

LIVING LITERATURE

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& Brush Drawings

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JAMES BOYER MAY

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EDITOR

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A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

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

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

CONTENTS

In Poetry, Man Travels'	6
Towards Print (now the Pudding)	12
Editors (and others) Write	14
<i>From October Letters of an Editor Expatriate</i>	14
I Do Not Dig (dedicated to Trace, Summer 1962)	16
<i>From Dreams to Image-Words</i>	17
Return-visa to Eldorado	18
Trace Could Do More	19
A Case? — for 'semi-fiction'	21
Peter Devries: Calvinist Gone Underground	26
A Correspondence *	32
The Utterly Quarterly	33
The Utterly Quarterly	34
Dear Do-Little:	38
September 1, 195—	40
20th Century Erato	42

The Truth and the Poem	43
<i>(Pictures of William/Carlos Williams)</i>	43
In the Wunderhorn World: Mahler's Fourth Symphony . .	47
Art of the Sonnet: 167	53
Right Turn: Left	58
Last Words of Whom?	60
<i>(Dedicated to —, and his ilk)</i>	60
The Great Pyramid	61
Jascha Kessler	63
Jascha Kessler	66
Jascha Kessler	70
Jascha Kessler	74
Vibraharping	76
<i>(Non-Vehement)</i>	76
Pitch	77
Amplification	80
Syncopation	81
Reprise	82

NOT in Passing	83
Asphodel, That Greeny Flower	96
Jascha Kessler (Continued from Page 60)	98
HERE WE ARE BUT FOR AN HOUR, by Dennis J. Horan	
INDEX (2nd Series): 8, by Gil Orlovitz	
ART OF THE SONNET: 167, by Gil Orlovitz	
MEDIAN 8, by Gil Orlovitz	
YE CHILDE WILYAM BARBE, by William J. Margolis	
TEN MINUTES, by A. Fredric Franklyn	
RIGHT TURN: LEFT, by James Boyer May	
LAST WORDS OF WHOM?, by James Boyer May	
Graphics: Brush Drawings by Ray Barrio	
Satire: A CORRESPONDENCE, by Sam Bluefarb	
More Poetry: 20th CENTURY ERATO, by Dorothy Ellin Flax	

IN POETRY, MAN TRAVELS'

by John Gould Fletcher

From an unpublished lecture, Queen's College, Cambridge, 1939)

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO (viz., 1914), this coming month, I landed at New York, having been away from my native land for more than six years. Although I had already published books in England, was at that time still to publish any in America. I was twenty-eight years old, and had spent seven of those years reading, studying, and writing what I then called poetry.

It was just a year after a certain magazine called POETRY was published in Chicago that is still now sometimes to be found in most public libraries in this country; already people were talking of the new Poetry. They talked still more about it in 1915, when Robert Frost's NORTH OF BOSTON, Vachel Lindsay's GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH, Edgar Lee Masters' SPOON RIVER, and the anthology entitled SOME IMAGIST POETS came out side by side. The next year, they talked even more; and in the year following— having such things to read as Edward Arlington Robinson's MAN AGAINST THE SKY and Conrad Aiken's symphonic narratives and Amy Lowell's polyphonic prose. All of these came out of New England, which hadn't produced a single respectable poet since Emily Dickinson quit writing.

Since then, a good deal of water has gone down the Hudson and the Mississippi, and poetry in both England and America has gone through various phases. American poetry in particular has officially been pronounced dead by several schools of criticism. And I have heard one of the most eminent poets in this country say that he did not write poetry at all — and did not want it to be called poetry. But,

as a matter of fact, American poetry is still alive. It is going to be a rough bird to kill; and the reason is basically that little word, 'poetry.'

Poetry is a big word — like love and death and God. For example, quite recently a publishing house has issued a selection from the novels of the late Thomas Wolfe, calling it poetry. I see no reason why not. If ability to rhyme easily is the test of poetry, then either Mr. Edgar Guest or Mr. Ogden Nash is the best poet we have with us today. If ability to write in some strict form, like the sonnet, is the test, then I suppose we must accept Edna Vincent Millay, and bar everybody else from competing.

But poetry itself has nothing to do with any particular set form.

It is frequently to be found in good novels. John Steinbeck's *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* moves in the form of a saga and has in it long passages of prose poetry suggesting that Steinbeck is a kind of cousin to Carl Sandburg. It is not easy to say just what poetry is. It is easier to make a list of really great and important poets and say these are the ones without which the world would have been poorer.

For instance: Homer and the Greek Dramatists, Job, the Song of Songs which is Solomon's, some of the Psalms, some of the Prophets, possibly Vergil, Dante undoubtedly, François Villon, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Donne, possibly Milton (though I think he and Vergil are bad models to follow), Wordsworth, Blake, Keats, the Ballads, Goethe and Heine, Baudelaire (a great poet closely akin to Dante—but without a heaven to get into), Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Hardy. I am doubtful about Yeats, but am willing to throw him in. What you see is my own private list. And also, of course, the Chinese poets; you never will know how poignant simple things are until you study the Chinese. And also the Pharaoh Akhenaton's Hymn to the Sun which goes back 1,350 years before Christ.

You see, there is a lot of poetry lying loose about the world, and if you want to do something about it, you've got to begin early and keep on. And one of the curious facts is that it hasn't been killed by our modern age of science and applied mechanical power. For that matter, the scientists are in a curious position nowadays. Albert Einstein as a scientist may say, for example, that the universe is run by particles of energy and by mathematical equations. But Einstein the man doesn't think of himself as being run that way, because Einstein is a very peaceable person—and modern wars are run by particles of energy dropped in the shape of bombs and torpedoes, and mathematical equations of mechanical power. Einstein does not like that, and neither do I—a scientifically-organized state with nothing but force at the top.

Even when a poet supposes force to rule the world, he tries to make it into a sane, humanly-comprehensible force. Poetry reduces everything to the human level. The very basis for poetry, rhythm, which can be found today in the songs of American Indians of the Southwest, is a human quality. We walk or run in rhythmic movement, and even our hearts beat that way. Poetry is the land of the heart. Mary Austin and the American Rhythm . .

In poetry, man travels—as Goethe said of his great poem—from heaven through the world to hell. Or from hell through the world to heaven—which seems to have been largely Dante's way. And possibly, as another great poet has more than hinted, the marriage of heaven and hell is in mass. The object of poetry is to stimulate the imagination. There is no final law which says you must read poetry, or which will guarantee you are going to like it when you read it. But if, instead, you read THE DAILY MIRROR or the SATURDAY EVENING POST or THE NEW YORKER or DETECTIVE STORY, you have no guarantee whatever that you are not missing something,—just about all the difference there is

between a man and a robot. And that difference is one of the imagination, a considerable one.

There is also another reason for reading poetry: it will teach you a good deal about two other arts, painting and music. Painting and music and poetry have imagery and rhythm. Poets have more of one than another. The musical side might be called the dynamic element, the rhythmic; that of poetry, the imagery; the realistic element, that of painting. Whitman, for example, was a great rhythmist — perhaps greater in his rhythm than in his imagery, which sometimes has too much Dutch matter-of-factness.

There is also thought-structure, still more difficult to define. One of the few poems in which thought and rhythm and visual imagery move very closely together is Dante Alighieri's *THE DIVINE COMEDY* — and this is not in English. In Shakespeare, in English, sometimes the thought literally outruns the imagery, though Shakespeare's rhythm in his later work increased in complexity.

(Published with permission of the author's widow, Charlie May Simon.) which my name was mentioned . . . I could not detect any influence

FOOTNOTE: Fletcher exercised unmeasurable influences on uncounted young poets of the succeeding generation; and among his contacts was that with James Franklin Lewis. This holds special interest for TRACE, whose Editor has been endeavouring to aid Mary Graham Lund to bring about a 'Lewis revival,' with the better recognition many feel due him. Fletcher's death occurred in 1950 (age, 64), and it was not until three years before the death of Lewis in 1945 that the two made direct communication. However, the latter had read and had been affected by Fletcher's writings.

The years immediately following this lecture are revealed in letters to Lewis as a period of near-desperation, during which his accelerating interest in poetry was perhaps a kind of counteragent to fears of bankruptcy and mental breakdown. Fletcher was lecturing extensively and writing, but unable to sell his poetry. The letters show him to have felt at odds with the

then-editors of POETRY (Chicago), mentioned in this piece; also, that he was eager to make new acquaintances (of whom Lewis was one) in the world of poetry.

In an unpublished essay, A BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP, Mary Lund quotes from a memorial essay of Fletcher's published in EXPERIMENT (Winter, 1945): 'In the late summer of 1942, . . . I received from an unknown correspondent at Arkansas College in Batesville a poem in

of my poetry in his verse, but he obviously thought my work interesting.

We began to correspond and some time that winter I met my correspondent.'

WHITE REACH

The poem mentioned is WHITE REACH, concerning which — and other matters — Mary Lund states:

'Lewis addresses the poet (Fletcher) of the "white reach" directly
assuring him of the value of the "lone audacious white"
with which he
spanned the creosote and tar where man lay tortured,
prophesying:
"And you shall drop the music of direction on our
breath, / And beauty
on our street."

This poem was scheduled to be published in CRESCENDO, but when Scott Greer was called to the army and Lewis was left to edit the last thick double issue (Autumn, 1944), he substituted for it Fletcher's answer to WHITE REACH, titled THE BUILDERS OF THE BRIDGE, later to appear in THE BURNING MOUNTAIN (Dutton, 1946) with the inscription, "In Memory of James Franklin Lewis."

In this poem, Fletcher caught the essential idealism in Lewis's striving and passed on the task of "building the bridge" to the younger poet, little thinking that he would live

to write obituary tributes for his new friend.

'An EXPERIMENT article of Fletcher's finds in Lewis a "wild Celtic power of fantasy allied to a terrific love of sheer words." He speaks of a "violent spate of technique . . . used to illuminate an attitude of rebellion," and draws a parallel between Lewis's romanticism and Hart Crane's. A year later, in an article in THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CITY REVIEW, Fletcher makes a higher estimate of the value of Lewis's poetry.

'Strangely enough, Lewis had revised his opinion of Fletcher from an earlier time. In 1939, in SONG TO MYSELF, he described him as "A man who learned his one good trick too well. / Like Swinburne, fettered to perpetual youth, / He sang too sweetly to discover truth. / He keeps repeating yet, in slight disguise, / Old melodies that made him never wise."

'Then, in 1942, he was praising Fletcher's work as "Music hardly heard for modesty, . . . / Eolian of the testament of years . . ."; and sent the poem to Fletcher.

'And in THE BUILDERS, Fletcher expresses a more acute criticism of Lewis than appears in his formal tributes: " . . . None knows the hour nor how / Necessity becomes beauty. Since the form / Flower upon the act, that act is best / Which rests on interaction, more than self; / Which through the self expresses more than thought; . . ."

Returning to the correspondence once more: Fletcher often criticised Lewis's 'baroque' style, his failure to 'fuse emotional drive with intellectual excitement.' But Lewis had what Mary Lund calls a 'Shelleyan immunity' to criticism. When Fletcher wrote: 'I fear a descent into chaos,' Lewis comments in a marginal note: 'I welcome it!'

TOWARDS PRINT (NOW THE PUDDING)

by the Editor

ALTHOUGH OPINIONS WIDELY differ as to whether an increasing percentage of books about writers, by writers about themselves, critical works on their creations may be rated (also) in the creative area, statistics show their ever-augmenting numbers since 1910. And readerships for these have enormously increased. Besides new publications, scores of items in this category, long out of print, have entered the lists in fresh editions; and they've realized bigger audiences than had the originals.

The facts cannot be summarily minimized. Proliferating populations, to be sure, account for both lengthened tabulations of new books and for better over-all sales; but the disproportionate boom in literary biography, autobiography, and criticism (often, mingled with the others) can be explained only by affirming that — good, poor, or indifferent — such works must appeal to a substantially larger cross section.

'Cross section,' because the expansion of higher education has been cited, as if added scores of doctoral theses finding print had so upspun the publishing figures, or as though the thousands conjectured to be buying books ancillary to their studies had swelled the buying market. However, anyone familiar with the trade is aware how slight such effects are (most of the books are from typewriters of professionals, and these are as seldom approved for publication as they ever have been — while only a fringe of postgrads can afford to buy any extra books). All that may be said is that the more people achieving higher education, the more readers there should be (and this is dubious: for instance, British book-buyers always have outstripped

Americans, though the population boasts fewer degrees). Obviously, decisions what to read aren't specifically channeled, — except that we'd hope tastes improve.

Another verifiable constituent of the trend, and perhaps the most relevant (to bolster the theory of a new field of creativity): one in four persons absorbed in these works has read little or nothing of the books criticized or the authors delineated; at least one in three has read only one other biography or study (say it's a 'personality' thing) or one of the books described (say it focuses on texts). This would be altogether and astonishingly unreasonable, unless the scorned 'writers-upon-writers-upon-writing' had not rather frequently composed convincing expositions of more than mere contingent commentaries.

All by way of response to some TRACE readers who have protested that too many books of this type are described in *ITEMS RECEIVED* . . . that we commit the 'sin' we attribute to certain academicians. Not only have the foregoing observations led us to give space to selected 'unoriginal' writings — we've done so because many of the best of them are slighted or obtusely noted in the big reviews. And, despite that the limited pages of TRACE won't allow analyses of half the volumes recommended, failures of adequate attention and/or possible misrepresentations, elsewhere, remain prime elements in determining which should be detailed.

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

FROM OCTOBER LETTERS OF AN EDITOR EXPATRIATE

Margaret Randall de Mondragon

Dear Editors:

Mexico City . . . what can I say? It is a city of mystery and solitude and hundreds of underlying currents stemming from a mixture of cultures which at times seem to bridge East and West. Coming from the last three years in New York — the intensity, action, that particular density which only New York has — I find it remote at times, strange, very beautiful, not terribly conducive to work (in the N.Y. sense), but with its own rhythms and feelings which are seldom (I feel) tapped by the Anglo-outsider . . . I think it must take a long time to really feel 'here.' Of course my views are all colored by the fact that I fell in love here, married here, am raising my family here . . . We have a son almost two and another on the way . . . Also, by the fact that EL CORNO EMPLUMADO was born here, and this all gives weight to our 'being' here.

