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MAR 25 1947

# The NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY REVIEW

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## EXPERIMENTAL POETRY: A SYMPOSIUM

Edited by Alan Swallow

Experiment, Revolution, and Tradition . Thomas Howells

The Scope of Experimental Poetry . . . Meade Harwell

A Theory of Dealing with Experimental  
Poetry . . . . .

Kurt H. Wolff

Notes Toward a Marxist Criticism . . . Thomas McGrath

The Nightmare. A Story . . . . . Jean Byers

Thank You, I'm All Right. A Story . . . Lois Jacobsen

My Little Genius of the Malayan Spell . . . Dean Cadle

Poems, by Deane Mowrer, Carol Hall, J. S. Moodey,

Helen Burlin, Mary Ruth Funk, and others

Book Reviews . . . . . Book Lists . . . . . Other Features

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## WINTER, 1946

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## EXPERIMENTAL POETRY: A SYMPOSIUM

*Edited by Alan Swallow*

### INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

**M**ORE THAN THIRTY YEARS of spectacular effort have gone into the making of experimental poetry. I take it that we are not sure there is any other experimental poetry besides this body of it; indeed, our custom is to use the concept *experimental poetry* with perhaps a tolerable air of agreeing what we mean, but without any precise knowledge of what poetry it points to.

Sometimes I think our period is somewhat analogous to that of Shakespeare, when the official, expressed criticism tended to talk about a poetry which was relatively little written. The relationship between Sir Phillip Sidney's *Defense of Poetry* and *Hamlet* is hardly that of a good critical estimate of what is in the play. In the taverns and wherever the poets of the time met, there must have been talk which was closer to the writing of poetry which was being done. Nowadays our poets are more scattered, and only sporadically in the little magazines, in the Greenwich Villages and Left Banks, or in groups gathered around a college or a magazine, has this kind of talk been possible. Our official criticism has improved to make surely the most explicit and satisfactory critical vocabulary ever achieved. Yet even this criticism has been only partially helpful in bringing us to terms with experimental poetry of the day.

Many of the "established" experimental poets have contributed brilliant poems, but few have added to our critical knowledge of their work. If the newer poets are to continue this work, I think it would behoove them well to know what it is they are continuing, extending, increasing, and to be able to say it critically. Hence, I have wished to get together a brief symposium of what four of these people would say in trying to indicate the nature of experimental poetry.

One significant consideration of experimental poetry has been contributed by those who relate it to past poetry. Their point of view is, I presume, indicated by Mr. Howells' notion of "revolution," that is, that much can be learned about *modern* experimentalism, at least, in noting how it shrugs off some trappings of an immediately preceding poetry and returns

to some fundamentals of a former poetry. This apparently was a premise of Ezra Pound and the Imagists. And the critical point of view is most valuably indicated in such works as Cleanth Brooks's *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* and in a number of essays by T. S. Eliot and Allen Tate.

Surely this point of view is not quite sufficient, however. In reading experimental poetry one must at some time note the differences between this poetry and any former work—that the French Symbolists, the Imagists, or any of the others, are not direct descendants of the metaphysicals or any others but have injected a note of their own. The work spills over the cup of poetry which we have made sensible with criticism. Valuable criticism has been contributed by Yvor Winters, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Kenneth Burke, and others in an effort to bring our critical knowledge to terms with our observable reading of poetry. One of these, at least, Mr. Winters, has found that modern practices in experimental poetry demand some new concepts in critical reading. He has not placed a large importance upon “experimental” as one of these. But continued use of the term indicates a need to examine it more closely, a problem Mr. Harwell has evidently set for himself, defining the term mainly by exclusion and coming out with the feeling that the term has validity. Mr. Wolff has a similar regard for the need for defining the term and for finding it useful.

One of the most significant experimental groups has been the Marxists. With a set of concepts and a philosophy derived from studies usually considered outside those of literature—from philosophy, economics, politics, and history—and with a need to extend aesthetic sensibility and knowledge into heretofore little touched segments of human experience, the Marxists were essentially experimental in this notion, at least, of “extending” literary activity. I hazard the opinion, also, that they might well have been more experimental in extending the traditional modes of literary perception in any way demanded by the new perception or sensibility of the Marxist philosophy. I believe this is part of the charge Mr. McGrath makes against Marxist criticism. Instead of examining experimental poetry from a Marxist viewpoint, he has taken the valuable liberty of examining Marxist criticism from the viewpoint of the experimental poet who sees the need for recognition within Marxist thought for experimental literary activity.

Ordinarily I suppose it is not just for an editor to enter into the discussion he has provoked. A part of the original plan of this symposium as suggested by Mr. Harwell and seconded by the others was that I should attempt some critical examination of all four essays. Because of the length of the project for magazine publication, however, I shall instead put down a few remarks from my own point of view.

An analogy with the present situation in poetry has been attractive to me for a number of years. An amusing trick question in a comprehensive examination in English literature is to ask, “Why don’t we have a course in

the poetry of the fifteenth century?" The answer, of course, is that there wasn't any adequate poetry of the century. This answer ignores a good bit of fine folk poetry, but it does serve to indicate the nature of the literary scene when the sixteenth century was opening. Carry-over from an older poetry in the new century was mainly an effort by Stephen Hawes, Edmund Spenser, and others to keep alive the allegorical narrative and the pastoral. Language, insight, philosophy had changed, and a new poetic method was evidently demanded. One of the first to jump into the breach was John Skelton with a poetry which reminds me very much of modern experimental practice and which W. H. Auden has found worthy of imitation. Skelton's practice, however, was left still-born. From the Continent Sir Thomas Wyatt imported a poetic method which was found more resourceful for the needs of the sixteenth century, more resourceful in the sense that it was more versatile and complete in communicating the sensibility and insight being developed. Surely both Skelton and Wyatt were great experimentalists, both grasping new methods of writing; the one grasped a method which was judged, historically, to have little survival value, and the other grasped a method which was accepted, developed, and used by some of the great poets in English.

I have called this early sixteenth-century situation analogous with that of the modern period. But already it is apparent that the analogy is faulty. We have had many revolutions in recent times and are surely within one now, which I trust we may direct, but these are all within the shadow of the Renaissance. We are not ushered into—or ushering into—a completely new cultural *milieu* which has no contact with the past. Many of us well think that the grip of the past must be loosened more than it has been; yet revolutionary thought of all kinds today seems to be posited on use of some old methodologies, in some cases use of some aspects of our culture to change other aspects (social institutions must change to fit a changing and modern world; economic institutions must change to meet the realities of production; or whatever the proposal).

Response in the literary world has been various, according to the estimate of the situation. Perhaps it would not be too false to say that there were three main estimates. One was that the traditions of English verse were resourceful enough to meet the needs of modern sensibility. I must judge this one of the most appropriate responses, since close to a half of the best modern poets made such an estimate, and since many of the "experimentalists," such as Eliot, Stevens, Pound, and Tate, have felt their practice to be in many ways within the tradition and have depended upon their reading of the tradition for many elements of their practice.

A second response was that of "revolution," in Mr. Howells' use of the term: to throw over qualities of late nineteenth-century verse to return to some older practices, and to extend those practices as need be. Proponents

of this judgment of the situation are probably most numerous among poets of some quality of recent years. They are usually called "experimental," and I think rightly, since their contact with the tradition was flickering, frequently confined to certain resources abstracted from the tradition, and variously successful. They worked toward new combinations, extension of their readings of the past, and development of new methods. New combinations, extensions of the old, new developments—all involved experimental activity.

A third reponse was one of nearly complete experimentalism—finding methods which were as new as possible. I am dealing with tenuous categories which in the end may not be very fruitful; yet one must distinguish in the large between the experimentalism of Eliot, say, and the experimentalism of the surrealists or of Dylan Thomas; probably William Carlos Williams and the "objectivists" are appropriately considered fully experimental, with little contact with traditional practice (unless one would consider the practice of primitive poetry, merely because of its existence in history, as a part of the tradition; similarities between the poetry of the primitive peoples and modern experimentalists are evident, but I think they are not there because the moderns were striving to imitate the methods of primitive poetry).

Experimentalism in poetry, then, is evidently a "real" thing. Our most inclusive account of its methods in the modern period is that of Yvor Winters under his terms "primitivism" and "decadence." But there is a place for a more inclusive term historically and categorically, and that term, apparently, is to be "experimental." The term refers to two matters, so far as I can judge:

(1) Historically it refers to efforts to create new methodologies, new technical resources for perception and communication, and to the critical test of these in the trial-and-error "laboratory" of writing a poem.

(2) In the modern period, this inclusive meaning of the term has not fully been realized. In most cases it has referred to excerpting from the tradition, isolating certain resources of poetry and extending them into a new context. This experimental effort has been justified in criticism by a feeling that the "matter" of modern life required certain techniques to handle it; that the poet had been isolated by the *bourgeoisie* and must investigate the unsullied realm left to him; that the impact of science and loss of faith had fractured the experience and created the dissociated sensibility. Whatever the drive or rationalization, modern experimentalism has netted us possibly a very few new techniques of carry-over value to later generations. But it has netted us some very fine poems—undoubtedly several great poems—which are of the sort which investigate one corner of our experience with great ability; to say it another way, in these poems we have a remarkable and permanent record of the dissociated sensibility.

## EXPERIMENT, REVOLUTION, AND TRADITION

*Thomas Howells*

EXPERIMENTALISM IN LITERATURE, as I understand it, is the point of view supporting the recurrent attempt to achieve a literary form or manner which will be adequate for the representation of new insights and new outlooks not implicit in older forms and manners. The fundamental postulate of experimentalism, I should think, is this: that the possibilities of expression by a literary form are implicit in the terms and conditions of the form itself. With increasing use, the possibilities, while not necessarily diminished, are liable to be prejudiced. Originality—which I assume the experimentalist to equate with creativity—is not likely in the latter stages of a form, whether it be the periodic sentence, the heroic couplet, the novel of manners, or the characteristic diction of an age, a cult, or a class.

In his desire for newness, the experimentalist does not invariably assert that existing forms are exhausted and unfavorable to further achievement. But the newness he seeks is that of kind, not of example.

The experimentalism I have been trying to define is of the extreme, one-hundred-per-cent variety. Literature has its partial experimentalists just as politics has its partial revolutionists. And in poetry as in politics, the more extreme one's position is, the less doubt there is about it—at least with regard to classification. No one would question that *Finnegans Wake* is experimental writing. In diction, in imagery, in arrangement, in the manners of connection—including intellectual and emotional connection—in purpose and theme, the work is constitutive of a kind and not exemplary. But how many novae does it take to constitute a kind; and once constituted, how many further examples are required to make the kind traditional? Is Kenneth Fearing an experimental poet, thirty years after Carl Sandburg? By general report, Hopkins is an experimentalist and Robert Frost a traditionalist. Yet is the total effect of Frost's poetry any closer to Longfellow's than Hopkins' is to Swinburne's or Sidney Lanier's?

I think we would be better off in dealing with cases if we granted that a poet may be an experimentalist in one or several of the elements that make up the poem, and a traditionalist, with or without fervor, in the others. This conception helps us understand how likely it is that the same people who would not have read Frost in 1910 because he didn't sound like Emerson were reading him with enthusiasm in 1930 because he sounded more like Emerson than T. S. Eliot did. The rhythm of Hopkins' poetry has a startling urgency about it which in the 1930's made it seem as new as Ezra Pound's. But Hopkins' diction is traditional—not to say archaic—compared with Frost's. How are we to call Hopkins an experimental poet and Frost a traditional one unless we say that the test is solely one of rhythm?

Is an experimentalist one who is habitually willing to gamble on the expressiveness of a new form? Does he seek to create new forms, or does he simply improvise form on the spur of other necessities? Is he one whose poems are exhibitions primarily of form, new form? The poets who played at rondels and triolets at the end of the last century used content only to body forth their form. Were they not experimentalists only for the reason that their forms were old, bearing the stamp of origin in another age? Auden recently has used forms like the rondel—is he still an experimentalist?

These questions preceded in my own thinking the answers I was able to devise for them. I believe we can see what experimentalism is about if we place it in critical relation to two other conceptual names for attitudes and methods in the arts: tradition and revolution.

I should distinguish the revolutionary from the traditional in the following way. Revolution in literature is an attempt to extend the tradition of letters by a recovery of its primary motive force and a reassertion of its basic qualities. Revolution is historically protestant in its directions—it seeks to recapture what has been lost or obscured in the sequence of events and operations from an original source. The aesthetic of the Renaissance revealed this protestantism in its aims and standards. Wordsworth, another innovator, sought to recover what had been lost to poetry, not to gain what poetry had never had. The imagists and free versifiers of the 1912 movement were also endeavoring to restore qualities which had abounded in a golden age. These revolutionists went farther afield than their predecessors—the golden age had many different locations, chronological and geographic; but the animating principle was the passion traditional to revolutionists: what had been lost must needs be found, what was basic must be reasserted.

Experiment, I believe, achieves work of permanent value when it serves as a technique for the literary revolutionist; it becomes, I think, strictly contemporary, a random exploitation of blind alleys, when it leaves the hand of the revolutionist and sets up a program of its own, when it ceases to be the instrument of change and becomes the instrumentalist. Self-sufficing, experimentalism achieves neither the old nor the new. It may achieve the unique, which having no referability and no power of attachment to the past has likewise none for the future. The new is that which stands in a recognizable sequence from the old. The genuinely new, I believe, is most likely to come as the result of a search for the fundamental undertaking in protest against the conventional.

As others have done, I would distinguish the conventional from the traditional for the same reason that I have distinguished the experimental from the revolutionary. The strictly conventional is no better fitted to maintain the old than the strictly experimental is to discover the new. They do not so much advance their causes as render them insupportable.

Tradition is, I think, simply the principle of continuity in the arts, as in other activities of civilization. T. S. Eliot has much the same conception. I disagree only with his apparent idea that literature is a sort of investment trust, self-funding and self-perpetuating. It may be a trust, but it is not self-funding; and it has no unique power of survival which preserves it from an oblivion which overtakes all other aspects of civilization. Literature is never the only part of a civilization that survives. We know civilizations which have survived in various ways but the relics of which do not include any literature they may have had; yet we do not have any literature which is the only extant relic of a civilization, unless one were to denominate the Homeric age and the Periclean age as different civilizations—as I am not willing to do.

It is in their different solutions for the problem of communication that I think we can see the radical difference between experiment and tradition. Experiment renders experience without classifying it; tradition represents experience by classifying it. Which is right? I suppose the preference turns on the question of whether there are new experiences in a generation of literary experimentation or only new experiencers. Certainly no one would deny that twentieth-century man has some experiences beyond the opportunity of man in Homer's century. But what about nineteenth-century man and eighteenth-century man? Does the citizen of our time have experiences which are unique, entirely unconnected and unconnectable to theirs? I should like to repeat my belief that whatever has no connection with the past will prove to have the same irrelevance to the future. The purely unique in form would be the purely contemporary in significance; its merit would not be a valid question, for merit is an affair of continuity. The most that could be found out about the unique work of art, aside from its uniqueness, would be its functional relation to the unique conditions which gave rise to it and the unique artist who achieved it.

I am not sure that I can accept the idea of pure uniqueness in the arts, not after five thousand years of work in progress. Surely the difference between *Finnegans Wake* and the *Book of the Dead* is not one of unrelated, unlikable objects. Both move in the domain of literature and draw their significance from the renewable human experience which gives content to that domain.

If we deny that absolute uniqueness is possible in the arts, we then fall back on partial uniqueness—and there we had better give up the idea of uniqueness altogether in favor of the unassimilable, the unattachable, the contemporary. I should not admit the idea even of the purely contemporary, from an unwillingness to believe that any contemporary event or situation or work is totally without relation to the past. A work of art may be purely contemporary in its duration, at least in the sense that it has no power of self-extension into the future of art. But we know enough of the



shadowy life possessed by the host of Elizabethan writers who lie on the edge of the outer darkness surrounding Shakespeare to understand what the value of the "strictly contemporary" writer can be to future times—that is, enough survival value to make a penumbra out of an aura, given a sufficiently intense investigation.

In twenty years, more or less, of concern with poetry, I have seen its modernism successively oriented toward the Greek, Latin, and medieval poets, the Elizabethan poets, the metaphysical poets, and now, currently, the Augustan poets. There have been side excursions into French, Chinese, and Italian periods; but this ranging in cultural geography has been subordinate to the recapitulation of cultural time. This modern revolt from the conventional in poetry is productive of permanent worth, I think, in so far as it seeks to reassert the fundamental and thus to extend the traditional. I believe that a considerable part of the experimentalism in the modern movement, omitting some of its slogans, has been productive of worth by being revolutionary in the sense I have discussed. The part which has been experiment for experiment's sake is smaller than a recent judge like Karl Shapiro, surveying the scene in his *Essay on Rime*, seems to believe. There is, on first thought, a singular discrepancy in that *Essay* between the praise Shapiro bestows—rightly, I feel—on individual poets like Eliot and the contempt he heaps upon the movements he finds them to represent. But when I realize that Shapiro is choosing between experiment for experiment's sake and experiment for poetry's sake—and the sake of all it can mean to man—the discrepancy turns out to be a discrimination.

At the start of these remarks I said that a basic belief of experimentalism is that the possibilities of expression by a form are inherent in the form. I believe that, with some reservations about the nature of "inherence"; but I do not believe that the creation of a new form necessarily changes the possibilities of expression or even increases them. New forms do not mean new expressiveness necessarily—that depends in large part on the one who does the expressing and on what he has to express. A poet can, God knows, be just as trite in free verse as in a sonnet. New expressiveness comes when a new poet, having something new to express, succeeds in doing it. He may use or make a new form in the process; but the newness of his form is ancillary, not primary, to the newness of his creative act. Not all new forms are inherently well expressive of new good things; some are very possibly inherent with bad expressiveness of bad things, and old bad things at that.

As the experimentalist would equate creativity with originality, I would equate it with authenticity. That equation makes me a traditionalist, I suppose, in experimental eyes. But personally I feel more inclined to revolution, the protestantism of the arts.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SCOPE OF EXPERIMENTAL  
POETRY*Meade Harwell*

IT IS A CHARACTERISTIC of our time, in its confusion, that the development of poetry away from its tradition, while looked upon as valid activity and even anticipated as inevitable, has nevertheless been objected to as it has taken its "experimental" step. Ironical, too, is the fact that the reader, even while taking pride in his "openmindedness," has tended oftentimes to regard the departure from the tradition as illegitimate. For while recognizing the legitimacy of "experimentalism" as a method of discovery in scientific procedures, the reader, impressed with the general skepticism of the scientific method, has exercised the cautions of "suspended judgment" upon a phenomenon which has appeared strange in the light of his previous reading experience. The advantages of inconclusive experiment and suspended judgment in science have been fully extolled. Less emphasis has been made upon the probability that tendencies resulting from "suspended judgment" lead to intellectual sloth, indifference, and the inability to make any decisions or name any preferences. Regardless, the effects of skepticism have registered with the reader of modern experimental poetry. Thus, the discrete result: the reader, conditioned into trained obedience, accepts the traditional, familiar statement in poetry, refers the experimental poem to a later pronouncement, or, if it is seemingly "vague," "too new," "strange," or the like, rejects it as an unrealized and incommunicable result.

But part of the difficulty has also been with the creator himself. In his zeal to manifest the "new," or to place the processes of change into adequate poetic synthesis,<sup>1</sup> he has profoundly diverged from the tradition of poetry which, in its expression, was more nearly a continuum of ideas and modes of structure, at least up to the time of the Imagists. In consequence, poetry has at times appeared, if new, almost polar to the traditional aspects, and frequently beyond the comprehension of the reader. As Yvor Winters has illustrated in *Primitivism and Decadence*, modern experimentalism can lead to obscurity if not consciously constrained from a too rampant and arbitrary use of modern techniques. It goes without saying that the presence of obscurity has tended to deter much appreciation of experimental poetry which would otherwise have been investigated to the point of yielding its final meaning.

But the experimental creator who is obscure cannot be condemned more than the modern critic-exponent of modernist poetry. For quite often

<sup>1</sup> "Adequate" in the modern sense has involved in general a simultaneity of symbolic activity, implications on the Self which are Freudian in tendency, intellectualism, intellectualized mysticism, urbanish rhetoric, evocative subtlety of expression, a tendency toward abstract statement.

the latter has appeared to follow uncritically in the wake of the creator rather than to act as a guard against the tendency of the poet to set forth an uncompleted act in the poem itself. Any explanation of this fact is inevitably oversimple; yet part of the problem certainly lies in the critics' examination of structural parts of the poem rather than its structural entity as a poem.<sup>2</sup> A part of the difficulty lies in the general lack of closely accurate measurements by which a poem may be examined and related—rather than its present-day demonstrations, for instance, as a convenience of personal taste, as a cultural derivative, as a psychological phenomenon, or as a synthesis of intellectualist ideas. This is not to suggest that, in search for the constant, inclusive measurement, one should return to the Humanist equation based on a romantic-classical dichotomy. It is possible that examination of poetry on this basis will ultimately prove ineffectual and too simple for the complexities of poetic criticism. But it is to suggest, as negative inference, that, insofar as the poem is examined in terms of touchstones, paradoxes, tensions, or as a dynamic, a mystique, or the like and insofar as these terminologies are investigated at the expense of the poem's accomplishment as a structural, communicable entity, there must be as well the inevitable tendency to accept the poem that fulfills the search of one's particular and fragmentary fancy, rather than the poem in which structural accomplishment is complete. A basic irresponsibility of judgment, regardless of the critic's personal integrity, must be the result. And such criticism becomes indeed a rationalization of particulars in art, with corresponding effects on experiment in poetry, rather than an explanation based on a rigorous and inclusive inspection.

The instances of such criticism are available almost daily to the reader. Thus one reads the sage prediction that Hart Crane's poetry represents a fundamental cosmic Oneness with his times and will someday be too clear rather than obscure as now.<sup>3</sup> Wallace Fowlie, in a statement on St.-J. Perse, writes that "without possessing the architecture of Dante's realms, the realms of St.-J. Perse are the site of the modern voyage. The realms of Dante narrate the epic of theology. The realms of . . . Perse narrate the poem of a spiritual quest which never defines itself."<sup>4</sup> Granted the correctness of Mr.

<sup>2</sup> This fact has been perhaps most recently dramatized, as effectively perhaps as by any past group, by the Neo-Aristotelian group of R. S. Crane, Norman MacLean, and Elder Olsen at the University of Chicago. And it is possible, as Kenneth Burke suggests in *Accent* (Winter, 1943), that herein may be the egress from such a dilemma of criticism.

<sup>3</sup> This paraphrase refers to Waldo Frank's introduction to *The Collected Poems of Hart Crane*. It is not certain just what Mr. Frank's definition of "too clear" denotes, but it is reasonably safe to state that one of the things which it cannot mean is that the poem will ever exist as a completed creation. It is possible that time may produce an amalgam estimate of *The Bridge* which will stand in estimate of its communicable qualities. But this will hardly be adequate, nor will any other device which resides outside the demonstrations of the poem itself. Crane, as a visionary, was an inchoate conceptualist. His theme, though realized in part, remains an inspired, unrealized emanation in other parts, and in final projection falls short of indubitable communication.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace Fowlie, "The Poetic Tradition of St.-J. Perse," *Chimera*, Summer, 1944.

Fowlie's statement, it must be added that in the midst of the poet's imaginative rhetoric one observes a definite limpness of impact due to too much undefined unarchitectural voyage. To take still another instance, Lawrence Hart discusses the effect of "distortion" in poetry as practiced by his Activist group: "Their content—especially that of Miss [Rosalie] Moore's poem—is not supposed to focus until after a number of readings. (Of course the writer needs to make such a poem interesting enough so it will be pleasing to reread it until it focuses.)"<sup>5</sup> Perhaps Mr. Hart should indicate the *number* of times such a type of poem should be read. Thus he would provide the reader with at least a clue as to when he might reasonably expect to arrive at a grasp of the poem. The assignment of a definite reading period would be no more sophisticated than his assumption that a poem should arbitrarily not have "to focus" until after several readings. Needless to say, to secure "distortion" in poetry by such a device is to reduce poetry to a final and deathful obscurity, for it is probably true that no poem can ultimately survive that is not written with the ideal of sensible communication in any and all readings.

These examples are merely illustrative of the situations that exist, and perhaps inevitably so, when poetry at any time attempts to step so boldly from an accepted periphery of statement. On the other hand, in suggesting certain deficiencies, one must observe that the experimental impulse in poetry has resulted in an extraordinary heightening of expression in poetry, and has literally seized the modern poetic temperament in some of its most talented manifestation. It is of less wonder, in consequence, that in criticism of the negative aspects of experimentalism there has often been a tendency to associate with experimentalism many failures in poetry which are not exclusively of an experimental type. At least one reason for this has been the neglect of the profound relevance of traditional poetry in the modern scene. Any use of the "experimental" presupposes a relative existence of the "traditional" in poetry, as the alternative for comparison and analysis; and traditional poetry as such has been much more relevant in the modern affair of poetry than as a mere historical influence from another generation. A further reason has been that, in the general tendency to associate all modern poetry with the experimental, there has been a correlative failure to establish specific points of demarcation between experimental and traditional poetry, a fact that has automatically made all experimentalism the sufferer—for instance, of the charge of being "inchoate." Of course, it is not certain that such a demarcation can be accomplished. The methods that we have, either of science or of the more qualitative impressionism of literary critics, are not supremely satisfactory for the purpose.

It is reasonably certain that variant attitudes toward experimental poetry will continue, as well as attendant confusions on the subject, until

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Hart and others, "Ideas of Order in Experimental Poetry," *Circle*, No. 6.

more cogent understandings are established of the relation between the experimental and the traditional. And probably any attempt to criticize these confusions will be negligible in result. Still it is of some relevance to attempt an examination of a few of the challenging aspects of the attitudes upon the subject that prevail. Perhaps by the attempt a more approximate concept of the nature of experimental poetry may be obtained, and indeed a greater awareness of the relation of experiment in poetry to the tradition. There are, then, four prominent attitudes which may be examined. Although they by no means offer a complete representation in regard to the subject, perhaps they will at least illustrate some of the problems involved.

