the writer's mind. The man is not behind the style—he is the style. For the style is but his collective faults, filtered through his creative energy. All writing, not ever being, all of it, to order, is proof enough that a literary man's stumblings are also his stepping-stones. In other words, thus we have individuals.

'Kenneth Patchen is a good writer; but because he has had his say in his own highly personal way (cultivated faults) not many at large have listened very closely to his music.' But then, you must have a third ear, to hear that kind of 'music.' E. E. Cummings has led a whole generation of style-conscious young poets up a blind alley. Style, as I see it, should not stand out. It is but a vehicle used to convey the message. There is too much deficient writing going on.

'However, it is true that an effective style is superior — though only insofar as the message is superior. One without the other is not literature.'

ISSUE P. 18 · SCAN P. 20

THE FIFTIES

The editors of THE FIFTIES believe that most of the poetry published in America today is too old-fashioned.

THIRD ISSUE

Poems by a young Czech and a young Rumanian poet. An Article on the work of Donald Hall. Award of the Blue Toad to Norman Cousins. Four City Poems. Parody of Diana Trilling's article on the beats, from Spring PARTISAN. A note on Neruda.

50c \$2.00 per year Briarwood Hill, Pine Island, Minn.

Editors: William Duffy, Robert Bly.

THE GERMAN WAR NOVEL

By Lothar Kahn

PERHAPS the best explanation for the immense popularity of the war novel in Germany has been the need for national self-examination. Twelve long years of abstinence from critical analysis and the reasons behind this abstinence, were bound to result in a thoroughgoing search of the national self. If the war novel was singled out for this purpose, it must be largely because it affords a special opportunity to delve into the responses to patriotism, leadership, and authority,—questions which have plagued the German mind for a long time. Involving also the sense of guilt, the war novel can disclose a state of mind that may offer a clue to the German character of the future.

These books are not good novels. Their unpretentiousness as works of art seems to increase with their power as portraits of war. It appears that the thunderous events which supplied their subject matters allowed nothing to interfere with full evocations of these events.

Theodore Plievier's *STALINGRAD* and *MOSCOW* fail to develop a single character,—instead, introducing hundreds of men who die shortly after Plievier has identified them by name and function. The staccato, scenariolike episodes, barely tied together, heighten the impression of literary artlessness, much as they intensify the anonymity of the lost and dead. To be sure, Heinrich Boell and Gert Ledig—in *THE TRAIN WAS ONE TIME* and *THE TORTURED EARTH*, respectively—present frames which are distinctive, characterisations which are bold and nuanced, in prose which is smooth and easy-flowing. But, and partly because of this, their works ring less true as historic happenings, less representative of the voice of those who perished in the Russian snows.

Gerhart Kramer in *WE SHALL MARCH AGAIN*, Willi Heinrich in *THE CROSS OF IRON*, Hans Werner in *BEYOND DEFEAT*, *THEY FELL FROM GOD'S HANDS*, and his still-untranslated *DU SOLLST NICHT TÖTEN* (*THOU SHALT NOT KILL*) as well as Plievier in the two works already mentioned, give less evidence of individualised vision of war or of stylistic accomplishments. Instead, they appear more single-mindedly concerned with the physical and moral disintegration which is war. Inevitably, they seem closer to it. Their preoccupation with its destructiveness does not admit of stylistic niceties which, in a sense, would be antithetical to their recollection.

But, to lump these novels together under the heading 'war novels' is hardly just. Richter's *BEYOND DEFEAT* deals with Germans fighting in Italy and their subsequent imprisonment in the U.S.; *THEY FELL FROM GOD'S HANDS* rather ambitiously seeks to give an overview of the moral depravations of the global war. Both these works contain far less of the bestial brutality which characterises the novels of the Eastern front.

Apparently, the major difference between war in East and West was from the natural enemy, the harsh Eastern climate, which proved as demoralising to Hitler's men as superior numbers and material. Richter's third novel, in which he describes the virtual liquidation of an entire German family, bears this out, as does the difference between Plievier's earlier *STALINGRAD* (1948) and his later *Moscow* (1954). The soldier at Stalingrad is beaten and destroyed in a manner as relentless as it is merciless. These same men had been superior fighting-machines in the early phases of combat. Their phenomenal victories in the West had left but one question: when would the Russians collapse? Initial surprise at Russian tactics gradually evolved into mild consternation and, with the coming of winter, entered the first genuine doubts concerning the Fuhrer's wisdom. The symbolic death at the hands of partisans and

winter, of a hitherto victorious Nazi General who had, in his blustering fashion believed himself bullet-proof, foreshadows the fate of all German armies. The much greater concern of these novelists with the defeatist atmosphere of the post-Stalingrad period suggests that victory-become-despair proved dramatically more alluring than the rosy hue of victory. When Plievier's Colonel Vils-hofen one day unwittingly substituted 'May God protect you' for 'Heil Hitler'—and no one noticed this—a new attitude was clearly in the making. And with the first doubts of success, the first serious questions were asked: Why am I here? Who brought me here, and is it my duty to remain here? How much are we Germans responsible for this war and the particular shape it has taken? . . . Ever more pressing, became the moral dilemma of personal and national blame.

Why am I here? This question had been superfluous at Oslo, at Sedan, and even at Minsk. The German soldier was here to win, to achieve the bright, shining destiny which a magnificent if unpredictable Fuhrer had designed for him. One did as one was told, especially since the doing yielded results which were personally and socially satisfying at an incredibly low cost. But, after two Russian winters, these questions of a German soldier gone mad at Stalingrad reflect the general thinking: What for? For Greater Germany. Greater Germany on the Volga — is that good business, is there a need for that, does it satisfy a many-sided demand? A Greater Germany extending to the Volga — no one demands that and no one needs it; it is not a many-sided demand, not even a one-sided demand; not even Germany needs it. Then it was done without any compelling necessity, for no real reason? Was it nothing but illusion, madness, crime? Not an idea, a nightmare! The CROSS OF IRON, with a late-war Russian setting, reflects the same inner vacuum, the same bankruptcy of ideals. In the words of an enlightened officer: ... Our men no longer have any ideals. They're not fighting

for world freedom or for the culture of the West. They're not fighting for the kind of government they want. They're fighting for nothing but their naked lives, for their bedeviled, unfortunate flesh. But if flesh was fighting only for its own sake, why did they remain? Why didn't they desert? Unquestionably the wish was there; but its realisation was averted by the common soldier's fundamental sense of duty and decency which precluded leaving his comrades in the lurch. And despite ever-growing odds against them, there remained in these beaten men last glimmering hopes that a benevolent fate would yet rescue them in the end. The ordinary field-soldier appears to emerge the hero from this crisis. Heinrich holds to the somewhat debatable theory that to fight for a conviction required no heroism. One of his officers explains, in fact: 'Heroism begins where the meaninglessness of the sacrifice remains to the last, the only message the dead can leave behind.' Different criteria prevail for officer heroism. Their excessive obedience, too easily an escape from responsibility where responsibility was needed, is scathingly attacked by Heinrich and Plievier. Several officers, especially Heinrich's, realise that the crime of obedience occurred the day they swapped uniforms for consciences, a swap which could not be revoked. They had known then, instinctively — even before the oath to Volk, Führer, Vaterland — that they had chosen the easy course. Heinrich implies, and Plievier categorically states, that full responsibility was consciously evaded by the German officer who found moral shelter between the links of the chain of command. Plievier has him sitting in his bunker, learning of the slaughter of his men who have hope neither of victory nor of salvation, awaiting like docile shepherd dogs the orders of a man they now detest. The author's strong Marxist orientation (since penning STALINGRAD he has joined the Koestlers and Silones in the ranks of the disillusioned) makes him intolerant of the officer's reluctance to take the

initiative and revolt.

Plievier's professional soldier, Vilshofen, speaks for him in this. Vilshofen's eyes, too, were opened only at Stalingrad. Like others of his caste of professional soldiers, he had helped pave the way for Hitler and eased his road to conquest. Entranced by the force of Hitler's personality, blinded by his methods of sheer violence, astounded by his easy, uncostly victories, he had accepted the Fuhrer's total war. But now that the magic was gone, Vilshofen recognised the full scope of his own responsibility and that of his fellow officers. They had helped bring on the disaster—it was incumbent upon them to stop it. There was nothing worse now than to go on fighting and to lose one's life for the crime of Hitler and the war—rather use life to fight against them. Therefore, release the men from their oath—release them to seek life, a future, if a life and future were left anywhere. But instead:

Why did not the generals speak out? Where was the place to stand on from which one could move this world of false calculations, vain arrogance, and vicious contempt for lives?