Here we are fighting under the Mexican sun . . . still trying to pay off our printer on No. 4, and getting excited as No. 5 progresses . . . The planning and assembling of each issue is always the most gratifying part (along with the reams of really fine and interesting correspondence from all parts of the world); and the money-hunt has to be kept in place, relegated (spiritually, at least) so as not to spoil the whole. We continually promise ourselves our next issue will be smaller and not so demanding financially, but surely we will die before that is true, since our ideas are always on the expansion side rather than the reverse. Two human beings

raising 15,000 pesos to put out an issue every three months, handling the editorial end in two languages, answering some thirty letters daily, from as many places, handling distribution in 250 bookstores in some twenty-three countries, often trying to find other markets for rejected work which seems to us of good quality, but just 'not for us,' etc. etc. can easily lead to the brink of breakdown . . . to say nothing of one baby two years old, another on the way, our own living to earn, etc. And our own writing! But we are usually rejuvenated with the latest copy, fresh off the press, in our sweaty little hands, and so . . . onward.

And with this optimistic thought, I must get back to typing out the week's comic which Sergio is racing to complete for tomorrow (yes, one of the things we do to keep ourselves alive down here is translate a comic a week for a big publisher who makes his millions off the Mexican counterpart of the U.S. mind-eating industry.)

ISSUE P. 14 · SCAN P. 20

I DO NOT DIG (DEDICATED TO TRACE, SUMMER 1962)

Ruth Bunker Christiansen (writer's Exchange)

Dear Editors: I do not dig those menPoet's poems: They talk in strange Jargon. (They must dream awake And then write their Dabblings backwards.) I do not dig those backward Dabblings. I do not dig backwards. I do not dig. I do not!

FROM DREAMS TO IMAGE-WORDS*Helen Wolfe*

Dear Editors: Your collection of poems revealing dreams or connected with dream states . . . For several years now, I have been writing poem based on images. Such images, seen just before going to sleep are familiar to most people. The first intimation that some of them embody ideas came to me after an overlong, overtiring day packed with a variety of experiences. Since I was close to dreaming, but unable to sleep, I decided to entertain myself by watching images go by. In spite of my befogged state (it was now near 5 a.m.), I detected a unusual unity, a scheme in the procession. Harking back to a conversation I had had the afternoon before, I said to myself: 'Why can't they be words?' — and instantly the images changed into words. I was numb with fatigue, yes; this was the first day we had been in our country house since the year before, and I could not remember where to look for pencil and paper. But I did know something extraordinary had happened, and I managed to get those word down just instantly before I fell asleep. The next day I looked at what I had written and named it DAYBREAK.* . . . I tried to unravel the secret of recognition: by what metho do I know that one particular image out of two or fifty or 10 represents a poem? But the answer to this has and probably alway will elude me.

(Editor: This poem, DAYBREAK, will appear in TRACE, lat in the year.)*

RETURN-VISA TO ELDORADO

A. Fredric Franklyn

Dear Associates:

In the portion of my article, Food of the Seed and Chaff (in TRACE No. 46), examining Kenneth Rexroth's ASSAYS, I suggested that Mr. Rexroth's interest in the poetry of Brother Antoninus may have been esoteric snobbery: 'One wonders if it isn't only "as far as" the comparative rarity of his monasticism "is concerned," that Brother Antoninus has fallen under the author's eclectic regard at all . . .).'

Since the article's appearance, Brother Antoninus has written to me to correct this impression: 'Actually, Rexroth showed interest in my work as early as 1944 or 1945, long before I was a Catholic, and in fact was instrumental in placing my ms. THE RESIDUAL YEARS with NEW DIRECTIONS, of which he was then an Editor.'

Earlier in the same article, I took exception to Mr. Rexroth's ' . . . depressing attack upon (Robinson) Jeffers' poetry,' and attack which I felt was ' . . . singularly venomous.' Further on in the body of the essay, I called attention to what I felt was an inconsistency in his predisposition in favor of Brother Antoninus who, he asserted: ' . . . is more or less a disciple of Robinson Jeffers!' In his letter, Brother Antoninus also writes: 'I asked Kenneth to himself select from earlier volumes, and he did so, carefully excising the Jeffers influence . . . When (THE) CROOKED LINES (OF GOD) was published eleven years later, I explicitly sought to rectify this by establishing on the jacket my indebtedness to Jeffers.'

TRACE COULD DO MORE

Robert Bassil (michigan's Voice)

Dear Editors: Your mag could offer a challenging leadership in letters, for this time. One way of raising circulation is to be controversial, polemical. You obviously can't do this alone, although you have a few stalwart boys. Our leading academic poets are exploring their pathetic 'suburban souls.' This is the supposed 'new' movement of Lowell's *LIFE STUDIES*, Snodgrass's *HEART'S NEEDLE*, and so on. Most of them haven't even been able to break out of the swaddling bands of the academy. Someone needs to say this. I don't believe in Sartre's: 'Man is a useless passion.' We can remake ourselves, if we have enough spirit and guts; but the hour is very late. In contrast with the academics, the Beat, now-defunct 'movement' . . . is just juvenile. It's time our so-called artists realized that all of us were born, had childhoods and the usual growing pains (this is essentially the content of so much of our 'poetry' and especially the early novels of 'promise'), and that real art and literature begin precisely where most of them leave off!

The quality of the so-called mystical experience is subtly changing as consciousness itself evolves (Teilhard de Chardin has something of the same idea, but he ranges so broadly over the whole of cosmic evolution that he neglects to develop what will be the next step). The new kind of consciousness and vision, in the long run, is the only thing that really matters today. If we are not going to destroy ourselves and 'civilization' — that pitiable mechanization and ant-heap manipulation of man today — we have to put away childish gadgets and toys and grow up. A sublimation of sex is, of course, necessary for the visionary (cf. Buddha walking out on his family, Christ's 'What haveth I to do with thee,

woman,' etc.) to achieve his integration-individuation; but, once having achieved it, I see no reason why one should not return into the world. A second 'going down' of Zarathustra — but with a difference.

TRACE could be a major force in disseminating such ideas and developing an intelligent debate on such vital contemporary issues. You could be much more than a gossip shop! Artistically, the problem is: How and through what forms and media does the mature writer communicate his vision?

ISSUE P. 17 · SCAN P. 23

A CASE? — FOR ‘SEMI-FICTION’

by David A. Munro

SOMETHING NEW WAS ADDED when Authors William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick stood the usual disclaimer on its head, saying in the Preface to *THE UGLY AMERICAN*: ‘This book is based on fact.’

If we were to name it and define it, we might call it ‘semi-fiction.’ That is, a special factual account of events which uses the device of fiction to tell more than the more-standard factual accounts — history made more factual than history itself! In this it differs from recent war novels, for example. We are not at all sure that Private Pruitt, to name one case, is drawn from life in *FROM HERE TO ETERNITY*, but we do know that we are not terribly concerned with whether or not he existed. The case is different with *THE UGLY AMERICAN*; for, we become immediately involved. We are aware that the authors have chosen this device to sneak a story to the outside world past a patent iron curtain set up by the Establishment.

Similarly, let us look at *EXODUS*, the fabulously successful semi-fiction novel based on the struggles of the Jews to set up Israel as an independent state. Once again we find ourselves following a story like amateur detectives to find out what really happened in this vital corner of the world. Semi-fiction in the hands of Author Leon Uris has become another variety of reportage, enjoying a new ‘now it can be told’ license.

Note how this differentiates it from ordinary historical fictioneering. Our most notable master of the standard product was undoubtedly Shakespeare himself. Even a cursory comparison of the famed fictional Macbeth with the obscure historical Macbeth shows us that the author did

very little research indeed; also, that his aim certainly was not to tell us what Macbeth really was like. Shakespeare set himself to write a morality play concerned with the workings of the human conscience, and he invented a character suitable to the purpose and credible to Elizabethan audiences. The historical novel over the years has always been filled with such facile inventions, always designed to be credible to the author's contemporary audience; but the task of writing semi-fiction is at the other extreme. Every page of *THE LAST HURRAH* and *ALL THE KING'S MEN* shows signs of hard-headed research into historical events. Leon Uris confesses to having done two years of research to produce *EXODUS*.

Evidently, research is the key. And the three-step task of the writer of semi-fiction begins with research; that is to say, finding out what really happened. Next, fictional disguise; that is to say, the redesign s that individuals shall not be libeled or embarrassed and so that publi cation shall not be halted by censorship. And only then may th author concern himself with the customary 'literary' or audience response values.

Thus, the job is not only big but requires several different kinds o skills, not necessarily related. The assignment tends to become group-task, like working for a news magazine. And the productio of semi-fiction in our day has become an organization accomplish ment. Money, for example, may make it so. We all know that there i a fortune in a book like *EXODUS*, and advances can cover fees t researchers, fees for travel and documentation, etc. The same thin also may be achieved with volunteers; many will agreeably help, ; the projected book is designed to blast the lid off some oppressiv situation. Or a government, or other institution with a stake in th matter, may sponsor semi-fiction by the release of documents, b loaning research-personnel, or by direct subsidy. In such a circum stance, favorable semi-fiction will

be sought.

This puts our focus on another necessary ingredient of semi-fiction it arises from suppression and is generated because suppression has occurred; it takes on the nature of the exposé; it is, in a word propaganda. This is to say that the motivation for its composition and publication is in large part to change people's opinions about specific issues rather than merely to entertain them. (The ancient and fruitless argument whether or not propaganda is 'literature' need not be reopened here, especially since the proposition is logically defective and cannot be answered.) The appearance of semi-fiction thus reflects the immediate tenor of political controversy. *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* appeared just before the Civil War, when the slavery controversy was at its height. *RAMONA* appeared in 1884, when we were ready to consider the Indians our moral problem. *THE UGLY AMERICAN* appeared at the end of the reign of the Dulles brother over American foreign policy. *EXODUS* is not only propaganda for Israel, but an outcry against the fruitless cynicism of modern great power international policy.

And, since semi-fiction is propaganda, action is likely to follow its publication. For instance, there was a temporary cleanup of the State Department after the appearance of *THE UGLY AMERICAN* yet, because the cleanup was hardly more than a ceremonial whitewash, the Department proceeds to this day under a cloud. Semi-fiction — because of the fact that it does not name names — spreads propaganda the more widely. Who shall say who is innocent when the fictional name will fit one as well as another? Our incompetent Ambassador Sears in *THE UGLY AMERICAN* has a way of becoming every ambassador.

Rising semi-fiction hence may be a product of our challenging times, being contemporaneous with increasing censorship of newspapers and other vulnerable media. Today's semi-fiction is moving into a vacated area. And the writer of it seeks to keep his stuff in tune with the headlines,

concerning himself with southeast Asia, Israel, South Africa, or wherever, and simultaneously seeks to tell what has otherwise been kept secret,—to spill the beans.

The outlook for semi-fiction is therefore good. The times will undoubtedly become more, rather than less, strained, though we have President Kennedy's word that censorship will harden (meaning that more facts will be suppressed, more official lies told). Meantime, the free media — books, the stage, and to some extent movies — continue to flourish . . . with semi-fiction products.

Author's footnote: Here are two typical semi-fiction disclaimers, not in the 'any similarity . . . is purely coincidental' manner.

From *THE UGLY AMERICAN*: This book is written as fiction; but is based on fact. The things we write about have, in essence, happened. They have happened not only in Asia, where the story takes place, but throughout the world —in the fifty-nine countries where over two million Americans are stationed.

At the end of the book we have added a documentary epilogue which we hope will convince the reader that what we have written is not just an angry dream, but rather the rendering of fact into fiction. The names, the places, the events, are our inventions; our aim is not to embarrass individuals, but to stimulate thought — and, we hope, action.

From *EXODUS*: Most of the events in *EXODUS* are a matter of history and public record. Many of the scenes were created around historical incidents for the purpose of fiction.

There may be persons alive who took part in events similar to those described in this book. It is possible, therefore, that some of them may be mistaken for characters in this book.

Let me emphasize that all the characters in *EXODUS* are the complete creation of the author, and entirely fictional.

The exceptions, of course, are those public figures mentioned by name, such as Churchill, Truman, Pearson, and the rest who were related to this particular period.

PETER DEVRIES: CALVINIST GONE UNDERGROUND

by Abigail Ann Hamblen

IT WAS ALEXANDER POPE *who wrote that he knew*
'... nothing that moves strongly but satire, and
those who are ashamed of nothing else, are so of
being ridiculous.'

What was so in Eighteenth-Century England is certainly true in the American Twentieth Century. But now, as then, satire is a tool for only the skilled; probably nothing is quite so difficult to write effectively. And paradoxically, it is most effective when the humor seems most casual, when the author is one who seems to view life with an almost-insane irresponsibility.

Peter DeVries is such an author. As one reviewer has said aptly he '... surveys his world with the wacky vision of a man who has inadvertently put on the wrong pair of glasses.' (TIME, July 20 1959.) It is virtually impossible for him to write a straight, sober sentence: he must twist his meaning into fantastic paradoxes or simpering epigrams; he must poke a finger at all his bewildered creatures — even his suffering heroes. He is restlessly unable to keep his pleasures from interfering with his happiness (to paraphrase himself).

The world he sees through his 'wrong pair of glasses' is a topsy-turvy world symbolized by the wallpaper in Chick Swallow's bathroom which, at the beginning of THE TENTS OF WICKEDNESS depicts people in cages as at a zoo, with the animals on the outside looking at them and feeding them. At the end of the novel, the room has been done over. Now the walls show children hard at work over their lessons while their parents watch TV and look at comic-books.

It is a world in which a parishioner who has got religion is ‘... embarrassing to a cleric of sensibility,’ in which a minister is exhorted by his psychiatrist to ‘... make a decision for Christ.’ No longer must one wonder here about the ‘divinity of Jesus’: the main question is ‘the humanity of God.’ Nothing is the way it used to be, ‘... not even nostalgia.’

In one novel (*COMFORT ME WITH APPLES*), Chick finds himself in bed with the large and dominating, but arty, Mrs. Thickness. In *THE TENTS*, he is persuaded that to help a psychotic girl back to reality he must father the child she desires. When his father has all his ‘heavy’ philosophical articles rejected by the ‘heavy’ quarter lies, he has a feeling of ‘rejection,’ not of ‘submission.’ And when he is discovered to have a ‘sensitive colon,’ his son supposes it ‘... an apt enough ailment for a man as meticulous about punctuation as he was.’*

No adult writes in this manner, page after page, unless he is in deadly earnest. (One is reminded of Jonathan Swift and his ‘... modest proposal [that] a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled ...’) There is something determined in the very playfulness of the DeVries novels, something purposeful.