1. *Experimental poetry is an obscure and/or incomplete poetry.*

This criticism exhibits a characteristic tendency to accept a part as indicative of the whole, as well as to relate the difficult-to-understand with the obscure. Perhaps even more importantly, it is related with that aspect of scientific experiment which is an incompleting effort. Modern experimental poetry can be and is, on occasions, obscure and incomplete. But the statement is applicable also to almost any modern traditional poetry. The critic must realize that no poetry, experimental or traditional, can exist if it functions merely as obscure or incomplete poetry, and that if experimental poetry were indeed to be characteristically obscure and incomplete it would be doomed to ultimate failure as expression. Likewise, in using the term "experimental," one must see this poetry as something beyond the experimental process of the laboratory in which conclusive results have not yet been ascertained. All poetry may be described as laboratory experiment in the sense that the essential process of determination of word, structure, and final conception represents a series of trial efforts. Experimental poetry is capable of completed statement just as the laboratory is capable of producing a completed experiment; being thus capable, it has potentialities of something more than the inchoate or incomplete.

An incomplete poetry represents a failure of sensibility or of sensitivity, or of both,<sup>6</sup> and sometimes incorporates obscurantist elements as a part of the failure. Its incompleteness may be technical, intellectual, or emotional. Obscure poetry is more directly a failure of sensibility, a case in which the poem has failed as a communicative judgment and exists instead as a dangling, semi-understood, provocative, unrealizable thing to be examined, re-examined, variously interpreted, and never encircled with a generally

<sup>6</sup> By *sensibility* is meant the intelligence and dynamic force of the poem, the elements of rational communication by which the poem achieves meaning to the reader—the underlying definitiveness of a poem which makes it a completion and an entity. By *sensitivity* is meant the refining emotives of a poem which place the sensibility of the poem in its exact status by imagery, words, and symbology. Sensibility and sensitivity in a poem are, of course, interlocked and indispensable to each other as form and content are, in their popular meaning, in a definition of what is contained in a poem.

accepted meaning. Shakespeare failed to give sufficient reference for all his sonnets, and, as previously mentioned, Hart Crane's *The Bridge* possesses only fragment sensibility. Eliot's "The Waste Land" has not yet come into the completed experience of general reader-understanding, and it is possible that parts of it will not do so simply because Eliot has evocativized in part beyond the denotative action necessary to sustain it. The distinguished failure of modern poetry has been its failure of sensibility. Where this failure has occurred in experiment, it has involved an inchoate or obscure experimentation; and as experimentalism has participated in this inchoate obscurity, it has eliminated its potentialities as accomplished experimentation. The modern experimentalist has the privilege of his experiment; but the obscurity or incompleteness of it will derive largely from the extent of his awareness of poetry, his strength of intellect, and his ability to survive the trap of modern chaos.

That this can be done is suggested by past poets—Crashaw, Donne, Dryden, Hopkins—whose works were experiments in statement in their own ages. In modern times experimentalism has been a completed effect consistently; thus, in T. S. Eliot—"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "The Hippopotamus," "Ash-Wednesday"; in John Peale Bishop—"Speaking of Poetry," "And When the Net Was Unwound Venus Was Found Ravelled with Mars," "In the Dordogne"; in W. H. Auden—parts of "Songs and Other Musical Pieces." It is one of our failures of judgment that if a poem appears fresh and original but also unfinished, it is then likely to be denominated experimental and a failure. The reader should naturally know the relation of inchoate poetry to experimentalism in poetry, but it is probable that we read with less identification of the poem in relation to its influences and to a tradition than we should. Indeed, it is more probable that we complete our examination of poetry precisely at the point where it should commence—that is, with the question of whether or not the work possesses sufficient creative power and originality to warrant its being read. But to enjoy a poem to its completest manifestation it is desirable to go further, and at least one direction is the identification of its originality in accordance with its experimental or traditional impetus, and the continued examination of it as a poem until its merits, and deficiencies, are unassailably known and related. To do less is to encounter the constant danger of misappraisal, not only on the above grounds, but also a misappraisal of the experiment, which may be simply a more intelligent work than a reader can manage. The man of genius demands an intelligent audience to apprehend the levels of his complexity brought into a complete understanding. It is quite possible, where terms are applied so loosely as the terms "obscurity" and "incompleteness" are today, that *all* poetry, and experimental poetry in particular, will continue to be labeled by these terms with indiscriminating rapture.

2. *Experimental poetry is necessary to poetry but remains an essentially fragmentary statement.*

The statement to follow, a rather typical folkway, was made by James Laughlin in "Editor's Notes," *New Directions VIII*: "Our effort has been, and always will be, to foster and cherish the principles of experimentation or variation from the norm, and original, if sincere, self-expression. Without these forces the writing of any period is liable to go very dead and dry. They are not terribly important as ends in themselves but are very necessary to the overall health of a culture. You might liken them to one of those mysterious chemical substances which must be present in the bloodstream to keep it virile; by itself the substance would never nourish the body, and yet without its action the blood would fail in the job too."

It is ironic that this statement, representing a very decent attitude toward experimentalism, is symbolic as an inchoate statement in itself. For instance, Mr. Laughlin endows experimentation with "principles," which is thus to grant it capable of possessing entity, and with a horizon defined as "variation from the norm." Yet he qualifies the "principles" of existence with the conclusion that "they are not terribly important ends in themselves" and are mainly necessary as regenerative influences on the "overall health of a culture."

It is, of course, anyone's privilege to allot to experimental poetry such importance as he sees for it; but it is also quite possible that to consider experimental poetry in such a manner as Mr. Laughlin has is to blight it practically to extinction. Experimental poetry, if considered on the basis of the individual poem, has oftentimes been an entity of expression in the modern scene; thus, T. S. Eliot's "Prufrock," Wallace Stevens' "Peter Quince at the Clavier." And while it can and does, if one cares to see it thus, "nourish the body" of poetry (minimumly and maximumly, depending on the situation in which it is being written), it is capable of making a profound contribution to poetry in excess of the tradition. Poetry, if it is regarded on the traditional-experimental basis, is then the structure of both the traditional and the experimental. It is possible, furthermore, that the terms exist, as Mr. Laughlin suggests indirectly, as judgments beyond a time consideration, each individuated from but related to the other, and finally contributory to the form and content of a poem by its usage of experimental or traditional properties. Thus E. E. Cummings is quite experimental in that his originality of expression is innovative rather than traditional; which is to say that while remaining within the scope of poetry he achieves a mode which is distinguishable from traditional poetry and cannot be contained successfully in it.

One final remark of Mr. Laughlin should be observed. I refer to his association of "original, if sincere, self-expression" with experimental statement. This attitude appears to evolve out of the tendency to associate



original creativity as automatic experimentation. The statement is but a half-truth at best, and the alternative, as related to traditional creativity, is probably more close to the truth. Shakespeare's sonnets are original self-expression, as are T. S. Eliot's "Ash-Wednesday," Karl Shapiro's "Scyros," Wallace Stevens' "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle," Keats' "Ode to a Grecian Urn," W. H. Auden's "Canzone" ("When shall we learn what should be clear as day"), and Hart Crane's "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen." But obviously these do not fit collectively into the experimental or into the traditional mold. The fact is that original "self-expression" is both or either depending on the properties of its originality. A fresh or original poem may include experimentation but does not necessarily have to in order to be creative. Experimentation, on the other hand, in necessarily involving creative activity, becomes a fresh and original aspect of the creative process while not becoming a component part of all creativity. Experimentalism establishes a new vista of creativity, in which case it is fresh and original as well. Meanwhile, fresh and original creativity may also find a representation in the more familiar vista of the traditional. This difference is important, for today, though the period in its relation to the poetic tradition appears to be dominantly experimental, there are many poets, such as Karl Shapiro, J. V. Cunningham, Randall Jarrell, Yvor Winters, and Allen Tate, whose writing is creative but fundamentally or completely non-experimental.

### 3. "*All poetry is experimental poetry.*"<sup>7</sup>

This statement of Wallace Stevens upon first observation appears to burgeon with truth; a second observation betrays the fact, however, that the statement can mean anything, perhaps everything, and as a final statement represents an attitude of almost complete nihilism toward poetry. For the statement is, in practical application, too simple, too over-inclusive, and leads ultimately to more confusion than realization of concept. An equivalent—a better one, but still insufficient—is to invoke the Aristotelian definition of poetry as an act of catharsis. However, the implications of a position such as Mr. Stevens' have offered a certain attraction to critics and readers whose concept of poetry is essentially pragmatic. As such, then, it should be examined for whatever value it may have.

Offhand, the statement may be approached in two ways: (1) as a statement by the creator who, in the act of composition, senses the flux and flow of phenomena which compose a poem; and (2) as a statement by the reader who senses the "difference" of any poem from its predecessors.

In the first case, the assumption apparently is that each poem presents its own drama of creation; hence no two poems involve the same problem of form, and therefore each poem represents an adventure of creation, iden-

<sup>7</sup> Wallace Stevens, "Poetica Materia," *View*, 2nd Series, No. 3, 1942.

tified as an experiment, which continues until the poem is completed. This view, although reasonably valid in regard to the poem's creation, must fail as a statement regarding poetry. We cannot call all poetry experimental if the term is to have any definitive meaning. Even assuming a latitude for subjective creative processes, the poet customarily creates within a tradition, within, that is, a cultural milieu which in its strength tends to influence the poet sometimes to the point of restraint even of his natural talents. And even though subjectively the poem may undergo an extraordinary rearrangement of properties, the actualized poem is more likely to illustrate a traditional rather than an experimental impulse. Karl Shapiro and J. V. Cunningham are two modern poets who, although differing in ideas on poetry, are still both modern in temperament while tending toward the traditional rather than the experimental in poetry. On the other hand, Stevens and W. C. Williams, modernists in temperament and statement, write characteristically in a mode of experimentalism.<sup>8</sup> To conclude, all poetry must be judged by its actualized historical realization, and any judgment made which is contingent principally on the subjective processes of the poem can result only in chaos.

Nor can the statement be sustained from the reader's point of view, the second possibility enumerated above. Every reader, probably because of the modern stress on individualism and the statistical stress of quantities at the expense of the qualitative, is prone to consider every poem as new or different, hence as an experimental gesture. The problem lies, as in the case of the creator, in the confusion of a uniqueness of the poem with its possible status as experimental poetry. Every poem has the effect of uniqueness. But uniqueness is, so to speak, the effect of completion of the poem. The poem is the communicable structure speaking its unique message in its particular mode. As such, it is related to the experimental or traditional properties which dominantly inhabit the structure of its uniqueness. But neither the quality nor the poem, the vessel of the quality, is rigidly restricted to the experimental as a means of final expression, and indeed the uniqueness as either experimental or traditional is finally known only upon the completion of the poem as statement. Every poem has the privilege of being experimental at its time of creation. It is more likely to be traditional. It will always be, unconditionally, unique. And the reader's

<sup>8</sup> It would be of interest to be able to relate Mr. Stevens' statement to his own manner of creation. An inspired poet, he symbolizes the search of the experimentalist for expression. Unquestionably an enormous amount of experimentation must occur within Mr. Stevens before any poem is ever written by him. It is an important correlate that Mr. Stevens is, as well, one of the most aware poets of our time. His handling of metrics, of textures, the insinuating obliqueness which he projects, all represent one of the most skilled objective treatments of poetry. A point of interest would be to document the relation of one's awareness of his art and its tradition with experimentalism. It is probably true that no experimental poetry is more than mediumly successful without a supreme objectivity in knowledge of relationships of the experiment to the tradition.

feeling of "difference" may ultimately be more profitably used in his gaining an awareness of this fact than by any arbitrary assignment of "difference," unanalyzed, to experimentalism in poetry.

4. *The experimental and the traditional are disparate elements in poetry.*

Any absolute interpretation of this statement is of course impossible. If the experimental were completely apart from the traditional there would be no basis of their comparison. Nevertheless the statement has a pertinent implication in the modern mind largely because of the tendency to make experimental and traditional differences the correlatives of the Humanist division of poetry into romantic and classical disparates. Such a classification of poetry has perhaps been exhausted and abandoned by the more serious critics. Still the classification carries on, largely as a remnant of an old memory in judgment, and more seriously as evidence of the failure to develop other classifications of poetry based on the poem as an object. The result—the pairing of the romantic and classical classification with the experimental and traditional ones—is probably more unconscious than not. Still, since it does persist, it should be briefly considered.

At least two basic differences in the two classifications exist:

(1) The judgments on romantic and classical classification represent a specific assignment of values independent of trends in poetry. The experimental and traditional classification is a more flexible concept, involving judgments considerably bound to trends in a particular period.

(2) The former represents a division of poetry into a classification the values of which are regarded as absolute, timeless, and polar. The latter is more accurately posited as differentiations from each other, rather than polar in relationship, and as variant values in time.<sup>9</sup>

From the vantage of modern poetry, which is probably always the period in which traditional and experimental relationships are the most active and prominent for critical discussion, the absence of dichotomy is striking. Thus one witnesses in Eliot's "Ash-Wednesday" a traditional theme (worship, confessional, attitudes of humility and adoration) and an experimental structure (metrics, imagery); or in Carol Ely Harper's "Sunday Morning Service," a traditional theme (backwoods country Sunday preacher with attendant scene of Sunday School and members), and an experimental structure and symbolism (punctuational devices, free verse; use of attendance chart as nuclear symbol); or in E. E. Cummings' poem "LII," in *One Times One*, a traditional structure and theme (sonnet form, constant flux of Mind in contrast with changelessness of the form of Beauty), and experimental devices (arbitrary conversion of verbs into nouns,

<sup>9</sup> The variant in value must be allowed until its more serious but still unknown plausibility as an absolute may be known. Some further mention will be made of this later in the essay.

decapitalized sentences, variations on traditional usage of adjective and conjunction).

The experimental is in constant process of building from the status quo of the traditional toward its own uniqueness. At no time, however, does it ever depart completely from the tradition. In fact, it is a closer observation to state that its development is so gradual and stumbling that its removal from the tradition is almost inscrutable. There are moments when the experimental trend may be heightened extraordinarily. Thus, today, with the semi-collapse of morality, the redefinitions of conduct by Freud, the extension of scientific and social fact, the investigation into the psyche, a new war, changes in educational concepts, an inevitable extravaganza of experimentation may be predicted in continuation of the experimentation that has already occurred. For it is probably true that experimentalism in poetry is an associate of cultural experimentation in the same period. Likewise, it is even probable that any experimentation in poetry may be measured by the intensity of fermentation and the dominance of chaos and dilemma over the alternative status of social stability. It is probable, finally, that in the extremities of such social fermentation experimental poetry will tend in part, as today, to become a potential rather than an actualization. But this statement cannot be a complete truth: the creator is constantly faced with the requisition of his own decision in a poem and, regardless of the period, is to be held culpable for the performance of his work. No period is free from confusion. The major experimentalist, and traditionalist, pierces through the chaos, out of the dilemma, into entity. Within the determinism of any period lies the face of the individual's own identity and will.

Generally, then, this discussion suggests that experimental poetry is capable of considerable expansion from its present interpretation—in its relation to originality, to the creative process, and to its actualization as a completed work. Likewise, the essay suggests that, by the fact that experimentalism can lead to a completed act, it possesses legitimate entity as a process of art, correlate with and perhaps even parallel with concepts of traditional poetry. And, finally, it suggests that “experimental” and “traditional” effect a logical division in poetry which possesses marked capacities as a sociological and historical introduction to poetry on a systematic basis, and that the terms are to be recommended as a potential “system” for discussion of other criteria in poetry.

Certainly a necessary consequence of any consideration of poetry on such a basis must be an acceptance of experimental activity as more than a fragmentary phenomenon which is catalyst and servant to the tradition. But whether such is possible should not be decided until a fuller measure of poetry has been made as to its experimental-traditional properties, to

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determine if experiment's projection in poetry is as great as it seems to be today. Further, it would seem advisable to test the potentiality of experimentalism's efficacy as a universal concept. Certainly as a psychological urge to new expression, experimentalism has been a part of any change that has occurred through all the steps of civilizations, and the experiment as an implicit mode of the scientific method is by now unassailably justified. As well, perhaps, there are aspects of poetry in the past which may be described best by the term. Thus Hopkins' "Windhover" remains after fifty years an experiment in poetry. And Crashaw, as Yvor Winters has suggested, could gain added identity if examined as an experimental poet. The research for such an investigation through all or even a part of poetry would be a quite extended labor. But its results could be quite profound as well. And conceivably it could result in an ideal of systems: a system in which the particular and the general in poetry may become resolved into something coherent and logical rather than the thousand-meaninged tangents which characterize the approach to poetry today.

## A THEORY OF DEALING WITH EXPERIMENTAL POETRY

Kurt H. Wolff

THERE ARE FOUR MODES in which one may deal with experimental poetry. One can, first, word it, exemplify it, embody it, that is, write *as* an experimental poet, not *about* experimental poetry. Second and third, one can write *about* experimental poetry, but in two ways which are often mixed: interpreting it immanently, from the inside; and interpreting it transcendently or extrinsically or socio-historico-culturally—from the outside. Fourth, one can write, as I am doing, about the way to write about experimental poetry, suggesting a program of dealing with the phenomenon or would-be phenomenon, or of trying to locate it.

Obviously, any product written by an experimental poet in that capacity is an exemplification, a wording, an embodiment of experimental poetry. But what is an experimental poem, who is an experimental poet? Is he who says so one? Or is he so classified by others? Originally (historically), probably the latter; and subsequently, that is, after the formulation had been furnished, some poets declared themselves experimental. It follows that it is impossible to be aware of, or to recognize, an experimental poem or poet without either an original definition or, in case a definition already exists, a classificatory step. In either case, immanent interpretation is involved—as an original enterprise (as a definition: "this ought to be called experimental poetry because . . .," and now you explain, define, interpret), or as consent, qualification, or negation (as a classificatory step: "yes, since this is such and such, it falls under the category

of experimental poetry," or "to this extent, this is experimental poetry, but on the other hand . . . , " or "no, since this is not such and such, it does not fall under the category of experimental poetry"). Which leads to the second mode of dealing with experimental poetry, immanent interpretation.

Immanent interpretation of experimental poetry is the attempt to define its "nature," its "essence," its place within the development of poetry, showing poetic influences acting upon and from it (intra-poetic interpretation as part of immanent interpretation); or, if the interpretation is of an individual experimental poet or a group of them, it includes a study of their syntax, grammar, vocabulary, style, influences, and attitudes, and many other features as revealed in their poetry, but all found *within* and through their work, that is, without going outside and drawing on outside sources for elucidation. For instance, Meade Harwell's definition of experimental poetry, except for the last sentence, is an example of immanent interpretation:

By *experimental poetry*, we refer not to the formless inchoate verse which, if experimental, is likewise immature in project and a failure aesthetically. We refer to the poetry, rather, which is innovative, or even a discovery, and whose effort is completed. Likewise, we define experimental poetry historically as poetry which in its newness is comparatively unknown to the reading public, and is not yet in the mainstream of the poetic tradition.—*Experiment*, I (April, 1944).

In the first two sentences of this definition, Mr. Harwell states that experimental poetry is not, and is; but merely by way of classifying types of poetry ("inchoate" vs. "innovative," etc.). But in the last sentence, he sets experimental poetry in relation with phenomena outside itself and outside poetry in general, namely, with a given historical moment ("newness") and with certain sections of the population ("reading public") from which the poet comes or to which he—at least potentially—addresses himself. Thus, the last sentence is an example of socio-historico-cultural interpretation. Which leads to the third mode of dealing with experimental poetry, transcendent interpretation.

Transcendent interpretation of experimental poetry is the attempt to explain or understand the results of its immanent interpretation in social or historical or cultural terms; that is, in terms of the "social backgrounds" of the author, or group or school of authors, concerned (family, class, socioeconomic status, occupation, education, social, political, religious affiliations, etc.) and of hypothetically outstanding features of his or their society (classes, power distribution, political structure, etc.); in terms of the poet's or poets' "culture" (attitudes, beliefs, values, knowledges, etc.) and of hypothetically outstanding features of the culture of their society (for example—in ours—anxieties, competition, materialism, return to religion, democratic, fascist, communist, socialist ideologies, etc.); and in terms of hypothetically

outstanding features of the historical moment or period in which the poet or poets live (for example—in our time—World Wars I and II, depression, inflation, deflation, New Deal, etc.). I stress “hypothetical,” because the sociology of knowledge (which has begun to develop the difference between immanent and transcendent interpretation and the implications of each) has made it clear that we must be very careful when positing social determinants or categories of determinants and that much of earlier intellectual or social or cultural history has been largely intuitive and arbitrary: we are only now beginning to accustom ourselves to the fact that the interpreter himself lives in a given society at a given time and has a given culture, all of which co-determine his own interpretations of others. But enough of hints at theoretical and methodological difficulties which, however, lead to the fourth mode of dealing with experimental poetry, writing about the way to write about it.

This mode, in the present context, is a partial justification of my conception. It will be noted that this conception has several implications (and surely, I am not aware of all of them). One is the distinction between unscientific and scientific modes of dealing with experimental poetry—the first mode mentioned above being unscientific, and the second and third being, at least potentially, scientific. Of course, the first—exemplification—alone makes interpretation possible. But why do I advocate *scientific* interpretation? Here, the two relevant characteristics of “scientific” are, first, the utmost degree of awareness and doubt in intellectual endeavors of which a given individual is capable—of secularization, if you will, or of “naturalism”; and, second, the belief in the value of such awareness. I advocate this awareness and this belief in its value because I think acting upon them guarantees a greater clarity in dealing with experimental poetry, as with intellectual matters in general, than does following any other method. For instance, awareness of the differences among, and the implications of, the three modes of dealing with experimental poetry (implications not all clear to me and, much less, all indicated here) enables us to redefine documents in their terms, that is, specifically, to recognize mixed interpretations, or to avoid taking literally an interpretation which is but a wording of experimental poetry: in short, it enables us to go beyond impression and opinion and subsequently to arrive at agreement. Why, finally, do I value agreement reached through clear argumentation? Because I share the belief of many that there is “trouble” in this world, and that part of this trouble is due to confusion in locating and appraising intellectual phenomena (including confusion in language)—and that what hope there is of overcoming this confusion lies in systematic questioning and in the continuous attempt to discover what we actually live by, not in covering up, glossing over, declaring sacred, or proclaiming sacred cow.

So much for one implication. Another, closely related, is the antici-



pation of some objections. The various objections to the general background of my interpretive schema just outlined cannot be dealt with here, for lack of time, space, and pertinence to the specific topic under discussion. But as regards the schema itself, both certain poets and certain scientists will object to it directly. Some poets will find me a snooper or ridicule me as they will any person who ventures to suggest that rational analysis can "get at" the "essence" of poetic production. If so, it ought to be emphasized that their attitude is an important datum for interpretation—an emphasis which illustrates the inescapability of sociology. Some scientists concerned with the interpretation of intellectual matters, that is, social scientists, will think I am making much theoretical noise about nothing—as if experimental poetry were important in a world of the atom bomb, power struggles, and other major questions; or they will shy away from the difficulties of extending sociological analysis to intellectual phenomena hitherto hardly exposed to it. If so, it ought to be emphasized that their attitude is not only likewise an important datum for interpreting *them* (and thus it, too, illustrates the inescapability of sociology, in this case the phenomenon of backfiring) but, what is more important in the present context (if we think of the exemplification and immanent-interpretation parts of the schema), such an attitude, if juxtaposed with the best of poetry, experimental or otherwise, appears as "naive" and one-sided as that of the poets mentioned above; it appears petty, frustrated, out-of-the-world (of poetry); in short, as compared with the swiftness, boldness, and depth of poetry (the best), science is challenged by the inescapability of poetry and art in general: a statement which I am not making for the sake of symmetrical argument, but with great sincerity and seriousness. Nor do I believe that in talking of the poets and scientists referred to I am envisaging straw men.

I am quite aware that the battery of interpretations suggested is exceedingly difficult to put into practice, is beset with pitfalls, and asks for abundant labors. Also, I know of no demonstration of it which approximates anywhere nearly the thoroughness which this schema calls for. In other words, it is largely new, though mainly so in its formulation. It should furthermore be noted that for most purposes it need not be fully implemented since most purposes are partial and hence call for selective, rather than "complete," interpretations. Examples of such partial interpretations, both immanent and transcendent, are of course numerous; to mention a recent transcendent interpretation, Saul Rosenzweig's analysis of Henry James in terms of an accident in James's youth comes to mind. But as we think along the lines indicated, shortcuts will be found, that is, methods based on the ascertainment of uniformities, as has been true in the history of other disciplines. Finally, it should be emphasized that the interpretive schema proposed invites the experimentation with whatever methods of interpretation have been developed by literary criticism, philology, history,

sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology, as well as with any other methods which suggest themselves as heuristic tools for enhancing our understanding.

I am now abandoning the fourth mode—writing about how to deal with experimental poetry—to conclude with a few remarks, of an even more suggestive and sketchy character, which exemplify the second and third modes, that is, which contain elements of both immanent and transcendent interpretation of experimental poetry itself.

As poems of mine have been printed in *Experiment*, a magazine avowedly dedicated to experimental poetry, I suppose I am an experimental poet. I must add, however, that I do not know enough about poetry to be able always to distinguish between a poem and an experimental poem—yet perhaps enough to be uncertain as to whether such a distinction can always be made. Rather, it seems to me, “experimental poetry” is an attitude which does not unavoidably find recognizable expression in its (poetic) products. I do not know, either, whether this attitude, or its expression, will help to make the role of poetry as a cultural force or the poet as a social type more important in our culture and society than they are today and have been for a long time. But I am inclined to believe that the transcendent interpretation of the experimental poet as a type goes further in explaining his emergence and his characteristics than does mere—“unaided”—immanent interpretation. I would say that the experimental poet is a person disturbed and confused by certain aspects of our time; a person groping about—experimenting—where nothing is certain; seizing upon philosophies, poetries, trends, currents, fads, schools, forms, to make them, if he can, bases for (re) orientation. If this characterization is true even of only *some* experimental poets, there is the possibility, if not the hope, that experimental poetry will amount to more than did some intellectual curiosa of the twenties and thirties and forties; that it will have a constructive significance of sorts.

Experimental poetry belongs in the general historical situation which has been expressed and analyzed in innumerable books, beginning, perhaps, with Nietzsche or even Kierkegaard, and certainly not ending with the diagnoses of Professors Mannheim, Drucker, Sorokin, Burnham, and many others. There is refreshing hope in the very fact that these diagnoses, whether the experimental poet is aware of them or not and however much they sharpen and enrich his sensitivity, cannot relieve him of his groping: as a type, he is, if more confused, more profound and more ambitious than the prose writers, and not the philosophers and social scientists only. (The inescapability of poetry.) To him, as Christian Morgenstern similarly remarked to himself, the gesture (at the same time desultory, exuberant, and humble) is the hoped-for source of certainties and thus, eventually, of a culture as he saps and synthesizes it out of his habitat.