...

Beyond Stalingrad must mean: struggle against military madness, against military (and, no doubt, not solely military) criminality.

Vilshofen not only recognised his responsibility; he recognised his guilt. And with it, he sensed the blame resting upon the German people.

How heavy is the guilt?

How much does the dead Stalingrad Army weigh in the balance, how much does this ghostly procession of prisoners weigh? What else must be laid upon the scales? Can guilt be weighed? How can it be weighed?

Children shot, women shot. . . .

It is (shooting) the law of the German people, the same people who brought forth a Gutenberg, a Matthias

Grunewald, a Martin Luther, a Beethoven, an Immanuel Kant? Is it the law of a creative people living by the fruits of its own creation?

Did the German people have no other political face to show the world?

But if Plievier and Heinrich accept the blame without evident reservations and are obsessed by the magnitude of the crime, Richter holds out partly against it. His disillusionment extends beyond the German crime, to encompass the crime of all humanity. To be sure, the areas of guilt he covers are not entirely those of the other novelists. The latter are concerned with the failure to act responsibly, courageously, incisively, the crime of Hitlerism and the crime of war. They are aghast at the factors which permitted it to happen. But Richter, who is as genuinely anti-Nazi as they, and accepts German guilt, makes it seem smaller when he magnifies the responsibility of other nations. *BEYOND DEFEAT* and *THEY FELL FROM GOD'S HANDS* present a sharp indictment of the comparable political stupidity of others, especially that of Americans.

Their inability to understand the existence of Germans like Gühler, who are patriotic Germans without any past Nazi affiliation and who, while praying for Hitler's defeat, yet renegade on revealing their comrades' battle positions — strikes him as acts worthy of past German mistakes. And what may be a projection of guilt becomes more pronounced in *THEY FELL FROM GOD'S HANDS*. Here, while proclaiming the innocence of the masses of all lands, he affixes blame on some vague and nebulous 'they' which might be equated with nations as corporate entities and, more particularly, national leaderships. But, he had in mind not only German leadership, but that of other nations as well. In one of his many and farflung episodes, Richter reaches the point of comparing the Jews' struggle for nationhood in Israel and their treatment of the Arabs, with the Nazis' war and

misdeeds. Yet, this hardly can be construed as anti-Semitism; for Richter, as founder of the Feuerwehr, is one of the most vocal anti-Nazis in West Germany today. Moreover, his thought evolves in the mind of Slomon Galporin, his main Jewish character, and the most warmly and sincerely drawn portrait in the book. Richter's sharp distinction between leaders and led, followers and followed, reflects an old dilemma in the German cultural tradition and one difficult to understand, for the Anglo-Saxon mind. Surely, this question of the little man's responsibility, as compared to the leader's, will occupy German novelists for a long time. An outgrowth of the German authoritarian tradition, it has now crystallised sufficiently to impose itself as a major German concern.

Scholars have distinguished between war literature which is mainly egocentric and that which is primarily ethnocentric. The former, concerned with the effects of war on the individual, reached its zenith in the between-war period with Remarque's *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, published in 1929, declined thereafter and was supplanted entirely by the nation-centred novel under the Third Reich. There can be no question that the German novels growing out of Hitler's war have been entirely egocentric, siding invariably with the individual in his struggle against the super-authority of the nation as vested in part in the officer class. There is, however, a decided difference between the egocentric literature of the Twenties and that of recent years. The villainous officer, arrogant, mindful of his superior station, and feeling but slight concern for the men under him, has largely disappeared. Even Plievier, who, in his fictionalised accounts of World War I had presented such types in 1930, has abandoned them in favour of officers, equally guilty, but of moral cowardice and lack of initiative. Only Heinrich's Captain Stranski and Kramer's Mortenson, truly villains of the old school with a few Nazi features added,

portray the former type.

On the whole, the fact that this was a Nazi war, a Hitler war, has not been sharply delineated in the novels examined. To be sure, where once Kaiser und Vaterland were damned or ridiculed, Fuhrer und Volk now feel the edge of the satiric razor. But there are few full-blooded Nazis populating these novels—the men are frontline soldiers, acting as such. To judge from the soldiers' sparse indulgences in Nazi ideology, the indoctrination so carefully nurtured in school, Hitler Youth and labour camp, disintegrated as sure victory became likely defeat. Only Richter in *BEYOND DEFEAT* and *THOU SHALT NOT KILL* sketched a few dyed-in-the-wool Nazis. But, except for the pathetic Gerlich, who even after Hitler's death and Germany's capitulation, went on believing in Fuhrer and victory, they are not wholly convincing. (In his other novel, the sole Nazi is, significantly, a Luxemburgian, not a German.) Could it be that the writers, anti-Nazis and all, could never fully penetrate the inner make-up of these fellow Germans with whom they had to live in silence for so long?

In a sense, the German war novels augur well for the future. They invariably decry war and portray a young German perplexed by war's irrationality and futility; and this young German prays only for a future of peace and simple living, a Germany in which individual and collective national authority may coexist more amiably. Nonetheless, overconfidence may not be justified. Though the national self-examination which these novels present strongly suggests a desire for a changed national character, it is hard to forget that the phenomenal interest in *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* was followed within five years by a regime dedicated to the pursuit and glorification of war.

ISSUE P. 25 · SCAN P. 27

THOMAS MANN

THE ILLUSION

by Felix Singer

He was twenty-five in 1900, and so saw many of the enormous upheavals of two centuries; and, his family having had ancient German roots, he carried much history inside him. He delved into almost prehistoric Egypt, dabbled in Oriental fables, and thus gave many readers the illusion that Thomas Mann encompassed all time and all human experience. An absurd notion, but many did adore him blindly, and he did know very well how to exploit the many-faceted value of a vast, vaguely-defined illusion...

Mann was neither philosopher nor novelist, and knew that—but was an ambiguous combination of both, and glorified in this ambiguity, as he gloried in so many ambiguities. Paradoxes, illusions—he collected them, dissected them, relished them, made you relish the dissection; and usually you ended up believing whatever he wanted you to believe—such as, for example, that the unreal was more real than the real...

Even the most obvious thing about him, his tremendous ego, had about it a paradoxical flavour. He was a reserved, relatively unassuming person, but a tremendous literary showoff. The Nineteenth Century-style author-comments: Look-Ma-I'm writing, pop up constantly in his novels, so no one may miss noticing how skilled and clever Thomas Mann is being. The pointing-with-pride (at devices sometimes quite simple) is often subtly woven into the novel; but subtle or obvious, it's always there. The whole Joseph series is one ostentatious tour de force in which he is constantly reminding you that the story is too wellknown to be worth the writing or reading; then he makes it worth the reading; then he signals for applause; and then he throws off

dazzling, multi-coloured spectrums of implications, allusions, nuances, symbolisms touching on everything from the Nature of God and Satan to the virtues of the New Deal.

When it comes to the narrators of novels slapping their own wrists and chiding themselves for plot-anticipations (look! says Mann, I can tell you what will happen and yet still surprise you when it comes), that's a wee bit too arch for me. I get off there; but who can resist this ingeniously involved sequence from FELIX KRULL (crudely paraphrased): 'You, Reader, may think: "are we to have nothing in this book except descriptive fragments such as, for example, the following (brilliant — S.F.) lines?"' (The lines.) "No, Reader, I'll deliver much more; but, congratulations on guessing just the lines I had in mind!"' He rubs your nose in his skill and then teases you about possessing that skill yourself. What can you do with that type of character?

And can you resent a man who, after five decades of international adulation, says with obvious sincerity that whenever he approaches a new work, it is as a frightened novice?

Another paradox is that the World's Greatest Living Man of Letters (as he modestly allowed KNOPF to tag him) remained all his life the amateur — in both the best and the worst senses of that word. In the best: the budding artist always, always approaching experience fresh, full of wonder and anticipation. In his late seventies, he can write (in KRULL): 'One should always try to see everything, even the most commonplace, the most completely matter of fact, with new, astonished eyes as though for the first time' — and then casually scatter a couple of dozen enchanting illustrations. And amateur in the worst sense: he never really learned how to write fiction. Not by a long shot. I can hear the horrified gasps from the university Mann-idolators, at this outrageous blasphemy: is this stripling Singer (who has never even obeyed orders in a college literary-criticism course — i.e.

never took one) presuming to say —?