This is not hard to seek. We begin by remembering that Peter DeVries, son of first-generation Dutch immigrants, was reared in a strict Calvinist environment. (His Andy Mackerel has a similar childhood.) Life is real and life is earnest to a true Dutch Calvinist, as real and as earnest as Hell is. Therefore, he is concerned with the world and its lust for evil and its petty evasion of the responsibilities of that evil. Such a background may be glossed over, may be relegated to the intellectual or emotional attic; but it is never wholly forgotten. As Chick says at the beginning of *COMFORT ME WITH APPLES*: ‘The past is prologue,’ and man is ‘... a jet plane propelled by his exhaust.’

Something waggish in DeVries would not permit him to be a Calvinist overtly. But, through all the clowning of his humorous writings (and as associate editor of THE NEW YORKER, he produces a great many essays and short stories, besides his novels), one may sense the concern for the plight of man in a complex civilization.

In some of his novels, he takes up at some length several of the more salient elements of that civilization. One of the more important, of course, is the cult of nonconformity. DeVries is intrigued with this, and fully understands what Chick calls '... the exhilarating sense of being a misfit.' Chick, during the course of COMFORT ME, goes through a good many uncomfortable experiences in order to preserve his 'difference.' (It must be quite a strain for him and his friend Nickie to talk in the glib paradoxes that so mystify the Greek restaurant owner and so enrage Mr. Swallow.) The cardinal example of the nonconformist is Sweetie Appleyard Chick's old girl-friend (THE TENTS OF WICKEDNESS). Because of the lamented coal-bin incident of her childhood, Sweetie suffers from arrested development; she floats about vaguely in a white dress suffering shoes only occasionally. At other times, as in her parody rhymes, she is piercingly aware of life. Chick, undertaking to bring her to a full sense of reality, is caught in a most unconventional web of circumstances, brought on by pity and a sense of responsibility. When, finally, his success with Sweetie backfires, he pronounces his ultimatum: "I think it's wishful thinking," he says to her, "this idea you artistic types hug, that you can't be one of the folks. It's a self-justification, a kind of goofing off. Why take pride in being lousy human being, for Christ's sake?" And later he says, meditatively: "... the conformity we often glibly equate with mediocrity isn't something free spirits 'transcend' as much as something they're not quite up to."

**The people in this world are all as brittle and brightly-colored as paper dolls. Even their names have a crackling unreality. Very*

few persons we know are called Molly Calico, Andrew Mackerel, Mrs. Cool-Paintey, Sprackling, and Sponsable. And who has ever imagined a judge named Merle Walnut? Or a siren named Sherry Budd? Dickens, with his Pecksniffs and Cheeryble brothers, would feel at home here.

It is in this way that DeVries seems to plead for a rational view of life. He is glad, at the end of *THE TENTS*, to say that Nickie, the zany, two-way personality, is settling down in the groves of Academe. Chick is glad to be reconciled with his wife, and to remain faithful forever. Neither he nor Nickie, for all their foolishness, want to be a 'lousy' human being.

The Church in the modern world could not hope to be ignored by a Calvinist-gone-satirist. A certain type of 'up-to-date' young clergyman is aptly presented in the youthful divine who preaches: "Let us load the camera of our heart with the film of the Gospel, and set the light-meter of our spirit at Infinity!" Chick darkly regards him as an imposter.

As for liberal religion, *THE MACKEREL PLAZA* is perhaps the most nearly complete spoof of it that exists in print. Andrew Mackere is the pastor of 'P.L.' (People's Liberal), the first church in the United States to have a split-level building complete with two bathrooms, a ballroom, a clinic, and a full-time psychiatrist. The wonderful thing about God, according to the Rev. Mackerel, is that He doesn't have to exist to save one! Such bon mots fall continually from the lips of this colorful clergyman; they add to the half-in-fun, wholly in-earnest air of the entire novel.

This air is pervasive. In one prayer, for instance, the Lord is assured that His people are aware that He presents '... difficulties for every solution.' And yet, the minister adds, if our stumbling blocks cannot be converted into stepping stones, we are '... unworthy to be called sons of God, much less to be saved, even by the skin of our teeth. Again, after a dry spell, the rains come on the night all churches are holding special services to pray for rain. Mackerel (who stays

at home) is shaken, appalled. "I have lost my faith," he says wistfully. He had always denied a personal God; now, if this rain proves there is one, he just isn't Mackerel's sort: he is a God who directly answers the kind of people who attend meetings to pray for rain "... the bores, the dullards, the bigots." "Oh, I can believe in Him," Mackerel says bitterly, "But I am not able to worship Him!"

Earlier, aroused, he has shouted to his doctor '... in one of those bursts of profanity whose roots lie so close to those of reverence, "I'm sick of this nursery room, pie-in-the-sky, backsliding revivalism! And I'm especially sick of seeing the clock turned back by people who should know better!"

Psychiatry comes in for its share of ridicule. Von Pantz, under whose care Mackerel finally comes, is an impressive caricature. What modern patients need today, he says pompously, is a sense of sin. For, since sin has been deemed nonexistent, guilt feelings have increased. Had not Jung once remarked to him that some patients cannot be cured: they must be saved?

These are only major examples of satire in DeVries' work. Actually very little escapes at least a glancing shot. But, over all his writing rings the rollicking tone of humor itself being held up to ridicule, and humorists, too. COMFORT ME WITH APPLES is full of wise-cracks that often seem more silly than funny, and in the end have a slightly suffocating effect. Consider the long-drawn-out incident where Chick deliberately sets out to discourage Nickie from marrying his sister. During one memorable dinner, the sophomoric jokes flow so fast that even the reader feels discouraged! (For example, when Chick's wife gives him the apple pie to serve, and asks him for "just a sliver," he hands her a bit of wood.)

Again, Chick undertakes to provide 'Pepigrams' for the daily paper at twenty dollars apiece. Instances of this brand of wit encrust many pages. (If you're a self-starter, your boss won't need to be a crank.)

Nor has DeVries neglected the art of parody. Every reviewer of *THE TENTS* has mentioned the variety and quantity of parody that fills it. There is something impressive in a writer who can switch from the soft Marquand sentence to the tortured Faulkner syntax to the breathless Fitzgerald exclamation. These are only the beginning: DeVries has shown himself perfectly at home in the idioms of people as disparate as Dickens and Proust, and his Biblical allusions are numerous. Further, he must know what Longinus said about shifting from third person to first and back again in order to create excitement in the reader; for, he employs this device frequently. As all satirists must be, he is thoroughly grounded in what others have said about life, and in what manners they have reacted to it.

His own conclusions are plain. Certainly, he finds mankind often absurd and almost always in error; or he could not write as he does. Satire cannot exist without a basis of solid reality. Beneath the zaniness of DeVries' novels lies the shabby world of the dishonest, the cowardly, and the pretentiously arrogant. Sensitive people must always be trying to escape this; their methods may be less than brilliant (as are Chick Swallow's) or absurd (as are Sweetie Appleyard's) or painful (as are Nickie Sherman's). But they will never really cease searching for something better.

DeVries' escape is found in his brittle novels and stories, all laid in never-never land peopled by those who are not quite sane, who see things upside down, who speak in quips, occasionally bursting out in the profanity which Mackerel says lies so close to reverence.

ISSUE P. 24 · SCAN P. 30

A CORRESPONDENCE *

(by Sam Bluefarb)

December 20, 195[?]

Mr. Jonathan Sur-Travaillé, 110 Roughstrewn Garrets,
Grub City, California

Dear Mr. Sur-Travaillé:

A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOUSITY IN THE
POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK, has been received by our editorial
board. As soon as we are able to come to a decision on your
article, we will inform you accordingly.

Truly yours, (signed) E. Squire Do-Little, Editor-in-Chief
ESD-L : abs

**Editorial certification: This is to verify that, to save the
additional expenses of photographing this correspondence, exact
and true copies have been made—and that all signatures (as
indicated) on the originals in our possession appear authentic.*

THE UTTERLY QUARTERLY

*Mr. E. Squire Do-Little, Editor-in-Chief, Chain Hall, The
University of Dropsy, Dropsy, Kansas*

Dear Mr. Do-Little: You will perhaps recall a manuscript which I mailed to you on or about December 20, 1957, entitled, A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOSITY IN THE POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK. With regard to this manuscript, I should like to enquire whether your editorial board has come to a decision regarding the feasibility of its publication in THE UTTERLY QUARTERLY. Would you kindly inform me whether you have taken any appropriate action. To expedite matters, I am enclosing a self-addressed postcard which I hope you will return at your earliest convenience. Please make a mark in the appropriate box. Yours truly, (signed) Jonathan Sur-Travaillé

April 1, 1958

We are returning your manuscript.

x Your manuscript is being further considered.

Your manuscript has been accepted.

THE UTTERLY QUARTERLY

*E. Squire Do-Little, Chain Hall, The University of Dropsy,
Dropsy, Kansas*

Dear Sir: Well over two months ago I queried you on a manuscript of mine entitled, A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOSITY IN THE POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK. Furthermore, to facilitate and expedite an answer with a minimum of trouble on your part, I enclosed a self-addressed postal card. Not long after, the card was returned to me indicating an interest in the article. However, almost six months have elapsed since I first sent out the article, and while I do not wish to rush you into making an injudicious decision, I would certainly appreciate your attending to the matter so that I might know what action to consider next. Please be assured of my patient understanding. Cordially, (signed) Jonathan Sur-Travaillé

JUNE 14, 195[?]

*Mr. Jonathan Sur-Travaillé, 110 Roughtstrewn Garrets, Grub
City, California*

Dear Mr. Sur-Travaillé:

Your communication has been received, and I can fully sympathize with your concern. We here at UTTERLY have been so inundated with work that, believe me, Mr. Sur-Travaillé, time (forgive the mixed figure!) flies on breathless wings, and we are left far behind in our obligations to contributors. We are indeed sorry. At any rate I thought it best to get this off to you 'post-haste,' as the poet says since the UTTERLY office is about to close shop, with the rest of the university, for the summer. Those of us in graduate work, who also edit literary quarterlies like the UTTERLY in our spare time, need a bit of a vacation to 'get the kinks out,' so to speak. We might return from the summer

break refreshed and ready to tackle the work of the coming year.

Although almost all of the editorial board have already left on the summer 'interregna,' the majority of them, including this correspondent, have looked over your story and have been favorably impressed, particularly with your treatment of Jellinek's attitude toward the Transvestite tendency in modern life and letters. However, in this far from best of all possible worlds, there are hurdles and there are delays to all relevant enterprises 'of great pith and moment.' One of our members, Miss Delia Whitherspoon (of the Chicago Whitherspoons) was recently called home to the bedside of her ailing father, who, at this moment, hovers between life and death. Miss Whitherspoon has further been burdened of late with her research into the influence of London fish-and-chip shops on the Cockney Poets (she is writing her dissertation on this topic). And although her intentions were of the best, somehow, in her haste to reach her father's bedside, she neglected to read A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOUSITY IN THE POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK. However, since Miss Whitherspoon is expected to be gone all summer and perhaps even for the coming fall term, I am taking the liberty of mailing your manuscript on to her special delivery mail, so that she might make some time available, in the press of her sad duties, to read your story. I am sure Miss Whitherspoon — whose family, incidentally, is the UTTERLY's most important sponsor — will attend to the matter as soon as she receives your manuscript. Thank you for being so very patient. I remain,

Yours faithfully, (signed) E. Squire Do-Little

ESD-L : gob September 27, 1958

Mr. E. S. Do-Little, Editor, THE UTTERLY QUARTERLY

Dear Do-Little,

Still no word from your end on my article A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOUSITY IN THE POEMS OF

STEPHEN JELLINEK. Pretty soon the year will have 'turned full circle' (I too can quote the poet) and still no decision on my manuscript. Will you please accept the manuscript, or return it.

Patiently yours, (signed) J. Sur-Travaillé

Ps: A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW is not a story; it is a critical essay.

November 1, 1958

Dear Do-Little,

What gives? I sent you a note on September 27 relative to my manuscript A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOUSITY IN THE POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK, but as yet haven't received a reply to that enquiry. Needless to say, I am very much concerned, since my garret was recently broken into and a large amount of material was stolen, including the only carbon copy of A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW. Will you please do something. You can understand my desperation, I think.

Desperately, (signed) J. Sur-Travaillé

December 27, 1958

Mr. Jonathan Sur-Travaillé, 110 Roughstrewn Garrets,
Grab (sic) City, California

Dear Mr. Travel (sic):

Mr. Do-Little, THE UTTERLY's editor, recently mailed me your comic broadside A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW (sic) OF THE PRECIOUS IMAGINATION IN THE POGROMS OF STEPHEN BREAKYOURNECK (siiiiic). As yet, what with my having to make arrangements for the funeral of my dear father, preparations for the Christmas carolers field trip to Mr. Algren's Division Street, the Hanukkah children's feast, and the imminent arrival of the new year with its concomitant preparations for the selling of banners at the Dropsy Slaughter Bowl . . . I have not yet had the opportunity to look over your manuscript. However, I shall do so at the earliest possible moment, and return it with my decision to the UTTERLY's office. Thanking you for your already over-burdened

patience, I am, Yours in literary fellowship,

(signed) Delia Whitherspoon (Miss) Delia Whitherspoon

January 20, 19[illegible]

Dear Travaille,

Upon my request, Whitherspoon sent me your ms A LOPSIDE MULTIPLEX OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOUSITY, etc. I believe you err when you imply that the imagery of preciosity was influenced by the Transvestite Movement in America. Furthermore, the organization of your little opus is utterly chaotic — and I do not mean the variety of chaos featured irregularly in the chaotic Utterly quarterly, but rather in the utterly chaotic opus known as a LO Sided Multiplex, etc. Incidentally, please tell that old biddy Whitherspoon that my name is spelled J-E-L-L-I-N-E-K, not BREA ANECK!

I am mailing back your ‘treatment’ to Mighty-Little, and you can tell him that if he publishes it with that transvestite nonsense, I’ll sue both of you for slander as well as misrepresentation.

(signed) Jellinek Jellinek

January 25, 19[illegible]

Dr. Dean W. Strewsmeat, President of the University,
University of Dropsy, Dropsy, Kansas

Dear Mr. Strewsmeat:

The editor of your university literary journal, THE UTTERLY QUARTERLY, Mr. E. Squire Do-Little, received a manuscript mine well over a year ago. This manuscript is entitled, A LO SIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOUSITY ESSENTIALLY THE POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK. To date, no decision has yet been made on the manuscript. I have spent at least five dollars on postage in correspondence with Mr. Do-Little, while the quarterly pays only five dollars for articles! I am not so much concerned with the pecuniary side of the problem as with the dilatory delays of your editors.