The incidental mention of some names with which the experimental poet, since he lives at a given historical moment, has to count in one way or another, lends itself to show that the often heard or implied contrast between poetic tradition and experimental poetry is untenable as an explanatory frame of reference. Tradition, including poetic tradition, is a historical given, but not in the sense of a homogeneous block which the experimental poet opposes or to which he adds, but in the sense of a storehouse of specific human experiences which he has and knows are at his disposal. Yet what he selects from among its contents is largely and in many different ways determined for him. (Hence the possibility of intra-poetic as well as of parts of socio-cultural interpretation.) Hazarding a hypothesis, I should say that symbolism, with its rediscovery of the symbolic aspects of the world and subsequent creation, routinization, and acceptance of a new attitude—poetic as well as diffused beyond poetry—is the most important forerunner of experimental poetry with its rediscovery of the “quest for certainty” and subsequent creation, routinization, and acceptance of what, for the most part, is yet to come. For there is an intensification of the quest for certainty (poetic, social, economic, political, international) from the *Gründerjahre*, when the yet pregnant tradition of symbolism was conceived, to our totalitarian or fascist or managerial epoch, in which “experimental poetry” received, at least, its tag.

## NOTES TOWARD A MARXIST CRITICISM

*Thomas McGrath*

IN RECENT YEARS left-wing writing has been lost in the horse latitudes. The changing social pressures and historical conditions which during the war years shifted our consciousness from national to foreign politics is one of the reasons for this. The class consciousness of the 'thirties was partially dissipated by the rising standards of living, full employment, and the necessity for unity against external fascism. The period of the 'thirties and the depression (which some had seen as a parallel to 1917 or at least to 1905, in Russia) turned out to be hardly more than a recapitulation of the Narodniki movement. The fact that the class struggles of the period did not reach their hoped-for fruition and that the tide of the working-class movement began to recede was reflected in literature by a reawakened interest in the problems of the individual in isolation or by themes which seemed to have little relationship to social conditions. Such a shift in literary interest was conditioned primarily by historical and social forces—which might be called “unconscious” forces—, and these were felt most strongly by those writers whose roots were in the middle class (or who were “declassed” in the sense that the middle-class intellectual most generally is or attempts

to be). This shift was most sharply revealed at the time of the fall of the Spanish Republic. This was the final quantitative change which sent a whole host of liberal writers away from social themes and away from the labor movement. Comparable results—to borrow another example from Russian history—followed the defeat of the 1905 revolution. Another example of similar phenomena is the attitude of many English Romantics to the last stages of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon.

A second reason for malfunctioning in the literary left is the result of incorrect or incomplete or dogmatic applications of Marxism to the theory of literary productivity. This second factor is perhaps the more important of the two, since, unlike the first case, the causes for failure cannot be assigned to blind historical processes, but are the result at least in part of the consciousness and reason, however faulty these latter processes may have been.

The great value of Marxism is that it sees literature not in isolation—as is the case with most bourgeois critics or historians—but as primarily a social product, the result of objective historical conditions which can be tagged and analyzed. The trap which many Marxists have dug for themselves is that they “forget” that, while a literary movement such as nineteenth-century English Romanticism is the product mainly of economic and political processes of that period, there are also many secondary causes which exist in the form of carry-overs, either in direct or modified form, of ideologies and attitudes common to earlier eras. This “intellectual lag” is apparent in society at any time to a greater or less degree—strongest in a period of social stability when the class struggle is dormant, and tending to disappear, at least for the attacking class, during periods of class strife and revolution. So strong is this tendency to carry over from the past out-moded traditions, institutions, and ideas, that Thorstein Veblen has said, perhaps with some exaggeration, that by the time an institution has been established, the situation which brought it into existence has already disappeared. And yet the Marxist critics go on forgetting that this condition is strongest precisely among writers (even excluding clerics and educators, who are the professional grave-tenders of ideas), partly because of writers’ class position—most of them being consciously or unconsciously representatives of the bourgeoisie—and partly because their function in society makes them citizens of the whole realm of ideas, past and present, and makes them, as it were, the continuator of literary traditions of earlier periods.

A third element which Marxists have generally neglected is the personal or psychological one. While masses react to a condition in ways which may be readily described or summed up in the form of a theory or social law, the fact remains that individuals do *not* all react alike and, while consciousness is a product of society, the literary man being first an intellectual is subject to conditioning from forces and times outside the immediate social

situation. Since he is generally of the bourgeoisie, these—what we might call ideological forces—act upon him more powerfully than they would upon a worker at the point of class struggle, where the latter has less room for maneuver and less chance of exposure to these cultural forces.

The failure to recognize these three powerful elements in the conditioning of any writer, and especially of the bourgeois liberal, has often resulted in a lopsided undialectical critical apparatus which weakens the appraisal of much of modern literature. Its effect is not only felt analytically, where this type of criticism—which constitutes nothing less than an attempt at “revision” of Marxist criteria—has cast false lights upon certain literary fields and figures. It has also had a deadening effect upon the writer himself where a narrow emphasis upon the relationship of the left-wing writer to the needs of the day-to-day struggle has often resulted in a subordination of his work to the most narrow aspects of that struggle and a consequent thinning out of the writer’s own experience. What happens here is what has happened to the whole concept of social consciousness.

The idea of social consciousness should be a valuable one for any writer, since it indicates a direction for him and a function for the writer generally; but the concept of social consciousness has with many of these revisionist critics been narrowed down to a point where it constitutes little more than political consciousness, and political consciousness only in a short-term or tactical sense at that. If we assume that the function of art is to communicate experience, we must also assume, if we are to consider the experience dialectically, that it will be composed of the most discrete, opposite, and conflicting elements, if it is to be whole. This is not to say that the experience will be a negative or “neutral” one in the sense that it is a unity wherein conflicts have reached the point of stasis, have “worn themselves out,” or have been cleverly stacked and balanced to avoid judgment and create the kind of fastidious irony which has been so fashionable in certain circles, of which John Crowe Ransom and the Southern post-Fugitive school may be taken as examples.<sup>1</sup> With the revolutionary writer, the experience is saved from this negative quality by class consciousness, which is, with this writer, a part of social consciousness which enriches his work and gives it direction. This class consciousness is certainly “political” as well, but it is political from the strategic, long-range point of view and

<sup>1</sup> This must not be taken as a judgment against the use of irony in poetry nor as a wholesale condemnation of the work of Ransom, Tate, and especially Robert Penn Warren. Actually irony (except “romantic irony” which is only sentimentalism with english on it) always acts to toughen and give inner structural power to writing. This does not define irony, which is so complex and has so many faces that to attempt to do so would require too much space. But it would seem that irony must not be regarded or used as a *device*. If it is so used it may strengthen a poem (especially its “texture” or “surface”) but, used thus, it imposes great limitations. It is within these limitations that much of Ransom’s work moves. Most of this work is minor (perhaps consciously so) in scope. But inside the imposed tolerances it is perfect.

has nothing in common with the extremely narrow and sectarian "politics" of those revisionists who would tailor every literary experience to the tactical demands of the moment.

On the question of social consciousness, taken at its broadest, it is worth pointing out that here left-wing writers have absolutely no monopoly. There are many cases of bourgeois or even reactionary writers who, as a result of the depth of their intelligence and the absolute honesty with which they wrote (that is to say, in other terms, as a result of things they were forced to see and understand because of their relationship to the social struggle), have managed to create works where social consciousness tremendously adds to and strengthens and gives clarity and depth to their creation. This was what caused the enormous admiration which, as is well known, Marx felt for Balzac, a man who was in no sense politically progressive, but whose politics may be taken as very nearly the opposite of those of Marx. The only way it is possible to understand Marx's great admiration for Balzac is, as Marx himself says, that Balzac's work presents such an honest and accurate picture of the impact of the totality of life at that period upon his characters. Another example is the admiration which Lenin felt for the great Russian writers of the nineteenth century, who he felt could not be compared to any writer of the time. What both of these examples indicate is that social consciousness, if it approaches being complete, is in itself a powerful, progressive, or even revolutionary thing. Coming into our own time it is worth pointing out that, by these criteria, a poem such as "The Wasteland" of T. S. Eliot, which has been the butt of attack by many so-called Marxist so-called critics, is among other things a very powerfully focused and expressed communication of the failure of bourgeois values in the present stage of society, and in this sense certainly has revolutionary implications. It represents a social consciousness which isolates and then relates some of the principal problems in values of the modern intellectual. It is, with all its echoes and allusions, a storehouse of literary tradition, although it must be admitted it is a storehouse where everything may not be completely in order. And, last of all, it is a very powerful communication of personal attitude and experience wherein is registered the impact of certain social conditions on the personality of the writer. What is true of Eliot is true in varying degrees of Proust, Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and others. In fact, we may take it almost as an axiom that a period of the break-up of accepted values of the bourgeoisie is certain to generate the most profound kind of social consciousness in this broad sense among bourgeois writers. While it is true that their class position often results in their turning backward in attitudes of negation or in the espousal of reactionary and fascist ideas, nevertheless this must be said of much of their writing, that it is a profound record of a society or a section of society, and in this sense, no matter what their class position or their subsequent

political orientations, these are works of art and will stand. And while shunning their negations and their retreats into obscurantism and fascism, the left-wing writer has much to learn from their methods: in enriching the content of his own writing and making his communication as complex, complete, and artistic. His own class consciousness will insure him against the reactionary attitudes of the bourgeois writer and enable him, in addition to his primary job of communication, to "make action urgent and its nature clear." This is what the left-wing writer must learn. And the revisionist critics must learn to let him alone.



## THE WILD DUCKS

*L. R. Lind*

IT WAS MORE FUN swimming around here under the cottonwoods in the little pool near the bend. He had left Jake and Heinie at the big hole where everybody came in the afternoon; they were busy trying out some tobacco they had brought along and had not missed him when he waded down the river. Now he was splashing across the ripples or catching hold of the cottonwood branches, lifting his thin naked body up to plunge it down again into the brownish water. The sun came through the pale green of the lowest limbs, covering the pool with patches of brilliant light.

After a while he grew tired of plunging up and down. Walking breast-high against the current, he let his feet drift out from the velvety mud and floated down to the bend. He did this three times, shutting his eyes against the noon glare, his head back, his feet fluttering a little. He reached out for a piece of wood as it drifted by and then turned over to swim, dog-fashion, to the opposite bank. Stretched out in the shallows among the straggling cress, he examined the white stick in his hand and could just make out the faded red letters on it: "Walker's Whiskey."

Suddenly he heard them. With a high shrill little "quack, quack," two white ducklings swam side by side around the bend, paddling fast not more than twenty feet away from him, like two tiny sailboats in a race. He thrust his toes into the gravel near the bank and stood up, staring at them. In the middle of the pool, they saw him and, with a ridiculous chatter of fright, veered to the other side of the stream, looking sideways out of their buttony bright eyes beneath pink lids until they scrabbled about under the bending branches and were half hidden from his sight.

He did not yet begin to swim toward them but tried to see what

they were doing there. They were the first ducks he had ever seen on the river. The hell-divers were common enough; now and then the older boys, who swam faster, would try to catch one before it disappeared, to come up again, a long way off, in the big hole where the diving board stuck out under the huge poplar. No one ever caught hell-divers; they were too smart, they played the game too well, and seemed to get as much fun out of it as the boys did. They never stayed around long if there were many swimmers; they soon went down out of sight past Larson's farm house. They weren't much good anyway; Bill Turner had shot one once with his twenty-gauge, but it was tough and stringy and smelled of fish. Bill threw it away. The Kishwaukee was no place for hunting, and the game warden might have made it hard for Bill if he ever found out about it.

But ducks—here was something worth watching and, maybe, catching. Cautiously, he dropped the piece of wood and let it float down. Then, wading slowly, he stuck his head into the water as far as he could and began to swim noiselessly across the river. About five yards now and he would be able to touch them. He had almost reached the shade of the outermost branches when they saw him coming and, flapping their miniature wings, rose a little out of the water and paddled frantically upstream at an angle. Far out of reach, they began to move around in a circle, watching him and gabbling excitedly to each other. Probably they were calling the mother duck; he looked down to the bend, but there was nothing moving in the ripples where the river swung round and was lost to view.

Now he swam slowly up toward the ducks; all they did was to swim higher and edge in toward the weeds among the lily pads where the cows came down from the pasture and left great round holes in the mud at the edge. He stopped in disappointment; this was not the way to catch them. He wondered whose they were, whether old man Larson had ducks in his yard. He had never got close enough to find out; Larson was always chasing the kids away from this part of the river, until they gave him up as a cranky old fool and kept to the big swimming hole upstream. Someone said he had taken a shot at one fellow who climbed up on the bank and ran up and down, bare naked, right where Mrs. Larson could see him as she fed the chickens. That was taking a big chance, just for a little fun; nobody tried it again.

Maybe they were wild; they acted wild, at least. But wild ducks weren't white; mostly brown speckled or blue and purple and green around the neck and head. Yet, how did he know? Some of them

might be white and probably these two had dropped behind from a flock that had passed over early that fall. They were too little to fly far; perhaps the rest had left them and flown on southward. The hunters on the Rock River killed them every year, he had heard; the last time he rode over to Kingston on Ed Franklin's grain wagon, the elevator man had talked a lot to Ed about duck-hunting.

He couldn't be sure, of course; ducks looked pretty much alike, white or speckled, tame or wild. He stood in the middle of the river and looked at them, thinking what Heinie and Jake would say if he caught them and showed them to the boys. They might think of him as more than just an eight-year-old kid who tagged along every time they wanted to go swimming, a kid who got sick and threw up when you gave him a clay pipe full of Bull Durham to smoke. "You'd better stick to corn silk, Bud," they said when he got white around the lips that day and had to lie down on the bank for an hour to get over being sick.

Then he began to plan how to catch them; a great resolve arose in him, tightening his small tanned face and widening his green eyes. A fellow would have to be quick; these ducks could move fast enough to get away. As he watched, the ducks paddled farther upstream and began to edge over to his side of the river again. In a flash, he saw his chance.

Up above the ducks the river grew narrow and rushed down with a great gurgle of brown foam, right where he had taken Hank Warnecke's dare last summer and had ridden Hank's black pony across, the day of the Sunday School picnic, when all the kids came down to the river on hayracks. The boys had been disgusted because they had to wear swimming suits, since the girls came along too, shrieking and laughing in the shallow water. Most of the boys didn't have swimming suits and wore old pants or wornout overhalls; many of the girls had faded calico or gingham dresses they no longer wore to school. The scout master didn't let them throw any pop bottles in the river, though; everyone had to take his empty bottle back to Lon Hazeltine's grocery truck and put it in the wooden cases.

The ducks certainly couldn't swim up against the current there; it had been all Hank's pony could do to keep from being swept off his feet. In the deepest part he had to swim hard until he touched bottom again in the gravel on the other side. Below this narrow place the river spread out again in a quiet stretch; but it was still rather narrow and the banks were pretty high. The ducks had now got into this part

and were swimming lazily round and round, not so frightened now that he had stopped chasing them.

Wading fast, he cut over to the bank and climbed up the blue clay sides until he reached the pasture at the top. Stooping low, he ran up until he came to the bushes right above the ducks. Then, gathering his scrawny legs under him, he jumped down into the water just as he did, with a great splash, up at the big pool when the diving board was crowded with big boys and all the little kids had to hang around the edge for fear of being pushed under.

He landed between them and came up fast, blowing water and shaking the hair out of his eyes. He had the ducks cut off; they couldn't swim down past him and it was clear they couldn't make it against the rush of water above. Scrambling hard, he got the nearest one by the neck and dragged him along until he cornered the other under a boulder on the river's edge, where his little yellow webbed feet were making a game struggle to carry him up the slippery bank. He breathed hard, lying there in the shallow water, getting back his wind, a duck in each fist. After a few minutes, he got up and climbed the bank.

He did not want to show the ducks to anyone now. Clutching them to his wet ribs, he reached the spot where he had left his clothes and, taking a piece of string from his pants pocket, he tied their feet together, holding first one, then the other, between his knees. When he had finished, he pulled on his clothes and set out for town.

The ducks became quieter as soon as he hit the road; passing wagons frightened them a little but, after a weak flutter, they subsided, to stare around in a silly way. By the time he crossed the wooden bridge and started down the alley behind Main street, they were almost asleep.

He went down past Cowley's drug store; Pete Cowley was stacking some Peruna cases by the back door and didn't see him. At the rear of Larkin's pool hall he heard the click of balls and the thud of a cue; he did not stop here, at the richest hunting grounds in town for collectors of Sweet Caporal picture cards, tinfoil, and matchbox lids. He went past Downey's Emporium and Turner's grocery store; Bill Turner was just backing the truck up to the screen door with a load of watermelons. It would not be long before a small army of boys would gather to help him unload, and he felt a pang that he could not be there too. Bill always gave them a half dozen of the softest melons to break up and eat.

A sweet smell of wood and sawdust behind Lambert's furniture store and undertaking parlors made him think of the first dead man he

had ever seen, a line-man electrocuted on a high pole. He had lain in the coffin in the back room among wood shavings, bed springs, and broken chairs, while Harry Lambert walked up and down beside his work bench, whistling. He still dreamed, on bad nights, of that gray face fixed in waxen silence against the purple silk lining of the casket.

He started to run past the rear doors until he came to Henry Talbot's butcher shop. Here he turned into the yard where the rendering kettles and the chicken crates stood, smelling of feathers and rancid lard. Sometimes, after school, when Henry was rendering a pig, he would join the fellows standing around and wait for the crackling that Henry passed out to them. Once it had been his lucky day and he had seized the pig tail first, the prize of prizes, rich brown and curling, with a few stubby hairs sticking to the delicious skin. There was nothing quite as good to eat as a freshly roasted pig tail, unless it was the fried oyster plant that Martin Rohrbach, the junk dealer, would give him now and then when he dropped into Martin's untidy back yard. Martin was a bachelor but a good cook just the same, although his hands were always dirty with rust.

He went into the back room filled with meat cases; the ice-box door was half open and he could see Henry pulling down a hind quarter of veal from the hook. He came out and slammed it down on the block. Then, turning to shut the door, he saw the boy standing barefooted in the deep pine sawdust, clutching the ducks to the bosom of his faded blue shirt. He laughed and said, "What have you got there, Bud?"

"Wild ducks."

Henry picked up the cleaver from the slot where it hung and winked at Tom Horsfeld. Tom was his cousin, and between the two of them they ran the butcher shop.

"Tom, here's some wild ducks. What do you think of that, hey?"

Tom grunted and kept on scraping the other block, moving his quid of tobacco from side to side in his sunken mouth. Henry Talbot, with an elaborate professional gesture, pulled the quarter of veal closer and lifted the cleaver. Before he brought it down, he said, "Well, what are you going to do with them?"

"I'd like to sell them, please."

With a great whack, Henry swung the cleaver into the veal and left it sticking there. Without looking at the boy, he shifted his huge body backward a little. Then, grinning:

"Well, Tom, what do you say? Are we in the market for some wild ducks today?"

Tom scowled; he was never very enthusiastic about anything.

"Aw, I don't care what you do. We've got more poultry than we can get rid of by Sunday right now, back in the shed. Suit yourself."

With a slow step and another laugh which sounded as though he were making fun of someone to himself, Henry went over to the cash register under the big red meat chart and struck the "No Sale" key. He took out a twenty-five-cent piece and dropped it into Bud's hand.

"Here you are, kid. Don't never say I didn't give you nothing, even if you stole them ducks. They look pretty tame to me."

"I found them on the river. Honest, I know they're wild; I had a hard time catching them." Conviction, born from visions of all he could buy with two bits, strove amid uncertainty against Henry's blunt distrust.

He gripped the money and backed out into the yard, still hearing the butcher's loud laughter as he threw the ducks into a crate, shouting something unintelligible above the noise of the grinder where his cousin was making hamburger for the few late afternoon customers. And now that the ducks were gone, he felt a little lonely and uneasy, as though he had parted with something precious, something he would wake up in the night to grieve for. It was not such a fine adventure, after all, catching a couple of helpless little ducks on the river, with the warm feel of their feathers still upon his chest and the wild terror in their eyes to trouble him.

On the way home he pulled out his sling shot and popped a few times, without success, at some sparrows on the telephone wires. In his own yard at last, he got up into the big apple tree in the potato patch and pretended he was riding a horse through the Australian brush, like Stingaree in the serial every Thursday night, out on the big limb that just fitted his legs. That wasn't as much fun as it usually was; after a bit, he went into the house and started putting together the Meccano girders again from the pile on the floor behind the kitchen stove.

## THE NIGHTMARE

*Jean Byers*

**T**HE FEVER BURNED IN MY FACE and eyes and throat. It was hard to drive with my cold hands sweating on the wheel. I knew the trip would take only four hours, but the flat monotony of miles seemed endless. If I can just keep driving till I get home to Jessie, I kept thinking. Jessie will take care of me.

My muscles were cramped and aching when I finally saw the high, clipped hedges of my home. I left the car in the driveway and stumbled into the house. Jessie was in the big, cool kitchen cleaning shelves when I came in. She was standing on a chair, her long arms stretching to reach the deep back corners of the old-fashioned cupboard. She turned as the porch door slammed, bracing her tall, full figure against the shelves. I saw the familiar expression of alarm come into her blue eyes. She stepped down quickly, wiping her hands on her apron and smoothing the gray hair that escaped from the heavy knot on her neck.

There was no word of greeting, no comment on my long absence. Just her anxious "What's happened to you?" as she hurried across the room.

"I'm sick, Jessie," I said. "I've got to get to bed. Come up and help me."

Her natural acceptance of the responsibility was almost a physical thing. I could feel the burden of illness drop from me onto Jessie's strong shoulders as she followed me up the stairs.

"Your room's always ready," she said. "Go in there." She hesitated on the stairs. "Is your bag in the car?"

"I didn't bring one."

"That's all right." She came on up. "Your old things are always ready, too." She hurried ahead in the hall to open the bedroom door. As she helped me to undress, I seemed to lose my sense of time and the present; to lose all awareness of myself as a grown woman. I was Jessie's

lonely little girl again, in need of her familiar, quiet mothering. Her fingers were knotted now, but as gentle as they had been in my childhood when she had dressed me nightly in a white cotton gown, heard my prayers, and lifted me onto the high, hard bed.

The pillow was cool on my cheek, and I closed my eyes gratefully as Jessie hurried downstairs for her store of remedies.

I could not think of her as a servant, for as long as I could remember it had been like this. Home to Jessie for protection and sure, unquestioning kindness. To Jessie with bruises or colds or fears or grief. For her praise had I brought home the good marks in studies and deportment. Only to obey her had I tiptoed through this house as a little girl in order not to wake the thin, frail lady I called Mother. My father, silent, brooding, undemonstrative, had been as remote from me in childhood as he was now. It had even been Jessie's task, not Father's, to tell me of death. Mother, she had said quietly, was no longer in the big east bedroom. She had gone to be with God.

I remember receiving the news calmly, puzzling only over the being "with God," but feeling no sorrow at the loss of a strange, invalid mother I had never known.

"May I play in the house now?" I had asked Jessie then. "May I make noise with my shoes?"

"Not yet," she had answered. "It wouldn't be right yet. Your father's going away for a while soon. Wait till your father goes away."

Always she had decided what was right, where I might go, what dress I should wear. No, she was not a servant. She was something indefinable to me; sturdy, quiet Jessie who tirelessly cooked or washed or cleaned the big, old-fashioned house, and who gave me, through a stern, restrained affection, the only security I knew.

The afternoon's brief nap dulled the throbbing in my head. I could smile to myself that night as I finished the spare meal Jessie had carefully arranged on the tray. I had known so exactly what she would bring. Beef broth, a soft-boiled egg, toast, and the glass of wine, half port, half hot water, that was the unmistakable mark of her cure. I felt time slipping back again. It was hard to realize that eleven years had passed since I had lain sick with fever and headache and cold in this same room. Not one detail of the room had been changed. There was the patchwork quilt, done with Jessie's fine stitches, folded neatly across the foot of the dark, polished bed; the white linen scarf with its plain, embroidered monogram and tatted edge on the rosewood dresser; the little green desk I had painted in high school; the books lining



the wall between the closet door and the long casement windows. There were the same smells, barely perceptible through my cold. Lavender that Jessie kept among my old nightgowns in the bureau drawers, the thick oiliness of coal oil and lard, and the rubbing alcohol, faintly sweet, on my body. Even the sound that had broken my afternoon's sleep had been a familiar one. Old Charlie had come to garden and mow the lawns. Every Monday and Thursday, as long as I could remember, the sound of Charlie dragging a hose or a rake across the gravel paths had drifted up into my room, and on warm days would come the sound of the mower and the sweet, fresh smell of the cut grass. Only Jessie's appearance made me conscious of the years. The lines were deepening around her blue eyes; her tall figure was thicker, not quite so graceful as it had been.

"Are you all through?" she asked when she came in for the tray.

"Yes, thank you, Jessie," I answered. "It's nice having you take care of me again."

"You shouldn't live alone," she said. "It's not right, you living in the city all alone."

"I couldn't stay here," I said, smiling at her familiar complaint. "I'd soon let you do all my thinking for me. By the way," I asked suddenly, "where's Father?"

She picked a few crumbs from the white tray cloth and put them in a dish. "At the ranch," she answered. "He's seldom here since you left. He always brings the foreman with him when he comes."

"He was seldom here before I left," I replied. "I don't see why he keeps this big old place."

She made no comment as she placed the tray carefully on the bureau and came to smooth the pillows.

"Remember the last time I was sick in this room?" I asked. "Eleven years ago."

"Eleven years?" She hesitated a few seconds as she spread the patchwork quilt over the bed. "It doesn't seem that long."

"You make time stand still in this room, Jessie. Everything's precisely as it was then."

"I like to keep things as they always were," she said. She turned to pull the faded cretonne-curtains over the windows, her fingers catching them easily near the rods.

"I feel as if I must have dreamed the years between," I said drowsily, watching the precision of her gestures. "I'm fifteen again tonight." She gave me one of her rare, faint smiles.

"I wish you were," she said.

"You shouldn't, Jessie," I protested. "Think of the trouble I was to you then. Remember the nightmare I had?" There was a pause while she refilled my water glass from the pitcher on the bureau.

"No," she answered at last. "I don't remember you having nightmares."

"I had one then," I assured her. "I can still remember the horrible fear I felt when you came in with my tray in the morning. I forget the details, though. You probably explained it away as calmly as you did all my other troubles."