Baloney! Anybody not blinded by decades of hero-worship can't help but see Mann's fantastic clumsinesses. The first part of *MARIO AND THE MAGICIAN*, for example, is a protracted, amateurish travel essay. The adoring academicians, ever ready to cloak reverence with rationale, would have it that that was Mann's way of portraying contemporary European tensions; but any good magazine hack could suggest tension more vividly in one-third the space Mann took. There are times in *FAUSTUS* (another example) when, instead of devising a plausible way for the narrator to find out what he needs to know and relate, Mann simply has him snap: Devil take it, of course I know! It's my story, isn't it? — the typical, impatient, amateur way of refusing to be bothered with solving problems, and the reader be damned.

And yet — how explain the Lisbon portion of *KRULL*: a stunningly-simple design executed with maximum economy, a model of swift, sure narration — and nary an aside to the reader (well . . . almost none) about how brilliantly things are being made to happen here? . . . On the basis of that, can you call Mann clumsy? But — on the basis of *THE BLACK SWANN*, how can you not?

The strange thing about the man: the older he got, the younger, the livelier he got. In the ending of *MAGIC MOUNTAIN*, writing in his late forties, he sends Life's Delicate John Doe, now educated (if ambiguously so), into the post-graduate butchery of war, asking in the final sentence, with more doubt than hope ("may it not be —?") if there might not still be love in the world. Thirty years pass . . . Nazism . . . the biggest bloodletting . . . the threat of nuclear race-suicide; Mann endures exile, serious illnesses, family tragedies, and his politics alienate millions; he lives in a Europe divided, his homeland is split atwain, he is so near home, but still not home . . . and he does not expect to live much longer. And what does he write now? A paean — out of the mouth, of all

possible mouthpieces, of Felix Krull, sometime pimp and thief, currently disguised as an aristocrat dilettante — a paean to life, to beauty, to love. What did he leave behind at eighty — he, the worldweary, sceptical European, the ponderous Herr Professor Doktor? Laughter, beauty, joy, love. Freut euch des Lebens, the Krull door chimes played: enjoy your lives.

That was the final paradox . . . the strangest, perhaps . . . and the very finest.

MIGHT WORLD'S WOOD NOT SPARE THIS TREE — James Boyer
May

Not to condemn the term from its origin (after all — how could its abuses have been foreseen?); and not to criticise the term's legitimate adaptations. Rather, to protest the compounding of Existentialistic confusions. This word's definitude becomes so debatable that the bewildering misinterpretations finally may lead to its abandonment.

The Summer 1959 CHICAGO REVIEW supplied a splendid hodgepodge of semantic inconsistencies, the delirational prize for which is due an article by the 'out-sided' Mr. Colin Wilson. Caliginous mazes of the variations upon this philosophy and its applications filled the issue, with Wilson proposing that the inadequacies of contemporary literary analyses be corrected through an 'existential criticism,' for which he of course would be the sole ordained bearer of tablets-of-doubletalk.

But he is late — very late — in rushing down the mountain to perpetuate his unintended smashing of ungilded idols. Long ago, it had grown difficult to explain why tired cocktail conversations had continued being enlivened by mouth-ball games with this equivocal term. Perhaps this goes on because about forty per cent of those present at such chance gatherings surely will stumble over the pronunciation, delighting the more 'avant,' who are therewith reassured of their superiorities in parroting

correctly. And yet, way back at the word's inception, a deceptive fluidity should have warned that an overfilled measure of ambiguity would start dribbling from every side of the metaphysical trough. Today, each dissenter must explain precisely which of three dozen versions of existentialism he may be attacking!

From another approach, the vogue for 'demonstrations' that ancient questioners of destiny also must have been existentialists amazes one. Though those oldtimers knew no such word, they did, nevertheless, cogitate not unwisely, never comprehending, as the neo-philosophers do, how they inched along . . . and living lived . . . and thinking, thought . . . and fornicating, begat . . . all but lost, it would seem, amongst their uncured olive mounts? How could they have procreated with comparable joylessness, lacking the fatuous wordy-word which, just a generation ago, was filched and flicked so dazzlingly before a 'decadent' society by the precocious M. Sartre? Maybe the French language lent glitter. And, no doubt, the timely place — Paris-between-wars. At any rate, old Kierkegaard had been little quoted before Jean-Paul adroitly misconstrued his intentions of affirmative denial. And Paul Tillich's German take-off seems untranslated to the cocktail-hour wise men down to this very hour.

Ah, life! — ah, steeped frustrations! — in general and at large, whether tagged existential or with some bitter blacker label — what dervish notions have been nourished by what pessimistic blend of sadly-dark, confusing terms! Not to belittle the sound thinkers, but sponsoring the values which always have accompanied man's cognitions of some functions somehow fostering knowledge — without this word. As in distorted endeavours to form philosophies from Freudian therapies, many so-called existential afterthoughts have proven about as helpful to understanding as it might be to use colour instead of math-charts to check ocean

soundings.

Then — there are the opposite extensions. In the August 1959 GRIFFIN, William Barret reviewed *EXISTENCE, A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology* (edited by Rollo May and others) with far more philosophical discernment than Wilson shows; yet, Barret stretched (conceivably, in part, to exercise amenity toward the editors of this book) his residual ‘fetch’ to semantical advocacy of ‘existential psychiatry!’ Much of the basic psychology involved is sound enough, and the reasoning quite acceptable. But why this abuse of terms? This seems to result from the prevailing madness for odd labels on every alleged idea (as though smart-sounding tags ensured validities). But, unless clearly defined within contexts of individual expositions, where they are an expedient shorthand, labels usually just cover vacuities.

Many definers of existentialism not only have taken off from assumptions that ‘process’ affects existence — they suggest that existence somehow even originates from process. If they did not, they could not fail at least to suggest the possibility of distinguishing between the two. Mere applications of an existential tag to concepts of purposive personality, or to ‘free’ will, or to parts played by ‘choice/s’ in shaping subjective realities, do not correct the implications that deeds take precedence over doers. Should not such strained and straying error itself invoke surmise that a self-as-observer may have detectable being, — if not requisitely altogether separate and apart from existence?

Not to imply by this unorthodox simplification that human personality is not complex. Nor to call upon the professionally-convenient divisions of personality the psychiatrists have invented. Surely, not just to refer to the distinction between a dubiously-named ‘top’ rational mind and what often are called mind’s dream levels. Intelligence receives, translates, and applies sensory (perhaps extra-sensory too) reports, while sporadically ‘reasoning’

about them. But the intention here is to suggest a primary Self, also observing the processes of thought which also are components of existence-as-process. Whether or not this Watcher is a 'part' of mind, depending upon or conditioned by the brain's physical functionings, is immaterial. The question rises from manifest Selfawareness; every man occasionally asks himself why his awareness is channeled through his one complex of cerebral activities.

The universality of the question corroborates that thought is an integral vital function, while selfconsciousness must be a phenomenon of another order. Which, in turn, may lead to the far speculation that the special earth-time's seeming 'flow' may hold the key to man's conception of (or deception in) individuality. Were it not for 'time' (or if, in some indescribable fashion, outside of time), one might imagine events recognisable as preformed (in another sense, always formed), and in this manner might explain how events are individually apprehended. There could be alternative layers — from, or with, or before, or after — with numberless concurrent influences. And these inevitably would form infinite variations in selfconscious individuals. Then — since individuals more or less (some more and some less) contribute as 'moved movers,' to what happens to themselves and others and objects about them — they would necessarily appear to be 'doing,' in their performances of varied acts.

Applying this — whatever may be the speculative possibilities, existence (here, more precisely, existing) IS inseparable from involvement. People do become what they do or seem to do (an existential corollary). Most existential theory rotates here, while leaving out of account that the Watcher remains. As Colin Wilson did in the CHICAGO REVIEW piece, in his downgrading of a long list of distinguished writers. Starting from unoriginal observations that the major fictional characters of these writers are neither ethically admirable nor on an intellectual plane with a clever young

man like Mr. Wilson himself, he has not perceived that the writers do not identify with these fictional characters. Most of these authors identify with the Watcher, the self-as-observer (if not through omniscient techniques, by merging with the Watcher within one or more characters). This single error explodes the entire misbegotten notion of 'existential criticism.'