Would you, in all kindness, sir, use your good offices to whether this matter may be brought to some sort of happy

resolution for all concerned? My patience is almost exhausted. Sincerely yours, (signed) Jonathan Sur-Travaillé
February 10, 1959

Mr. Jonathan Sur-Travaillé, 110 Roughstrewn Garrets,
Grub City, California Dear Mr. Sur-Travaillé: Your letter to
Dr. Strewsmeat concerning A LOPSIDED MULTI-VIEW OF THE
IMAGERY OF PRECIOSITY IN THE POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK was
turned over to me, and I am attending to the matter at once.
I trust that you will not be bothered by any further delays.
Thank you for your interest in the UTTERLY. Sincerely yours,
(signed) John Tearhope, Secretary to the President JT : dz
February 28, 1959

Mr. Jonathan Sur-Travaille, 110 Roughstrewn Garrets,
Grub City, California Dear Mr. Sur-Travaille: Miss
Whitherspoon has given the nod to your piece A LOPSIDED
MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOSITY IN THE POEMS OF
STEPHEN JELLINEK, which means, subject to your approval of
the deletion of the Transvestite controversy in your
manuscript, we are now pleased to say that we are prepared
to publish. We shall send you galley proofs shortly.
Meanwhile, be patient just a little longer. Payment will be on
publication. Sincerely, (signed) E. Squire Do-Little ESD-L :
sob March 4, 1959

Dear Do-Little: Do whatever you wish with my manuscript
— but DO it! (unsigned) J. Sur-Travaillé 29

SUR-TRAVAILLÉ

DEAR DO-LITTLE:

Since I haven't yet heard from you, nor received the galley
proof of my manuscript 'shortly' — whatever that means, I
am assuming that you are either unable, or unwilling, to
publish my piece. This thought has entered my mind that
you have lost or mislaid the manuscript, and, instead of
admitting to it, like the Loiseles couple in the Maupassant
story, you are frantically attempting to recreate a semblance

of the original. Anyway, I've done some rewriting myself and since, as I told you some time last year, the carbon has been stolen, I've naturally had to do the best I could with what scraps of knowledge managed to float to the scummy surface of my cluttered memory. I have sent this new virgin (sic!) to another journal, with an earnest plea to the rogue-like gods on Publishers Row for forgiveness in breaking the literary ethic which states (and must be obeyed by writers, on pain of death!) 'Thou Shalt Not Submit More Than One Copy of a Manuscript to More Than One Editor at a Time!' However, in extenuation, I did rewrite the piece without benefit of carbon copy, so that I did not really break the letter of the Law, only the Spirit. Anyway, will you please return the first virgin (sic!) of this article 'post-haste' (as the poet says), for if not, I shall be forced to report you to the Indifferent Guild of Ignored Authors.

(signed) Sur-Travaillé

SEPTEMBER 1, 195—

Mr. Jonathan Sur-Travaillé, 110 Roughstrewn Garrets, Grub City, California

Dear Mr. Sur-Travaillé:

I am returning, under separate cover, your article, A LOP-SIDE MULTI-VIEW OF THE IMAGERY OF PRECIOUSITY IN THE POEMS OF STEPHEN JELLINEK. Certainly, Sir, I thought it was in extreme bad taste for you to go over my head and write to the President. Apparently, either you have not published before, or are a little aware of the vicissitudes of publishing enterprises. Only rank amateurs would have had the gall to be so persistently worrisome as you have been. Let me tell you, Sur-Travaillé, I've had lots of correspondence, but never like yours. Furthermore, if it will interest you, (though I'm sure it won't) I recently had my car stolen, a lightning bolt struck my house and destroyed the best part of it — especially the rumpus room for the kiddies, Miss Whitherspoon recently contracted a case of adult mumps, and, if that isn't enough, creditors have recently threatened to foreclose on the UTTERLY. So there Take your nasty old transvestite piece, and send it to the devil, if you wish. Truly, (signed) E. Squire Do-Little ESD-L : pip Sept. 8, 1959

Dear Do-Little, Too bad that lightning bolt didn't hit you — you mangy son of a bitch! Sur-Travaillé JS-T : pip-squeak! September 20, 1959

Mr. Jonathan Sur-Travaillé,

110 Roughstrewn Garrets,

Grub City, California

Dear Mr. Sur-Travaillé:

Mr. Do-Little has requested that we represent him in the suit he intends to bring against you for slander and malicious defamation. Any further correspondence you may wish to address to Mr. Do-Little should be done through his

attorneys and the offices of their law firm, Meany, Mealy, and Meany.

Respectfully,

(signed) Jasper Meany

Jm : sik

Ps: It may interest you to learn that Mr. Do-Little recently completed his work on his Ph.d in clinical psychology, and has accepted a position on the staff of Rippling Falls State Hospital, thus bringing to a close his happy association with the UTTERLY QUARTERLY.

ISSUE P. 31 · SCAN P. 37

20TH CENTURY ERATO

The constipated muse of these congested times —
Binding her wings with a Freudian noose,
She cumb ers thought with bulging words,
Vaunting obsolescence —
Throwing away the core,
She treasures the excrescence.
by Dorothy Ellin Flax

THE TRUTH AND THE POEM

(PICTURES OF WILLIAM/CARLOS WILLIAMS)

A. Fredric Franklyn

THE GOOD DOCTOR WAS NOT always so concerned with artistic truth and structural purity: To be an artist, one must deceive, make up a story. One must get the punch in, the shocking punch so skilfully that no one will suspect it. The art covers that. The shock is necessary. Necessary to make them stop, look and listen—in other words, read and say, (1) How awful, and (2) how fascinating. What a wonderful writer. The artist always has his tongue in his cheek.¹

The ambivalence exposed here referred to the art of another literary medium. Happily for American poetry, and the considerable influence his American idiom, variable foot, measured line, triadic stanza, and metaphor as metamorphosis have had upon it, Dr. Williams takes a more serious view of poetry.

Much has been argued, ubiquitously, about this American idiom. And it almost certainly exists (in a changing way). But the quality of a poet's entire body of work does not rest upon a single literary device. It is true that William/Carlos Williams' (*the separation of the Doctor's own; see THE DESERT MUSIC) preoccupation with this particular tool, along with critical reaction to it, has raised the question of the device to the level apparently of a major literary issue.

Williams himself didn't use the term before 1958 (see Edith Heal I WANTED TO WRITE A POEM). But the idea of unique American rhythms in the language, as opposed to the pure traditional music of the English speech-inheritance, existed in his mind, in embryonic form, perhaps as long ago

as a half-century before its fullest development.

Even before he began his medical practice, Williams had met and come to know (through the University of Pennsylvania) Ezra Pound and Hilda Doolittle (Aldington); and later, in New York, Wallace Stevens. Among the Imagist poets, he was a contributor of free verse which he afterward came to despise (1924), to *GLEBE* before World War I. And *THE TEMPER*'s preceded that by a year.

The basis of his great theme had already become evident as (Continued on Page 79)

¹ *Quoted from A BEGINNING ON THE SHORT STORY, 1950.*

RUTH FORBES SHERRY

PARODIES OF SPRING

Who are the lonely ones,
the travailing hearts,
the blind diviners of multiple meaning
whose fingertips probe the girdling dark?
Their the perilous images —
frail parodies of spring.
They tear the suns apart
to find their music.
Even the gazelle, his mild nudities
slaked by wet petals,
lopes the leaf-silk aisles
only to be lost in labyrinth.
Even he of the single horn
and silver hoove is lone
till you bangle him with stars
and wimple him with love.

MARVIN BELL

**FOR DOROTHY, BECAUSE THEY
RARELY MAKE THEM LIKE YOU
ANYMORE**

How was it you came
to be cleft, a second sister,
when your father was long for a son?
And why, once formed,
did you not grow gelatinous,
like most of your kind
piled on my generation? O but you
are something good out of mothballs, lean.
Neither do I know
how your spare glands keep you moist
in dry weather.
My head drops like a well-bucket
and I am said to be praying for another
like you for my son.

HOLLY BEYE

WHAT THE MOON DOES HERE

Like yesterday's girls who brought their wash
To mountain streams — a blind white bitch with a bone
To bury, rooting in summer's leavings —
She rolls in dreams the kids discard
Blown and witched by the watching stones.
Lost in the pastures of mulberry, elm
And screeching pine, that tear her wings
And catalogue the skeletons of her cold, she
Runs from window to window,
A marked, lost thing
Asking release from the child's heart
She wears, the old man's shabby darkness —
And what she sings, only cats and sorrowing owls
Agree to hear, themselves long since
Made sentry over her.

ISSUE P. 36 · SCAN P. 42

JAMES SCHEVILL

IN THE WUNDERHORN WORLD: MAHLER'S FOURTH SYMPHONY

'One does not compose — one is composed.'

Convulsive shake of strings,
Trumpet's spectre call, sullen drums,
Percussion of the skull,
Shrill flutes like insect signals :
The artist ' shooting in the dark,
Unknowing whether he hits, or what he hits;
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen;
I am the separate sound of the world,
The Wunderhorn world of flowers and beasts,
Horns of wonder wailing, while eleven thousand
Jungfrauen whirl in trance at the heavenly feast;
Saint Ursula laughs at them gleefully,
Saint Martha cooks, angels bake bread,
Plates full of food spring from the garden,
Apples, pears, grapes to pick freely,
And Saint Peter, the old gaper, gaps on
To watch all things tingle, awaken to joy.

THOMAS McEVILLEY III

WHEN SUMMER HAD ENDED

When summer had ended and undone the children's
fancy
And fire in the sky had scattered the beasts into fear,
Falling from the hills like birds in the falling leaves,
The lake like a great mind spoke the necessity of return,
And it was hard to remember the first burst of spring.
This woman and I walked by the lakeside then,
Refusing to mourn the strict burial of our love,
And speeding fishes underneath that sky
Sped to their homes in the turtles' churning paths.
It would have been foolish to insist on an old passion:
Winter would come, and the world waited.

MARGARET RANDALL

BREAKFAST (FOR SERGIO)

up the hill
raining
the sun shining
the sun not shining or shining
when shining: a rainbow
of that combination
a marriage
coming down
one at a time
one at a time coming down
and sees:
its own image
cut off / cast away
set loose
among the seeds of other elements.

DENNIS J. HORAN

HERE WE ARE BUT FOR AN HOUR

Here we are but for an hour
Looking up the lust of love,
Searching for a fruitful power
Or with sons or grateful of
Another's holy kiss we challenge
One eternity of touching
To become the one among
Those living left behind.
Grasp pleasure, grasp my love,
Grasp my waiting and my evil;
Understand what's left of love:
Leave me to my mending.

GIL ORLOVITZ INDEX (2ND SERIES) : 8

light
on the bicycle eye
the childswing retina pedals
the crooking sideglance finger
a long birth to be at rest
as far forward as I can remember
as far back as I can forget
each part of us has a cupboard of light
and the sleepy blood with the tousled hair of the nerves
smiling it opens the cupboard
from light then our love
light a gloving hummingbird at honey crossroads
hallowing the senses with curve
we labor back to our dawninggrounds
rapid as the rose beating in the throat
the moisture maze in the nets
the silver animal racing the rails
the wind frowning the grass
the dark at the pasture of snow
the snowbearing dark
the filaments of aphrodite from a springseason sea

purling on the iris domes the morning freshets
gold medievals and blue florentines
and mahogany lustres masticating oranges

GIL ORLOVITZ

LEMON DUSK AND BANANA RAIN

and ultraviolet torches in the vertical storm
light knows all of me
my tongue tooling the noon cubes
the heavy frost eyelashes on the trees
the moon arching against the fishes' bellies
my throat that swallows the crucifix thermometers
at what point can I not be pierced by waves
and descend to spires in the lobes of groin
listening to the sperms whistle at the ponderous
foamflash
and the earth hips turning loam roan
and the strawberry birthmarks on the river's haunches
and the woman kneeling slow crimson on green weeds
the diamond fishhook sun jingles on the eagle's
collarbones
tackles the mirrors that powder into snow
winks the eardrums
I hear the wings dip under my ribs they cicada fire
decks of chattering glass on glass the cells must slide
transparent discuses in the circles' ghosts
the statuary of history the prospectors panning for light
arc upon arc the quills quiver from the target of release
the stars the sweat upon the firmament brow
there the fishhook anchor drags seashell fireworks
across the
zodiacal dew
and the clouds that loosen their chastities
light coming like the soar of ermine
a monolith whispering
a feather enraged

a burden liberated from the bearer
a chart chafing at its lines
sprinkled glaze
the spinningwheel beside itself
tucked tuft and slackward
birds crumbling in flight
coalescence as a swift scar
a snake skipping
the sighlights of surfaces' relinquishments
and all the queens who cry let them eat light

GIL ORLOVITZ

brilliance staggering over the desert
and brilliance nonchalant on a warm night
mirages on the fingernails' horizons
chalk congregations' hallelujah
lavender bulls with gray meat swinging from their
eyeballs
pink lips in the milkshade
shocks shimmering
gloom glistening
boulders undulant as young girls
strata fanning themselves
the fungi fans
the spiel of sparks
chitchat bubble
chains chasing chuckles
pinpricks hoarding avalanche
the ramps of tangerine tongues into the sheer black
nylon estuaries
here the evergreen chandeliers swami the crystal
here the flickering oil coughs
here the light only that it knew it had been from
there the light only that it knew it would be to
if I can remember all must remember
all forces remember according to their forces
and the light according to its light

light's source according to its stretch
light shall lick all wounds

GIL ORLOVITZ

there the flame a sucking adhesion
here the flame a quilt of quartz
a trail of keys from the trickle of edges
the sponges beneath the vortices
what of the quiet rustle of stone
he found fireflies under his lids
like stutters touch and go
like stammers melting wax
were there sparkling burrs on his flesh
they were cameo kisses and catchascatchcan spangles
perhaps mistletoe jewels and slothful lariats
I saw them as silhouettes inside out
as a pinch of sneeze that snuffed
see see see like a paste sponge
the barely touched that stunned an hour later
the pulsing of fluffed concussion
it could have been a bridge restrained from suspension
an anchor floating like a parachute
a shoal of spirochete shark
or those rainbow creditors dunning the midnight
xrays in tuxedos and jellyfish diaphragms
mention the matches that blaze in wrinkles
tell on the puddles of amethyst
and the spectrums flying into the void
and the void headlong at pastels
the fluttering handkerchief blown from the scarlet horn

ISSUE P. 44 · SCAN P. 50

GIL ORLOVITZ

ART OF THE SONNET: 167

Your death, mother, and my father's money,
these I want with all possible greed. Love
reeks of the murderer's boredom; hate is
survival's collage; both, to foster the body's
assignable nipples — sucking the last refuge
of the puckering mind — need their fools'
gold that the fools' son make up his foolproof
mouth. Yet he — I — wish you, my mother, as
many green and blue siphons of the days
your sanddrift breasts may dream of possible greed.
So do we invert ourselves, that life rushes
to the head even as we hush our cloudy
bowels. Well, when there's no other mother and
money, blow through the straw that broke father's
hand.