"I don't remember it," she repeated as she picked up the tray. She looked at me critically. "Will you be all right now?"

"Quite all right, thanks."

"Shall I turn off the light?"

"No, I may read a while."

"I think you should sleep. You shouldn't read so much. A good sleep will break that fever." She turned off the light as I knew she would. "Sleep now," she said, and closed the door softly.

The hot broth and wine had made me drowsy. Jessie was right, of course. I should sleep. Reading would hurt my eyes. How easy it was to let her decide things again. She had probably said the same things to me before. Eleven years before. I closed my eyes. How comfortable to lose those years for a little while. Could I always be fifteen here in this room? If Father kept the house, and Jessie kept things as they always were . . . . I dozed.

How long I was asleep I do not know. I think it must have been an hour or more, perhaps, but I'll never be quite sure. I only know that I found myself sitting upright, terrified, fighting the impulse to go out into the hall to discover the meaning of loud voices in our quiet, unemotional house. I clutched the bedclothes around me in instinctive obedience to Jessie's warning. If I took more cold I could not be in the high school play. And I must stay in bed. Father did not like my being ill. I must sleep to break the fever. I sat there trembling, fearing to move but unable to shout out those strange, harsh sounds.

Surely that was my father's voice, loud and angry in the hall.

"I'll remarry when I please and whom I please."

"But Calvin—" That was Jessie! Strange, her calling my father Calvin.

"And if Helen will have me, she's the one I'll marry."

"She's too much younger than you, Calvin." That name again.

"It would never work." Jessie's voice was clear and firm, but there was a note of hysteria in it I did not know.

"She'll be a companion for Elizabeth, Jessie. The girl needs a companion at fifteen. She's alone too much."

"I think I take care of her very well. No one knows her as I do. No one could—" The sound of crying stopped the rest of the sentence. I had never heard Jessie cry before. I hated hearing her deep, dry sobs in the darkness.

"Now stop it, Jess!" How rough my father's voice sounded. "You'll always take care of her. For God's sake, don't cry!"

"But—you'll not marry that woman?"

"She's just what I need, I tell you!" The words were swift and impatient. "I need someone young to give me life again."

"She's not the right one for you! She's not the one!" A little louder now, her voice rising.

Then Father's question with the cruel, cutting edge to it. "And whom do you have in mind, may I ask?" Jessie's wordless sobs then, and a long silence. "Never, Jess." A harsh finality in Father's voice. "And that's the end of it." A pause. "You'll stay on, of course, as housekeeper."

Some mumbled words from Jessie and a stifling of the sobs. Then her voice, high and a little shrill. "If you marry that woman, Calvin, I—I'll tell the girl. I'll tell her exactly how her mother died. She'll hate you, Calvin. Your daughter will hate you!"

The sharp slap of a hand against flesh, and Jessie's sudden gasping cry. I remained staring toward the sounds, breathing hard to fight this choking wave of fear.

Then finally my father's voice, hard and bitter and hopeless. "It wouldn't work in the long run, Jess. She'd hate us both, you know. Now go to bed. You'll wake her if you stand here crying."

Footsteps in the hall. The closing of doors. Then the long silence in the dark again, the quiet dark with its sickroom smells, and the restless, troubled turning, and then sleep. . . .

I was not awake when Jessie brought my tray in the morning. The sound of the door made me open my eyes.

"Jessie!" I cried, half lifting myself from the pillow. I felt an overwhelming desire to cling to her tightly for safety and protection. She put the tray down quickly on the bureau.

"What's the matter, dear?" she asked, her blue eyes wide and frightened on my face.

I could only stare at her, startled to see her hair gray, lines about her eyes and mouth, her tall figure heavy and thick at the waist.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked again, and put her hand gently on my brow. The cool touch of those knotted fingers cleared my head, and I felt the years rush back into their even line. I lay down again and closed my eyes.

"It's nothing, Jessie," I said slowly. "I'm really much better this morning. It's just that I didn't sleep very well. I had a nigh—I had a sort of—bad dream. Get me a bowl of cold water, will you, please?"

She brought the water and dipped a cloth into it. "It's nothing," I repeated, pressing the cloth on my forehead. "I'm all right now." I looked up and found her studying my face intently. She bent over then to smooth the pillows and prop them up behind me.

"I was thinking about Father last night," I said as she put a jacket around my shoulders. "Is he well? He never writes, you know."

"Quite well, I think," she answered calmly. "He's always at the ranch."

"I'd like to see him," I said. There was silence while she placed the breakfast tray on my lap.

"You should try to," she answered, looking away. "Perhaps your father's lonely sometimes."

I stirred my coffee slowly. "Why is it Father never married?" I asked. "He was still fairly young when Mother died."

Jessie was busy for a minute adjusting the curtains. She turned. Her blue eyes were narrowed; perhaps the glare of the morning sun had been sudden in the darkened room. "I don't know," she answered quietly. "I suppose he never found the right one." She left the room without another word.

I drank the coffee, trying to think of Jessie as I had the day before. But every familiar image of her seemed to cast a kind of shapeless shadow I could not dispel.

She glanced quickly at the tray when she came into the room again. "You haven't eaten anything," she said. "You won't get well that way." I did not answer but kept my eyes on the untouched plates before me. I could feel her searching look on my face.

"Jessie," I said at last without looking up, "I think I'd like to stay in some other room while I'm here. Would you mind? I'd like to try that little guest room at the end of the hall. I've never slept there." I glanced up then, and for the first time caught her eyes shifting quickly from mine. She seemed to force herself to look directly at me.

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"I've just opened the windows and put fresh linen on the bed in there," she said. "The change might be good."

She took the tray and went out. I sat staring at the fine stitches in the patchwork quilt, and a long time passed before I remembered about going down to the other room.

## MY LITTLE GENIUS OF THE MALAYAN SPELL

*Dean Cadle*

**T**HE AMADOR DAGUIO you'll meet now in Leyte's crowded and dirty little capital of Tacloban is in most aspects the same boyish writer-teacher who, dressed in creased white ducks, used to deliver manuscripts in person to the editor of the *Philippines Magazine* in Manila or used to spend all night long in conversation with other Filipino writers.

He still believes in his original precept that nothing short of perfection in a written piece should be considered by the author a finished product. He still accuses himself of being a lazy writer, still desires to visit the States and perhaps spend a year at Columbia's school of journalism. His wife Estela still calls him "Amador" when she is peeved with him, and when all is well, "Darlin'" or "My Little Genius."

Daguio has had published more than two hundred compositions—stories, essays, and poems—and has many more unpublished ones that have in them the ingredients of good stories, but need revision. His writings, from the time he entered the University of the Philippines to his arrival in Tacloban in 1941, had appeared in practically every Filipino periodical, the best in the *Philippines Magazine*, the *Atlantic Monthly* of the Islands. He was represented nearly every month for several years in this magazine, sometimes with a poem or an essay in addition to a short story.

Immediately after Pearl Harbor he dashed off a patriotic play and presented it in Tacloban's Mercedes Theater one week before the Japanese reached the Island. During the occupation he wrote and presented two others, not quite so nationalistic, of course. He is now working on a series of four novels, his aim being to give a picture of typical Filipino life, people on the soil and in the cities, from the

Kalingas of Luzon to the Moros of Zamboanga, from the tyranny of Spanish days to the coming and going of the Japanese.

The financial reward for literary efforts in the Islands has never been much more than a handout. The most Daguo ever received for one story was fifteen pesos (\$7.50). But that fact only strengthens his repeated statement that "I write because to me there is nothing more important."

Quite often he is the philosopher, especially in his poetry. In "Man of Earth" he wrote,

Pliant is the bamboo;  
I am man of earth.  
They say that from the bamboo  
We had our first birth.

. . . . .  
I might have been the bamboo,  
But I will be a man.  
Bend me then, O Lord,  
Bend me if you can.

His writer friend, Manuel Arguilla, read the entire poem and exclaimed, "Jesus María! You are an atheist!"

Daguo once wrote to A. V. H. Hartendorp, editor of the *Philippines Magazine*: "I object to your acceptance of poems that merely describe places, making little pictures and nothing more. What I send you are sincere products of the mind, not the results of leisurely practice." In a biographical note in the magazine Hartendorp replied that much of Daguo's poetry, "though full of fine poetic spirit, is too obscure for the average reader."

"What he means, Darlin', is you just don't make sense," Estela teased him at the time.

And she made a similar statement recently when I remarked to Daguo that the atmosphere of several of his stories reminds me of Sherwood Anderson. He had read only a few of Anderson's stories; so I obtained copies of two collections for him. After Estela had read them she remarked to me, strictly for her husband's benefit, "You are right. He is like Anderson. I understand neither of them."

He is like Anderson in that he portrays most of his people as lonely beings who all their lives have hungered and searched for sympathy and recognition from others, only to receive added injury and a deeper sense of futility.

Much of the well-knit naturalness and conviction of "Hands" are

lacking in Daguió's "The Life of Cardo," but in it is the same depressing mood of a driven creature, and a sharp portrayal of a man's great capacity for kindness being masked by his physical features from those who know him. Cardo had a monstrous face and a twisted body; women ran when he smiled at them; men struck him when he came too close, but babies returned his smiles over their mothers' shoulders and reached their arms to him when he passed. It is the same mood, whether you find it in the shaded streets of a small Ohio town or among the nipa huts and bilimbing trees of an island barrio.

But, as it is with every person who writes, it can not be said Daguió writes in the manner of any one particular writer. Joseph Conrad, Daguió says, has influenced him as much as any one man, both because he, as Daguió has done, learned to write in a language other than his own and because Daguió considers "The Heart of Darkness" his favorite short story.

Some readers might find a resemblance to Jesse Stuart, especially when Daguió writes of his love for the soil and its people, as he wrote in "Goodbye to the City:"

I want to go back to my country where the mountains are green and strong with trees . . . , where children play and scream and laugh in the rain, painting their bodies with soft brown mud, chasing each other up and down hills, and knowing not of bitterness as yet. . . . I want to go back where there is a sleepy town and women go to the springs carrying clay jars on their heads, with the bloom of the mountain winds on their bronzed and wind-hardened cheeks, and white, unopened, orange blossoms in their knotted hair. I want to go back where the looks of the nubile girls are shy and not brazenly sexual, where the songs are plaintive and old-fashioned, where the beauty of a woman is like the beauty of a running stream. . . .

Perhaps the phrase "lyrical prose" describes his writing. He is considered a passionate follower of the stream-of-consciousness writing, more so than any other Filipino. It is this music he writes into his words, giving them a poetic rhythm, that has prompted Filipino editors and critics to call his stories good examples of the type Saroyan produces so well.

Daguió deals for the most part with the conflict that is in the soul of each of his characters, with the individual's fight against loneliness and obscurity, and with his desire to accomplish something worthwhile.

"To write Philippine literature," he has stated in an essay, "My Literary Credo," is "to interpret the confusion or bafflement that has been brought about by the cross-currents of many conflicting cul-



tures. . . ." To write a literature of escape would not be true to Filipino life. Therefore, most of his writing is philosophical and serious, and he says it is so "because I have thought inwardly of the truth of existence. . . . I have thought of life and death and love in relation to the longing of man for immortality, and therefore his seeming futility. But man against the universe is not futile. It is this courage to face the laws of nature and God and challenge them that makes him heroic. Literature should concern itself with heroes. The glorification of man is his own meaning and immortality."

Daguio does not often portray the customs and characteristics of his people as being different from those of any other people. There are numerous aspects peculiar only to the Islands that you at times wish he would paint with heavier strokes. There is the unique process of securing from the coconut palm the intoxicating drink *tuba*, the harvesting of rice and wheat on the terraced hillsides and in the broad valleys, the fishermen dragging in their nets at dawn, the desolation spread by typhoons, and similar incidents that he keeps in the background as nothing more than line drawings. His people are plain ones living in a narrow corner, whom he portrays with the philosophical universality of being not so much Filipinos as just human beings. Quite often you wish he would make them strictly Orientals.

I do not know what his rating among Filipino writers would be; no such poll has ever been taken. He has submitted only a few stories to the States; they were to the quality magazines, and on each story he received highly encouraging comments.

His fine short essay "Tea" was reprinted in *Fact Digest*, in the States, before the war. The partially historical and legendary story, "The Old Chief," in which Daguiio pictures, through the resignation speech of an aged barrio chief, the end of tribal government in favor of provincial administration, has been reprinted in *The Philippines, a Nation in the Making*, a literature text published in Manila and used in the third year of high school. He was represented by "The Woman Who Looked out of the Window" in *The Best Filipino Short Stories*, a collection of twenty-five stories selected from approximately six thousand that had been published in Philippine periodicals up to a short time before the war.

Mr. Hartendorp more than once wrote of him as "one of the Philippines' most distinguished writers in English."

Daguio himself is not at all modest about his ability to write, and, unlike most writers, harbors no inhibitions about discussing proposed

stories with his friends. Once he wrote Mr. Hartendorp: "You will not be surprised when you will receive from me things I can be really proud of. I feel a . . . great insistent urge . . . an aching promise of good in me, and I am sure . . . you will not be disappointed."

Yet he says, "I have never written anything I am satisfied with . . . . The longer I keep my manuscripts and the oftener I correct them and the better they become, the more loath I am of turning them loose . . . for fear they are not up to quality."

He says that "having fallen in love at eight, I began writing at the age of twelve." He writes more slowly now than during his college days. "When I was younger I wrote what I saw and felt. Now I write more of what I think, and I feel it is a much better type of writing."

The actual composition is torture for him. As well as possible he closes himself up from intruders and distracting noises and drowns himself in the struggle of linking words to form correlated thoughts and pictures. Sometimes a writing period continues for many hours, at least not ending until the story or a phase is finished. His entire being goes into the creation, apparently, for Estela says he perspires a lot while writing and she jokes that he has lost a pound for each story he has written.

One Sunday in Zamboanga he came to visit Estela and spent the entire day alone in the living room writing a story about a half-Spanish girl he knew in Manila. That is the incident from which dates her irony-tinged name for him of "My Little Genius."

Daguio says that for a few months after their marriage every time he began writing Estela would tiptoe up behind him, put her arms around his neck, and whisper, "Darlin'." He says, "Always when I wanted to write she wanted to make love."

She soon learned, though, that such an interruption quite often meant the ruin of what may have been a good poem. One evening on a boat to Manila, Estela entered their stateroom to find him writing. He had got an idea for a poem from *The Man Nobody Knows*, which he had just finished reading, and was writing the second verse on a flyleaf of the book. In response to Estela's plea he closed the book and went on deck with her to watch the moon rise. She still has the book, but the poem was never finished.

One extremely significant essay of his is "The Malayan Spell and the Creation of a Literature," published several years ago in the *Philippines Magazine*. "The Malayan Spell" is simply a phrase he created as a name for the inspiration in the native writers to portray in

words the people and the customs and the scenes in such a manner as to be truly representative of the Islands. He styled himself spokesman for, as well as to, the other writers and journalists. "The creation of a national literature is our responsibility," he wrote. The task is made more difficult by the fact that the Philippines is "a soft paradise" and that there is in the people "only a contentment, a languor, an attitude of calmness and resignation. . . . We need to acquire an understanding and passionate evaluation of our own racial and national life, deeply rooted in the mystery and glamour, even the somberness, of the past."

Daguio's solemn face goes sad when the conversation turns to the war and he talks to you about the destruction that has come to Manila and has swept away that phase of "The Malayan Spell" of the earlier days when he often walked in the twilight along the Pasig River and through the streets of the Old Walled City and when he often spent many hours of the warm tropical nights with his friends discussing politics and literature.

His writer friends, many of whom he studied with, form a long list. There are among them N. V. M. Gonzales; Sinai Hamada; José García Villa, now in New York City; Juan Cabrereros Laya, author of *His Native Soil*, the only Filipino novel in English; and Manuel Arguilla, "discovered in the States by *Story* with "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife."

It was with Arguilla that he and Estela stayed during their visits to Manila. One of Estela's favorite recollections of those days is of the time Mrs. Arguilla and she were awakened about five o'clock one Sunday morning by loud voices from the kitchen. Daguió and Arguilla had got up early to do some writing, and, because of a remark from Daguió, were arguing hotly over whether Shakespeare did or did not imply a certain something in one of his poems.

"But, Manuel, I know he means it! He plainly says so!"

"You are no poet! You only think you are!"

At that moment someone pounded on the apartment floor above and commanded in a drowsy voice, "Will you gentlemen please go to bed?"

"We just got up!" Daguió yelled.

"Then go back!"

Now that the war is over, it is indiscernible what turn Filipino writing will take, just what influence Daguió and the others will have on "The Malayan Spell." Daguió realizes that the process of "creation"

is far from ended. He and the other writers have already produced the *Winesburg* of the Islands. To come yet are their *Arrowsmith* and *Good Earth*. One may only guess who will produce them. I do not say Daguio will. However, he is one of the Islands' best writers and is capable of putting into words an important picture.

## HANGOVER

*Mark Neider*

A PARTY WAS BEING THROWN in the back room of the old "Silver Slipper" for Walter. There had been no objections to a testimonial for him when the word had spread through Hull 513 that he had received his 1A and notice to report for a physical. Other men had left for the armed services after a few drinks and a fast handshake, but Walter had that rare quality of being liked both by the boss and his fellow workers. He was modest, with a tendency to blush, and did not indulge in backbiting or chewing the boss's ear. He was so well liked that he could work opposite another shipfitter and do a bit more without being accused of trying to show that man up. Even the oldtimers in the yard admitted he was a good mechanic and were sorry to see him leave.

The shipyard crowd on hiring the room usually included the breakage deposit as expense because their rackets ended too often in broken furniture and heads. But that did not stop them from coming back over and over again, for there was an aura of the underworld about the room which was conducive to stags. Once known as the back room of the old "Second Street Athletic Club," it had turned legitimate with the advent of the liquor license. Now it was used for all occasions, the front of the club having miraculously sprouted into a night club. But during prohibition the room had been used as a refuge for petty racketeers fleeing justice from bordering states. The club had been highly touted among a select clientele for its clean cots, congenial company, hard liquor and its "sociable" card games. And for phenomenal fees, the room had been used for operations of an illegal nature. Rumor had it, and was still widely accepted by the underworld, that the whiskey-sodden tables prevented infections.

The men were finishing their meal and beginning to feel their drinks. Outside it was snowing, and the room was rapidly filling up

with cigarette smoke. No one cared to open the two windows looking out upon the alley; heat was unanimously preferred to fresh air. It was a luxury to feel heat distributed evenly over the body. All week, six days of it, you had to huddle over a wood fire and feel your face roast and your toes so icy cold you had to thrust your feet into the fire until your shoes curled; or you had to take turns singeing each other with a burner's torch; or you had to keep sitting on a toilet seat, pretending to do things you couldn't do, until you developed hemorrhoids . . . yes, it was pleasant just drinking and smoking and sitting.

The men had seated themselves at the table by trades. The shipfitters, as hosts of the party and "brains" of the ship, a great many of them having served apprenticeships, had grabbed the head of the table as their just due, with Mr. Brash, their boss and guiding spirit, presiding over the entire gathering like Henry VIII in his guzzling of beer and gorging of meat. As a concession to dignity and responsibility, and to Tex and Walter at his side, he made automatic mutterings of "excuse me" when the food repeated and the belching commenced. Sometimes when the food repeated like a semi-automatic he ignored all concessions.

Opposite each other, just below the shipfitters, sat the welders and burners, the welders fat and soft from their sedentary jobs, the burners pockmarked by burns from the backfiring of their torches. Then came, followed by all the lesser trades, the lanky carpenters and the heavy-set chippers. There were short carpenters and frail chippers, of course, but God help them if they lost time and had to resume lifting planks and using the air hammer once more. They were like violinists, becoming stiff without practice.

All were seated except Bill, Walter's helper, who was drunk already and dancing with the lone waitress. He was a short man, but provoked more fights when drunk than anyone else. He had a habit of standing on his toes and blowing a cloud of cigar smoke in your face, which was quite annoying, especially when you were drunk also; then he would square off with a leer on his face while watching his victim choke. If you were infuriated and foolish enough to give chase, his hand would dart out as fast as lightning for anything dangling between the legs. Then he would squeeze slowly and carefully. Usually he was pounced on by the other men and beaten to the ground. He was quite mild and jovial when sober.

After a few minutes, when Mr. Brash was satisfied that everyone had finished eating, he gave a signal for the music to cease. Bill came to a stop in the middle of his jig, bewilderedly looking about him, but

not letting go of the girl. Tex, at another signal from Mr. Brash, slowly got to his feet at the head of the table and raised both lanky arms high in the air for silence. His eyes were transfixed, for he had become greatly religious after his experiences of the last war. His thin body, swaying slightly above them in his black suit, made them all feel as if they were doing wrong. Tex stared ahead and would not begin. Someone whispered to Bill to take his seat, and his face was suddenly purple with anger as he muttered threats and tightened his grip around the girl's waist. He ran his blurry eyes around the horseshoe table, his chin cutting the air belligerently. They were trying to steal his girl. She was frightened as he spread his stocky legs and moved his fingers into a fist for the attack. Then she whispered into his ear and his face brightened, but he reluctantly removed his arm. "You'd better!" he threatened through stiff unbending lips as she retreated towards the kitchen. She nodded and waved her arm to him as he dropped into a chair.

Tex's mouth had begun to move in silent prayer. His eyes were closed. One by one the men followed Mr. Brash's example at the head of the table and bowed their heads. The back room was suddenly quiet except for the cook quarreling with the dishwasher in the kitchen about the dirty dishes in the sink. They seemed to be using megaphones. But abruptly they ceased, and in a moment they were standing in the doorway, peering about the room. Tex's resonant "Amen" broke the silence and was the signal for them to lift their eyes. He was smiling good-naturedly now as they raised their solemn heads.

"Mr. Brash,"—he nodded to the boss—"Fellow Workers,"—he raised his scrawny palms before him in a sweeping comic gesture to include them all—"and last but not least,"—he turned to the embarrassed young fellow on his right—"our honored guest, Walter." Then Tex paused and sipped water from a tumbler. He was not averse to mixing theatrics with religion for effect. His voice was softer and sadder as he continued. "You all know why we are gathered here, tonight—it is not solely for the purpose of drinking and filling our bellies—we are here to send our comrade off into battle. And that is why I thought it both fitting and appropriate in our moment of joy to offer a prayer to our Lord. May we not incur the wrath of God with our evil living and visit our sins upon this righteous boy on the eve of his departure. Amen."

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"Mr. Brash,"—he nodded to the boss—"Fellow Workers,"—he raised his scrawny palms before him in a sweeping comic gesture to include them all—"and last but not least,"—he turned to the embarrassed young fellow on his right—"our honored guest, Walter." Then Tex paused and sipped water from a tumbler. He was not averse to mixing theatrics with religion for effect. His voice was softer and sadder as he continued. "You all know why we are gathered here, tonight—it is not solely for the purpose of drinking and filling our bellies—we are here to send our comrade off into battle. And that is why I thought it both fitting and appropriate in our moment of joy to offer a prayer to our Lord. May we not incur the wrath of God with our evil living and visit our sins upon this righteous boy on the eve of his departure. Amen."

The men began to look uneasily about them as Tex sat down. There was an awkward pause as the silence spread, and everyone was

afraid to breach it by lifting a drink to his lips. Finally Mr. Brash cleared his throat audibly as a sign he intended to speak. He made an effort to rise by pressing his ten stubby fingers down upon the table top, but when he was not vaulted to his feet he gave it up as a bad job. His whiskey-belly seemed to be wedged beneath the table. He adjusted his horn-rimmed glasses upon his purplish nose and began to speak gruffly without turning his head, as if he had a stiff neck.

"You fellas know I don't go much in for speechmaking. My job is to build ships, good ships. All I gotta say is that in thirty years of shipbuilding, which has taken me to all parts of this man's earth, I've never run across a buncha better guys. That's all I gotta say. Except that sometimes you run across a young fella who's like a son to you, who you can teach all you know." He turned to Walter, "The fellas wanna show their appreciation for working with you. They've appointed me to give you this war bond."

Before Walter could get up, Tex was on his feet once more. His lean face was yellow and haggard and there was a troubled look in his eyes. "All of you probably know how I've tried to get back into the Navy—but they won't have me. I'd do any thing to get back in . . . or even have a son in the fight . . . but I guess I'll have to sit this one out. But before I joined up, my father, who served before me, gave me his ring for a keepsake"—and Tex twisted the heavy ring on his finger. "I'd like to pass this ring on to another Navy man, who will keep up the tradition, I'm sure. God bless him."

Walter got up on the verge of tears to accept the bond and ring. He brushed back his dark hair from his face with his hand and felt a wetness on his cheek. The men, deeply touched by Tex's speech and seeking relief from their emotions, broke out into applause and laughter at Walter's embarrassment.

"Let's drink to Walter!" Bill shouted, jumping up from his chair and waving his mug above his head. He began to sing, "For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow—"

And the men took up the song and quickly got to their feet, glasses in hand, and drank the boy's health in beer. Walter glanced hastily around the room at his good friends, his eyes smarting, his mouth quivering, and then back to his plate.

"Drink up, boy!" Bill shouted. "For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny!" And his eyes began to search the room belligerently, for was he not Walter's helper?

That night the party ended in its usual fashion. Mr. Brash drank

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until he had a heart attack and was taken home in Tex's car; and Bill, after an argument with a welder, was beaten to the ground and had to be put to bed by Walter, who was drunker than he had ever been in his life.

On a Thursday, a week after his pre-induction examination, Walter returned to work. His old badge and his tool checks were given back to him, but not until the doctor in the outer office examined his nose and pronounced him fit once more for shipyard work. It was near eleven before he again was an employee. The clerk looked up in surprise when Walter said he was going to take the rest of the day and the week off. He would start anew on Monday.

The restaurant across the street from the yard was empty of customers as Walter opened the door. It had not yet got over the onslaught of the breakfast crowd. Tables were out of line, chairs overturned, and the potbelly stove had lost its early morning redness. Several big black shipyard cats were sleeping on the sheet of tin in front of the stove. The owner poured a cup of coffee and salvaged a cruller for Walter from beneath the counter. His fat face was serious as he looked at the clock on the wall, and he blew air out of his mouth as he reckoned the time. "How do I do it, every day?" he muttered to himself.

Walter pushed aside some cups at a table and sat down. The sight of the heavy signet ring on his finger brought a frown to his dark face. Why the hell did he have to be rejected? And after they had thrown a party for him and got him drunk and shook hands all around. Walter gulped his coffee down, burning his tongue, and feeling the better for it.