The importance of further pursuit of the matter is not the clinching of the contradiction of Wilson — nor even from the fact that criticism assuredly is in a parlous state (without his gobbledygook) — but to suggest reasons for the prevalence of similar negative assumptions throughout critical writings. No literary defense of these authors is at issue; though, in whatever degrees modern writers may be self-critical through character depictions ('disrespectful' of themselves, as Wilson would have it), their soul-searchings comprise significance for study of the 'division,' the split-awareness of Everyman. And this bears directly upon immediate problems of Western society.

Putting this another way — it's helpful to understand how serious novelists evidence unhappiness over segments of their selves though not denying whatever portions of their comprehensive Selves they nevertheless are realising. Today sees a great deal of such positive pessimism among novelists. Which helps to clarify the essence of the commoner errors in deductions from meandering existential theories. The helpful 'objectivities' (really no such things, to be sure: all awareness is subjective) or hoped withdrawals, in works of these writers, are neither necessarily academic nor phony. Many are sincere endeavours to broaden understanding of identification; and no reader should assume, along with Mr. Wilson, that he is expected to surrender his Watcher-self to his preoccupation with the 'processes' of these fictions. The philosophers who have demanded such Self-surrenders usually have wound up

cutting their own throats or have become unblithe learned idiots.

The multiplying fraudulencies of existentialism manifestly render undesirable the seconding of Wilson's wish that 'within the next two decades, the techniques of existential thinking will become a commonplace . . .' This is tantamount (with the many available misinterpretations) to prescribing a kind of universal occupational therapy, the effects of which would prove frighteningly similar to those from overdoses of electrical shocks.

Wilson contends that 'England and America have so far contributed nothing to the development of existentialism.' Besides that this is disputable, it's not irrelevant (if being superficially smart, like Mr. Wilson) to mention that a few respected scholars agree that the deterioration of Western culture has been less marked in Britain, the U.S., and the Commonwealth, than on the Continent.

That existential fiction (so-called) makes available most of the material forming the basis for Wilson's rantings upon defeatism, offers another kind of 'howling' contradiction: despite this, he advocates an existential criticism. In a related, but utterly different sort of undertaking of analysis of his contemporaries, Thomas Munro has recently provided truly intelligent suggestions for the comprehension of a large portion of modern fiction. This was *THE FAILURE STORY: A Study in Contemporary Pessimism* (Dec. 1958 *JOURNAL OF AESTHETICS*) — which presents an excellent case for belief that the dark tendencies are brightening (just as philosophical trends are changing). Something of the crux of Munro's ideas may be gleaned from this paragraph: Other failure stories find a precarious stoppingpoint short of this abyss, in the existentialist attitude of gloomy stoicism. The universe is absurd, civilization is a failure, people are either exploiters or exploited, the philosophic mind is beset with anguish, attempts at reform are impotent. At best the individual can

assert himself in some forlorn gesture to symbolize the freedom of his mind and defiance of his destiny. But most of the characters of existentialist fiction exemplify the pathetic or contemptible failure of man, externally in his attempts at social and sexual adjustment and inwardly in his search for spiritual dignity. Happiness is out of the question. The logical outcome of the nihilist attitude is universal murder and suicide. But if that is the end of any story from the standpoint of one who believes in no future life, we reach death too soon and have no story at all.

And thus, the central inconsistency commences to take recognizable form behind the 'existential' sets?

Many may applaud Wilson's slurs upon Sartre; and not a few may second his lack of respect for Heidegger. Fewer will feel, however, that Wilson has a better mind than had the late Albert Camus; particularly not, when he ambiguously suggests that a new sort of Anglo-Saxon existentialism is rooted in William Blake! He asserts Blake had been an existentialist before Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, or Kierkegaard. Not only may it be shown that Blake's mystical route takes antithetical turnings, but the very mention of Nietzsche in this setting suggests a plausible reversal, to subordinate the existential takeoff from Kierkegaard to an entirely different area of 'total' willed contradictions. And this is what many of those influenced by Nietzsche have accomplished. Incidentally—had Nietzsche become a novelist, he'd surely have been condemned by Wilson, along with Aldous Huxley and Arthur Koestler. Samuel Beckett is another case. Likewise, D. H. Lawrence. These two fall in a different category, because their works do not stress an 'upward' solution, such as to be inferred even from the dark writings of Franz Kafka, whose pessimism is directed at the individual ego, and not at the comprehensive Self.

Slight need to indicate the evidences of Wilson's own failure to develop a philosophy. At best, he shows precocious

superficial understanding of the better minds he blatantly judges. With apologies for a ruse not unlike those of this brash young man—to inquire how one could overlook asking Wilson precisely why he should deem it important to ‘find . . . (a) . . . system of philosophy that fits, even remotely, the facts of my everyday existence?’ Does he conceive the end of thought to be a reconciliation of biology with astro-physics? But — double apologies!

Of course, he does not; and still, his bandying of terms invites the suggestion. The point is made clear by another reference to Munro, who carefully keeps redefining his ‘failure story,’ as by stating: ‘... it (the story) refers to the psychological contents and their mode of organization.’ A terse warning, both to himself and readers, not to run off the rails. Once more — and applicable to Wilson’s chameleon-criteria — : ‘Much depends on the standards of value one applies in judging the characters, their acts and motives, and the fate they encounter.’ Elemental? Still, forgetting this, Wilson contrives one non sequitur after another.

Some of Wilson’s related ‘slips’ are revealing. For instance: ‘The existential critic challenges the author’s overall sense of life.’ Indeed? And who — pray tell — possesses this undefined ‘overall sense?’ Reading his CHICAGO REVIEW article not too concentratedly, anyone may verify that — although he styles himself an existential critic — his comments on writers are limited by unwitting disregard for their own personalities, certainly conveyed in what they have written about ‘the small section(s) of the world’ with which they have chosen to deal. Now, Mr. Munro wisely recognises that even in their own frames, authors continually are changing their ‘sense of life,’ as when he notes: ‘Already the latest poses of the vanguard failurists — the “angry young men,” “the kitchen sink painters,” and the “beat generation” — are being derided in both popular and

sophisticated magazines.'

Going back to the first question above — what Wilson calls the 'ideal aim' of the (non-existent, he does by implication concede) genuine existentialist 'is to finally summarise life, its ultimate affirmations and negations.' Quite a bill! In other words, the only 'satisfactory' existential philosopher is God Himself. Then, how true, how true, Mr. Wilson! — : 'Against this background, the work of any novelist is bound to cover a small area . . . ' However, he cannot be content with any judgements within the area(s). And thus, he reduces his own article to absurdity.

And yet, many may be sufficiently gratified over his attacks on academists that they may fancy he does after all offer therapeutic suggestions in this mishmash on 'existential criticism.' Which renders it fitting to recall that there have been and are good critics (Benedetto Croce, Middleton Murry . . . G. S. Fraser . . . others) who did and do believe in placing 'the work in the context of the writer's life and his relation to humanity,' and much besides, without finding definitive need to pin existential labels on themselves.

At this juncture, Wilson boldly declares: 'The area covered is the criterion of value!' His italics, my exclamation. But he later contradicts himself, stating existential criticism is not a substitute for literary criticism. With the preceding dictum, he injects a reference to Blaise Pascal, the Jansenist. Anyone who can discover confirmatory relevance here must be a more agile mental contortionist than Wilson, who does not try.

Of Aldous Huxley, he notes an ability to create unique story-atmosphere, as though this were a flaw. And next, he speaks of Huxley's 'ordinary lack of vitality!' In admiring Edmund Wilson's writings on Kafka (in this instance, classifying the American Wilson as an 'existential critic'), he overlooks having elsewhere declared that an important tenet

of his new critical theory, is for the critic to enter the frame of the writer,—and not without sympathy (empathy) for his subject's intrinsic purposes. His extolling of Edmund Wilson seems to stem from the exceptions that critic took to Kafka's special world-view; yet, meantime he has unequivocally stated that existential criticism will counteract trends toward denial of importance to the individual. This Kafka-inconsistency underlines how many other of his puzzling assertions result from a limited concern for a very exclusive metaphysical type of fictional character; and thus, it would follow that 'defeated heroes' are not even eligible to be looked upon as individuals.