GIL ORLOVITZ

MEDIAN 8

The action at camphorstone
is the burden at matchless murder,
the movable monotone, the winter
block subjected to clowning presses
that, by gauze guess, grin
from sheer to sheer. The stopper,
made of accounts conceivable, thrombs
the Othern Lights of cytokinesis
where shrunken dybbuks darkle
at the locomotive's trackless scream.
The siren wind sibyls at horseplay.
I cannot, for the knife of me, condone
the walking papers of the prattledome
under which, as a lissome laboratory
might conduct a hulking sea, my
ancestors blackmailed abortions to ride
sidesaddle down the circusleaks
midgeting the moths of the hereafter.

WILLIAM J. MARGOLIS

YE CHILDE WILYAM BARBE

In the childy eye I have inside me,
hidden from sophisticates of praise
& scorn, I see a castle tall
& spired, with turrets, walls
& stairs inside that lead way up
to cobwebbed towers & lead way down
to musty dungeons where are kept
all manner of beastie & mystery.
In the childy eye I have inside me
hidden, I see the secret stairs
& maidens, and by my beard & name
I'm known throughout the land
for jousting skill & bravery . . .
but now the world has little time
for chivalric dreams of wonder.

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

TEN MINUTES

1. . .

BEAT

and funneled wind
emerging

pausing

regaining

something raw

and unprotected

expanding

2. . .

pulse

heart in my wrist

pause

3. . .

wind-shaken things

something royal

not quite thunder

then. . .
crescendo!
rattle of glass
whipped paper
rifled awning
shower of pillaged leaves
protesting screech
of shackled iron
(EAT)
ransacking hearts

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

4. . . glissando BEAT pulse blood in my head eyes open
muted roar oncoming not yet wrenched from another context
distant Damons approaching quickly ON THE MOUTH OF WINDS
5. . . pianissimo (stretto) something alien electing from
weather higher octaves secretly screaming in the upper
registers forwarding night's cold chrysalis of controlled anger
in the belly of jeopardy 6. . . staccato nerve-endings
unwilling descending scales spilling fear

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

pulse
in my ear
7. . .
allegretto
sound
of time's voyager
entering
barometer's
rising
pulse
andantino
climbing lungs
of unchained force
shocking planets
8. . .

andante
pulse
BEAT
pause
parturition!
9. . .
larghetto
blood rhythms
weather
and dynamics
of stumbling man
time's creature
time's invention
time's humor
casually recalled
time-pardoned
from oblivion's
SIGNATURE. . .

ISSUE P. 50 · SCAN P. 56

JAMES BOYER MAY

RIGHT TURN: LEFT

And it shall be on the day when you will pass over Jordan to the land which the Lord your God gives you, that you shall set yourselves up great stones and plaster them with plaster. And you shall write upon them all the words of this law . . . And there you shall build an altar of stones; you shall not lift up any iron tool upon them. You shall build the altar of the Lord your God of WHOLE stones . . .

(Translated from the original Hebrew of Deuteronomy, Chapter 27.)

Fuddling reason's feazy aid to art. Best rely on thought's return to watching: see this bluely feathered jay there perched to miss a fall of rain, quick-cocks his head (upon dark branch of helter-shelter) agaze at us, while scrunching up roughed shoulders of his scrolling wings. That eye glints curiously, yet, gauges rain and sights our dullness too . . . dismisses us, and lets us pass.

For, he's no star-burnt stepchild of this nebula. His nether sky may change unspeculative pace of pulse; but he sees how that neon cross

JAMES BOYER MAY

does float there on the smoke-daubed east.
He sees it riding freely, next full/blooded moon
which glares on him with baleful tinctured light
of now-late dropping sun . . . how fleshly-pink,
that smoke has risen from a forge —
no altar.
Watch: his left eye stays upon us as he
stretches out his wing to lift right foot
to show his left claw writes upon the limb.
What bestirs a foot bestirs a hand —

and eye . . . and head. While limpness
of reflexions spoils keen feel and smell . . .
and lobar concentrations on discernment.
The times now bring unmotored conflicts to
unfeathered psyches cleft of self-defeats
by anarchies of mind. How many
know the nervous motor-sense? —
that left may rectify a right? We
fumble finger-laws where plaster hardens.
Our tardy tools of science violate
this script; we can but seldom read which tracteries
our former God intended we should sight.
Eye . . . hand . . . foot: the order's jumbled.
Hand mans first; and knees, before young feet.
The crawling-watch finds knowledge of
firmed precedent to focus righting-views.
Yet, rote perspectives form
this 'fitting' world of little wonderment . . .
to juggle half-read books, to flag
men's own pretensions . . . casually — through
mannered jargons of a word-flogged flux
to break faced stones of entropy with enterprise,
and vision triply mixed in right-hand leftness of
each solely-misdirected foot.

ISSUE P. 52 · SCAN P. 58

JAMES BOYER MAY

LAST WORDS OF WHOM?

(DEDICATED TO —, AND HIS ILK)

I knew what came over me . . .
but I couldn't care.
The lamps were lit and the fire'd been cut.
Grey tree-heads stared into the clearing
where asters had bloomed
before the summer-of-the-rose.
Moon's face had been sliced at the chin-line,
and Jupiter saw the knife.
I tossed a loud smile, and crossed
to first stump and stabbed through its bark.
No sound, excepting the smile
that echoed where headed trunks formed
their motionless dance. Then — hand
made a reach for the nose-knob . . . There was none . . .
of course. Nor brow: hindermost.
Had thinking been possible there,
in missing cranium,
this would have been christened strange;
but I'd already sprung
to where the owl said Hugh.
I was;
and barely startled.
Send me word from you one day
when you come here to find the knife?
SORRY.

THE GREAT PYRAMID

Their meetings took place in a tiny hotel apartment a block or so off Times Square. Every Saturday night, the two dusty, overheated gray rooms filled with women. They came from their seats in the dim lobbies of decaying hotels like this one, or out of their dim warrens in dreary brownstones. Each possessed, or was possessed by, some notion that revealed every word of the language as significant, a key to an obscured world of meanings, occult meanings reserved for those who knew.

They were Mentalphysicists, Theosophists, Christian Scientists, real Rosicrucians, or often as not novitiate in something new. There was, however, the common interest: spirits, prophecy, miracles. They were onto things the government would like to know; they had information, they slyly chirped, that the millions of the masses of mankind could never even suspect . . . Secrets of History . . . the Future of the World.

These aged ladies were adorned with fancifully-wrought, old silver-pendant earrings, brooches of filigree dull gold, great cameos of delicate ivory and coral, massy bracelets, noisy ropes of pearls or amber or onyx or jade; rings with great carbuncular pink or brown or purple stones clung to their broken fingers; layers of powder, various in hue and texture, caked their cheeks and coated their throats and liver-spotted bosoms. They used too much fulsome perfume. The large ones strapped themselves in creaky corsets, every joint of which, every hook and eye and string, was visible through their musty silk dresses of faded flowers; the small ones, the birdy creatures, came clothed in worn woolens, and accompanied by younger companions who were nervous, suffering through their climacteric.

These women doted on their host, the young student of prophecy whose shirts were foul, raveled at collar and cuff, and whose hair was never cut or combed. On one wall in the front room, next to his framed Oxon, he had hung the Certificate of Honor conferred on his mother by Mary Baker Eddy. A few years back, he had published a treatise on Nostradamus, an excruciating explication of Things Yet To Come making up the bulk of its pages. Now, he was bubbling with news about what had really become of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel: that is, they had in modern times been transmogrified into the invisible citizens of what he termed Anglo-Israel. Even the Irish, he said earnestly, are Hebrews;

JASCHA KESSLER

they are descendants of the Tribe of Dan, the Seafarer. Didn't everyone know that Gaelic was rooted in Hebrew? Or that the Basques, so proud of their blond hair and blue eyes, are Hebrews — are there not inscriptions made of Hebraic characters on their oldest tombstones? And, as for the British Lion — had not descendants of the Tribe of Judah reached England? And was not the American Nation, originally at least, and culturally of course, very largely descended from Judah, in consequence? Hence, Anglo-Israel!

Bright in his esoteric ways, avaricious for new suggestions, he was a scholarly and almost indefatigable researcher in the hidden vales, and frequently hinted that he had, as a matter of fact, but a few details to clear up before he would be ready to reveal a triumphant exegesis of the prophetic mysteries of FINNEGANS WAKE itself! But for the restraining influence of his male acquaintances, mostly his seniors by two or three decades, he might have tried to integrate all the doctrines, various as they were, so earnestly, so beseechingly propounded by the females who came to him. But, these gentlemen were seasoned sceptics, and scoffed at him for being rather gullible, and even interrupted frequently, rudely enough, when they saw him listening with that certain logical light in his dreamy gray eyes. They were, after all, scientific; even though they followed up the least reports of psychic doings, and traveled to attend any good seance within a hundred miles, they denied believing anything whatsoever — perfectly genuine photographs of ectoplasm, such as they had been shown last week, notwithstanding. Mr. Brett, their dean of physics, Mr. Brett with the white goatee and gold pince-nez, for example, had spoken last week and summarized the results of sixty years' work in probing the World of Spirit: he himself, after sixty

long years, had had to confess his evidence preponderantly negative . . . of course, he had also gone on solemnly to maintain that he could always tell a good medium from a fake, and a real presence from the false, and of course the men in his audience, the scientists, agreed, while most of the ladies thought sixty years' worth of negative conclusion meaningless, even pathetic, in view of their knowledge, and their feminine sensitivity.

Tonight promised to be most interesting. They had a guest lecturer, this night. The two rooms were filled early; some ladies sprawled awkwardly on the rickety beds, others squirmed on camp stools or perched on the few pieces of furniture or stood with the gentlemen at the rear wall. At the front of the larger room, over the unused firedoor, hung a chart fastened to the wall by little colored tabs of Scotch tape. Shortly after the talk had started, one or another piece of tape would peel away

JASCHA KESSLER

from the wall, that corner of the sheet would curl over, obscuring the diagrams and forcing the speaker to return to it. But he continued, talking back at them over his shoulder as he grunted, reaching up to press the tape laboriously to the wall, in what was an obviously futile effort to secure the chart.

This Doctor Bowler who addressed the group had long white hair, a red face, and wore a black serge suit. He stood with his fingertips splayed on the pamphlet-littered table before him; a heavy and gnarled cane was hooked over his left arm. His deep voice issued from the leathern throat of a public speaker. The subject was the Great Pyramid at Gizeh, whose cross section was displayed behind him. The old man spoke quite impressively, pausing at frequent whiles to look long at this figure before them all and to reflect upon it with them.

‘Yes,’ he was saying, ‘this whole thing is a prophecy. As sure as I stand here, you will see that what I am about to reveal to you must come about within the next few years. You keep your eyes and your ears open. This Great Pyramid of Tutankhamen’s is all a Prophecy. Entirely. Only a few greatly learned and devout men have succeeded in deciphering the mysterious writings and unraveling the profound significance of this Pyramid’s architecture. Just look here now.’

He walked slowly back to the wall and pointed the rubber tip of his cane at the entrance to the Pyramid. ‘This is the door, yes, but a secret door unknown to all the tomb-robbers, plunderers of they knew not what. It was discovered by a friend of mine, a world-famous English archaeologist who left me private letters saying that he firmly believed in the truth of what I am about to reveal to you people here tonight. Now look here at this — see how one passage leads straight down and down away back down into the bottom of the Great Pyramid? Now look how it stops dead in this little room here — and I saw it with my very own two eyes there in Egypt — from this room you can look back, and ‘way up there back over your shoulder is the entrance: a faint glimmer of light about as big as a three-cent stamp. And day and night, night and day, do you know what is visible, shining down through that little tiny hole? Yes, the sky, and one star, ladies and gentlemen; and that star is the North Star! Polaris! Day and night, always visible, always shining there, Polaris.

‘And, you remember that I said before this here Great Pyramid is so vast it covers almost fourteen square acres! Think of that, and then think of that star, the North Star, shining down always through that tiny hatch up there . . .’

He paused, significantly, to let the weight of that settle.

JASCHA KESSLER

'Now I'll tell you what this passageway means. You know from the Bible how Ham, the Son of . . . the Son of . . .' He seemed to hesitate in doubt an instant.

' . . . The Son of Noah!' was proffered eagerly by a gray wisp of a girl who had joined the group recently and who always placed herself at the elbow of the young student of prophecy.

'Thank you, thank you, Miss. I see someone knows her Bible,' he said mischievously, and continued, ' . . . how the Son of Noah, Ham, was driven out from before his father's eyes? Well, now, he and his children and his children's children, and all on down the line of that descent were cursed, and they went on down this slanted tunnel, down this passage to this dead end, this dead-end, empty room. Away, away from out of the sight of the Lord, out of the Lord's sight! They got damned, you see—and they can't turn around, and they can't go back up because it's too steep, and too late! And the Children of Japheth too, and the Children of Shem! All lost, all lost down this long tunnel.' He shook a mournful head, his venerable white mane, and contemplated once more the path of his doleful words. Finally, he said: 'Indeed, indeed a great shame.'

Then he resumed his guided tour of the Great Pyramid. 'Let's go on away from that foul, dismal hole, that tomb and sepulchre of Ham, Japheth, and Shem, and let's start over again. Back at the entrance up here now, there is, you see it here, a path that goes upward: it goes climbing up and up until it reaches a division, a fork, a separation, a parting of the ways (all this happens deep inside the Great Pyramid, you know), and then it levels off. We have come now, therefore, to the year of the birth of Jesus Christ. By the bye, my dear friends, all these steps here that we have been

climbing up are numbered; only you have to be able to figure out these mysterious hieroglyphics on the wall that give you the right correspondences. Now, according to this ancient prophecy, the key to which was discovered by my English friend, Christ was to be born Easter Week, Four B.C. And what does historical evidence say to this prediction? Historical evidence, the rectification of the calendar by science, shows us the very same thing!