Rejected. An old break, the doctor had said, an accident, perhaps?

No, he had bluffed, but he remembered with a sinking feeling the black and blue eyes and the strip of adhesive across the bridge of his nose of a year ago.

But, Doc, he had pleaded, accept me and I'll have it operated on before induction. The Army will get me anyway some day.

Sorry, son, and the doctor had shaken his head.

Walter left the restaurant and went out to catch a street car. He would go to a movie. Yes, that would help him forget that he had to go back to work on Monday. . . . It was too bad that his idea had not worked out. Then the fellows would never know that he had let them down. Of course, he would've always felt ashamed about the ring, but Tex need never have known that he had not gone into the Navy. . . .

They must have traced him through his social security number. The two Federal men had made him feel like a criminal when they had come over to his bench. They had flashed their badges and hustled him away in front of the whole machine shop. Then in the office they had been indignant and hurt as if he had offended them personally. Didn't he know he was essential to the shipyard? Where was his release? A bright gleam came to their eyes. . . . What was he—a draft dodger? Where was his draft card? Who did he think he was anyway, skipping around from job to job? There was a war on, bud, hadn't he heard?

Walter pulled his skull cap down over his ears as he stepped upon the deck. A group of men were huddled around a dying coke fire amidships. They sprung from the dull early morning in grotesque figures upon the bulkhead as a welder struck an arc. Walter quickly raised his head above the level of the flash. The sky flickered uncertainly as if a heat storm were brewing.

A short fellow in overalls broke from the group; it was Bill. Shading his eyes against the welding, he took the can of tools from Walter and glanced keenly into his face.

"Rejected," Walter muttered under his breath.

"No-o. . . . Too bad, kid."

"Hey, here's Walter!" someone said in surprise. "What are—what are you doing here?"

"Ah-h," Bill answered deprecatingly for the benefit of all, "they couldn't use him. Whatta you think of that?"

Walter glanced up and met Tex's eyes staring at him from the other side of the fire. Involuntarily their eyelids fluttered and their heads jerked away, but instantly they recovered sufficiently to nod to each other before dropping their eyes.

Three days passed before Walter decided to have a talk with Tex. He found him down in the hold putting up brackets under the Third Deck. Walter had to wait until the welder finished tacking up a bracket before getting Tex's attention.

"We-ll, it's about time you came down to visit me, stranger!" Tex said with a smile as soon as he climbed down from the scaffolding. He flicked a spark from his dungarees and then extended his hairy hand to Walter. They were both aware of the ring as they shook hands.

Walter mumbled something about being busy, and then he removed the ring from his finger and held it out to Tex. "I won't need it now," he said.

Tex hesitated but for a moment. It flashed through his mind that the fellows might censure him for taking the ring back after the great scene he had made in presenting it.

"No, son," Tex said in a deep voice, putting his arm on Walter's shoulder. "It's yours, lad."

But Tex went back to his brackets with a sour taste in his mouth and no heart for work. Hell, he had overplayed his hand. The ring was rightfully his—no one could deny that the boy was as free as a lark, and that he had given the ring away only because the boy was going into the Navy. To Walter it was just an ornament; to him it was his heritage. . . . And, besides, the boy had no right to the ring—he was not Navy.

Walter and Bill were making up a deck butt on the top deck when Tex came out of the hold. The sun was shining, but a strong shifting wind was sweeping the dirt and steel dust in whirlpools across the deck. Tex hunched his shoulders and shaded his eyes until he could get his goggles from his pocket, his dungarees flapping with a snapping noise against his legs. He leaned over the side of the boat until Bill went for an errand.

"Walter."

The boy glanced up from his squatting position and knew immediately from the look on Tex's face what was in his mind.

"I—I took into consideration what you said—"

Walter got up quickly, his face red as he avoided Tex's eyes. He moved out of earshot of the welder with Tex just behind him, his voice pleading with earnestness.

"And I've come to the conclusion—"

A wave of hatred swept over Walter. He was ashamed for Tex in his humiliation, and his nails bit into the palms of his hands. He began to walk rapidly.

Tex continued, increasing his stride. "—That you were right—" He stopped short as it came to him that Walter was trying to break from him. He watched him walk towards the gangplank. The boy flung a look backwards and then continued walking rapidly.

And then suddenly as an afterthought he snatched the ring from his finger and sent it skidding across the deck. "I don't want your damn ring either," he yelled into the wind. "You damn faker!"

## THANK YOU, I'M ALL RIGHT

*Lois Jacobsen*

MIRIAM RIPPET stood with her back to the people in the room. She leaned over the fat china punchbowl and dipped slowly the pink liquid from the bowl into her glass. Her cheeks felt swollen and almost sore with heat. Behind her the room hummed with polite and low-voiced arguments, and now and then the sound of a woman's voice, high and clear. The laughter came from the throat of Mrs. Harlow, that young woman so beautifully pale, who moved with grace like a panther, who spoke as though with her whole body, gently and quietly and faintly swaying, and who had sat to the left of Miriam at the table that evening.

Now as Miriam leaned over the punchbowl, she felt the laughter as though it were directed toward her stiff, self-conscious back. Over her poor warm cheeks another sheet of hot blood crept, and blotched her face. She rose nervously on tiptoe, pretending to be deeply absorbed in the contents of the bowl. Then she thought of how she looked to those behind her, so uselessly stretching over a table that sat below her waist. She dropped her heels quickly to the floor.

In truth, no one at all had taken the slightest notice of her except Mrs. Harlow's husband, who thought kindly, "Poor tortured girl. So healthy and normal to look at—why in the world does she put herself through all this? And what lovely legs she has, too." And then he'd turned away, feeling half guilty.

Miriam Rippet was a tall girl with a broad face and round cheeks. Her shoulders were narrow and rounded, her breasts small, her hips and stomach large and round. Her legs below the knees tapered gently down to small ankles under which sat large, long feet, not particularly ugly in themselves, but noticeable because they moved so heavily and self-consciously. When she walked, her feet were pointed out and slapped quite firmly on the ground with each step.

Now as she stared over the table trying vainly to prolong her absence from the center of the room, Mr. Harlow walked up, took from her hand the little silver dipper, and smiled at her gently.

"I'll have a drink too," he said.

Miriam raised her head and nodded and answered rather too loudly, "It's really very good, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Mr. Harlow looking into her warm face. "We were just talking about man's relation to the sun. Won't you come and help me out a little? They're all very much against me." He saw what large blue eyes the girl had. They seemed moist and pained. He took her arm, and quickly they walked back to the center of the room.

"He rescued me on purpose," thought Miriam gratefully. Then a warm shame went through her, for she knew he had been watching her. She looked out of the corner of her eyes at the neat Mr. Harlow—with his delicate paper hands, his fine strong face, perfectly pale and beautiful like his wife's, his high pale forehead that appeared never to have known pain and heat, his small lips that smiled so easily and rested so perfectly when closed, without twitchings or grimaces. Miriam leaned back in her chair. Now she was unnoticed and far away.

She heard the voices, softly, lightly, and the occasional laughter. She knew that if she should speak the room would be hers, and when she paused there would be a great silence until Mr. Harlow broke it gently. Then her cheeks would redden and she would be swept with a kind of anger and a passion, and speak more loudly and longer, her voice heavy with the groans of her very soul. They would all be shocked, disgusted, perhaps. Yes, the whole atmosphere would change. Miriam was aware of all this, and that it was in her power to cause all of them some flush of feeling, some unwanted warmth if only that of a super-delicate nausea. She kept quiet.

Miriam had been invited because she had written a book. At the beginning of the evening, they had turned toward her with interest and nods. They had asked questions that she answered vigorously, sometimes smilingly, but she could sense in a few minutes the distance between them. They looked at her bright naked eyes and her round cheeks, red with excitement as much as with health, and stepped back paces. One, two, three—one, two, three. She could hear the steps, actually. It was not so much the men as the women. The men stepped more softly, more kindly, perhaps.

For several minutes while at the dinner table, she had had a splendid time talking to the fat little artist at her right who laughed loudly.

They had made up a game of comparing the guests around the table to the various dishes of food. And when they came to call Mr. Harlow "Celery" and the fat little artist bit into a stalk, they both laughed until the tears rolled down their warm round cheeks, and they had to wipe them away with their napkins. They were watched with aghast expressions, or were ignored with frowns. After that Miriam knew she would have to stay close to the fat little man, but he was bound to go early, to catch a train, he said, and she was left alone.

Now she sat back and watched Mr. Harlow. She was grateful to him, yes, but she hated him. She wanted to call him Mr. Celery, but there was no one there to laugh her kind of laugh. She wondered if he would snap drily if bitten in two, and decided that he would indeed, as would all the others, except the fat little artist with the red face who had left early.

Miriam knew, as she hated them, she longed for them. A small, lovely girl with long straight golden hair was now standing up before them, doing a dance she had seen done in a club the night before. The party laughed and clapped, and the dancer sank gracefully to the heavily carpeted floor at their feet and turned her pretty face to theirs laughing and speechless. This was gaiety, this was life, simple, bright, happy, and golden. This was as she could never be. As she watched the fine movements of the girl dancing and heard the low, husky voice singing—not too suggestively, nor too blankly—she longed for that touch, that quality of the "just so," the feeling of the thumb pressed to the middle finger, little finger raised delicately. The precise, the balanced, the nice. The gay without drunkenness or ribaldry, the serious without groans or heavy-lidded eyes.

She longed to go home, to bed, to silence and darkness, to gain again her composure and dignity. There, alone, all things shaped up in her hands wonderfully. This moment became soft and sad, a small shrub, clinging so sadly, so tenaciously to a barren empty hillside.

She looked at them all. She liked to watch them, the way their voices sounded and their hands rested so gracefully on chair arms, or at their sides; the way they twisted their mouths and moved their eyes, in complete control of all their physical parts. Yet, she scorned them, and somehow gloried in what she was. She thought with disgust at the time she had spent bathing, powdering, dressing for them, of the excitement she had known only a few hours ago. Now she wanted to stand up and say in a quiet lie, "Excuse me, will you? I've really got to go. It's been a splendid evening." But she sat pressed against the back of the large



straight chair, waiting until they moved and stood up, so that she could slip out quietly among them.

"Well, my girl, you've not helped me much."

She turned at the low whispered voice and looked at Mr. Harlow. She felt more secure now, leaning back against the chair. She smiled and whispered politely, "They'd changed the subject before I had a chance."

"Just the same"—he patted her hand—"you were moral support."

She looked at his pale face, his flat grey eyes, and the fine dark brows. She liked him and she disliked him.

"Perhaps," he said, "you'll have dinner at our house some time. Mrs. Harlow and I would love to have you. Just you. It would be more pleasant that way. I don't care for large parties, myself." He patted her hand again, smiled, and looked away.

Miriam muttered, "Thank you," and looked at his quiet pale profile. "Mr. Celery," she said to herself, "Mr. Celery has the milk of human kindness in him. Well, well. Yes, I could come to your house for dinner. Not because I would want to particularly but because I could not help it. I am like the moth too, a fool who cannot stay away from the light when his home is darkness."

They left, and Miriam walked out softly and quickly as possible. There was a feeling of frost in the air. The others had cars or taxis waiting. Miriam turned the corner and walked toward the subway. The air bit into her skin, cleanly, strongly. The stars were cold and if you looked at them long enough they would probably freeze your eyeballs. There was a small wind, and not many people on the streets.

On the subway people sat in dull, slit-eyed silence staring at each other sightlessly. The subway jolted and jerked and swayed. The people sat and jolted, jerked, swayed. A little paper-boy slept on a seat, his head on a stack of Sunday papers. At the first stop, a tall man with only one arm staggered onto the car. Miriam watched him. His eyes were streaked with red and he swayed as he walked. The subway door shut just behind him. The rows of people slowly raised their eyes and stared, and the tall man stepped uncertainly toward a seat. The subway started with a jerk. He raised his arm wildly to grasp a strap, missed it, and staggered. He fell slowly, haltingly toward the floor of the car, then caught himself again and grabbed at the back of the seat upon which the little paper-boy was sleeping. His hand slipped again. The people sat in stiff rows watching, blankly, without fear or sympathy or malice. No one moved.

Miriam felt the blood rising to her face again. She leapt up and ran halfway down the car to the man. He had fallen on his side where the coat sleeve hung empty, and his head had struck loudly on the floor.

Shaking with anger, with shame, with loneliness, Miriam lifted her eyes and stared with loathing at the dull face of a passenger before her. "You foul ass!" she cried. Faces turned, eyelids fluttered with faint interest. She turned away from them. A young boy helped her now to lift the fallen man to a seat. She sat beside him then and whispered, "Are you all right?"

Lifting his head, the tall man looked at her, "Thank you, Miss," he said. "I'm all right."

She saw his eyes looking at her face, at her carefully gloved hands, at her neat fur-trimmed coat, and she knew that while he was grateful, he hated her. As she left him, her heart swelled. In that moment she longed to reach out her warm arms and gather in them the whole world that she could bind it with the benediction of her tears.

## A MAN AND HIS DOG

*Leon Wolff*

SIMPLE DREAMS dreamed the little dog under the piano, plotless, counterplotless and without direction, wistful as shreds of quiet fog on a road at night, simple as a red rubber ball.

Dreams of parboiled beef unfettered by cereal dreamed the little dog under the piano, nervous dreams of a dour shaggy enemy, dreams of parboiled meat, of furiously running through soft grass in a certain park to the edge of strange waters, poignant not vague but crystal-clear image of steak-bone, eager dreams of feline, elemental dream of favored tree and of making water, chilling dream of a man, thrilling dream of parboiled beef.

The little dog twitched and groaned and savored deeply of his dreams, but with the sound of the key in the lock slid swiftly into wakefulness and lay waiting motionless on his chest, head between his paws, and blinked slowly into the darkness.

The man entering the apartment knew without thinking that the dog would not come to meet him. The dog was now awake, he knew. He also knew that he was under the piano far in the corner afraid of him and (if such a thing were possible in such a dog) hating him with a simple and inflexible hatred.

He walked into the living room and snapped on a light. "Hello, Deke," he said. The dog stirred slightly. "Come on out, boy—I won't bite you." He waited a moment, then turned impatiently and went into the kitchen. He mixed himself a drink. He came back, sat down, and looked at the dog lying motionless in the shadow of the piano.

The dog had been alone many hours, was hungry, and needed badly to go outside. The man knew all this. After three years, the man knew all things at all times about this dog. He had bought him from a fashionable kennel at the age of four months, a mad and irresponsible character with an unoriginal impulsion toward slippers and piano legs. The little dog had matured quickly since then.

The man looked at him and drank his drink and considered pas-

sively the phenomenon of a dog with negative reactions toward his master. He loved this little dog on occasion, especially when feeling his liquor, but mostly despised him; when he thought of the dog at all, he did so confusedly and usually with irritation. But now, at this moment, he loved the dog, the damn apprehensive dog, the little soft damn scared dog in the shadow of the piano, well out of reach (they both knew) of anything but a golf club or a broom. He poured another drink and sat there breathing rather heavily, loving the little dog, and looking into the eyes that shone watchfully under the grand piano.

"Come here," he said. "Come here, Deke." The dog moved uneasily, awaiting developments, no longer aware of his hunger or the desire to go outside. "Come on, boy. Come on. Come on." The man spoke softly and insistently and tried to coax the dog out with neutral phrases of blandishment, avoiding certain words which he knew would engender an artificial and unfair temptation in the dog's mind. Patiently but unsuccessfully, wanting only to touch him, he tried to convince the dog that all was well.

"Jesus, what a pooch," he said finally, and set his drink down sharply on the table. "A hell of a rugged pooch you are, I must say," he said sarcastically. The little dog, on edge from the coaxing and the sudden crack of glass against wood, watched the man out of large, luminous eyes.

"Want your dinner?" the man said. This was one of the irresistible words. Now that the legal contest was over, and he had lost as usual, he used another. "Want to go outside?" The dog twitched and squirmed in a torture of desire and indecision that could have only one ending. "Dinner? Dinner? Outside?" the man repeated.

The little dog got up. Slowly and agonizedly he advanced toward the man, body shaped like a U and head to one side, a picture of ingratitude and embarrassment. When he reached the man's feet he collapsed utterly, looking up at him and causing his tail to flutter wildly with hope and fear. The man reached out to pet his head; as he did so, the dog shrank back, blinking spasmodically.

"Want your dinner?" the man said. "How about some dinner?" The dog came to his feet and looked into the man's eyes with silent intensity. "How about some dinner?" the man teased. "Dinner, Deke, dinner." The dog whined softly and stared at his master, trying to force him into action by the sheer chemistry of vision.

"What do you say we go outside, first?" the man said. "How about it, boy? What do you want—dinner or outside?"

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The little dog barked with excitement and desire. The man smiled. This was the way he liked the pooch—showing a little spirit, a little interest in life!

The dog rose on his hind legs and clawed the man's chest in a frenzy of anticipation. His rough pads scraped across the man's satin tie and produced dusty streaks on his white shirt.

"God *damn* it," the man breathed, and slapped the dog viciously across the muzzle. The dog spun once on the floor, and snarling in surprise and bitterness darted under the piano, into his shadowy corner. "You ignorant little jerk," the man said, getting up. "When will you learn to stop doing that?" He finished his drink. "Just for that you'll wait a while."

He thought for a moment, the dog now being forgotten, then snapped off the light and left the apartment. The door slammed.

The little dog, who had been trembling where he stood under the piano, now sank down on his stomach, head between his paws, and blinked slowly into the darkness. Soon he was dozing again and fitfully dreaming, fearfully of a man, yearningly of a tree and of making water, deliciously of meat, hopefully of a tree, quiveringly, desperately, half dream half not-dream of a certain tree in a certain park where many dogs passed the time of day in a very social and pleasant manner indeed.

## POETRY

### FOUR POEMS

#### DEPARTURE

In this quotidian of my setting out  
I fumble at the latch and hesitate  
Before my froward shadow on the step  
Blotting the sprawling sunlight from the stone.

There was a time when I would not have gone  
Beyond this door, when sorrow's tentacles  
Were strong as hemp. (And what grave image there  
Was hoist for matins in that darkened hall.)

Pressed by impedimenta-freighted brain  
Resilient tendons dared not stretch. Prostrate  
On polished timbers mummied time aroused  
No horror of the rodent hours. But now

Departure-chastened, desuetude propounds  
New formulae for taking leave. Upon  
The threshold I have paused to give entail  
And benediction to my termite heirs.

#### FOUL CONJUNCTION

O foul conjunction joining this bright soul  
With carrion-food for worms—no sacrament  
Hallowed this tainted marriage making whole  
Two ones; rather carnivorous sediment,  
Earth's belly (womb and tomb!) awaits return  
Of flesh and bone. As surely as that proud

Cloud-flaunting hill where lavic cones now burn  
 Sea-buried once shall feel the watery shroud  
 Once more, so body back to dust. But where  
 In daisied fields or fiery-dappled sky  
 Shall go the transient-and-eternal fair  
 Divorcéd one, unknown and knowing I,  
 (O lonely soul that will not be compost  
 For fecund earth!) the lost and homeless ghost?

## VANTAGE

He had seen travelogues depicting the  
 Picturesque villages, marvelled at quaint  
 Costumes, viewed an Oroscau panorama  
 Whose real and fabulous conjoin in paint.

And he had heard one, wiser than many,  
 Say, "It is a strange and terrible land;  
 Not for the half-hearted." But the frenzy  
 Of departure was in him. So he planned

A sojourn, mapping an itinerary  
 To include the latitudes of Whence and Why.  
 After that brash incredible journey  
 He stared at the implacable vast sky

As once might one of Cortez' baser men  
 Who came, mazed in cold greed of scrutiny,  
 And compromised with fear. Could he not then  
 Cull some truth from this gaudy pageantry—

Rash fables hatched to gull poor traveling  
 Fools? Or was truth adamant in mountains,  
 Trapped in rock-sealed strata with the deathling  
 Fossils of old Time? Such were the questions

Troubling him who looked beyond a landscape  
 Toward history's mirage. The mango's taste  
 Exotic on his tongue, a dancer's shape,  
 Maguey green-armored in a desert waste

Were gloss and comment, program-notes to read  
 Curiously after the event. But now,  
 Cogitating the swift allegoried  
 Show, he remembered that absolute bough

Whose fruit is brittle in mortality,  
 And found the play authentic: the villain  
 Genealogically sound; homely,  
 And familiar, as original sin.

#### LACUSTRINE THOUGHTS

##### I

It was there. And we had seen it. Beyond  
 The circling swan it rose, mammiform and  
 Opulent. No one could ever dream that  
 Green harbor . . . that lush-breasted promise of

Repose. Yet suddenly it was not. And  
 We saw only bits of inverted sky  
 Strewn in the fractured lake. And the swan swam  
 In proud orbits — wide as despair . . . as doom.

##### II

That day we did not see any islands.  
 There was nothing — only gray water and  
 A solitary swan. The sun laid down  
 Its gold highway for night to enter on.

But we, mazed in a sullen latitude,  
 Could not descry one patch of green, one brash  
 Intimation of islands burgeoning  
 Out of the fertile word. Lost . . . lost . . . betrayed

By what was and what would be—we heard earth's  
 Ancient anguish—Time's stale proleptic sigh.



III

Once more we watched the proud swan circumscribe  
Its solitary ambit round the lake;  
And heard the prowling winds descant on man  
And his sad genesis. "Begat in sin

And doomed . . . and doomed . . . and doomed . . ." The words recurred,  
Reverberated through brain and blood. Then  
My tree muttered—"Not only man . . . " Lakeward  
We looked again. And the lonely swan-swam.

IV

Lush and mammiform that island rose brash  
As the germinal word tongue-warm on that  
Glad lake.

Our thoughts coupling in green transit  
Found perilous conjunction on rathe waves;  
While under-arching all the sky, inverse  
And subterranean, girdled with sly  
Aulic lechery our laughing isle.

But

We—more sure of our meridian—passed  
By that bright illusion . . . passed straight to our  
Green island—our brashly-burgeoning *Now*.

DEANE MOWRER

AMELIA, 1904—

Daughter of a comfortable insurance executive  
In a medium midwestern city, she always felt  
At her back the cold breath of poverty.

Conway claimed her at the membership dance  
(Checking coats, slowly achieving college).  
He had her only three times, because her mother

Preferred a plastic clerk whom she did not,  
Eventually, marry. She was fond of Proust,  
And wrote in a small still hand like copper plate.

He married. Fifteen years later she suffered  
A superfluous change of life which wandered  
Now to her thigh, now her contracting bosom.

CAROL HALL

## TWO POEMS

### VOICE OF ODYSSEUS

The empty hides walk ghostly here,  
The flesh bellows within the flesh;  
The mind tauter than a leash  
Strains from the gods, pulls back in fear.

Stirring the sacred sin of dust  
Like cattle in corrals of sun  
We brand upon the self a tone  
That burns upon the hip of lust.

The churches mad within the head  
Swear vengeance for the sacred cow;  
We fear the sun will leave us now  
And go to shine among the dead.

### PAN

I met him in the month of May  
When I was sweet sixteen;  
I looked into his heart and saw  
A hunger curled and lean.

They said he drove about the town  
Hunting corners of the moon  
Before he took his fiddle down  
And began to tune  
The strings upon a look of grief.

And the velvet shoulder pad  
Trembled gentle as a leaf—  
It was like the joy he had.

Took a wife and left her cold,  
Colder to drink berry wine;  
Starved hungerly but never sold  
The strings and keys across his mind.

Once I took the music stand  
Placed it near the window  
Let him guide me with the hand  
That could draw hurt splendor  
From the gut and crooked bow,  
That could make a tone  
Tremble so a heart would crave  
His whiskey of the sun.

And he died of drink they say  
Left his wife so cold  
Weeping where she lay.

I have traveled far to find  
Nothing, nothing in my mind  
That can be as gold  
As the woven music spun  
Whirling from his drunken sun.

GLADYS HYDE

SONNET: PEACE

Along the actual streets the living rush,  
Their four dimensions hung on them like pride,  
While up the beaches of Salerno push  
Eternally the dead against the tide;  
While under meadowlands in Normandy  
And under rubble that was Stalingrad  
There sleeps not sound, there sleeps not restfully,  
The early slain, the dead, the shattered lad.

Oh you along the streets of living run—  
 Your profit freedom, but the price, their grave;  
 Your breath come freely, but their breathing done  
 That there shall never breathe another slave:  
 But hear them restless in their early tomb—  
 Your living thrust between them and their doom!

ALBERTINE FOX

## TWO POEMS

### THE SCHOLAR AND THE CHILD

A scholar studies the ocean's solemn text;  
 Two rivets span the preface of his mind  
 Linking the acetylene years of his intelligence  
 With the universe. Callipered tides move  
 On the mirrors of his ancient eyes.

Upon the beach a child, building a castle  
 In the sand, smiles and lifts his hands  
 In innocence before his eyes—then laughs.  
 The laughter bursts the crucible of the scholar's  
 Brain (formulas spill slowly from his hands) —  
 And the child's fabulous dream dissolves.

### REFLECTIONS ON AN OLD, OLD THEME

Death is our final exile from the sun,  
 Wherein is lost our brief inheritance of light;  
 Where all the dry, abortive legacies of noon  
 Fade from the desolate margins of our sight.  
 Death is our silent exodus from day,  
 Where lusterless and dull our eyes discard  
 The remnants of desire, the soul's decay.

WILSON C. DENHALTER

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TWO POEMS

NIGHT SONG

From reservoirs of silence  
The veils of evening come  
Upon imponderable winds  
To cover us, and some  
Will share kind sleep with other  
But most will toss alone,  
Night being gentle mother  
To no child not her own.

MORNING

This is the end of quiet  
When motors far away  
Begin a loud conspiracy  
To mechanize the day.

All day they will go roaring  
In our accustomed ears,  
Who lost the prize of silence  
In our own boisterous years.

And now what comes so rarely  
Is never ours to keep,  
In rigid mountains far from home  
Or on the edge of sleep.

J. S. MOODEY

TWO POEMS

SUMMER END

My thinking heart told less of what it knew  
Than what it saw,  
Summer gone, summer repeating,



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Is not important now. The Brandts, well-bred,  
Discuss Peron, do not expect  
Replies to mend a childhood toy.

JAMES HALL

VALEDICTION

I do not turn to lift my emptying arms—  
The ruin of a rose torn in despair  
Will sublimate to an enduring splendor  
The end of what we made a love affair.