On the last matter, Colin puts forth an unsubstantiated generalisation: 'The modern hero is brainless, soulless and clueless' (whatever he meant by 'clueless' in this context). The silliness of this is on a par with: 'In pure literary terms, it is quite impossible . . . ' to demonstrate why the quality of Ernest Hemingway's later work is below that of his earlier work. He not only furnishes no evidence that the later Hemingway actually has deteriorated, but he expends enormous wordage in further irresponsible comments . . . intermingled with tired elementary literary dicta he's apparently deluded will so impress readers that they'll swallow all his absurdities.

He employs a like technique to support 'existential philosophy.' Yet, this effort is triply submerged when he neglects to specify whose existentialism he's promoting; and his central thesis finally is crippled by an admission that mere references to facts (process), rather than to 'will' (precisely what others have found flaws most existential argument), does not construe a 'human situation.' An 'explanation' of geniuses, he declares, involves a 'supra-personal' component: geniuses cannot be accounted for merely by their lives (existences?). Assuredly, man is free, he asserts. While if — since he says existentialists grant man

is ‘spirit’ also — this is true, why didn’t he perceive that the writers he denigrated have worked quite independently of their ‘mean’ invented *dramatis personae*?

Just one question remains: what in Mr. Wilson’s own personality led him through all this pothier of trying to translate the exploration of man into such a poorly-defined terminology? Hasn’t he betrayed a peculiar mistrustful blundering private need for rationalising ‘existentially’ his benighted disapproval of many authors? His article bares grounds for suspicion that he has merely been an immature reader, that he has coursed through serious novels in the manner of an adolescent on a penny-dreadful binge of yearnings for escape through envisioning himself as one and another of the characters — not reading to illumine and broaden his understanding of humanity. As Thomas Munro remarked, in a continuation of the work already quoted (J.A.A. for March 1959): ‘Children and adults with naïve literary tastes can enjoy this simple kind of fantasy-satisfaction over and over, with slight if any variation, so that “dreams for sale” in fiction, film, and drama are a staple product.’ . . . Wilson’s trouble being that the dreams he’s bought prove unsoothing to him.

While this essay is largely a ‘reply to Colin Wilson,’ more is intended. Underlying questions, only nudged by Wilson, are raised. These are at the root of what may be ‘wrong’ with today’s art and literary attitudes. Careful examinations of such articles reveals that the central question is closely related to obfuscations from careless semantics.

SYDNEY OMARR SPEAKING . . .

YOU

IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS AND IDEAS

This is not an article, but a selection of excerpts from a sample radio script prepared by Mr. Omarr, and submitted by him to one of the large U.S.A. networks, with suggestions for a series. He has been engaged in radio and TV work for several years, and still is regularly on the air—albeit with programmes of quite different nature. Besides for the intrinsic interest of these selections, this is published for its indicative significance (having been somewhat emphatically rejected). Produced by one long experienced in gauging audience reactions, the material's acceptability probably was not adversely judged on its form and presentation, but because it is designed to acquaint a larger public with less-popular writers of non-conformist types. The Editor believes this another evidence of a comprehensive tacit censorship by those in control of the mass-media, and indicates a prevalent inimical attitude toward creativities which may not foster so-called norms of a materialistic society.

GOOD afternoon. This is Sydney Omarr, with YOU—IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS AND IDEAS . . . an excursion into the creative mind.

Today, a look at creativity itself, at writing, as examined by writers themselves.

*

. . . there have been, of late, numerous works examining the methods or motives of writers and the creative process, including what must be considered the most definitive book to date on the life and times of Gertrude Stein. And this book is THE THIRD ROSE, Gertrude Stein and Her World, by John Malcolm Brinnin, published by ATLANTIC, LITTLE BROWN. Although Gertrude Stein died more than thirteen years ago, her work remains controversial—talked about and written about. Before the Brinnin book . . . which is largely sympathetic and appreciative, also perceptive and incisive . .

. there was ART BY SUBTRACTION, A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein, by B. L. Reid, and published by the UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS. And before this . . . there were others. However, the two most recent books . . . concerned with the writer Gertrude Stein . . . and her methods and effects, her accomplishments and shortcomings . . . are: THE

THIRD ROSE . . . AND ART BY SUBTRACTION.

Both Brinnin, in his sympathetic work, and Reid, in his dissenting opinion, agree that Gertrude Stein is difficult to understand, in that she was intent on forgetting her audience. But Brinnin is able to see a reason . . . he pictures the pioneer, charting new roads, these charts valuable, if even to warn others away. He draws a fascinating analogy between the cubism in the painting of Picasso . . . and the same kind of cubist way of seeing . . . in the strange writings of Gertrude Stein. But Reid sums up Miss Stein in another way. He says, in his book, that she is enormously interesting as a phenomenon of the power of personality . . . and as a symptom of a frantic, fumbling, nightmare-age — our present — and that it is as such that she will live.

Reid claims that later ages will gather about the corpus of her work like a cluster of horrified medical students around a biological sport.

Whether one agrees with the dissenting view of Reid, or with the appreciation offered by Brinnin . . . both books are worth having . . .

Here, in Los Angeles, many outstanding writers make their homes. Among them is Anais Nin . . . considered by many to resemble Gertrude Stein . . . in a literary sense. Not that there is anything really and solidly alike in their works as far as styles go. But, both Stein . . . and Anais Nin . . . are masterful in utilising the power of the symbol. Miss Nin is the author of *THE FOUR-CHAMBERED HEART*, *A SPY IN THE HOUSE OF LOVE*, *UNDER A GLASS BELL*, and other works, including the first introduction to Henry Miller's controversial *TROPIC OF CANCER*. She advises the young writer to obey the impulse, the intuition . . . and to obey even the interruptions. In a lecture given at Northwestern University,

Miss Nin presented an example of what she means . . . by obeying even the interruption. She was at work on a novel, but decided to leave the typewriter . . . and to take a walk. While she walked, it began to snow . . . and the air chilled. When she re-entered her studio, she did not continue where her previous writing left off. Instead, Anais Nin wrote about the snow falling and the air biting . . . and that was part of what she might term an intuitive interruption. Later, she found that it was not so much of an interruption as she might have thought . . . for it was important to the story she was writing . . . in a symbolic sense.

Concerning writers and writing today, Miss Nin says . . . that today a novelist's pre-occupation with inner psychological distortions does not stem from a morbid love of illness, but from a knowledge that this is the theme of our new reality. She says, too, that the novelist is like the modern physicist . . . that he should face the fact that this new psychological reality . . . can be explored and dealt with only under conditions of tremendously high atmospheric pressures, temperatures and speed, as well as in terms of new time-space dimensions, for which the old containers — represented by the traditional forms and conventions of the novel — are completely inadequate and inappropriate.

Coincidentally, this is exactly the interpretation John Malcolm Brinnin places upon the works of Gertrude Stein . . .

So, the books, the ideas, the subjects, the authors — no matter how far apart they may at first appear — are often interwoven, just as the scientist and the poet are (in many cases) very close together, the poet often perceiving, knowing in advance — or so it would appear — just what it is the scientist of the time is after and eventually will discover or create.

Anais Nin says this is why James Joyce shattered the old form of the novel, permitting his writing to erupt in a

veritable flow of associations, which we now accept and recognise as stream-of-consciousness, a form which now can almost be considered traditional. For those interested in the life and work of James Joyce, the controversial author of *ULYSSES*, heartily recommended is the new biography of Joyce, by Richard Ellman, published by OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Back to Anais Nin. She claims that most of today's novels are inadequate because they reflect not our experience, but people's fear of experience. These novels, she says, portray all the evasions.

Miss Nin says she believes that the experience of war . . . might have been less disastrous to the mental and emotional life of young Americans . . . if they had been prepared by an honest literature . . . for all the deep primitive experience with birth, sex, and death.

Writers like Anais Nin are deeply concerned with conveying the truth . . . and to do so, often utilise symbols. D. H. Lawrence once declared that symbols don't mean something — they are units of experience. And Miss Nin concludes by stating that naked truth is unbearable to most — and art is our most effective means of overcoming human resistance to truth. The writer, she says, has the same role as the surgeon . . . and his handling of anaesthesia is as important as his skill with the knife. The fact, claims Miss Nin, that man persists in dreaming in terms of symbols shows how he clings to this primitive emotional perception.