We walk straight along this tunnel, level now with the ground outside the Great Pyramid, and we come to a room which is called The Lesser King's Chamber. It signifies the Messiah; but it, too, has a blind dead end, so it's not the true Messiah. I'm sorry to say, but Christ was not the true Messiah. No indeed, and not by a long shot! Many people thought back then that Armageddon would come soon and then the Kingdom of the Lord would be set up on the earth, forever and ever. But it never came. Of course, the Great Pyramid could have told them that! Had

JASCHA KESSLER

they but known, had they but known its secrets! ‘Let’s walk along back to where we met the fork, now. Here we are, yes. Now you can understand why all those poor people who have followed Christ — who was just another prophet, that’s all, like Moses or Ezekiel — those poor people followed him down that blind passageway. But you see how they can still be led back. All those poor people everywhere who believe that Christ was the Lord, or the Lord’s Son, the real Lord, when he wasn’t, could not have been at all’ (his voice grew plaintive here) ‘when he was merely but another prophet. A big one, I freely admit it, I am the first to admit it, but, well, not the Lord! So then, we can lead all those people back just the way we came, toward the separation of the ways in the Great Pyramid, and on towards the True Messiah. ‘Now let’s go up these numbered steps — each one stands for exactly 100 years — that lead to the real King’s Chamber: the Greater Room! On these last Steps, we must go carefully and slow. Ah! here we are: the Twentieth Century! And allow me to remark that all the big wars we have had since 1800 are predicted there on the walls of the Great Pyramid — with their exact dates. Here’s 1914, and up another half-step, look carefully now, ah, the last step — here’s this last war. These things are down there, carved into the wall: you need only the eyes to see. The Great Pyramid tells it all. All!’ His eyes glittered. ‘We turn a corner and we find etched in hieroglyphic symbols, the year 1963, right on the wall as high as my shoulder here. This is the big year. September of Nineteen Sixty-three. It’s down, it’s foretold in the Great Pyramid. That is the year of the Angel Michael coming to announce the Armageddon. And big things will be happening in Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-three. Just you watch and see!’ The women in the room looked at each other knowingly, anticipating the pleasant surprises of the secret, which was really no secret at all to them, as adepts. And the speaker’s

pitch rose more shrilly, and he turned from a deep meditation over the Great Pyramid's runes toward the people awaiting his words. He raised his right arm and clenched his fist till it trembled with anguish. 'That is why, my friends, I cannot see all that business over there in Palestine, with those unfortunate folks from Europe working away and taking over the Holy Land, and the Arabs still trying to stop them. First, the English, and now the Arabs; and all that bloody fighting and bloodier truce, year after year without cease. Why, they can't stay there even if they do keep it, because in seven years, fatal years, after the Arma-geddon, the world is going to be run from there. It will be the Headquarters of the Kingdom of the Lord! None of the Arabs will be thrown out then.

JASCHA KESSLER

Jascha Kessler

No, they will be brought into the fold; they will have the land again, and it's no use, ladies and gentlemen, for those Jews to fight to hold onto it, for it doesn't belong to them, never did. The Great Pyramid says so. Suddenly, he took another tone.

'Now, did you know that England and America are the homes of the lost and scattered tribes of Israel?'

'Yes, yes! They are, they are!' called out a rapt voice from the back of the room. It was the student of prophecy. Doctor Bowler nodded quietly, thanks, went on. 'They are the Anglo-Israel nations. And they will be fighting at the side of the Lord. All those folks away down down down in that black pit below — they, they are the lost people! The tribes of Ham, of Japheth and Shem. Truly lost. No way for them in the sight of the Lord. All the Negroes of Africa and India, all those Russians and those millions and millions of Chinese and Japanese and Burmese and Javanese and whatnot, ragtags and remnants . . . those poor, poor people down in that black hole . . . It's too bad.'

He shook his sad white head. But, he then looked hopefully up and said: 'But we have got to try and help them. We have got to show them the paths of light and of brotherly love. They are our brothers, after all, and we must do our duty by them. We have got to try to raise up those poor lost people. Our poor brethren of long ago.'

'And look here now, too — aren't there also millions of foolish folks walking the streets of this very city of New York here, and calling themselves Jews. Why, they're not any more Hebrews than those poor damned Chinese. They are not descended from the Tribes, the true Ten Lost Ones. I

know! I can look into a man's face anywhere in the world and I can tell you if he is one of the Chosen Ones.'

He glanced over the faces before him. 'Do I see anyone here who's not Chosen? No. I am Chosen. For most of my life I truly believed I was Gentile. And so I thought I was utterly forsaken. But then, after I learned the secrets of the hieroglyphics, I was able to trace my heritage back, and so discovered that I am of the tribe of Judah, the Lion, an imperial Hebrew. You know, my friends, it isn't what a man thinks he is, but what he's born as. You have to be born a Hebrew!'

Sternly he looked them over again, drawing breath deeply for his peroration. 'Now for this Great King's Chamber. There is a big stone step just at the threshold. It's all inscribed with mystic signs, and it's the last word the Great Pyramid has to tell us.'

The rooms stirred and hummed with low excitement. Doctor Bowler's voice rang out: 'That means the King's Chamber is the Kingdom of the Lord set up on earth after the Day of Judgment. It says that Arma-

JASCHA KESSLER

geddon will come upon us in Nineteen Sixty-nine! Yes, another war, and it's going to be the biggest war ever fought on this earth.'

He spread his arms over them. 'The Third World War! The battle in which the forces of Evil will be vanquished and the Angel Gabriel will appear on earth to set up the Throne of the Lord in Jerusalem! And you see, ladies and gentlemen, it's got to be that way! It's there in the Great Pyramid, and nobody, nobody on earth, can stop it. That's why I say to you that what's going on today has got to fail, that United Nations and such, all that useless diplomacy. It's just no use, ladies and gentlemen. Just no use, no use at all . . .'

Doctor Bowler leaned intently across the table for his final utterance. 'There are thirty million people in this here

country who will lead the armies of the Lord, who will be the Chosen Ones for the Kingdom of the Lord on the Judgment! The Armageddon approaches. Seven years, seven fatal years — and then the last war in the year Nineteen Sixty-nine. The Armageddon! There's only a short time left now to prepare!'

He stopped, his face and neck scarlet, glowing between the black of

his suit and the white full head of hair. Evidently he had finished.

Quietly, he asked if there were any questions.

An enormous woman, her breast covered with rustling bric-a-brac, tremulously begged to know if she was of any of the Lost Tribes, any one of them. Others also pleaded. Doctor Bowler referred, somewhat vaguely now, to the chart of the Great Pyramid, to its tunnels.

They were eager too about their fates after Armageddon; and he seemed rather reluctant to say exactly what was in store for them.

There was a commotion at the rear. A man rose up, drawing a sheaf of papers out of his coat pocket. Dressed in a baggy, patched and fraying herringbone suit of indeterminate color, he set his grizzled bony head forward. There was stern smoldering look in his eyes; he spoke quickly, in an exaggerated sardonic rasp, once he got started.

'Doctor Bowler, I'm not sure I know what the gist of your talk was about, but some of my old friends here seem to be getting excited about it. Perhaps I might be able to offer a few words about your background which might cool their brains a little?' He unfolded his scribbled-up papers and read hurriedly. 'In 1928 you were arrested in Illinois as a Kleagle in the Ku Klux Klan. Then you joined up with Gerald L. K. Smith's gang. And after that, you were one of the boys in that America First outfit, and also in the German-American Bund. After that, you went around preaching about Moral

Armaments!’

There was a buzz of wonder.

‘I . . . I don’t know what you’re saying,’ the old man stammered.

JASCHA KESSLER

Jascha Kessler

'I remember. I saw you myself. Before the war, I saw you in Yorkville at Bund meetings with that man Fritz Kuhn who they put away in jail. And here you are again — eh? What do you say?'

But he didn't stay for answer; he went on reading vehemently from his list, garbled names and dates. His message of warning gripping him suddenly, he flared into a tirade against the guest of the evening.

Doctor Bowler stared amazedly. He seemed hurt: 'But . . . but surely you can see how it's all in the Great Pyramid? the signs, the millenia . . .

The man shouted the louder at the Doctor, demanding to know, for instance, whether he, Abe Jensen, was blind or something. 'I saw you there, here and there and everywhere, you liar, a coupla times, I say I saw you. Yes, and what about the KKK? What do you have to say about that? Ha! Don't you worry, the FBI's interested in you. I know and I just happen to know they been keeping an eye on you all along. Bet you didn't see that in your hieroglyphics. Ha! I could tell you a thing or two, yes, sir — that I know. World War Three! Great Pyramid! What the hell, I'm sick of war, and I'm sick of the god-damned Hebrews who always start wars anyway. Who needs the god-damned Lost Tribes? Who needs the god-damned Hebrews? What the hell are you up to anyhow, you Judah the Lion Hebrew, you?'

But Doctor Bowler, stunned, mumbled he must really be getting along . . . something about another engagement. He fumbled with his Great Pyramid, disconcertedly got it down and started rolling it up.

The rooms were in a small uproar, Abe Jensen yelling at everyone by turns. He bawled out that he was going to take the Floor, that he would conduct the Forum and answer their questions, because Doctor Bowler unfortunately just had to be running along — ha!

The sceptics at the back, seemingly always saved by providential disorder, stood impotently grinning at the commotion and the ruffled bumbling of Doctor Bowler. The young student of prophecy, agonizingly disheveled at the throat where his nervous fingers yanked and pulled at collar and tie, clammy thin hair falling over his shining eyes, darted and stumbled through the confusion of female bodies until he reached Doctor Bowler's side. He began to pump his hand and thank him for coming up this evening. He begged the old man's pardon — terribly. With hesitant, hopeful smile, he apologized and apologized, tenaciously holding onto his elbow, while Doctor Bowler pulled away and tried to get out through the jammed fire door.

The women in the middle room had turned in consternation from the evening's apocalyptic lecturer to the fiercely gesticulating Abe Jensen, his

ISSUE P. 69 · SCAN P. 75

VIBRAHARPING

(NON-VEHEMENT)

‘What is there to shout about . . . a man’s a man!’

— Bertolt Brecht

MAN IS MAN opens simultaneously in two versions, two theatres (different actors). ‘The lingo [of the play] is a special and complex one, invented by Brecht: no one ever talked that way.’ — Eric Bentley ‘WYLIE SYPHER shows how the dominant themes of modern painting and literature—and especially the tendency toward non-identity—reflect the major intellectual developments of our times.’ — (Random) House

PITCH

Robert Creeley, (nomad), 1960

CIPHERDOM — IS THE TOPIC OF Marshall McLuhan, critic of media, in *THE GUTENBERG GALAXY: The Making of Typographic Man* (UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO Press — \$5.95). McLuhan asserts the extension of language through uniform, repeatable, movable type has unmanned man. Where once man had been tribal and whole, where once there had been an interplay among his senses—the visual, the aural, the tactile—the discovery and spread of printing overemphasized the visual, the lineal, the fragmentary until man, as Blake ‘saw,’ ‘became what he beheld.’ Split, in other (words): the neglected senses driven underground (‘the collective unconscious’), waiting for Freud.

Gigantic scheme (Gutenberg ‘program,’ ‘print culture’) shaping all phenomena—commerce, social change, art. Nationalism, an example, resulting when language, which had been individual and fresh, became, with print, consolidated and manageable; thus common goals, organization; French Revolution, world revolution; standardized, replaceable, portable soldier; mass production; mass, homogenized, ciphered man. (is man.) Language (and the book), agency of insight and perception, of expression, became an appliance, a commodity, a tool for action (what is there to shout about—‘move ahead’).

This, McLuhan’s ride. First, *THE MECHANICAL BRIDE*, 1951. There pointed to devastating effects of media (particularly photographic reproduction). To counteract necessary to understand as scientist must allow for bias of his instrument in computing, in judging. Must work very hard to retain such values as privacy, separateness, individuality in ‘global village’ vibrating anew with tribal drums. Sequence,

perspective, Newton's predictable properties have been replaced by 'resonance,' by (even) 'electric all-at-onceness.' and mere literacy (obviously) is not enough. Necessary therefore to cultivate the suspended judgment, not the fixed point of view closely aligned to typography. And the mosaic, 'open field' approach to experience.²

¹ *Editor's note : viz., Jung.*

McLuhan's exponent De Toqueville, the dialogue: '... discussion and participation rather than specialism' (but may not 'interview' from De Toqueville to PARIS REVIEW be a subtle technique of selectivity, of imposing assumptions?)

METHOD AND FORM of the book are integral to its thesis: book, though highly charged, is a well behaved, conforming book, flat and dimensional, though typographically arresting. Title, on jacket, the Gutenberg galaxy, in regulation lower-case type but with ornate, old style capital G placed directly above disproportionately large red-on-white design of two G's, one reversed and enclosed within the other, interlocking, yet never fully meeting — dynamic, open universe. This relationship in type (and content) carried throughout. Text itself is excessively literate, quotation after quotation, authority after authority, paragon and parody of 'repetition as criterion of truth and practicality' (which McLuhan supposedly attacks). Parading Cervantes, Shakespeare (who 'explains minutely' dissolution of senses); Dryden, Pope, Blake, Joyce ('rite words in rote order') — anthropologists, religionists, philosophers, economists, historians, sociologists, psychologists, nonologists — all staking claims in that open field. (The book while broad in scope is thus surprisingly limited, attempting to prove influence of print by them alone — the print-prone.) Each 'chapter' separated and advanced by a 'gloss' — conspicuously large, boldface italics (TYPOGRAPHY CRACKED THE VOICES OF SILENCE OR FRANCIS BACON, PR VOICE FOR THE moderni . . . or HEIDEGGER SURT-BOARDS ALONG ON THE

ELECTRONIC WAVE . . .) repeating the effect of the cover. The pressures of (on) the author real, if the book is not: the author assumes reader will identify with such vacuities and be engaged; or the author himself is in their grip; and/or the author hopes to shock reader, bring him fully 'to his senses.' For student of footnotes (entire book said to be a footnote, a study of a study of a study — interrelatedness, therefore, within the profession, disclaiming, with circumlocution, final responsibility?) McLuhan inserts continuously, monotonously, the purpose of the book, his present book, his book to come, until manipulation, not edification, seems its most salient feature, bearing out, only too well, his own claims for the insidious character of print.

² Dupe, not apostle of 'audile-tactile,' charges NEW REPUBLIC, October 8, 1962; he chooses choicelessness.