That rose within the vase of stagnant water,  
Its shriveled petals falling in a shower,  
Is kept in memory of a vanished pleasure,  
Or chivalry toward the poor, dying flower.

Rejoice, then, that the red rose of our passion  
In cruel, razing violence has gone,  
Sparing us those sad, deciduous petals—  
The furtive glance at clock, the smothered yawn.

MARY RUTH FUNK

NEWS REEL

The mind is photo-flashed into the past:  
Upon the film a decade reappears  
And reenacts the roles that had been cast  
In the tenuous and the long-buried years.  
The time between is cancelled, and we seem  
To view a play that would be false, again—  
Now we behold the fallacy of dream,  
But happily we did not guess it then.

Here through the telescope of time, we see  
Our lives, like newsreels, running in reverse:  
We touch a lens, and by some sorcery

We watch the pantomime (ourselves) rehearse,  
Until the focus fails, the reels unwind,  
The dream projected fades against the mind.

MAE WINKLER GOODMAN

P O E M

The force of accident  
Shatters to cold excess  
Delight and pain alike:

The what we do not see,  
Or do not think to see,  
May bide its time, then strike,

And push us far beyond  
The hardly-captured bound  
That measure sets for us

Until by sleep or death  
We're hastened to forget  
Why we're meticulous.

JACKSON MAC LOW



## A REVIEW OF SOME CURRENT POETRY

- The Earth-Bound, 1924-1944*, by Janet Lewis. Aurora, N. Y.: The Wells College Press, 1946. \$3.50.
- Slow Music*, by Genevieve Taggard. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1946. \$2.00.
- The Bridge: Poems 1939-1945*, by Ruth Pitter. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946. \$1.50.
- Poems 1938-1945*, by Robert Graves. New York: Creative Age Press, 1946. \$2.00.
- Lord Weary's Castle*, by Robert Lowell. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946. \$2.50.
- The Burning Mountain*, by John Gould Fletcher. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946. \$2.75.
- Man and Shadow, an Allegory*, by Alfred Kreymborg. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946. \$5.00.
- A Man in the Divided Sea*, by Thomas Merton. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1946. \$2.50.
- XII Poems* by Francis Coleman Rosenberger. New York: Gotham Book Mart, 1946. \$1.00.
- Ultimatum for Man*, by Peggy Pond Church. Stanford University, Calif.: James Ladd Delkin, 1946. \$1.50.
- Sonnets to Orpheus; Duino Elegies*, by Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Jessie Lemont. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1945. \$4.00.
- A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry, English and American*, edited with an Introduction by Oscar Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. \$3.50.
- The Poetry Society of America Anthology*, Introduction by J. Donald Adams, edited by Amy Bonner, Melville Cane, Gwendolen Haste, Alfred Kreymborg, Leonora Speyer, A. M. Sullivan. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$3.50.
- Nothing Is a Wonderful Thing*, by Helen Wolfert. New York: Venture Press; Simon and Schuster, 1946. \$2.00.
- The Feudalist*, by Woodridge Spears. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$1.50.
- Release the Lark*, by John Black. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$2.00.
- The American Prometheus*, by Francis Blake. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$3.00.
- Against the Furious Men, Poems 1938-1945*, by James E. Warren, Jr. Emory University, Ga.: Banner Press, 1946. \$1.50.
- Borrowed Laughter*, by Syd Turner. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1945. \$2.00.
- An Oregon Interlude, a Narrative Poem*, by Anna Holm Pogue. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1946. \$2.00.
- Take It to the Hills, a Novel in Verse*, by Zella Varian Price. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1945. \$2.00.
- Poems of the Family Circle*, by James Peter Warbasse. New York: The Island Press, 1945. Price not indicated.
- Symphonic Poems*, by Salvatore Cutino. Published by the author, Los Angeles, 1946. Price not indicated.

Anyone who watches the poetry published in magazines and in anthologies will have identified Janet Lewis as one of our finest women poets. Publication of *The Earth-Bound* gives the opportunity of estimating her work of twenty years. There are thirty-six poems in a finely printed volume. The poems are of remarkably even quality, and that quality is extremely fine; yet the poems vary from the broad themes of "The Earth-Bound," "Country Burial," and "The Manger" to occasional poems addressed to a child, on presentation of a gift, and quatrains to friends. The sensibility which informs the poems is always alert, perceptive, and managed with a warm feeling and admirable judgment. The product is a minor poetry of the first order. "Country Burial," although possibly inferior to a half dozen of the other poems, is quoted because of its indicative method and because it struck me anew with the power of the ending:

After the words of the magnificence and doom,  
 After the vision of the splendor and the fear,  
 They go out slowly into the flowery meadow,  
 Carrying the casket, and lay it on the earth  
 By the grave's edge. The daisies bend and straighten  
 Under the trailing skirts, and serious faces  
 Look with faint relief, and briefly smile.  
 Into this earth the flesh and wood shall melt  
 And under these familiar common flowers  
 Flow through the earth they both have understood  
 By sight and touch and daily sustenance.  
 And this is comforting;  
 For heaven is a blinding radiance where  
 Leaves are no longer green, nor water wet,  
 Milk white, soot black, nor winter weather cold.  
 And the eyeless vision of the Almighty Face  
 Brings numbness to the untranslatable heart.

New books by two other women poets are considered next for useful comparisons and contrasts. Genevieve Taggard's *Slow Music* continues one of the more distinguished, and also one of the more quiet, careers among our women poets. This volume holds some disappointments: it is casual, as if Miss Taggard were not, here, doing all she has demonstrated she can do; and there is a little sense—one would hate to see it confirmed in later books—that she has given up on more ambitious work and settled into the casual, momentary vision, the poems which are almost starts or pieces of better poems which the author could write. The result is a volume which best shows one side of a versatile and capable talent, in this case some good poems of irony, whimsy, and occasional fine social comment.

Ruth Pitter has a deft but minor ability. Her themes and subjects are quite broad, varying from the occasional to the mystical. One admires the sensible, resourceful manner in which she works within a narrow range of feeling and technique; within a full book, a certain facility and an occasional lapse (for example, this line from "The Cygnet": "And loud within life undefeated answers") become a little appalling. Both her very good virtues and her limitations are illustrated by this stanza from "The Sparrow's Skull," a poem written on the fall of France:

Even so, dread God! even so, my Lord!  
 The fire is at my feet, and at my breast the sword,  
 And I must gather up my soul, and clap my wings, and flee  
 Into the heart of terror, to find myself in Thee.

In Robert Graves' new volume there is a considerable amount of poetry devoted to the casual, ironic situation such as delighted Hardy in his "Satires of Circumstance." Occasionally the interest goes beyond the ironic to the bitter and sensational, as in "To Lucia at Birth":

Outrageous company to be born into,  
 Lunatics of a shining age long dead . . .  
 Hark how they roar; but never turn your head.  
 Nothing will change them, let them not change you.

But the irony reaches the urbane, well-balanced level which we expect of Graves, and which makes him a significant poet in "Instructions to the Orphic Adept" and some other poems in this valuable volume.

*Lord Weary's Castle* contains seven poems from Robert Lowell's first book, *Land of Unlikeness*, plus well over thirty new poems. Lowell has moved rapidly and well in the two years since that volume. Gone is much of the strain, the image which becomes a "sport"; and we have a surer density of writing. Occasionally still there is a strained image (notice, in speaking to the Virgin Mary, "Your scorched, blue thunderbreasts of love," an image which surely can be explained in some sort of exegesis, but which won't be made to work as a line of poetry, I'm afraid, with any exegesis), an uneasy violence in communicating religious feeling (arising, I'm sure, not from the quality of the experience so much as from the method of tackling it in poetry), a bowing to fashionable style, and a common harkening, like Eliot, to other poets in style, image, and symbol (in this case, Yeats shows up strongly). But in this second book, I'm convinced that these are manners fairly close to the surface and that Lowell has a good chance to slough them off. In fact, the imitations have seemed to help him from the extremities of the first work. His talent is really fine, and when it moves directly on its subject, as in "Christmas Eve under Hooker's Statue" and other poems in the collection, it produces some beautiful lines and finely managed poems. Lowell has one of the significant talents among the younger poets, and a record of work and advance which would shame some of the others.

For some years I have been aware of a very fine interest John Gould Fletcher has taken in some of the younger and lesser-known poets. Knowing of this, and reading the first poem of *The Burning Mountain*, a poem entitled "Shadow on the Prairie," I looked forward to completing a volume in which Fletcher would show a broadening and a deepening of his poetry. What I expected, I think, was a certain abandonment of the surfaces Fletcher has customarily worked with in the past, an increased thematic ability, including an increased social awareness, and a tightened verse texture. In terms of these expectations, *The Burning Mountain* was mostly a disappointment. The tendency in all these directions is apparent in the volume, I am sure, but not successfully concluded. Poems showing these tendencies are side-by-side with the "symphonies" and similar poems which place an excessive sentiment upon place and surface; they are similar to those which provide

much of Fletcher's reputation in the past. Fletcher is a considerable poet, with virtues few but real, such as his awareness of oral qualities, a management of moods. If I am right in reading this new book, we are witnessing an effort which, if Fletcher can do it, will place him yet among the front rank of our modern poets.

At first look, Alfred Kreymborg's *Man and Shadow* is a book much too bulky for its apparently slight conception. Essentially, the pattern is that the poet walks through New York's Central Park for a day and puts down impressions, conversations, and thoughts evoked by meeting people of all qualities during the day. The slightness of conception is overcome in good taste, for Kreymborg makes the occasion a chance to get down a great deal about himself, his ideas, other people, covering an immense range. One wouldn't go around hailing it as a major poem and a masterpiece, but it makes a recommended book.

Thomas Merton's talent can be more adequately assessed now with the publication of *A Man in the Divided Sea*. The book contains the former *Thirty Poems* plus a larger number of new ones, many providing a developmental background for the latest work. Merton started with some methods from the objectivists, fortified with an engaging wit; to these were quickly welded a Symbolist sense of violence and sin beneath innocent-appearing surfaces:

But only where the swimmers float like alligators,  
And with their eyes as dark as creosote  
Scrutinize the murderous heat,  
Only there is anything heard:  
The thin, salt voice of violence,  
That whines, like a mosquito, in their simmering blood.

One presumes that this sense of lurking sin provided the basic motivation for Merton's conversion to catholicism and acceptance of monastic life. But when, after this change, Merton writes direct religious poems, most of the technical accomplishment he had achieved, minor but interesting, disappears, and no really adequate substitute is found. Merton has been hailed as the best Catholic poet in English since Francis Thompson. One hardly knows whether this is to be taken seriously, is an error in judgment, or is a reflection on the quality of Catholic religious verse. Surely it is an error in judgment; but Merton has ability and has a real chance to make it a good judgment.

Two attractive and good pamphlets are those of Coleman Rosenberger and Peggy Pond Church. Half of Rosenberger's *XII Poems* are concerned with the past of Virginia or with Thomas Jefferson. They are fine efforts in the assessment of history and of an important man in history. The other poems are more immediately topical, varying from the irony of "Notes for a Portrait" to "The Goats of Juan Fernandez: A Note on Survival." These also are done with care and taste. Peggy Pond Church has been impressed by the destructiveness of modern war and by the atomic bomb; her "ultimatum for man" is one of urgency: "Must I not pay / with my living breath?"; "Man . . . is master only of death, of death"; "Love is . . . the unequivocal ultimatum." Several of the thirty-four poems are movingly informed with this urgency. The only trouble is that, most of the poems being alike thematically, some suffer in comparison with the best and present a little too much of the same thing.

Jessie Lemont was the first sponsor of Rilke in English translation, and she continues to add to the number of Rilke's works she has made available. Newest of the books is one volume containing both the *Sonnets to Orpheus* and *Duino Elegies*. I am not a judge of the problems involved in translating Rilke, but inspecting the English poems which are a result lead me to think that Miss Lemont acquits herself well.

*A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry* is a better job of editing than Oscar Williams did with his *New Poets* volumes. I am inclined to think there are two main reasons for this, that it provided more space in which his taste could make itself felt, and that in covering older poets a body of critical work gave him leads and corrections for his own taste. It is remarkable indeed that he doesn't go outside that body of criticism to lead us to good work among the older poets who are not widely recognized. When Williams gets to the younger poets, he is as erratic as ever. Of the younger American poets, only John Berryman and Delmore Schwartz are substantially represented (Berryman with as many as, or more than, and Schwartz always with more than Thomas Hardy, Marianne Moore, E. A. Robinson, and Wallace Stevens), and many are not represented at all. On the other hand, heavy weighting goes to such English and Empire poets as Roy Fuller and John Manifold, among the youngest group. Oscar Williams is a special case, apparently, since he is represented by as many poems as William Carlos Williams, Robert Penn Warren, Yvor Winters, and Mark Van Doren all put together; and Gene Derwood has more than any of these and as many as Winters and Van Doren together. Others who get comparatively little representation are Louise Bogan and Hart Crane, besides the eight mentioned above; and some who get the largest representation are W. H. Auden, George Barker, E. E. Cummings, Robert Frost, Archibald MacLeish, and Dylan Thomas, besides those mentioned above.

This may seem little more than a parlor quibbling game. An editor must be allowed his taste, and of course any critic can find many poems or people whom he would want represented. Williams guards against this criticism in his introduction by saying that he has picked the poems which stirred him and not to give a critical selection of modern poetry; that is the reason he calls the book "a little treasury," although the publishers add "The best poems of the 20th century." One's retort is that Williams in that case convicts himself of inadequate taste or insufficient industry in coming in contact with much work he should know. In addition, the book is unfortunately arranged by topics rather than according to individuals, critical divisions, or chronology. In the end the book has a good place, for its only competitor is Louis Untermeyer's more inadequate anthologies; and the book is handsomely produced by Scribner's. However, the serious matter is that the faults of the editing keep this anthology from being the contemporary one the poets and the readers deserve. We are likely to await that book a long time, since the cost of producing such anthologies permits only one or two per decade.

The anthology of the Poetry Society of America is of interest mainly to members of the society, which is not broad enough in membership to represent modern American poetry with any completeness. Naturally the book suffers from inclusiveness; an organization of this sort has poor as well as good poets. However, it makes an interesting volume to pick over.

The remaining books, on a comparative basis, must occupy but a few sentences.

Helen Wolfert's *Nothing Is a Wonderful Thing* reports snatches from a day in the life of a young girl. At the local color level, the reports are frequently interesting; but the verse texture is slight and unimportant. Woodridge Spears I associate with Byron Herbert Reece and Howard Ramsden, two other young Southern poets who are working in the romantic method and doing good work. Spears, coming more recently, naturally sounds like an echo of the others; his work is inferior and needs to get its distinct voice, but he evidently has ability and may be able to manage it. Two other books from the Fine Editions Press are *Release the Lark*, by John Black, and *The American Prometheus*, by Francis Blake. Both are worthwhile volumes. Black is most interesting for an effort to get the boisterous language of the Whitman tradition into the sonnet and quatrain stanzas. The attitude behind the verse is humanistic, liberal, engaging, although the verse isn't particularly well realized. Blake's narrative is symbolic, with New England representing science and Mexico as an opposite; the attitudes are analogous to those of D. H. Lawrence, and the poem is decently executed. James E. Warren, Jr., writes quite a good poem in "Tarawa" and a few others; most of the time his verse is too vaguely and stiffly executed to be of any real interest. Syd Turner's verse is impressionistic, best when concerned with paradoxes in our culture. With the exception of a half dozen pieces which might have made an attractive little pamphlet, it is a question whether the book should have been published at all. Anna Holm Pogue's *An Oregon Interlude* is a tale of young Phil, later General, Sheridan, when he was stationed in Oregon. It is not done well. Zella Varian Price's novel in verse is concerned with the adjustment of the returned, crippled veteran. It is poorly written. Peter Warbasse presents a book of verse culled from a lifetime of writing poems for members of his family. The verses are homely, but only infrequently rise above that level, mainly in the poems addressed to the young children. Salvatore Cutino's *Symphonic Poems*, a pamphlet, lacks any of the textures we expect of poetry.

ALAN SWALLOW

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Suitors and Suppliants: the Little Nations at Versailles*, by Stephen Bonsal; introduction by Arthur Krock. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946. \$3.50.

In 1944 Mr. Bonsal produced a volume that won the Pulitzer Prize in history. It bore the title *Unfinished Business* and told the story of the drafting of the League Covenant. The material was drawn from the entries in the secret diary kept by Mr. Bonsal at the request of Colonel House. The present volume covers the same chronological span but deals with the role of the small nations at Paris—their hopes, demands, and personalities. It is no reflection on the captivating title of this book to suggest that it could have borne the same title as the earlier one.

Before 1914 the author had been a correspondent of global proportions—a hardy pioneer of what today is a very numerous species. He combined a reportorial capacity with linguistic ability. All that was wanting was the necessary stroke of good fortune to make these talents available where they would be most useful. A chance meeting in 1915 with Colonel House ripened into a friendship. In late 1918, while serving as a major in France, Bonsal was ordered to report to Colonel House, who had arrived in Paris to begin the peace negotiations. The Colonel's instructions were brief. "I think I can handle Lloyd George and the 'Tiger' (Clemenceau) without much help, but into your hands I commit all the mighty men of the rest of the world. . . . Most of them you knew and appraised before they were built up by war propaganda and nationalistic inflation. The war that has destroyed cities has puffed up some little men until they find their hats and their boots too small, much too small for them. I shall count on you to present them to me in their original proportions."

In contrast to the Big Ten the spokesmen—official, semi-official, and purely personal—for the "little people" were a variegated group. Understandably they were obsessed with the righteousness of the cause they represented. With minds unsullied by the subtleties of European diplomacy, they approached the Great Assizes (the author's phrase for the peace conference) in high hopes. It was Mr. Bonsal's task to hear, to alter, and to delete their representations. The result (and not the fault of the author) was more unfinished business, much of which is presently crowding the calendar of the peace makers as pending business.

Russians of all hues, Zionists of different complexions, Feisal and Lawrence, Kim of Korea, Bratianu, Father Hlinka and Paderewski were only the more prominent of the suppliants. From his secret diary the author has extracted the relevant entries concerning each and the cause for

which he pleaded. Such an arrangement has made for a more coherent presentation than would a strict chronological presentation.

Of particular interest because of their currency are the chapters on the Palestine problem as it shaped up more than a quarter of a century ago. The actors have changed but the plot is untouched. The pithy observations of Lawrence, admits Mr. Bonsal, contained more wisdom "than many volumes of Blue Books or White Papers." The main trouble, observed Lawrence, was easily identifiable: too many cooks. "From the beginning of the war and down to the present time (1919), the Intelligence section of the Indian government has been paying the Wahabite Emir (Ibn Saud) one thousand pounds a month to make war on King Hussein of Mecca, our ally; and at the same time our War Office has been paying Hussein about the same sum to harass the Wahabites. . . . There will be hell to pay, and that will continue until we get together and honor our wartime pledges. Mind you, I don't say we have deceived them intentionally, but we have reached the same result by not letting our right hand know what the left hand was doing."

This is a volume in which the principals speak fully and frankly. To their remarks the author has added his incisive delineations that appear in his diary. To the cold documentation of the peace conference literature this book adds both warmth and color. It belies the remarks of Joseph Chamberlain that "the day of small nations has passed away; the day of empires has come." Let us hope that today there is a Bonsal to record with equal candor the melancholy complaints of those knocking on the door of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

ALBERT C. F. WESTPHAL

*Inter-American Affairs 1944: an Annual Survey, No. 4*, edited by Arthur P. Whitaker. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945. \$3.00.

*Intellectual Trends in Latin America, Latin-American Studies, I*. Papers read at a conference sponsored by the Institute of Latin-American Studies of the University of Texas. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1945. No price indicated.

*Address Delivered before a Session of the Pan-American Round Table Annual Convention, April 25, 1944*, by Charles H. Stevens. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1945. No price indicated.

*Who's Who in Latin America*, by Ronald Hilton. Third Edition. *Part I: Mexico*. Stanford University, California; Chicago; London: Stanford University Press, The A. N. Marquis Company, Oxford University Press, 1946. \$2.50.

The fourth volume of *Inter-American Affairs* carries on an enterprise which already has become standard equipment to most persons seriously concerned with developments in Latin America. It also contains a brief chapter on Canada, but its main preoccupation is with the countries to the south. As in earlier editions, the editor has contributed the initial and closing chapters, dealing with political and diplomatic trends and events. He centers his treatment around the "Argentine muddle," military and political "upheavals," and the relationship between the Pan-American sys-



tem and the United Nations organization which began to emerge rather vaguely in the year covered by this volume.

Economic developments are now treated in three chapters, by as many authors. Of these, Sanford A. Mosk's discussion of "Main Currents of Economic Thought" is particularly timely and useful. Labor and Social Welfare and Cultural Relations are treated in separate sections. The rest of the volume consists of a highly selective list of references (books and articles, mostly in English), statistical tables, a list of chief executives and foreign ministers (already largely obsolete), lists of inter-American conferences held in 1944 and of bilateral commercial treaties and agreements negotiated by the Latin-American republics in 1944, and an inter-American chronology for 1944.

*Intellectual Trends in Latin America* consists of papers read at a conference held at the University of Texas on April 13 and 14, 1945. The twelve papers cover a wide range of subjects, including historiography, the various social sciences, philosophy, literature and the fine arts. Although most papers attempt to deal with Latin America as a whole, others concentrate on specific regions, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Central America. Some papers offer little more than a hasty review of some recent publications; others are serious analyses of representative trends during the past two or three generations. Fernando de los Rios contributes an interesting survey of "Intellectual Activities of Spanish Refugees in Latin America." It seems a pity that relatively few outstanding Latin-American scholars and artists have contributed to this conference. A great deal remains still to be done in bringing intellectuals from Latin and Anglo-America together for a systematic and creative interchange of their findings and organization of co-operation on specific projects.

Dr. Charles H. Stevens, Cultural Attaché of the United States Embassy in Mexico, describes in his address the objectives and methods of the cultural relations work designed to promote closer co-operation between scholars, teachers, artists and educational institutions in the two countries. Especially noteworthy is his emphasis on the fact that most Mexican educators and scholars speak English and his plea to United States educators and research workers to acquire a working knowledge of Spanish in the interest of a balanced and genuine inter-American relationship.

The first part of the revised and enlarged edition of *Who's Who in Latin America*, now published by Stanford University Press in co-operation with the publishers of *Who's Who in America*, marks a considerable improvement over the two earlier editions which were edited almost single-handed by the late Professor Percy Alvin Martin. Instead of one fat volume, the material is now scheduled to appear in seven comparatively slim volumes, according to the following geographic subdivisions: Mexico; Central America and Panama; Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela; Bolivia, Chile, and Peru; Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay; Brazil; and Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Haiti. This arrangement provides considerable additional space and has permitted the addition of many biographies. Foreigners residing in the respective Latin-American countries are included.

The delicate problem of who is worthy of inclusion in a work of this kind will probably never be decided to the satisfaction of all concerned. Issue could be taken with the editor in several cases, both in regard to names appearing and those left out. Certain improvements in editing would be desirable for the next edition. Thus, the word "director" is used instead of the English term "editor"; some titles are translated into English, others are given in the original. However, there can be no doubt as to the usefulness of this reference work in its present form.

RICHARD F. BEHRENDT

*The Masters and the Slaves: a Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, by Gilberto Freyre; translated from the Portuguese of the Fourth and Definitive Brazilian edition by Samuel Putnam. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946. \$7.50.

*Casa Grande & Senzala* (1933), here translated as *The Masters and the Slaves*, is considered by most Brazilian critics as one of the most significant books written in Brazil. The author, Gilberto de Mello Freyre, was born in Brazil, but received both his A.B. and M.A. degrees in the United States, the former from Baylor University and the latter from Columbia University where he did graduate work under Boas, Giddings, Seligman, and Carlton Hayes. Because of his study here in the United States, Mr. Freyre is able to make occasional valuable and interesting comparisons between life on the Brazilian plantation and that on our own Southern plantations.

*The Masters and the Slaves* is a rather detailed sociological study of Brazilian plantation life from its foundation until recent times. In it, Mr. Freyre discusses the importance of the three major races that contributed to the formation of modern Brazil—the Native, the Portuguese, and the Negro—, together with details of their daily life, food, sex habits, art, architecture, religion, and literature. Although some readers may feel that the book is not always thoroughly sound from a sociological point of view and that Mr. Freyre displays an undue interest in the sex habits of colonial and modern Brazil, *The Masters and the Slaves* remains, without doubt, the most important contribution to an understanding and an interpretation of Brazilian civilization. It is a "must" in the field of Brazilian studies.

An extensive glossary—including Brazilian, Portuguese, American Indian, and African Negro expressions, botanical and zoological terms—and a detailed index add to the usefulness of the book.

Mr. Putnam again proves himself to be a master at translation. This is an excellent and accurate rendition into English of a book that would be a challenge to any translator.

ALBERT R. LOPES

*Brazil: People and Institutions*, by T. Lynn Smith. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946. \$6.50.

The purpose of Professor T. Lynn Smith in his book, *Brazil: People and Institutions*, is "to organize, analyze, and interpret the materials on Brazilian demography and social institutions." It is largely a book on Bra-

zilian rural sociology, designed primarily for readers who already have some knowledge about Brazil, her history and her institutions. Such topics as cultural diversity, the people, levels and standards of living, relations of the people to the land, institutions (family, religious, educational, governmental), are thoroughly substantiated by generous excerpts from translations of earlier works (now very difficult to obtain), seventy-eight tables, twenty-nine figures, and a glossary. In spite of the somewhat technical scope of the book, there is a wealth of reference material (843 pages) for all interested in Brazil, whether from a political, economic, social, or literary point of view.

Although published in 1946, for all practical purposes the publication date should be 1943. The latter date is probably the date of the completion of the first draft of the book since events and material after that date have not been incorporated to any significant extent.

Professor Smith's book has been well received in Brazil, several very favorable reviews having appeared in Brazilian newspapers this past summer. Too, Professor Smith was granted an honorary degree from the University in Rio de Janeiro, in recognition of this publication.

ALBERT R. LOPES

*What the South Americans Think of Us*, by Carleton Beals, Herschel Brickell, Samuel Guy Inman, and Bryce Oliver. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1945. \$3.00.

This volume, presented under the often abused term "symposium," shows little evidence of that intelligent co-ordination and creative give-and-take among the participants which should be characteristic of a symposium. The division of the material by geographic areas rather than issues or problems has caused repetitions because of the many concerns which all Latin Americans have in common in relation to "the colossus of the North," different though they may be in many other respects.