As we say, there has been much, of late, showing concern and genuine interest in writing today . . . in writers themselves.

*

The books and special issues of publications continue to pour forth . . . concerned with writers and the purposes and problems of writing . . .

SOME ITEMS RECEIVED by the Editor

A RE-OFFERING of Martin Buber's *THE WAY OF MAN* (PENDLE HILL — with introduction by Maurice Friedman — 35c) induces an Hasidic view of modern writings — particularly, problems of those who produce them — and of the book-arrivals here. How revelatory of deeper reasons for failures of satisfaction from the readings of dozens of too many avant gardists, the observation: ' . . . every man hides . . . to escape responsibility,' and by so doing, 'turns existence into a system of hideouts!' For, though analyses of poems and fictions for psychological and philosophical values may be aesthetically debatable, it is undebatable that the serious artist's instrument for self-discovery (whether by tenets of Hasidism or not) must be the art he practices. This is his own key to prophecy.

How many living writers strive with honesty to justify their function in their own accents, from their own understandings? Few indicate appreciation for the three admonishments of the Jewish sages: to know whence one comes, whither one may be going, and to whom one must render eventual accounting. Instead of self-searching concentrations upon these questions, most are concentrating to become imitation Joyces, Pounds, or (dried-out horrors!) T. S. Eliots.

Personal validity only may be approached by becoming oneself in the larger meaning; and the degree of such achievement nowhere is more manifest than in language. However worthy his preceptor, an author who sidesteps struggle toward self-realisation, by attempting to be like someone else, can 'actualise neither the one nor the other.' He strays from the path to 'that in him which stirs his inmost being.' Of course — as Buber remarks of mankind generally — amongst writers, this search never is altogether successful. Only partial integrations may be gained, at whatever levels . . . only partial 'unification of the soul,' which is 'never final.' However, the effective writer does learn

to speak to himself about real problems, in veritable accord with the admonishment of a teacher quoted by Buber; and he verges upon self-sufficient wholeness in the comprehensive, not a narrowly egotistical sense. Because the self-realisation meant here is neither 'temporal happiness' nor 'eternal bliss' — but in the work each 'is destined to perform upon the world.' In literary creation — applied to all life by Hasidic thought — 'self-intending' must be rejected, as well as foolish endeavours to win empty 'recognition' through imitating others.

A recurrent mystery — insofar as textual evidences seem not to resolve it — underlies certain gradations of status and acceptability among certain categories of poets and poetasters. Perhaps not the most apt example to be found — but a helpful illustration is provided by comparing two books chancing to find print in the same month. They are: Denise Levettov's *WITH EYES AT THE BACK OF OUR HEADS*, happily bearing a *NEW DIRECTIONS* imprint (\$3.50) and Liboria E. Romano's *VENUS FOR A CROWN*, under *POETS OF AMERICA PUBLISHING Co.* imprint (\$3).

While the latter — until now unread by the Editor — almost exclusively uses older forms and end-rhymes, and the former avant-garde-blessed writer eschews rhymes and composes irregular lines, both are emphatically metrical. And the unblessed one shows fresher originalities in her juxtapositions of analogies (despite trite figures), offers keener mental stimulations, and reveals livelier poetical identification with words. Occasionally, too, Romano's are just as 'fashionable' (superficially) as Levettov's.

Both are practitioners of poetical contrivance; however, the littleknown Romano — in part, purely from her superior respect for sounds and connotations — demonstrates a degree of essential spontaneity, quite absent in Levettov, whose superficial nonconformities are deliberately chosen from varied modern modes. Although Romano is less 'even'

than Levettov (who holds oftener to her 'best'), at her level she is consistently more poetically-concentrated than the NEW DIRECTIONS author.

But the test is in the tasting. Here is a morsel from Romano :

In the garden dawn
her pin wheel lies
trampled in the mud:
the pin is lost
the fireworks gone
the stick broken;
she turns her eyes
and picks a fresh-blown bud.

And now set this against a comparable bit from Levertov :

Under an orange-tree —
not one especial singular
orange-tree, but one among
the dark multitude. Recline
there, with a stone winejar
and the sense
of another dream
concentration would capture —
but it doesn't matter —
and the sense
of dust on the grass, of infinitesimal
flowers, of
cracks in the earth

Next, a 'thicker' piece of Romano's (also, as the title hints—

PORTRAIT OF JAMES JOYCE—for an example of 'imitative-rejection') :

Paring his nails on Mount Olympus, he
stands comparing the thunderbolts of Zeus
with those hurled by Homer J. objectively ad astra;
roving the dark woods the black beast bellows.
Icarus, Icarus, O sunward son foolrash —
daring the terrors of the naked face nakedly,
the son of tomorrow stands paring his nails.
Somewhat of this order, if little like it in superficials, is
Levertov's RELATIVE FIGURES REAPPEAR, opening :

She, returned in the form of youth
black of hair and dress
curls deaf in a poem.
He, returned, sits as he would never sit
perched on a radiator, smoking,
balking sullenly at an obscure outrage.
And it's noteworthy how even Levertov can be guilty of
 'corn'
—and with serious intentions :

As florid berries to the oak, should I pin
sequins to this Rockland County bouquet
of bare twigs? — as roses
to pineboughs? — While a primrose-yellow
apple, flushed with success, levitates quietly
in the top right-hand corner of a small canvas,
giving pleasure by its happiness?

But these are thin pleasures, to content the contented.
For hunger: the bare stretching thorny branches that may
never speak though they conceal or half-reveal sharp small
syllables of bud; . .

**WHILE ROMANO, CONVERSELY, CAN BE QUITE
RESTRAINED — PARTICULARLY IN TRANSLATING
FROM DANTE ALIGHIERI :**

With shorter day and larger ring of shade,
I came, weary, and at whitening of hills
when the loss of color affects the grass,
but my desire changes not its green;
it has rooted itself in that hard stone
that talks and hears as though it were a woman.

This translation is a closing reminder that Levettov had given away her entire endeavour in a twice-removed (via Spanish) version of a Toltec piece. She supplied her own 'key' to confirm the foregoing analysis of her modern practice : works like a true Toltec, composes his objects, works dexterously, invents; arranges materials, adorns them, makes them adjust. But the chief purpose has not been to enlarge upon unimportance of the assiduous ingenuities of these two (each of whom has, in her manner, obeyed the false Toltec dictum), but to suggest that the same spuriousness underlies both 'club and garden' verse and many questionably-'advanced' works . . . besides to point up unfair publishing attitudes. For, to make a detailed analysis of such an unToltec poet as Judson Crews (THE FEEL OF SUN & AIR UPON HER BODY — HEARSE, \$1 — just out) would make the Editor guilty (with re better pieces in this colourful selection) of expounding needlessly upon one who—whatever his faults—speaks for himself in undeniably-honest tones.

- Henry Miller has, to an exceptional degree, found himself, in the larger perimeter outside the 'self-intention' of Hasidic thought. THE HENRY MILLER READER (NEW DIRECTIONS — edited by Lawrence Durrell — \$6.50) outstandingly shows this, through selections from the entire span of his writing years. His gradual identification as a personality is seen to have proceeded notably less-gradually than his progress toward an authentic prose style, — that is, a verbal instrument integral to and effectively conveying his unique individuality. Perhaps naturally enough — but his personal self-discovery was always far in advance of the literary

manifestations, often lumpish and harsh. For years, he was like a man with huge calloused fingers fumbling at the strings of a delicate musical instrument . . . and every so often, concentrating less on effects, producing passages of smoother power.

Many critics have commented on Miller's apparent lack of feeling for word-relationships (meanings, sounds, connotations): that his writings sometimes prove cacophonically confusing when read aloud. However, examined in their order through the years, they show that Miller always has been developing his own off-harmonies; in the main, the later the writings, the more effective and less-disturbing they sound. Again, natural enough,— but here is an important writer whose audience has been limited for decades by what has been called his clumsy style . . . and here is a book certain to convert thousands to Millerian expression. In the brief italicised explanatory introductions to each selection, the author, at age sixty-eight, provides the easy flow of his own language, complementary to and in a way justifying all the crudenesses that had gone before. The materials here are not in time-sequence, but classified as PLACES, STORIES . . . PORTRAITS, etc.; but the periods of the various writings are indicated in these fore-sections, and often along with information as to rewritings.