*'our world has been so delivered to the perversion
of language (the word qua trick or persuader) . . .'*

AMPLIFICATION

NEWTONIAN (literate) MAN: 17 September 1962.

‘Dear B—, Many reactions to your ten-megaton (intermediate range) word-bomb. Befuddlement, amusement, even fear — but no enlightenment. To say, in the circumstance, “I understand,” you can readily understand, would be a contradiction. And yet it’s true, I do, in a funny way, “understand.” You were brought up to be gentle, kind, forbearing : this was your way of throwing a fit. Did you get it all out? May we go back now to the rigors of textbook syntax, orthodox lexicon orthography?’

For the rest of you — I also sent B— a copy of the 54-page (13 typewritten pages) account of my week-end meetings. In this morning’s mail, his reply: a bomb. Which is to say: four crumpled, torn, scotch-taped, 8 x 11½ pages plastered with helter-skeltering, blown-to-smithereen (on both sides) fragments of sentences and words, typewritten with a broken-down Olivetti, these the salvaged remnants (my guess) of a total twenty (the remaining fallout fallen into the basket, or down the laundry chute). How do you figure it? The fit? What is it saying?’

(Editor: See facsimile half-page at close of review.)

POST(ed)-NEWTONIAN (“audile-tactile”): undated postcard ‘L—, I didn’t write the bomb but took it from the demonstration type-writer next to Brentano’s. I don’t think it was a fit, I was editing the pictures, the bomb was supposed to be a conflicting parallel to your partyline letter. In your letter one mind is the focus of ten (?) minds. In my bomb, one mind gets spread by twenty different minds. The pictures were the conclusion. I am satisfied with being credited with a fit.’ [A B. H. Axler and Louis Galb exchange]

ISSUE P. 71 · SCAN P. 77

SYNCOPTION

JUST GIVE ME THE STUFF MAN — I'LL MAKE THE CONNECTION — (Fig-Newtonian) 'setting up a mosaic configuration . . . no consumer packages . . . only do-it-yourself kits, like a symbolist poet or an abstract painter.' — Marshall McLuhan 'word pictures will provide the stimulation and the viewer can read into it whatever he wants—as he now does with painting and music. Call it subliminal or hidden persuasion or whatever bad words you wish . . . The author's future lies in his joining the other arts —' — Curtis Zahn, (NOMAD), 1960 1962 National Book Award, Novel: THE MOVIEGOER.

ISSUE P. 71 · SCAN P. 77

REPRISE

'This is Biff Burns saying this is Biff Burns saying so long.' —
Bob (Bob & Ray) end of play M. D. Elevitch

De a r,

Dea rMr. McGillicudy:

Now is the time for all good men to jump in the river
.... to cool off.'

This is the time to buy an UNDERWOOD typewriter.

If you buy from the manufacturer you get only 10% off.

If, however, you

Le t us know how much you can give

I LOVE GA IL G.jjjjjhkl&p)-. /

de ar mr macde sr pllpllp

again. dear mr macdona H -----GO HOME !!!!!

Louis Winter ccc

Z Dd D Oo Williams

EDWARD madelei ne est un peu

B/Q ., eeeee

y5t Bernard Strauch wa s here so what? Now is the
time for all

iuytyupllkmj-9999999

Now is tye t8

mai

Usch laui ta v veit

Louise

bernadet te

this is my country Virginia McAndrews

xxxxxamhjh hkhmb f jk . dkdmmf ig jf,fjffud,

kfudddddddjd nx mhff,ff timothy ko

some typewriter ll Bernie Ha ll is a goo d guy.' and so is
his puppy, Mr.

Cinders. Dfgfhju

NOT IN PASSING

A. Fredric Franklyn

Our LATE-'62 BOOKS HOLD elements of particular import for the 'Trace-line,' and significances stretching far beyond the decade; two, for that matter, aren't new writings: AN AGE OF ENORMITY, by the late Isaac Rosenfeld (WORLD Publ. Co.—\$5.) reprints fifty critical reviews and essays from journals of the Forties and Fifties; OUR EXAGMINATION Round His Factification for Incamination . . ., by Jolas, Brion, Beckett, et al is the famed James Joyce symposium of 1929, absent from shop-shelves for some fifteen years (NEW DIRECTIONS—\$5.). New are: SAMUEL BECKETT, The Comic Gamut, a pioneering textual study by Ruby Cohn (RUTGERS University Press—\$6); WITNESS, The Story of a Search, by J. G. Bennett (DHARMA Book Co.—\$5.), a (perhaps unwittingly) revelatory autobiography of the author-scientist.

Saul Bellow's Foreword to the Rosenfeld is largely a personality sketch; Theodore Solotaroff, who selected and edited the contents, provides an impressive Introduction of literary analysis (laudatory—and deserved by his subject), with acute inductions bearing upon Rosenfeld's character, and justifiably rerating the influences from tightly-packed pieces which today provide extremely mature views of the period, having come from a very young man (he was only thirty-eight when he died, in 1956).

The since-confirmed accuracies of Rosenfeld's critical vision are so frequent here that it would take pages to detail them; and his own prose—even in the early portions—is both ripely individuated and worthy of the textbooks, a model of lucid, stimulating terseness. His assessments of scores of authors are expressed without undue heed for often-contrary 'verdicts' of older critics, and altogether without deference to promotional blurbs or to possible hurt feelings. Undoubtedly, when they originally appeared, many must have called him

intemperate; but his 'score' has risen with the test of years. Admittedly his estimates are controversial; but it's refreshing (in truth, astonishingly pleasing) to peruse such a straightforward and undissimulating reviewer, a type nowadays rarely met—with fewer and fewer honest judgments of contemporaries.

Despite their essential brevity, most of his conclusions were solidly substantiated within his own frame/s; he did not attack without plausible citations. In appraising individual books, he provided logical formulations for 'decision' (pro or con) built upon clear premises. In brief, he exhibited a rational ethic and concern embracing broad socio-cultural problems.

In re what Rosenfeld felt to have been deterioration in the prosefiction art, Solotaroff rightly stresses his fingering of one 'weakness of modern literature' as the 'problem of the reconstruction of character' ('the dramatic and moral center of fiction') —as it exists— not inventions to fit theories, not 'types' to forward social commentary. His editor also expresses awareness of his accomodation to the Fifties shift of emphasis from socio-political reform to Freudian 'adjustment,' a shift he observes favored the bourgeois 'accomodation and apologetics.' Though Solotaroff noted Rosenfeld's resistance to such an orientation, this reviewer was uneasy until, having penetrated the heart of the book, he found that Rosenfeld's plea for the 'natural' individual really wasn't just another subtle avoidance of the issue of personal responsibility. Rosenfeld never ducked to 'pass the buck;' he stood upon principles which he did not hesitate to modify, with enlarging scope for appreciation. Thus, he remained fully 'alive' until he typed his final '30.'

As remarked, the facets of these pieces are too many and too complex for elaboration; each should read them for himself. Indubitably, and no matter how often a student of contemporary literature may balk at his opinions, Rosenfeld

demands scrutiny. And some of his observations, to be sure, have long since become 'stock.' As, an assessment of Nancy Hale's stories: ' . . . well-formed . . . But none is satisfying, for none is freely expressed . . . not so much a form that has been mastered as one that masters . . . ' Yet, besides that this verdict antedated most, he discussed a deeper flaw, one shared by all too many new writers (if from different causes than in Nancy Hale): her absorption in structural and stylistic repression to an extent abortive of the passion in her, as author, and limiting her sensibility to the formal presentation. This fundamental lack— scarcely recognized by today's critics (indeed, they suffer the same deficiency)— is that of personal concern. Dozens of upcoming writers render altogether neutral treatments—not even moved to justify their own existences, let alone their literary offspring. Their fictions betray no exercise of moral judgments, although each model they would emulate (for having survived the test—say—of a half-century) evidences how advocacies—inexplicit though their art had dictated—imbued them with significant vitality.

For those who turn away from the term 'moral,' this element of Rosenfeld's insights may be limned more acceptably by noting that he kept objecting to popularly-admired writings on the ground that they offered no meaningful arguments, that their authors literally had nothing to say because their reactions were aesthetically and ideologically purposeless. He also, therefore, found them integrally meaningless; it wasn't that he sought reformers of any hue whatsoever but he did ask that writings realize some genuine individuated stance, to merit their being called 'creations.'

Besides for its historical worth, OUR EXAGMINATION . . . indicates 'reexamination' for the same and like reasons: not simply for entertaining arguments over the early ULYSSES and what was to become FINNEGANS WAKE, but for the

contributors' disclosures of themselves, more or less (some, less than more) exhibiting properties of 'inwit' which are far seldomer met than forty years ago. A small slant-light (how sometimes authors may, in latter careers, 'compromise' earlier integrities) is provided by Samuel Beckett's DANTE . . . BRUNO, VICO . . . JOYCE. Here, as a young man, Beckett betrays intimacy with legions of thinkers, and that he's amply grounded in philosophy and the psychologies predating that decade. In an interview published in TRACE No. 42 ('61), he declared himself uninfluenced: that he never read philosophers and did not understand them! 'I'm no intellectual. All I am is feeling,' he said. This carrying a pose-of-the-moment (for effect?) rather far.

Absorbed though each contributor was in then-novelties of Joyce's method, the symposium mingles far-ranging lucubrations with values pertinent to more than Joycean analysis. Marcel Brion, while sticking closely to his subject, conveys much of himself,—as when semiostensibly discussing 'time,' to illuminate Work in Progress, etc., he reveals deep personal concern in the questions. The same reflects from others here: a kind of concern all but absent from most recent writings of the genre.

The book also is recommended because of its relevance to pleas for a 'new' language amid thickening obstacles to communication betwixt the arts and sciences. Frank Budgen, in what at first seems an unlikely context (comparisons of Old Norse poetries) refers to 'machine-made effects of (modern) fiction,' and pricks vexingly: 'The reader is becoming rarer than the writer.' Stuart Gilbert deals with averredly-consanguine problems, discussing the since long-overdiscussed bogie of 'obscurity.' And the very title of the Eugene Jolas piece. THE REVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE . . . , keys suggestive insights to the communications-riddle; and touching upon the added barrier of different civilized tongues, Jolas, in effect, credits Joyce with pioneering in the

minglesments others have put down as Babelism.

But, to repeat, this new edition deserves reading, not just for early Joycian exegeses, but even by those entertaining no special interest in Joyce. Some may feel less negative toward him, if only because these contributors were sparked by his works.

Praiseworthy thorough, Ruby Cohn's SAMUEL BECKETT, nevertheless, holds interest from the TRA CE view mainly for detailed expositions upon all of her subject's major writings. Though she is well equipped, familiar with a profusion of background materials (see large section of bibliography), and prepared by broad readings to make apt comparisons, she does not, herself, emerge as a distinguished commentator-critic. In spite of a unifying thematic approach — keyed by the subtitle, *The Comic Gamut* — she sets down merely another scholarly chronicle, — with lively summaries of the books, the plays, the shorter works, etc. Though not dull, her style displays slight literary imagination; and what she says conveys virtually no intense or special reactions from her very own convictions. The result : a quite neutral, if informed, narrative.

Since the study is thematically framed, rather than strictly ordered (chronologically), condensed notes, by chapters, and a comprehensive bibliography scarcely compensate for absence of an index. Yet, some chapters can be read profitably apart from the others — assuming the reader has not picked up the book with any specific query in mind. One of the more valuable is Samuel Beckett, self-translator.

And whether or not Miss Cohn establishes her belief that Beckett's influence stems from 'philosophical profundity,' as well as 'superb control,' her synopses do confirm the astonishing 'stretch' of the ambit of Beckett's inner world of speculative wanderings through many consciousnesses (note, above, the remark upon his learning in *THE*

EXAGMINATION . . .). . . . The Appendix reprints WHOROSCOPE (HOURS Press, 1930) and other short, less-circulated items.

While J. G. Bennett's WITNESS offers rich attraction for persons of so-called 'psychic' bent, for all who yearn for knowledge outside the areas of ordinary perception, and for those who seek 'universal' solutions to existence, the book also is an unusual attempt at honest self-disclosure through recountal of recall. As many critics have substantiated, in this era of preoccupation with psychology, most such attempts are chiefly rationalized reconstructions at the times of their writings, Bennett's holds fewer signs of this.

Partly by virtue of the time in which he writes, Bennett has practiced retention of encyclopedic learning to an extent unequalled perhaps by any other autobiographer; many authorities have declared he's better acquainted with more branches of culture than any contemporary. A leading mathematician, as well as scientist (and versant in the arts, besides), he has labored years on a many-volumed Natural Philosophy of which but a part is yet in print. He would conjoin the disciplines of philosophy, the physical sciences, mathematics, human history, and theology! Which adds considerable depth to an essentially ingenuous often intimate book of personal recollections. Too—in an odd way—WITNESS may be described as a semi-'confession' of a creative intellectual, after decades of such struggles against a materialistic society as experienced by all artists. Parallels reach from the 'beatnik' level to that of the inspired religious mystic (involving, withal, the cerebrations of a rationally-trained and intricately-exercised mind. In the end, the book reveals Bennett's fairly recent embracement of the nonteachings of Subud to have been altogether logical.

J. B. M.

Processional and Secessional

JOHN CIARDI IS THE fail-safe artist of a kind of slick-literary poetry which is gradually occupying some pages of

semi-sophisticate journals. The paradox involved is precisely his strength and his weakness. And it is frequently worth the investment required from a reader.

Always a bridesmaid, never a bride! This poetry is not the product of the Academy; although there is the suggestion of a solid classical background, most evident, obliquely, in a careful avoidance of literary posturing. Nor is this lyric poetry. The poems collected in *IN FACT* (RUTGERS U. Press — \$3.50) are shaped in a deliberately idiomatic, often journalistic American English.

Ciardi eschews the weaknesses of both emotion and academic sterility. But he also ignores most of the available impedimenta of his strange craft: he doesn't touch imagery, in the sense, for instance, that the Black Mountains School (Olson, Creeley, Dorn, Oppenheimer, and Jonathan Williams) concentrate on this and on the natural or measured line; the source of Ciardi's phrasing (line—and stanza—breaks) lies in a loose unity of instinctive perception for intellectual effect rather than a deliberately imposed breath-control or rhyme-scheme, or in the rhythms of the classical feet scorned today by Ciardi and others; his metre is neither traditional nor does it reflect a consistent self-imposed discipline; nor are there anywhere apparent the outlines of a new music to replace the imagery, emotions, and language-contrivances he has discarded.