From a practical point of view it is to be regretted that only South America was treated. The opinions of the peoples of Mexico, Cuba, and Panama, these peoples living as they do much more closely in the shadow of their big neighbor, could have been exposed with even more usefulness.

Carleton Beals contributes a chapter on Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, filled with his customary good intentions, shrill moral indignation, and sloppy reporting. He is duly indignant at the fact that the Bolivian tin ore mined by Patiño had to cross the Atlantic to be smelted in England, only to be carried back west to the United States; but at the same time he inveighs against "the scandalous and reckless farce of the tin refinery erected in Texas as a supposed wartime necessity"—without offering any explanation for this contradiction. He advocates United States participation in development projects but reports approvingly the Bolivians' opposition to "the determined efforts of the United States to change the whole face of their country" (p. 45).

Mr. Beals' habit of reporting South American complaints, apparently sympathizing with them, without, however, making it clear whether or to

what extent they are based on fact must be confusing to a reader not familiar with the subject.

Bryce Oliver, in a chapter distinguished by psychological understanding and balanced judgment, poses the pertinent question "why, in our official eagerness to make friends and influence the Latin Americans, we failed in Brazil, where our opportunity was the brightest" (p. 93). He points out that the greater familiarity among larger numbers of persons from both countries during the last war has not helped matters and that one of the greatest handicaps in this respect is "the distinctively [North] American preoccupation with race and color" (p. 94). There is, unfortunately, a great deal of truth in his remark that educational efforts to bring about a sympathetic understanding of the Latin American nations in this country "have managed only to create a certain amount of patronizing public good will toward the southern nations" (p. 123).

According to Oliver, even in Uruguay sympathies for the United States have diminished as a consequence of the grant of a large military base during the war. And he points to the deep-seated resentment of Uruguayans and Argentines alike at what they consider the unfair blocking of their meat exports to the United States.

Herschel Brickell, although ostensibly dealing with Venezuela and Colombia, has many things to say which are generally valid for all of Latin America, particularly in regard to the importance of a command of the languages of the area and of personal attitudes. He believes that the Russians with their approach to Latin America "have much to teach us, especially in the type of men who are sent out as diplomatic representatives of the Soviet Union" (p. 240).

Samuel Guy Inman sketches the conflict of interests between the traditional landowning gentry interested in the maintenance of the "colonial" economy and the new forces favoring industrialization and greater diversity of production in Argentina. In discussing the reasons for the almost habitually strained relations between the United States and Argentina, he tries to combat the impression that the beef question is the all-dominating issue and that it cannot be solved to the satisfaction of both parties. Inman deplores the tendency of the State Department to use reactionary Catholic elements in Argentina to foster good relations, thereby disappointing genuine friends of American democracy.

In discussing Chile, Dr. Inman asks: "How can we expect to have the same prestige as the English and the Germans when in all Chile there live fewer than two thousand of our citizens, while the English have so thoroughly identified themselves with the country and there are some seventy-five thousand Germans living in the republic?" (p. 345). However, his statement that "today they [the German colonists] completely dominate the land" in the southern provinces (p. 351) is open to doubt.

The most significant conclusion of the volume, unanimously pointed out by all contributors, is perhaps the failure of the official "good neighbor" efforts of the past years and the need for positive relations between the peoples, beyond the realm of diplomatic gatherings, lofty but ineffectual after-

dinner speeches, and commodity agreements favoring a few monopolists in the southern countries.

There seems to be equally general agreement that a United States policy which has the effect, as so often in the past, of upholding a corrupt and sterile *status quo* in Latin American countries—or elsewhere—, while benefiting unrepresentative cliques, will not promote truly constructive and lasting inter-American ties.

RICHARD F. BEHRENDT

*The Rest Is Silence*, by Érico Veríssimo; translated by L. C. Kaplan. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946. \$3.00.

*The Rest Is Silence* is a translation of the novel *O Resto É Silêncio*, written by Érico Veríssimo, an able young Brazilian novelist from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Veríssimo has been enjoying wide popularity in his native Brazil ever since his earlier novel, *Olhai os Lírios do Campo* (*Behold the Lilies of the Field*), became a Brazilian best seller.

Veríssimo owes his success to his unusual talent for depicting, in a most interesting manner, the minute details of everyday life in Pôrto Alegre, capital of Rio Grande do Sul. The streets, the buildings, the people, together with their daily toils and worries, do not belong exclusively, however, to Pôrto Alegre; they are a part of any cosmopolitan city.

*The Rest Is Silence* is another view of life in this southern Brazilian metropolis. An incident that occurred in the main square of Pôrto Alegre provides material for the central theme. While the author was making his way across the square, he chanced to look up just in time to see a young girl fall from one of the top floors of a downtown skyscraper. Veríssimo then proceeds to trace, for a period of two days, the effect of this accident (or suicide?) upon the lives of seven of the individuals who saw her fall: a retired public official, a business man, a novelist, an ex-deputy, a newsboy, an unemployed typographer, and the wife of a celebrated musician.

A Brazilian novelist of Veríssimo's stature should merit, it seems, a more accurate rendition than that given by Mr. Kaplan. The translator here, as in previous translations, shows, at times, a lack of acquaintance with even elementary Portuguese idioms and vocabulary.

ALBERT R. LOPES

*Music of Latin America*, by Nicolas Slonimsky. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945. \$3.50.

Although a great amount of informative material has been written in recent years about the geography, politics, and economics of South America, Central America, and the West Indies, in the domain of the arts, particularly of music, Latin America remains for most of us a virtually unknown land. To discover what is what and who is who in the music of Latin America, Nicolas Slonimsky, Russian-born conductor, composer, pianist, musicologist and critic, now living in Boston, visited the twenty republics to the south in the year 1941, giving lecture-recitals on modern music, collecting orchestral manuscripts for the Fleischer Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia, gathering biographical data on native composers,

both living and dead, and studying materials in folk music. Mr. Slonimsky has compiled and presented the results of this search in his volume *Music of Latin America*. In its comprehensive scope and detailed exposition, it is one of the most valuable books on the subject yet offered to United States readers.

Part one, entitled "Panorama of Latin-American Music," is a somewhat disconnected, though entertaining, array of incidents, observations, personalities, and anecdotes. From this all-inclusive landscape, however, the general framework of Latin-American musical history can be discerned. The Pre-Columbian culture contributed characteristic instruments (drums, panpipes, flutes, scratchers and shakers of all types), the pentatonic scale, and monotonous rhythmic patterns. The early centuries of conquest brought European influence: the Ecclesiastical music, the dance rhythms of the Iberian peninsula, the heptatonic scale, and in due course, as a result of slave traffic, the syncopated rhythms of the Negro. Further colonization by European settlers introduced the Italian opera and concert performances, which soon led to the rise of schools of native composers. The native musicians were at first exclusively European trained and imitated European styles; but gradually recognizing the wealth of their native folklore, they began to employ folk melodies and rhythms. It might be said that the divorce from Europe is not yet complete in view of the many European-born composers now residing in South America. These composers are, however, often the most ardent champions of folk sources for their creative work. There are not a few extremist innovators in the group of present-day composers, and many who may be classed as ultra-modernists. Furthermore, the great number of government sponsored orchestras which emphasize the performance of native composers' works, government operated music schools, and national contests for composers with ample rewards for the winners, present to this country an embarrassing but stimulating example of public pride in and enthusiasm for contemporary music by native composers.

The second part of Mr. Slonimsky's book discusses each of the republics in turn. A brief opening paragraph on the geography, population, and racial mixtures as they affect the music of the people is followed by a complete description and analysis of the country's musical resources and development. Each section concludes with a survey of all native and naturalized composers and writers on music topics including a concise biographical sketch and description of the works of each. Mr. Slonimsky's eligibility requirements for a composer's inclusion in this list are indeed liberal, however, and it is impossible even to guess the actual musical significance of much of the music mentioned.

Part three is a dictionary of Latin-American musicians, songs and dances, and musical instruments. Coupled with an excellent index, it makes the volume a handy guide for quick and easy reference.

The diversity of cultural and ethnological backgrounds of the several countries makes the synthesizing of the musical situation in Latin America a formidable task. Even though the author goes little beyond the point of presenting an informal encyclopedia and bibliography, we can be grateful

for the completeness and utility of the present volume. To our criticism that we feel he has said too little about the quality of the works collected in such enormous quantity, Mr. Slonimsky anticipates a defense in his reply to the accusation of "fishing with a net rather than a rod," voiced by the Guatemalan critic, José Castañeda. He writes (p. 2): "Here they are, all assembled between covers, and—who knows?—some of them may yet spawn significant caviar, which even the fastidious Castañeda will find stimulating."

WALTER KELLER

*Literary Currents in Hispanic America*, by Pedro Henríquez-Ureña. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1945. \$3.50.

When Charles Chauncey Stillman endowed the Charles Eliot Norton lectures in Harvard in 1925, he stipulated that the holder be chosen without limits of nationality from men of high distinction and preferably of international reputation. The man who occupied the post in 1940-41, Pedro Henríquez-Ureña, fulfilled those requirements to the highest degree. Besides having written many books and articles in his field, he is Professor of Spanish Literature and Philology in the University of Buenos Aires and the University of La Plata and the Director of the *Instituto de Filología* en Buenos Aires. After delivering the lectures, Dr. Henríquez-Ureña spent two and a half years rewriting them and preparing them for publication by the Harvard University Press under the title, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America*.

As its title indicates, the book is not an attempt at a complete literary history. Instead, its two hundred pages are devoted to tracing the lines followed by artists and writers in their efforts to express the developing life and social experiences of Spanish America's young nations. Dr. Henríquez-Ureña writes in a lucid prose that still bears, in spite of the rewriting to which it has been subjected, some of the rhythm and balance of the oratorical form it must originally have had in the lectures. Packed with information interestingly and clearly presented, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America* is one of the most readable books of its type recently produced. This fact doubles its value, in that it offers the layman a key to Hispanic-American psychology through an understanding of the artistic development that has recorded and helped to mold present-day modes of thought.

THELMA CAMPBELL

*Mexican Heritage*, photographs by Hoyningen-Huene. New York: J. J. Augustin, Publishers, 1946. \$7.50.

*The Inhabitants*, by Wright Morris. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. \$3.75.

These two books of photographs are, superficially at least, naturals for comparison. Both are by U. S. camera artists and both contain photographs expressly made for publication in book form. At first glance each work shows a similar preoccupation with architecture to the exclusion of human beings from the compositions, and a boldness of design which is singularly

striking. Each artist records a people through the use of buildings and landscape in which these people live. Closer inspection is therefore necessary to evaluate and compare the two works.

There are those who will feel that Hoyningen-Huene has the advantage of the more exotic Mexican scene and comes off better for it, while Wright Morris has the disadvantage of the prosaic U. S. scene and suffers from it. This reviewer prefers *Mexican Heritage* for deeper reasons. The matter lies in the comparative stature of the two artists. The backgrounds, training, and equipment of the two men differ, but it is their ways of seeing that make the real difference in their work.

In Hoyningen-Huene's book you will find, as Alfonso Reyes says in the short text, "photographs . . . unspoiled by the immediacy of captions . . . photographs (which) restore sight to the blind." Here without statistics or sociological or economic essays is a group of superior photographs, which does justice to Mexico, her people, and her moods. With *Mexican Heritage*, Hoyningen-Huene makes another contribution of significant freshness and deep perspicacity.

Mr. Morris' book, *The Inhabitants*, suffers from the use of what Stanley Young refers to on the dust jacket as the "preface to a new technique, the fusing of camera and word. . . ." Perhaps it is the self-conscious use of this "new technique" that accounts for the unevenness of the book. At times the "fusion" is eminently successful, but more often the conscious effort to avoid using either text or picture to illuminate or to illustrate the other, makes rough going. Particular texts and specific photographs have obviously been chosen to face each other on opposing pages. It is inevitable that they are thus associated. Rather than complement, they more often rival one another, fiercely. We find pictures and writing competing for attention, with the pictures winning because of their direct communication. That they are fine, regional photographs makes the book well worth owning.

LLOYD LOZES GOFF

*Of the Night Wind's Telling: Legends from the Valley of Mexico*, by E. Adams Davis; with drawings by Dorothy Kirk. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946. \$3.00.

Many of the legends in this book are from ancient Mexico, Toltec and Aztec creation myths, the four destructions of the world by water, air, fire, and earth, and the beginnings of the Indian nature gods. Some of these legends are well known from the old chroniclers; some have been made familiar by more modern writers such as Madariaga, who wove many of them into his great novel of the Aztecs, *Heart of Jade*. Others refer to the period of conquest when strange white men with new gods and incomprehensible beliefs came to confuse the simple theology of the Indians. Still other tales, and perhaps the greatest number of them, are concerned with the times of the viceroys when the Church vainly struggled by way of devils and exorcisms against men greedy for wealth and power in a new world. Only two tales might be called modern: one, a story of brutality and revenge against the French during the reign of Maximilian; the other, a recounting



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of the peons' belief that a spectral Zapata still rides his black stallion over the rocky rim of the great Valley. Although the tales as often deal with murder and dire punishment by supernatural apparitions as with love and intrigue, they are all told in a tone of credence, amusement, and philosophical resignation to the happenings that are beyond the understanding of mortal man.

Mr. Davis made many journeys to Mexico to collect these legends. Rather than spend his time searching musty archives, he loitered among *cantinas*, market squares, in odd and desolate corners in the city of Mexico, persuading ancient raconteurs to tell him the tales their fathers and grandfathers had told. With few exceptions the author heard the legends orally. Later he checked them with written versions already in existence, and where variations occurred, as they are bound to occur in stories which pass by word of mouth from generation to generation, gaining color and enlargement with each retelling, he incorporated into his oral version suitable details from old manuscripts. Sometimes he tells the story in his own words with excellent descriptions of the plaza, the house, or the church where the event took place. More often the tale is written as it might have been told to him in the words of an old man enjoying his rest in the shade of a *portal*. The simplicity of the native phrase is nicely put into English. Occasionally, the illusion of the raconteur is rudely interrupted by the author's use of a Spanish word parenthetically translated into English.

Although Mr. Davis appends a short bibliography of works consulted in his research upon Mexican legends in general, he has wisely dispensed with footnotes and with any tone of scholarly intention in writing the book. It is a book to be read for pleasure rather than for reference. It is gay, spicy, and often slyly humorous. Mr. Davis admits he had fun writing it.

Dorothy Kirk's generous number of pen and ink drawings are delightfully expressive of the text.

MARY WICKER

*Fabulous Empire: Colonel Zack Miller's Story*, by Fred Gipson; with an introduction by Donald Day. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1946. \$3.00.

*Maverick Town: the Story of Old Tascosa*, by John L. McCarty; with Chapter Decorations by Harold D. Bugbee. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946. \$3.00.

Countries, like people, are no longer young when they can look back upon a complete cycle in the past, when death as well as birth figures in the pattern of their memories. In that sense, we fail to realize the maturity attained by the "young West" until something—the two books listed above, for example—recalls how much of history it has seen. Both volumes are nostalgic accounts of past glories. *Fabulous Empire* tells the story of the famed 101 Ranch in Oklahoma that grew from a cow herd to a kingdom requiring 300 miles of wire fence to enclose its 110,000 acres. *Maverick Town* recounts the growth and death of Tascosa, Texas, once a rival of Dodge City and capital of an inland cattle empire.

The 101 Ranch was the personal achievement of G. W. Miller and his three sons. By pure grit and bull-headedness, by bribing members of the Army detail sent to run him off the Cherokee Strip, and by driving out rival cowmen, old G. W. laid the foundations of the ranch that was to become world-famous under his sons' management. In its heyday, it was one of the wonders of America. Western movies were filmed there. Its guest list included such names as Luther Burbank, William Jennings Bryan, and Mary Roberts Rinehart. Out of its activities grew a spectacular show, the 101 Ranch Wild West Show, which toured the country, featuring an unknown roper named Will Rogers. In those days, the three Miller brothers rode high, wide, and handsome. Zack, the trader of the lot, once bought—and sold at a profit!—the entire army of General Mercardo, who was forced across the Rio Grande by Pancho Villa. But with the crash of 1929, the glories of the 101 were ended. In crowded court rooms and under the auctioneer's hammer, another dream of empire died.

*Fabulous Empire* is a good story, made better by the sensitive handling it receives from its author, Fred Gipson. The reminiscences of old Zack Miller are retold in the lusty language of the trail country; and so firm is the control of the author that not even the "big windies" of an old man looking back can mar the truth and sincerity of the book. With its richness of character, variety of incident, and freshness of language, *Fabulous Empire* makes a real contribution to Western literature.

*Maverick Town* is the story of a town that grew up naturally at an easy crossing of the Canadian River in the Panhandle. The Spanish explorers, buffalo hunters, and Mexican shepherders were only the prelude to the coming of the big cattle companies with names that have gone down in ranch history—the LIT, the XIT, the Jinglebob, and the Frying Pan. Tascosa, supply center for the range, attracted all kinds of people. Billy the Kid and his gang lived there for a while after the Lincoln County War, and, as a natural result, Pat Garrett's company of Home Rangers had its headquarters there. The fencing of the ranges spelled doom for Tascosa, for the wire cut the town's communications with the rest of the world. So Tascosa died slowly and painfully, strangled by the first strands of "bob wire." Perhaps its very name would be forgotten now, were it not for Boys' Ranch which has brought new fame to the site of Old Tascosa.

*Maverick Town* is a source of valuable information for the student of ranching history. Its author John L. McCarty, a newspaper man in Amarillo, has devoted twenty years to thorough, painstaking research on the town and its history. Unfortunately, however, the book is not as readable as one could wish. The familiarity of the author with his subject makes him crowd in characters, incident, and detail until the reader seeks vainly for a landmark in the confusion. Although addicts of Western history will not read *Maverick Town* straight through for pleasure as they will *Fabulous Empire*, nevertheless it should stand on their shelves for reference whenever questions arise concerning early ranching days in the Panhandle.

THELMA CAMPBELL

*Tales From the Plum Grove Hills*, by Jesse Stuart. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946. \$3.25.

Jesse Stuart is essentially a tall-tale teller, proof of which is found in this collection of twenty short stories representing the best the author has produced in the short-story form during the past few years.

Few of Jesse Stuart's critics and reviewers have ever made truly balanced and unprejudiced criticisms of his work. Most of them either damn him as a literary outlaw or they heap on him unqualified praise, as has a *New Yorker* reviewer in referring to him as "a national possession."

Jesse Stuart is neither a literary outlaw nor "a national possession." He is a conversationalist with a series of personal tales to relate. And even when he is not telling a tall tale he continues to use his exaggerated comparisons which are definitely a part of his tall-tale language. "Another April," the portrait of a boy's grandfather, is an exception and is the tenderest story this author has written. Perhaps the two best stories are "The Storm," a parental quarrel, and "Nest Egg," the life and death of a fighting rooster. "Frog-Trouncin' Contest" is skillfully constructed and is perhaps the most humorous tale the author has written. On the other hand, "Another Hanging" is a failure. It is a gesture of insincerity that the person who wrote the above-mentioned stories and several years ago wrote "Love" should also release for publication the trivia that are in this tale of the taking of a man's life. It is little more than a laboratory exercise.

To Jesse Stuart the story—or the tale—is the important thing. His characters are secondary, and the dialogue belongs not so much to his characters as it does to Jesse Stuart.

He is practically always an objective writer. He does not use his objectivity as a means of expressing subjectivity, that is, of creating subtleties or as an aid to understanding the inner emotions of his characters. Rather, his objectivity deals almost exclusively with externalities. His characters are not remembered, except as Father and Mother and Son. In a sense, he paints his characters with a broad sweep of the brush, giving most of them caricatured proportions. And since to him the tale is more important than the characters, he could often strengthen a tale by giving his characters more precise motivations than the blanket ones of love and hate.

Jesse Stuart's aim is not to teach or to rectify an evil, and he certainly possesses no sociological zeal to expose a decadent or a sluggish phase of society as Erskine Caldwell has done in the South. He is simply a conversationalist sitting on the other side of the table relating a tall tale, constructing it with little previous planning, often clumsily, and perhaps with little revision.

Though there may be sufficient cause to charge him with an unfair portrayal of mountain people—as he has been charged—, he in his foulest moments gives them greater purity than Caldwell, for instance, gives to his Southerners. And though Jesse Stuart may at times say that he is writing representatively of mountain people and though reviewers may yell, "Amen," he of course is writing about the rough-hewn, land-wise characters who inhabit Jesse Stuart's tall-tale kingdom.

DEAN CADLE

*The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, by Henry Miller. New York: New Directions, 1945. \$3.50.

The formulated reactions of Henry Miller, of which *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* is one small collection, come tumbling out at such a rate that their considerable unevenness is no more surprising than with any other phenomenon of nature. Miller considers himself an artist. He can also behave like a prevailing wind: now persuading hard buds into blossom and fruition, now dry and sullen, now ripping off shingles and unhinging doors, now pushing at you with something full and forceful that you can lean into, something sharp and prickly that exhilarates, now annoying the hell out of you with sheer noise and persistence.

He fancies himself a refugee from respectability, but on the impressionable and thin-skinned the mark of the beast is everlasting. Beneath Henry-miller's corduroy slacks we see the bohemian eternally fleeing Brooklyn. As a free, simple citizen of the world and apologist for all arts and artists, he naturally knows nothing, cares nothing, about politics, economics, and such-like irritations. Nevertheless social analyses are continually forthcoming as if the articulate ignorance of Henry-miller were its own excuse for being.

Such contradictions assure us that behind the self-made legend there is no mechanical monster of incalculable breadth and industry but a man at variance with piddling consistency, with a world he never made, and with himself. We see these facets in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, and more: that Miller has a superior gift of comic fantasy and that he is at his best when castigating and dynamiting, exhorting and belaboring. He is best, not in *The Nightmare* and similar compilations but in those paper-backed books now banned in liberated France, too, so help us, those rough and raffish chronicles that discard the wholly ridiculous distinction between the spoken and the written word. It's to our friend's great credit that he waded in and set down everything unfit to print. And it's not his fault that *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* is tame by contrast.

The hard words Henry-miller tosses at Mankind in the abstract and his soft purring over individuals—the known and unknown geniuses he runs across—give one the impression that he is uncommonly kind and sympathetic and that he would love you, too, if he could only get to know you. When he blasts away at the mob, it is only because populations are unembraceable and because he wants everybody to be as unselfish, generous, charming, and devoted to art and the good life as his friends.

His prophetic denunciations and therapeutic curetings, inspired as they often are, might be more purposive if Henry-miller were less distracted by home-cured theology and the lavender mists of the esoteric. He blasts away at scientists, politicians, robber barons, the fat-headed and hard-hearted. Never does he attribute the degenerate culture and civilization in which we flounder to the workings of capitalism. He falls short of pointing up the basic, brutish fact that we are all trapped in the same net, exceptional, "saved" individuals, too; that the reason for living at all, for art-expression, for sensitivity, for humaneness and decency toward others is all

but nullified by the competitive, exploitative, profit-hungry social system under which we live and are perishing. He underscores the obvious idiocy of our culture . . . the air-conditioned aspect of it wherein gadgets become gods. And he is unmistakably on the side of freedom and fraternity. But his case would be stronger, his uncommon gift would count for more if he would pin the guilt where it belongs: on all-demanding, all-destroying capitalism and imperialism which above and around everything spread the nightmare of inequality, atomization, terror, and murder.

DINSMORE WHEELER

*Gib Morgan: Minstrel of the Oil Fields*, by Mody C. Boatright. Texas Folk-Lore Society Publication Number XX. El Paso: Texas Folk-Lore Society, 1945. No price indicated.

In this book Mr. Boatright makes his first report on his study "of the impact of the oil industry upon the folklore and the folkways of the American people." When he first heard tall tales about a driller named Gib Morgan, he thought he had encountered an entirely legendary character. Study revealed that Morgan was a flesh-and-blood oil-field worker whose fame as a storyteller reached its height about 1909. After that his fame declined. Drillers who worked before the first World War remember him; younger men repeat his stories but often attribute them to Paul Bunyan, the folk hero who grew out of the more widely distributed lumber industry and who received early attention from the students of folklore.

The book is divided into two parts, the first titled "The Life Gib Morgan Lived," the second "The Tales Gib Morgan Told." In the first part Mr. Boatright sets down readably a surprising amount of information about the real Gib Morgan, information which undoubtedly cost much time and pains. In the second part he has put into swift, able prose of his own, fifty-one of the tall tales which he credits to Morgan. In an appendix he reproduces the only known published work by Morgan. (In the first part of the book Mr. Boatright acknowledges that Morgan's genius was for the oral not the written story.)

The book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of how such tellers of tall tales as Gib Morgan become legendary and achieve a sort of immortality among the people of the industry in which they worked. (Eventually they achieve it in the world outside through such books as this.) The word "minstrel" in the title is perhaps deceptive because of its romantic connotations. Mr. Boatright thinks that Morgan's tales transcend the oil industry. "Created at a time when a resource hitherto unutilized and scarcely known was being spectacularly exploited, they symbolize the whole era of expanding geographical and industrial frontiers, the era of manifest destiny and spread-eagle oratory, the era in which the folk artists, as distinguished from the literary artists, in response to a deep social urge attempted to create a literature commensurate with the events of the times." When Mr. Boatright writes in this vein—he seldom does—I have doubts. At least I should like to know more of the reasoning that lies behind this reading of the stories' significance. Probably the oil business was a back-

breaking business for the drillers. If Gib Morgan could lighten it with tall stories, good enough. Why guess that he responded to a deep social urge? (It should be noted that Betty Boatright's illustrations are effective, Carl Hertzog's design of the book another good job.)

E. W. TEDLOCK, JR.

*Thieves in the Night: Chronicle of an Experiment*, by Arthur Koestler. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946. \$2.75.

Sometimes a man must write several books, or be heard saying many things about many, related or not, human situations, before you can be at all sure of the nature of his gifts, or the character of his anxieties. Koestler is such a writer. *Thieves in the Night* is not unlike one of the expertly constructed *March of Time* features: flashy, swiftly informative, and portentously inconclusive.

Koestler's talent is unmistakable. Yet something has happened, or something is now clearer since *Darkness at Noon* and *Arrival and Departure* (his strictly personal chronicles like *Dialogue with Death* and *Scum of the Earth* are not entirely comparable). Where in the earlier novels there was, you thought, a searching desperation, now there is an inquisitive disconsolation; where, before, you felt that justice, mercy, love, and fraternity were being horribly riddled with new experiences and slaughterous compromises, now there is disquiet and an appealing construction of "the universal law of indifference." The talent is the same, the effect, now, one of tableaux.