A number of rather-startling stylistic contrasts are afforded—a good median example being that between the excerpt OF ART AND THE FUTURE from SUNDAY AFTER THE WAR, un-revised from its printing about fifteen years ago, and Mr. Miller's paragraphs describing how: 'The text was written in the Green House . . . with John Dudley, now dead, looking over my shoulder and giving me counsel now and then. It was a water-color period rather than a writing one. At the time I was more interested in reading Rimbaud and in talking astrology. . . . The war was still on, my royalties from Europe were cut off, and I was in the doldrums. It was more

fun to paint water colors and talk to Knud Merrild . . . The subject matter of this selection, too, is interestingly relevant to the style-development thesis; and here may be found some of those 'bad' passages, with insertions of odd bits of over-used phrases, clashing snatches, lengthy clogged non-sentences . . . And in the perusal of which, one almost commences to feel that Miller's attainments must have been extra-literary! For, here are many of his ideas, to all intents and consequences (so to speak) unformulated; and one must endure a great deal, to find the occasional razor-sharp phrase revealing the author's distinctive authentic vision.

With this book, one sees that, not only has the man, Miller been here all the while, but that he has been formulating his own special literary contribution for understanding humanity . . . and that what may have seemed his mundane limitations were not so limited, after all. As he himself has stated in his interviews, the 'other part' always was there, if not obvious in the autobiographical narrations he intentionally restricted to what he called the 'worst' of himself. One may say that he painted the mud in the streets before trying his hand at the grandeur'd sky.

In REUNION IN BIG SUR (SCORPION, 10/6) we find Alfred Perlès confirming this: 'We can get used to a deserved hell, but never to an undeserved heaven.' And with more than a suspicion that he picked this up from Miller himself; the chief value in his reply to Miller's REUNION IN BARCELONA — besides for the Zen parallels to Hasidic thought — would seem to be a kind of less-than-halfconsciously fabricated animadversion, by 'improved' example, upon the unpolished prose of Miller.

- A favoured route to self-discovery long has been that of autobiography. And the better successes have been via autobiographical fiction, which allows the more intense factual memories to be extricated from their often duller contexts and fused with dreams and the purely-fantasied

turnings, which often are proven more psychically significant than the real ones. Just such a book, it seems, is *DAWN AT NOON*, Mark Andrin (GREENWICH, \$3.75). The four large sections: *THE PLATONIC YEAR*, *THE VIEW FROM THE THIRD FLOOR*, *THE LIFE WITH MAXIM*, *LULLABY TO AN ILLUSION* — furnish pristine and yet sophisticated, vivaciously-readable and yet psychologically-matured depictions of an unique world, that of childhood and youth in Yugoslavia. Andrin's world comprises, as the truly-subjective always does, ascending levels of speculative reactions to times, places, impinging other-worlds of the 'realities' of other personalities — and all coloured by the narrator's private projections. The term 'narrator' is inadequate, because the narrative method is just one of several he employs deftly enough to maintain a suspense far above the average in books of this type.

The first few pages may annoy readers by what seem at the start minor verbal crudenesses, in spite of an extensive well-chosen vocabulary; and then, rapidly accustomed to what turns out to be in fact a distinctive style (*rara avis!*), they will find the language quite unaffected and exactly suited to Andrin's now-subtle and now-outright manner of expression. Certain special and personal shades of meanings he attaches to certain words, in what isn't his native tongue, are happily translated by their contexts.

By whatever 'standards' this book (most likely) may be underrated, in the large view, it embodies high technical accomplishments. More than mere interested curiosity is created and gratified; there is a fine balance of frankness and restraint, of intimacy along with transmissions of almost impersonal perceptivities. His own peculiar utilisation of language is part of this; but his ability to convey his ways of thought has still more to do with it. The most farflung connotations are convincingly natural, and will extend each reader's own experience of being. This novel is vastly more worth reading than hundreds of merely

professionally-competent ones by recognised authors 'blessed' by the imprints of large commercial houses.

- Gael Turnbull's *MIGRANT* should have been noted early last autumn, with arrival of No. 1 (No. 4 appeared with Christmas). Mimeographed though it is, some of the best readings to be found amongst about 300 magazines received, have been supplied here. Dr. Turnbull (a medical doctor, as well as a perceptive editor) fixes no price on his selections of creative prose, poetry, and miscellany, issued both from: 2 Camp Hill Rd., Worcester, Engl. and 1199 Church St., Ventura, Calif. The reprints and newly-published things in *MIGRANT* are characterised by personal intensities and alternating ingenuousness and sophistication in their authors. There has been sentiment, but virtually no bathos; and although exceptions may be taken to philosophical directions, the contributors have shared the not-too-common attribute of genuineness. With a preponderance of less-happy questionings of life, the issues have proven eminently entertaining just the same. On the 'literary' level, the material usually has deserved 'A' grades — for whatever that may be worth.

Rare integrity continues to be demonstrated by Editor Miles Payne of *LIGHT YEAR* (correct address now: 1219 Essex St., San Diego 3, Calif.). Another worthy periodical with a non-payment-for-art policy — contrary to this Editor's principles, though Mr. Payne is of course right in maintaining that art may not be gauged monetarily, and he has proven his own sincerity by fixing no price upon his issues. Exercising one of the most independent of tastes, for good or for bad, Mr. Payne also maintains a 'Parliament' for dissenters and poets who write about their besetting problems.

MONOCLE (50c and still at Box 1269, New Haven, Connecticut, despite corporeal dispersion of the editors) was recently noticed; but critical accolades can't be too often

awarded for outstanding editorial accomplishment. Without veering from a bitter-sweet satirical course, MONOCLE now contains more creative work, plus some of avant-garde significance (a Curtis Zahn story in Vol. III, No. 2, is a recent sample). Belatedly again — special note of sturdy continuance of DELTA (Canada) under Louis Dudek (from : 781 Beatty Ave., Montreal 19). Whether finding friends or enemies by his own forthrightnesses and the controversial contributions of others (see in No. 9: A DEFENSE OF OBSCENITY, Alden A. Nowlan), he prints validities. In the same No. 9, having offered unexpected comments on Joseph Wood Krutch, in another article, he issues an amazing reappraisal of the leading Canadian poet, Irving Layton, whom he himself originally had sponsored. His fairness of mind is underscored at the close where — an ardent searcher after talent in his own loved country — he asserts: ‘... he (Mr. Layton) is a purely typical Canadian product, a blow-up of our national inferiority complex.... As readers and critics ... We should forget about Canadianism and learn more about poetry. We might avoid, at least, flying off the deep end in praise of national genius.’

This Editor goes out on no limb in recommending that readers send shillings or \$\$ to any of these, or to all four, for the above issues and to help support these publishers in pending labours.

ISSUE P. 47 · SCAN P. 49
WALTER LOWENFELS

PARAGRAPHS

I don't agree with anybody, and the only way I can indicate it is a poem. * Tomorrow's poem is still an exile from a land we are trying to find. * That a poem ends is just as mysterious as that it begins. * If it can be said in half the words, it is twice as good. * Our poems have become negations of living. They affirm our death and sterility. We cannot keep on forever creating by negation. We have to live poems to make poems. To continue making negations, the poem demands we drive on to the end and affirm ourselves by blowing our brains out. However, the choice isn't between going suicidal or not. The direction is toward half a suicide. We have ceased to have much left inside to kill. * A poet is a symbol of the world's possibilities (I wrote when Hart Crane drowned). Without him, we are not completely aware of the world's potential energy. The tragedy in losing a poet is that we will never know what we have lost. When a poet is lost, the world's bookkeeping enters an indeterminate minus quantity. Since we do not know what that might-have-been is, we do not feel how the world's accounts are out of order . . . until another poet comes along and allows the whole story another credit. * This endless correspondence: Your letter answering my letter has been received. I am answering you immediately and would request that you let me have your immediate response in answer to my answer. I will take your reply to be your acceptance of my response or in the event that you do not answer, that you accept my answer as your answer. * If you take dancing seriously, a poet is a man without a tongue, shouting at an audience without ears.

ADDENDA . . .