And yet, what is left is somehow not without poetry. When Ciardi succeeds—and this occurs most often in longer poems—the result is compelling. Many strong pieces punctuate this book: *THE TRAGEDY MAKER*; *I'M NO GOOD FOR YOU*; *DOWN NARROW STAIRS FROM A THIN EYE* (almost outright reportage, using both right and left hand margins to contain the lines [of the narrow stairs] within the width of a newspaper column); *CONSUMER RESEARCH*; and others.

COME MORNING: MY TRIBE; *ON BEING SURE AND OF WHAT*; *IN PITY AS WE KISS AND LIE*; *IF YOU REALLY FEEL YOU*; *HERITAGE*; *IN*

MY FATHER'S HOUSE . . . ; etc., indulge, for their relative brevities, in too much editorializing, and utilize little recognizable poetry. Mr. Ciardi will not be arraigned for an intemperate desire in this collection to make the task of reading his poetry an easy one!

But the good poems, despite their lack of a consistent or developed craft, of emotional hand-grips, and of most the usual appurtenances, either in modern or in traditional forms, always fail safe! They do not always read like poetry, but there are evident the Ciardi wit and feeling apparent in some of the weakest. The wit is often the only accomplishment in the shorter pieces, and does not satisfy a critical appetite. But this special feeling, which is characteristically Ciardi's, always deals with some kind of reality, a believable human being or a human situation; and this almost always secures the empathy it is designed to elicit for its subjects. MISS OLIVIA BRANTON, despite technical and musical deficiencies, is a lovely and human portrait, and the best in the collection.

Robert Browning's philosophy and Edward Arlington Robinson's technical proficiency have evidently failed to impress Ciardi any more than the skills and themes of more-contemporary poets, not finding their way into his work. But Robinson's and Browning's similar biographical device of brief character sketches in unexpected depth closely resembles some of the equally human portraits with which Mr. Ciardi enjoys experimenting. Browning's 'unfoldment' in such miniatures as MY LAST DUCHESS and ANDREA DEL SARTO is experienced in a gradual evolution throughout the poem. Robinson had a trick of withholding the profoundly revealing touch until the poem's conclusion, using this to cap the piece with the sort of apparent contradiction with which the succeeding lines of a haiku contradict the preceding lines (CLIFF CLENGENHAGEN; RICHARD COREY; MINIVER CHEEVEY; etc.). Ciardi does not quite do

either, and yet he does both (MISS OLIVIA . . . ; THE TRAGEDY MAKER; DOWN NARROW STAIRS . . . ; and others).

But the essence of such vignettes is their humanity and the quality of a person or an experience that they must illuminate. With or without the customary trappings of poetry, Ciardi's sketches do accomplish this essential function. And the poems which achieve this unfoldment are satisfying.

Ciardi probably isn't certain, himself, where he's going ultimately with his peculiar craft. The specific direction probably doesn't matter terribly. This technique of transforming the personal into the universal, which is the property of his best poems and which he has in common (after all!) with his contemporaries, easily consoles the reader for other apparent lacks; functioning with a kind of free-wheeling invention which is its own justification. The end-product is achieved at the expense of a certain amount of poetry; but, unlike a good deal of current 'experimental' work, which trafficks predominately in the ego and the id, Ciardi's originality is not achieved at the expense of his reader's interest!

(Continued from Page 32)

back as 1944, in his view of the poem as a machine (in the Introduction to *THE WEDGE*). Thirty or forty years ago, even ten or twenty years ago when so many American poets were still slavishly emulating Eliot's *THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK* (1917), Dr. Williams' views still may have been considered largely controversial. Even then, there were experimenters like E. E. Cummings, John Peale Bishop, Gertrude Stein, Vachel Lindsay, and Hart Crane. And the first edition of H. L. Mencken's *THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE* appeared just after World War I. Today, this brief for the American idiom is rather more a statement of fact than an issue of controversy. Besides the serious and capable practitioners like Robert Creeley, Paul Blackburn, Robert

Kelly, Charles Olson, etc., there is a legion of good second-rate poets and bad third-raters employing the new idiom with varying degrees of honesty, instinct, and craft.

Dr. Williams is an innovator. The evolution of his work has had a major influence on American poetry; perhaps important as the translations and imitations of Arthur Waley, Witter Bynner, Lafcadio Hearn, and Ezra Pound.

Most of what has been written about the variable foot is exitative nonsense. The device itself is a minor one and worth something less than the storm of controversy it has inspired. Minor, for at least two obvious reasons: it is secondary to the main question of an American idiom (which lends itself to exploitation through many such devices); and its life-expectancy is limited for the same reasons it has largely replaced the rhythms of its classical cousins which Dr. Williams and others have eschewed as dated and unsuitable to the speech of the times.

The device is minor in a general way; but nevertheless of considerable importance in understanding its creator's own work. Williams uses it deliberately and for precise reasons.

One of the more interesting characteristics of the device is a resemblance, in its poetic function, to the randomness just as deliberately utilized in John Cage's music (The composer's *SILENCE* was examined by this author in TRACE No. 45.) Both Cage and Williams make use of 'silence' stresses; the former, musically, and the latter poetically; both, rhythmically.

Cage's silence is the recognition of unpremeditated noise-intervals he provides for in irregularly interrupted intervals of musical composition. Williams gives a similar value to pauses at the ends of some lines, where his ear informs him they are naturally dictated. To such pauses he gives the value of one or more (dramatic rather than heard) stresses. Each in its way, composer and poet, is concerned with music. The great difference between them is that, where Cage is using these intervals in his search for random

(natural) effects, Williams is using such stresses, not more mathematically, but in patterns which he seeks to make as deliberate as possible.

The distinction between the variable foot and antecedent metrical schemes is that its irregularity and consequent latitude lend themselves more readily to current speech-cadences, which permits an enhanced truth to emerge from the poem. To the extent that classical forms — with which imitative (English-American) poems are made — frustrate and distort their intent, the poems fail of truth. Dr. Williams' feeling is that this truth (revelation) is more important than (artificial) beauty. The poem's function is not to manufacture excitement, but to reveal the poem's substance by illuminating human experience.

He is opposed to compromising this essential revelation with the kind of artificiality that works against the poem's basic intent.

The recent edition of *PICTURES FROM BRUEGHEL* — and *Other Poems* (NEW DIRECTIONS — \$2.25) is a rich collection containing also, as its second and third parts, *THE DESERT MUSIC* and *JOURNEY TO LOVE*). From *SHADOWS* in the third section:

THE INSTANT

trivial as it is
is all we have
unless — unless
things the imagination feeds upon,
the scent of the rose,
startle us anew.²

² *Derives from the last chapter of Walter Pater's THE RENAISSANCE.*

Among the best in the collection are *THE KING* (third section) and *THE DESCENT* and *TO DAPHNE AND VIRGINIA* (second section). These are also excellent examples of the triadic

stanza and the measured line.

Weak by comparison with such stronger poems, the first ten BRUEGHEL pieces have the quality of a pretentious kind of finger-exercise on the piano. The stanzas are mathematical, uniformly careful in their choices of word and modifier, and remarkably uninspired in a collection otherwise rich with so much inspiration throughout. They paint very clear images which do, indeed, recall the paintings they catalogue. But they fail either as appreciations or interpretations. And there is so much to say about Bruegel; yet, these vignettes never become more than pretty.

To anyone who has looked at the paintings, it must seem they have done the painter both more and less than justice. Pieter Bruegel (or Brueghel), the Elder was not a first-rate painter. He was far from even the most outstanding product of this Netherlandish school of the Sixteenth Century. Any number of them had either more craft or more imagination or both. Not Gerard David or Quentin Massys or Bernard Van Orley or Jan Gossaert, perhaps; but Joachim Patinir, Marinus Van Reymerswael, Martin Van Heemskerck, Lucas Van Leyden, Jan Van Scorel . . . From Hieronymus Bosch (same school, a century earlier) he has taken the wit and humanity and weakness he put into the faces of his people (in an earlier period, he had even imitated Bosch's monsters); and to Joachim Patinir (or Patenir or Patenier!) he owes his wonderful vistas of landscape and horizon, with which he juxtaposes (and transcends) the narrow circumstances in which, in the foregrounds, he places his people.

Hundreds of painters have painted better trees, richer landscapes, more striking architecture, arresting faces. Few have combined them in just the way Bruegel has done (at his best) with this massive contrast between the unappetizing world of killing labor and narrowly proscribed pleasures in which his people are trapped, and the mystic vistas beyond them in some of the paintings which lift the eye from their

pedestrian activities to glimpses of rolling landscapes and limitless horizons at which the earthy human figures never look, themselves, caught in the limited round of their own lives and stolidly unaware of the whole world that lies just outside and without their little ken.

Such a painting is *THE HARVESTERS*. And Williams has catalogued it precisely and missed it entirely! What he achieves instead (in *THE CORN HARVEST*) is a conjecturable, and even romantic, portrait of the good folk enjoying the simple things. It is so (very sympathetically) much like what the small-town general practitioner would wish to see. But the poet has unaccountably failed to lift his eyes above the foreground of the painting. Williams usually is realistically concerned, even hardheadededly, with truth in his poetry. The women in Bruegel's canvas are stuffing their faces almost like animals over carrion. That is the truth. But Williams, in a typical idealistic conjecture, has gratuitously assumed these same women have brought this food and 'perhaps/a spot of wine' (which is nowhere evident in the painting) for one of the men, '... a young reaper ...' (who looks a hard forty-year-old who has worked like a bull all his drayhorse, commonplace life'.

The poem is pretty enough. All the Bruegel poems are nicely made. But Williams-the-poet has evaded the customary honesty of perspective with which Williams-the-doctor would have prompted him. There is a certain amount of truth, in any case, in these pieces; at least a simplicity of language and an economy of description effectively delineating the characteristically vivid word-pictures Williams seems to create without effort. Bruegel's own themes for these canvases are another matter; they have not merely been misrepresented — they have been abandoned! What is left in the Bruegel poems seems hardly worth the pains.

ASPHODEL, THAT GREENY FLOWER

(the longest poem in the collection) is, in part, the most mature and realized; in part, simply overwritten. Passages like:

Compare Darwin's voyage of the Beagle,
a voyage of discovery if there ever was one,
to the death
incommunicado
in the electric chair
of the Rosenbergs.
It is the mark of the times
that though we condemn
what they stood for
we admire their fortitude.

descend to the level of political asides, far removed from the sheer poetry of these lines from TO DAPHNE AND VIRGINIA:

In our family we stammer unless,
half mad,
And I am not
a young man.
My love encumbers me.

or those from THE DESCENT:

No defeat is made up entirely of defeat — since

the world it opens is always a place formerly unsuspected. A world lost, a world unsuspected, beckons to new places and no whiteness (lost) is so white as the memory of whiteness.

or the way Williams speaks of himself ('a timorous old man') in SUZY (part III) from the BRUEGHEL section : a bunch of violets clutched his back turned in your idle from you casually appearing hands gives him a place not to look he yearns after beside you which he cherishes you protectively

hopelessly wanting nothing

Here is the kind of truth with which his art concerns itself! This is a naked, clean and precise anguish. There is no attempt on the poet's part to hide from us . . . or from himself. And there's beauty here, because the honesty and exactitude does illuminate an experience we recognize as part of life.

In his poetry, at its best, Williams is both the man of medicine and the man of letters. Each has perceived his own truth; and both truths, in the one man, have shaped these ideas and poems.

EVOCATIONS (on some sites of creators) by Mary Dragonetti

LIKE THE NOTEBOOKS OF WRITERS, Literary Shrines have a fascination for many other writers,—almost compulsive, for some. In both cases, there is a sense of communication. Notebooks give the thoughts and feelings; shrines evoke the individual in surroundings. Sunnyside, the home of Washington Irving, at Tarrytown, New York, is the scene of several of his 'sketches.' A view of the Hudson, a comfortable hodgepodge of a house, cozy and convenient. Irving's study and his collection of books still hold a feeling of aliveness, of people just having left the room and about to return to take up their activities.

For an opposite instance, the site of the Stephen Crane birthplace, at 14 Mulberry Place in Newark, New Jersey, is now an abandoned playground with only ceramic markers to tell that there once lived in a fine brick house on this area the frail blond child who grew up to write *THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE* and the poems he called *LINES*.

In contrast, the Poe Cottage in the Bronx is kept as it was. A comfortable size, though sparsely furnished, it is too dimly lit to make out the photographs and manuscript pages around the walls; nevertheless, there's a sense of its having been lived in. One can picture Poe at his desk, writing his

poems, sitting in a rocker, brooding over them, walking over to one of the tucked-in cupboards to take out a book.

Ascending steps to a door where, beneath a small iron knocker, one reads the name Joyce Kilmer, and going up a narrow turning stair to the room where he was born, also conveys something. It does not matter that this is now an American Legion Post in New Brunswick and that there is nothing left of the original house except the structure. These are the steps he walked, and this was his home.

On Bedford Street in New York there is a narrow pink house, now growing shabby, where Edna St. Vincent Millay once lived. In New York, too, on Ninth Street — and still charming — is the apartment of Elinor Wylie. The two were friends; and one likes to think of their meetings and visits.

The dingy city of Camden, New Jersey contains — on Mickle Street — Walt Whitman's last home, crammed with likenesses of himself, and other mementos. Looking out from his windows, one thinks of Whitman in such surroundings, because he liked to be near works. One also recalls his fondness for riding the ferries — no longer operating, but in his time busily plying back and forth across the Delaware to Philadelphia.

JASCHA KESSLER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 60)

had known, and by his attack on their inspiring, frightening, thrillingly visionary Doctor Bowler. They did not in the least comprehend what he meant by the curious record he had declaimed; they were scared of the words Federal Bureau of Investigation, scrawled in blunt blue pencil over the crumpled sheets of paper he now thrust at them, for them to see, just see for themselves with their own eyes: the evidence, the evidence!

Doctor Bowler, having been helped on with his forgotten coat, was at last permitted to back through the fire door. He

looked down at the buttons of his shoes and murmured he was sorry to have to leave, but that his time was so short. He had grown smaller, and seemed very old.

The host scrambled about the rooms, pushing the women back to their places, trying to soothe them. Abe Jensen had now stumped forward to take over the Meeting. Waving his arms about over his head, he shouted: 'I've got the Floor now, I've got the Floor! Are there any questions, anything you want to know? I'll answer any questions from the House. Come on, come on, ladies and gentlemen — any questions at all!'