No matter what serious intentions may move the punster — no matter, even, what profound impacts may result from punnings — the direct effects of such writings, today as always, are those associated with humour. The primary component of humour is the element of the unexpected; and when the unexpected becomes the expected, the risibilities weaken. Of course, the composition of humour is complex, and the prickle of it varies in effects on different individuals; but, psychologically, it may be demonstrated (if necessarily at protracted length) that all other components are secondary in the sense that they are involved altogether subjectively (only so ‘explained’). But an unexpectedness (as in a first-formed pun) may have nearly 100 per cent repercussions on nearly every understanding, though these repercussions will not be identical in the individuals. For brief example: the elements of masochism and sadism are inseparable from their purely subjective degree of individual identifications. As obvious as that different backgrounds and experiences must affect reactions.

However, this is no essay on humour. Nor to remark upon what everyone knows: that the pun has returned to favour in contemporary writing. The latest DISCOURSE (first 1960 issue — from Concordia College, Minn., 75c) contains one of many articles along such lines: Peter Hilty on Kingsley Amis. Hilty refers to situation as the other primary element, separating this from style (including punning) and failing to note that the unexpectedness is the sole primary, — and that while it may be either semantical or referential, it quite often is both at once. His ‘situation’ is ambiguously applied, not sharply distinguishable, but fuzzily descriptive of subjective secondary admixtures of individual/social attitudes. The last are, of course, innumerably-varied in times and places; and

a glance through the pages of MONOCLE (see ITEMS RECEIVED) indicates that what Hilty calls disused 'situation' elements, fundamentally remain as often utilised today as the pun itself.

Thus, returning to the subject in mind at the beginning — to suggest that Theodore L. Shaw, the PRECIOUS RUBBISH man, has stuck out his neck where his head will be chopped off (January CRITICAL). Not only does he reveal failure to understand aesthetics, he illustrates his inadequacy of understanding with what he calls 'variations' upon famous paintings. The effects he achieves have much to do with humour (and by analogous flight, with punning), but nothing whatever to do with his stated subject, art criticism. A return-card insert invites readers to vote 'yes' or 'no' on an opinion of CRITICAL, by Kenneth E. Hudson, Dean of the School of Fine Arts at Washington University: 'Such an attempt as this to generate a controversy is absurd. CRITICAL serves no useful purpose, in any issue I have seen, and should be abandoned.' In the view of TRACE's Editor, the only exception which might be taken to Mr. Hudson's statement would be that, having correctly labelled Mr. Shaw's work absurd, he unwarrantedly assumes that the absurdities serve no purpose; the truly valid reason for discouraging the gentleman is because the essential humour of his discourses has become lost by repetition. The count has mounted until nothing he says is in the least unexpected; he has dragged forth his worn-fleshless, skeletal fatigue-in-the-closet so frequently that the sight waxes more boring than to contemplate the poorest of paintings for days on end. And still, those who have not met this apparition may enjoy not a little entertainment by sending 25c to STUART PUBLICATIONS, 719 Boylston St., Boston 16, Mass., for this magazine . . . and should they wish to taste real fatigue, they may send the sum of \$1, on a bargain offer of a complete packet of Shaw's confusions.

- Reminded that TRACE's own master-punster has not participated in this issue; but Associate Gil Orlovitz writes of his hope to do a piece upon Eugene O'Neill's 'slavish imitations' of Strindberg and German expressionism. 'O'Neill plods on and on to precisely nothing but well-constructed dramas on well-established psychologies,' he wrote. 'As for Faulkner (a proposed further article), though in SOUND AND FURY he made a world, especially in the first section, too often he winds up with a long, long convolution, to get to a revelation of the most puerile nature.' As with graphic art, in literature meaningfulness is quite simply and inescapably tied with the creator's degree of success in genuine self-expression, rarely approached in any era, and just as rare today, despite the annual Nobel awards. In No. 37 or No. 38 TRACE, a few more Nobel monuments may be jarred and cracked a bit.

- However, the immediate importance of awards, in the lives of recipients, cannot be denied. Each week's mail affirms this; just before this writing, we had heard from Charles Guenther with regard to the 'much difficulty' he had had in placing translations of Salvatore Quasimodo (the poor chap wasn't even in the THE READER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA) until his 1959 Nobel recognition—and ensuing which, Guenther states his translations have kept him 'very busy.' . . . The Guenther communication relates to the new series of Poetry Center assemblies at the St. Louis (Missouri) Public Library; contests are sponsored, radio time has been obtained (KETC), and the programmes themselves are led by prominent individuals, considering new writings from the area. . . . From another section of the U.S.A., Fort Smith, Arkansas—news of poetry-with-dance presentations, featuring work of Sue Abbott Boyd, whose offerings brought invitations for performances in several other cities. . . . And such activities have of course continued on the West Coast, where much of the poetry-or-not 'revival' first stirred in

America—though its beginnings were European, and we find British and French writers continue to be featured in California, New York, and—now—in Chicago. Both in San Francisco and Los Angeles, however, coffee houses and bistros emphasise hoped local talent.

Announcements of contests have quite consistently been reaching TRACE too late for publication value—one being that of the MONTALVO Award, which—and though the granting is set for the 5th of June (at Villa Montalvo, Saratoga, Calif.) closes to entries on 15th March. Those who receive this TRACE in time, should send theirs to Mrs. Dwight Caswell, 15095 Fruitvale Avenue (Saratoga). Adequate time does remain as re the Music Award (same)—original unpublished short compositions, to: Carl Lundstrum, 120 Vista Del Monte, Los Gatos, Calif.

- Special mention again has been won by a PENDLE HILL Bulletin: No. 148, with extracts from A WIDE PLACE, a work-in-progress by Ruth Hays Smith—available on request (Wallingford, Penna.) . . . And further notice for ABSTRACTS OF ENGLISH STUDIES, entering its third year, and much improved in coverage (includes the better little mags). Under auspices of the National Council of English Teachers, this is of value, not only to writers, but to readers generally who wish to find out exactly where to find what most interests them. Address the Council, at: 704 S. 6th St., Champaign, Ill., U.S.A.—50c per copy.

Among new items just received is: 21 CARLISLE, Blake Reed (THE BREAD AND WINE PRESS, unpriced). . . . And it also just has been learned that Sydney Omarr's HENRY MILLER: HIS WORLD OF URANIA will be available in U.S.A. from 9th HOUSE PUBLISHING CO., Box 1092, Hollywood 28, Calif. . . . Not yet scheduled, but to appear from one of the large New York houses is: WALT WHITMAN'S CIVIL WAR, a selection, edited by Walter Lowenfels. . . . The SEVEN POETS PRESS announces works by O. W. Crane, Harland Ristau, Carl Larsen, Jean

Arsenault, Robert Vaughan, James M. Singer, and Ronald Padgett for an initial series. These are pamphlets priced \$2 each, or \$10 for complete set.

A 'mixed' company of other arrivals: *THE BROMPTON POETS* (The Brompton Centre of the Poetry Society, 23 Brechin Pl., London, S.W.7, 15/-), edited by Zorika Greene, and contributors including David Holliday and Paul Green of *ENVOI*—also Carla Lanyan Lanyan; *COLLECTED CARTOONS*, Glen Coffield (*GOLDEN GATE*, P.O. Box 982, San Francisco 1, Calif., 25c); *PIETA*, Ulric Devare (a *VILLIERS* pamphlet, available in U.S.A. from the author: 535 S. Hoover St., Los Angeles 5, Calif., unpriced); *A CHILD'S THOUGHTS IN POETRY*, Mary Kathleen Werner (a 10-year-old), (*GREENWICH*, \$2).

Among books not received, but available with this issue, are: *SHADOW PANTOMIME*, Rosemary Bazley (3/9, *OUTPOSTS PUBLICATION*, England)—and two others in same series: *THE FAIR UNICORN*, Kenneth Prosser (3/3) and *ANGEL-FACED SHALL THE RAIN*, Pamela Stephenson (3/3); *SONGS OF A PHOENIX*, Gunhild E. Bodle (*DORRANCE & CO.*, price not noted); *COLLECTED POEMS*, Frank A. Collymore, with introduction by Bruce Hamilton (\$2.50 from: c/o BIM, Woodville, Chelsea Rd., St. Michael, Barbados, W.I.); *WRITE ME FROM RIO* (stories), Charles Edward Eaton (*JOHN F. BLAIR Publ.*, 404 1st National Bank Bldg., Winston-Salem, North Carolina, \$3.95).