Koestler's themes are always topical: Franco Spain, Vichy France, the Moscow Trials, the hunted anti-fascist revolutionary, and now Palestine, the Zionist settlers, and the trained, fanatical terrorists. There are others: the British officials and the police, members of the Arab resistance group, and that standard romantic personality, the cynical, but good, alcoholic American newspaperman. The occasional power of a descriptive passage, the infrequent intensities of character development do not overcome the final impression of facility and haste.

Ironically, this new novel of Koestler's appears to be as absorbing an account (it is sub-titled "Chronicle of an Experiment") as one can get of the circumstances and forces in Palestine today. Its deficiencies as a novel of tragic character are grievous. Its interest as a report is considerable.

V. GAROFFOLO

*Annals of the New York Stage*, Volume XIV, by George C. D. Odell. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945. \$8.75.

George C. D. Odell will go down in history as the architect and builder of a great literary monument dedicated to the memory of the pastimes of the American people. The fourteenth story of this colossal edifice houses the offerings of a transitional period in the history of American amusement—1888-1891. During these years P. T. Barnum personally conducts his circus to New York for the last time. The old Madison Square Garden gives way to the new masterpiece of Stanford White. Steinway Hall yields gracefully

to Carnegie Hall, New York's first real musical center. Kreisler and Hofmann make their first appearance. The Germans lose their monopoly of grand opera.

The last great operetta of Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Gondoliers*, opened in New York at this time with a dubious cast, and became such a storm center that thereafter the public no longer regarded the product of these great collaborators as their darling amusement but directed their attention to the works of Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero, pioneers of the English renaissance which gave us Wilde, Galsworthy, Barrie, and Shaw. The impetus from the continent behind this new English movement also traversed the Atlantic. A series of lectures was given on Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen at his best was seen in *The Pillars of Society*; and for the first time *A Doll's House* was produced in New York.

American dramatists also came into their own. Bronson Howard in *Shenandoah* presented a stirring study of the Civil War, so successful that the Philadelphia company came to New York and two productions of the play were going on at the same time. Clyde Fitch made his New York debut with *Beau Brummel*, the title role of which proved to be the apex of Richard Mansfield's artistic career.

Despite these signs of vigorous new growth, the supreme achievement of the age was repertory. Coquelin, who has never had an equal in French comedy, was playing Moliere, and Sarah Bernhardt was interpreting Camille and the plays of Sardou. This best of entertainment in New York of 1881-1891 was to be found at Daly's, where the aristocracy of birth and talent each year gathered to see Ada Rehan, Mrs. Gilbert, James Lewis, John Drew, and Richard Mansfield, and where the revivals of Sheridan and Shakespeare were so authentic, so brilliant, and so centered in great personalities that they are still to be surpassed on these shores.

DANE FARNSWORTH SMITH

*The Use of the Drama*, by Harley Granville-Barker. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945. \$1.50.

The atom bomb ended the war, but it is still true, as Mr. Granville-Barker wrote in 1944, that "we are . . . involved in the machinery of many marvelous inventions" which "cannot of themselves civilize us . . . but may impower us to be greater brutes." Although, with the bomb, we have reasserted the forms of freedom, it is still clear that the forms "do not of themselves make us free." Agreement that civilization and freedom demand more than marvelous inventions is evident nowadays even outside of churches and literature courses; it is particularly evident in the revision of college curricula toward a core of general studies, and dozens of recent books and articles have urged the social value of the humanities. But *Life* magazine currently, and probably accurately, translates "Dreams of 1946" into convertible station wagons, television-phonograph-radios, black evening gowns, and twelve-gauge shot guns at \$562; and even among the professors a narrow materialism is entrenched. Therefore, still another book on teaching the humanities—particularly one in such clean, nicely shaded prose

—may be welcomed. The humanities teacher, however palpable his function may have been rendered by our liberal renaissance, must still face his critics—and his students. *The Use of the Drama* should help him with both. And in a less personal sense it should interest anyone concerned, as perhaps every literate person should be, with liberal education.

Mr. Granville-Barker discusses "The Arts in General," "Drama in Education," and "A Theater That Might Be." With the shift in patronage from the wealthy few to the less wealthy many, he points out, the arts of music and painting have gained in general appreciation and have felt a new stimulus, but what education has done for these arts is less evident in literature. Literature still lacks a critical—or educated—audience; and it is the value and method of educating an audience by studying drama, together with possible culmination in a new theater, that Mr. Granville-Barker discusses. Conceiving of art as "a moral exercise," he finds in the drama unique values of co-operation as well as the more familiar values of discernment, human understanding, and continuity with the past. Just as drama involves the interdependence of play, actors, and audience, political and industrial democracy also requires a dynamic balance: "this art of combining active appreciation of the other man's point of view with clear assertion of one's own," and from those who would be truly represented in conference or debate, an aliveness "to the things done daily in [their] name. . . ." Yet it is not necessary to train college students as actors. The "art's generally educational uses" may be realized by a detached study of plays, with roles assigned to students for analysis and defense, with the play on trial as a whole and in its parts, and with the instructor exerting a minimum of control in the co-operative enterprise. Since the class will stop short of production, the best play for study is one in which physical action has the least share, one—like Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*—in which much of the meaning is left implicit but which "throws light into the very depths of human nature. . . ." The student's "business is to cultivate—to sharpen and refine—[his] hearing and appreciation until [he] can swiftly distinguish between what is significant and truly told, and what oftenest, in a poor play, is neither." With an audience of such discernment, or a degree of it, there would be hope for a true theater, "a stable organization of actors and actresses and directors, an institution in which the whole art of the drama can be cultivated for its own sake and made manifest." To create such an audience, only "a small amount of learning is involved; . . . the essentials of it can be slipped almost unnoticed into the regular course of our education. . . ." To justify such a theater, the drama "can, as no other art can, help to keep us vividly conscious of the continuity of our civilization. And without this continuity, without, what is more, the consciousness of it, is it too much to say that no civilization can survive?"

W. P. ALBRECHT



*John Keats' Fancy: the Effect on Keats of the Psychology of his Day*, by James Ralston Caldwell. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1945. \$2.00.

"It is the purpose of this book to show that ideas derived from the psychology of his day were of radical importance to Keats' creative life, to observe how these ideas affected his work-ways, and thus better to understand his poetry."

Having stated his intention in these words, Professor Caldwell proceeds with most lucid analysis to establish his case. He finds "that Keats' method of composition . . . was to fix upon a subject and let the mind take its willful way." To give the prominence of bare quotation to such a statement is, however, to misrepresent the meaning and value of the book. The book demonstrates conclusively that Keats was thoroughly conversant with "the association" even though he was not much interested in and did not talk about its theoretical anatomy. The influence of the Hartleyan association psychology on Wordsworth especially and on Coleridge is obvious to every student, but in showing that Keats too, in a very special way, was under the same influence, Professor Caldwell has made a most valuable and fruitful contribution to the study of Keats and of the whole period. He examines the poems and the letters in such a way as to construct an incontrovertible case. One may reasonably suppose that he has opened the way for a considerable amount of new and illuminating investigation.

Important as is this revelation of Keats's imagination at work the book will be most useful in additional ways. Not easily come by, for example, is such a clear and simple statement of the development of "the association of ideas" or such a convenient summary of Hartley's theories. Also valuable is the contrast between Wordsworth's and Keats's application of associationalism.

One may doubt that the book will much interest the general reader or the non-professional lover of Keats's poetry, who may even indeed be repelled by this scientific anatomizing of genius at work; but the proof is here, and if it does not explain the poet, it certainly goes far in helping to understand him.

C. V. WICKER

*The Little Magazine: a History and a Bibliography*, by Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946. \$3.75.

Those of us who have worked with the little and non-commercial magazines have long wanted a book devoted to them. *The Little Magazine* gives us the first comprehensive American survey of these magazines, and it supplies most of what we want in such a book. For that reason, and for the value of the little reviews in the last forty years, hardly any other book about recent literature is of more value than this one. It is an important addition to any library, public or private, which pretends to serious interest in contemporary writing.

Having said that, I wish to point out some faults in the book, but in no

spirit of quibbling. The fact is that the problems of publishing such a book are so great on the American market (and we owe much to Princeton University Press for doing it) that we are not likely to have another volume for a long time. It is best to get down the reservations and corrections and additions for future use. Perhaps even a supplement to the volume, participated in by a number of people who have the needed information, could be published and, together with *The Little Magazines*, provide the important materials we need. To verify some impressions, I have consulted Mr. Irvin C. Heyne, of Philadelphia, who has one of the best private collections of these magazines, and I wish to acknowledge his kindness.

1. In their historical discussion, Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Allen indicate only two functions for the little magazines: introducing authors who go on to make their names before the public eye elsewhere, and publishing experimental efforts. Indeed these are significant and primary functions of the magazines, but they are by no means all of them. In the first place, many writers do not "graduate" from the little magazines but continue to find them the natural outlet for any serious writing, early or late; or if these writers make a large name for themselves outside these magazines, it is usually with books and not in other magazines. The number of commercial magazines which have an editorial receptiveness to "serious" writing is hardly more than a dozen; the largest proportion of it must find publication in the non-commercial magazines. In the second place, almost our only contact with foreign literature outside books is in the pages of these magazines. Thus, the functions of the little reviews are surely at least four: (1) the continuing medium of publication for most of the serious magazine writing, creative and critical; (2) the discovery and development of talent; (3) the sponsoring of experimental efforts in writing; (4) the publication of significant writing by foreign authors.

2. The discussion and the bibliography are based on an arbitrary distinction between little magazines proper (for which the words *advance guard* seem to be the synonym) and some magazines which "do not answer strictly to the definition of the little magazine." This is a troublesome problem, but to put *The Dial* in one list and *Criterion* in the other, and to put *Prairie Schooner* and *University Review* in one list and this journal and *Arizona Quarterly* in the other provide distinctions too fine to follow, I'm afraid. The fault probably comes in equating the little magazine with the advance guard magazine; if this were strictly interpreted, only the magazines whose primary function is the publication of experimental writing could be included and not only Miss Ulrich's supplementary list but also half the magazines in the primary list would have to be cast out of the fold.

3. Errors are bound to creep into any work so vast as this one. In reading the historical discussion, I have been struck by few except in interpretation, as with the reasons for the end of *The Southern Review*. In the bibliography, a much vaster labor with detail, to be made complete in the end, surely, only with the co-operation of dozens of workers, the errors are of various sorts: (1) Failure to include a number of magazines, most of them short-lived but at least as significant as many included—*The Husk*, *Sage*,

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*Prairie Prose*, *Montana Poetry Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, to name just five which occur to me without checking any lists or collections. (Also, since book publications are mentioned, I am privately sorry that no mention was made of the *American Writing* volumes, an effort to show the best work of these magazines in volumes which would also provide yearbook data on them.) (2) Missing bibliographical information—number of volumes, number of issues per volume, number of issues in case of irregular publication. *The Little Review*, for example, had a scrambled publishing history, including the burning of four issues by the post office. What issues were they? What constitutes a complete file of a magazine? These questions ought to be answered. Unfortunately the tendency in making the bibliography was to consult the first issue primarily and follow through publication only with a few magazines. (3) Lack of significant critical judgment in the annotations to the bibliography which were, apparently, to give us some idea of the value of the contribution each magazine made.

ALAN SWALLOW

*Fighting Liberal*, by George W. Norris. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945. \$3.50.

Autobiographies, diaries, memoirs, and letters are always of interest to the historian and to those concerned with the reconstruction and interpretation of the past. And this autobiography of George W. Norris is no exception.

Writing after his retirement from forty years of service to his country in the national Congress (1903-1913 in the House, 1913-1943 in the Senate), Mr. Norris has recorded from memory, private papers, and public records his participation in some of the history-making events of his age.

Born on an Ohio farm in 1861, he was of pioneer stock and he early learned the values and joys of a simple, frugal, hard-working life. Confronted with many difficulties through the death of his father and the struggle of his mother to maintain their farm home, George W. Norris grew up accustomed to hard physical labor. He had also developed a love of the land and a deep and satisfying conviction of the peace and joy that come from living in close contact with the forces of nature.

Under the strong influence of his pioneer mother, he strove for and attained an education, studying law and gaining admittance to the bar in 1883. Two years later he moved to Nebraska where he married, established his home, and reared his family. Here he began his public life as prosecuting attorney and district judge. Nebraska sent him to Washington, first as a Congressman and later as a Senator.

Mr. Norris was an ardent Republican, imbued with idealism; yet he refused to be dominated by the party machine in Congress. His honesty and sincere convictions on issues to which he gave long hours of study soon marked him as a liberal leader. He relates many contests and incidents within Congress: his breaking the power of the Speaker of the House, Uncle Joe Cannon; his interest in and work for the conservation of the country's natural resources which led from the Hetch Hetchy water project in Cali-

fornia through the exposures of Teapot Dome to culminate in the final establishment of the T.V.A. He led a successful filibuster against arming the Merchant Marine in 1917 and voted against entering World War I. To present his viewpoint in the last, much criticized act, he returned to Lincoln and held a great public mass meeting for his constituents; contrary to the opinion of many of his colleagues, it proved to be a triumph of faith and loyalty in his leadership.

He discusses his part in securing the Lame Duck Amendment, the unicameral legislature, lend-lease, in curbing inflation, and solving other public problems. His satiric speech on the election to the Senate of the wealthy Mr. Newberry of Michigan, his unsuccessful fight to defeat Mr. Vare, Republican from Pennsylvania, and his success in leading the movement to prevent Mr. Vare's sitting in the Senate are related with vigor.

Many other events are told; through them all we see pictures of public personages, friends, enemies, officials, and those whose influence often dominated behind the scenes. Valuable, indeed, are such comments upon contemporaries.

In his very readable book, we can follow this nonconformist through his long career. Sometimes his memories are pungent and emotional, but he emerges a leader for liberal advances, a sincere and honest citizen and loyal patriot, who worked to forward the interests of his beloved country.

A journalist, J. E. Lawrence, aided in the writing of the book. Pictures add to the text, and cartoons, likewise, though no acknowledgment of the latter is given. The volume is a strong reflection of the man of the soil whose life it is and who in his last days expressed one of his basic beliefs when he said, "Unselfish faith will prove to be America's greatest resource in the difficult years ahead."

DOROTHY WOODWARD

*Reminiscences*, by Maxim Gorky. New York: Dover Publications, 1946. \$2.75.

It is good to have such a book as this. Good for all the compassionate observations that Gorky made of his friends and fellow writers. Good for the way in which these reminiscences support the current unfashionable belief: that it is both possible and rewarding for a man to experience great affection for another man's work and character without pernicious condescension, to admire that work and that man without concealing the occasional paltriness of that man and his work; that a memoir can be discerning, memorable instead of merely disarming.

This book makes available, in a single volume, reminiscences which have not been heretofore translated or accessible in English. In a period when chitchat flourishes and flatters, this work represents a considerable publishing and editorial achievement. There are no laborious displays of odd accounts of the home-life, sex-life, et cetera which somehow continue to be passed off as special insight in some circles. Gorky apparently did not believe that if you related so many "inside" stories of Tolstoy's temperament or Chekhov's charm, with appropriate asides, you would come out with any feeling for or comprehension of the sources and evidence of their tem-

perament and charm. Instead, you have an informal, moving collection of Gorky's notes while visiting Tolstoy, correspondence with Chekhov and Stanislavsky, and recollections of Leonid Andreyev and Alexander Blok.

No man with Gorky's prodigious humanity could record the impact of other men, especially men with the creative powers, in these reminiscences, without divulging the springs and course of his own compassion. The notes of his visit with Tolstoy are not souvenir-ruminations to prove, later on, that he was there. Rather, they are the compulsive acts of the young writer to wholly involve himself, to wholly discover the character of his own predicament and destiny.

V. GAROFFOLO

*Tolstoy and His Wife*, by Tikhon Polner; translated by Nicholas Wreden.

New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1945. \$2.75.

*New Chum*, by John Masefield. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945. \$2.50.

*Flowering Dusk: Things Remembered Accurately and Inaccurately*, by Ella Young. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1945. \$3.50.

*Alexander Woolcott: His Life and His World*, by Samuel Hopkins Adams. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945. \$3.50.

*Raw Material*, by Oliver La Farge. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945. \$3.00.

*Wars I Have Seen*, by Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House, 1945. \$2.50.

Tardy mention of these six good books, owing to crowded review schedules, calls for apology from this section. But delayed comment has the advantage of perspective on more than a year's collection of biography and autobiography which illuminates the modern scene from Tolstoy to Gertrude Stein. This group of books reminds us anew how much personal narrative can contribute to an understanding of our time.

The Tolstoyan marital riddle is analyzed sympathetically and objectively by Tikhon Polner, contemporary and personal friend of the Tolstoy family. Simply and directly he recounts what he knows of the strange spiritual struggle which began for Tolstoy late in the 1870's and eventually, increasing in intensity, wrenched him from his home and broke the bonds of his forty-eight years of marital devotion. The characters emerge with almost the quality of a Tolstoy novel itself: the charming, tactless, practical Countess, driven by her desire to preserve family and fortune, puzzled and thwarted by her husband's religious and social ideas; the younger Tolstoy of *War and Peace* growing into the Tolstoy of the *Confessions* and the *Kreutzer Sonata*. Polner repeatedly testifies to the real affection which for so long tempered the clash of will and ideal and which made the final break so tragic and pathetic. Polner's report is close to first-hand, for in the years after Tolstoy's death, the Countess talked freely to him, saying, among other things, "Yes, I lived with Lev for forty-eight years, but I never really learned what kind of man he was." The book was written in 1920, but was translated only recently by Nicholas Wreden. It is welcome to those who have turned with renewed interest to *War and Peace*, *Anna*

*Karenina*, and the later writings in an attempt to understand the backgrounds of modern Russia.

Filling in the background for favorite books is one of the special functions of literary autobiography. In *New Chum* we are behind the scenes of *Dauber* with the thirteen-year-old Masefield, as he begins his apprenticeship in 1891 on the training ship *H. M. S. Conway*. The record is full of appeal, of sharply etched memories of the lad who bucked a quiet, unprotesting way through the rough badgering meted out to a "new chum," struggling with a diabolically active hammock amid the jeers of a derisive crew, living the daily miracle of going aloft, worshipping the gentle petty officer, H. B., experiencing the delights of "Liverpool Leave." The story is effortless, fond, nostalgic, but never sentimental. It belongs with the best of Masefield to reinforce the contribution he has already made to English maritime literature.

Other memories of the turn of the century and after come to us in Ella Young's *Flowering Dusk*. Here are the full spirit and activity of the Irish Renaissance and revolution, Yeats and Maude Gonne, Lady Gregory, AE, Douglas Hyde, and Padriac Colum. The book is an impressionistic diary, leaving one with the strange sensation of having witnessed violent segments of revolutionary activity through a magical Celtic haze. The figures in the landscape are forceful and vigorous; the narrative is shadowy, half-told, almost defying the reader to sense the full historical and literary event unless he re-lives—and he is sure to after this book—the Irish Renaissance and its subsequent political developments. Ella Young's reaction to people and places is delicate and intense, her Irish memories more satisfying than those of the United States, although Southwestern readers will delight in her love for this country. As I sat here searching for words to attempt to describe the effect of the book—no easy job for a practical reviewer faced with the fantasy and mysticism of Ella Young—I watched a sunset etching Mount Taylor on the western horizon. By day the same view is a path for jet planes. Quite by chance the book fell open to this passage:

"What mountain is this?" I asked a neighbor.

"It is Mount Taylor," was the reply.

Mount Taylor—the name meant nothing to me! I watched the mountain as long as I had sight of it. The sun flushed it with purple and rose, with ruby and violet, and the sky hung over it in a mist of rose and azure long after the sun had gone.

It blossomed in my mind for months and years till one day against a sunset in a land of rose and amethyst I saw it, snow-crowned, far off as I motored with two friends to New Mexico.

"What name has yonder mountain?" I asked, "the mountain double-peaked like Shasta—like Everest, the Goddess-Mother of the World?"

"That is Turquoise Mountain, the Sacred Mountain of the Navajos."

Its Indian name is *Tsodsichl*.

Perhaps Ella Young belongs to an Ireland and a New Mexico which an atomic world has taken from us for all time. But it is good to have her reflections on both of them stored up for us in this book.

Woollcott's world is ours, too, and Samuel Hopkins Adams recreates it like a social historian as well as biographer. Woollcott, this idol of old ladies and anathema of Bennett Cerf, could have been no easy subject for a biographer, and it is to the credit of Mr. Adams that his portrait of the irascible and sentimental Aleck makes the point of view of both the old ladies and Mr. Cerf perfectly understandable. On the *Times* and the *Herald*, onstage and off, in the Algonquin and at Wit's End, with pen and conversation and radio broadcast, Woollcott fretted and flayed and adored and capered with the literary great, touching the world of letters at so many points that a good record of his career—and this book is a good record—is bound to be barbed and racy literary history. Because Woollcott paddles in the shallows of the great stream of twentieth century writing, buoyed up by the waterwings of his own tenderly inflated ego, the history itself is doomed to shallowness. Its particular merit is a relaxing, chuckling, sometimes devastating intimacy with best-sellers, the kind of intimacy which is, after all, sauce and relish for the literary historian.

An artist in mid-career, turning back to modest personal record and self-evaluation, often enhances his own reputation and shapes his own future. Here, in honest stock-taking, Oliver La Farge analyzes what happens when a member of a privileged group seriously questions the values of his own background and strikes out for himself. Mr. La Farge, "the un-Groton boy" made his own life in the world of scientists, in New Orleans and the Southwest, and in his writing. Such summary over-dramatizes Mr. La Farge's account, for his is a quiet, clear-sighted examination. The patterns of the Social Register and the spectacular adventurer-scientist alike meet with his quiet scorn. The relish in his writing as he describes his delight in his Harvard rowing or his steady pondering of what a changing world will mean to the protected groups bring to his book charm and solidity. For us in the Southwest, the chapters on the problem of the Indian caught between his own world and the world "which involves Hitler, soil erosion and the conquest of ignorance and poverty" are the most arresting. Mr. La Farge knows better than anyone else the progress in his own understanding from *Laughing Boy* to his present sense of our responsibility to the Indian: "... one could raise a good deal of money with sentimental appeals to keep our Hiawathas beaded, feathered, and pure, but when one talks of soil conservation, advanced education and sustained-yield forestry, the yearners drift away and the supporters of liberal causes show their frank disdain. Indians are not a liberal cause but a sentiment; now the Firestone plantations in Liberia . . ." No one can read the last chapters of this book without feeling that now, back from his service with the Air Transport Command, Mr. La Farge is ready for a maturity of service as citizen and writer which will go beyond his previous accomplishment.

Since Gertrude Stein's death and the publication of her *Brewsie and Willie*, a comment on *Wars I Have Seen* may seem completely pointless. Somehow, though, the end of her story only makes the substance of *Wars I Have Seen* more significant. In it, as in the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, it is the personality of Gertrude Stein which emerges in a strangely

endearing fashion. Living through World War II in Bilignin and Culoz, with her French poodle Basket, her goat Bizerte, and Alice B. Toklas, she foraged sturdily "for cake" over the French countryside. Her face still looking like an antique Roman coin, she maintained her calm as, proscribed but unrecognized, she evaded the surveillance of the German occupation troops, chuckling as she bought her own forbidden book under their very noses. Serenely unafraid she wrote her record of what the French said and she said, what the villagers did and she did and the Maquis did during the years and days when the wait for American liberation mounted to almost unbearable tension. She gives us priceless history firsthand, plus a heartening sense of pride in her own loyalty to the United States and her confidence in liberation by our forces. This book is still as warm and vital as anything Gertrude Stein ever wrote. It is rich in typical Stein comment. She maintains that this war has finally killed the nineteenth century in us. Of it she says, "The nineteenth century liked to cry, liked to try, liked to eat, liked to pursue revolution, and liked war, war and peace, peace and war and no more." She notes with relish that "the old farmer on a hill said of the Germans do not say that it had to do with their leaders, they are a people whose fate it is to always choose a man whom they force to lead them in a direction in which they do not want to go." She describes the American soldiers of World War II: ". . . they have become more American all American, and the G. I. Joe's show it and know it, God bless them."

The legend of her life seems now, like that of Dr. Johnson's, to overshadow her writing, for it is in memory, anecdote, and in her autobiographical work that she lives most vividly for many of us. Whether she was amused at the bewilderment she brought us or puzzled herself at our failure to follow her we perhaps shall never know. I remember her once, though, in 1935, lecturing to a confused audience who shamefacedly began to slink out at the half, at which she queried, almost pleadingly, "You understand me, don't you? It's all so clear." We didn't understand her of course, but now it's all so clear—here she is, a legend and a curiosity since World War I, living abroad and becoming more American herself, living through one lost generation and finding another and understanding them both—a shrewd, sturdy, salty, strangely kindly personality. *Life* snapped her best monument: Gertrude Stein saluting on Hitler's balcony at Berchtesgaden, where she and Alice B. Toklas "sat comfortably and at home in garden chairs." For her own best epitaph one might paraphrase her words on the G. I.'s: "She has become more American all American and Gertrude Stein shows it and knows it, God bless her."

KATHERINE SIMONS



## A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF THE SOUTHWEST

*Lyle Saunders*

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**T**HIS BIBLIOGRAPHY, a service of the University of New Mexico's Research Bureau on Latin America and Cultural Relations in the Southwest, attempts to list, with such thoroughness as time and resources permit, current materials dealing with the Southwest. The Southwest, as here defined, includes all of New Mexico and Arizona, and parts of Texas, Utah, Oklahoma, Colorado, Nevada, and California.

The symbol (F) designates fiction; (J) is used to indicate materials on the juvenile level.

Much of the work of gathering items for inclusion in this issue was done by Jack Vogel. Included are mainly those titles which were published or came to our attention between October 1 and December 31, 1946.

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## LOS PAISANOS

### Saludo a Todos Los Paisanos:

As I walked across the campus to class one morning not long ago, I saw Dr. Clark and Dr. Mitchell chatting together in front of the Administration Building. There were students to the left of them, and students to the right of them; there were students fanning out in all directions to focal points, south, east, and west. One motorcycle "cop" was directing student traffic to parking areas, and another one was regulating the flow of traffic south to Central Avenue, where it became a blur of continuous movement. I wondered if Dr. Clark was reminiscing about his first appearance on the campus in 1907, at which time he found the president of the two-building institution of higher learning dressed in overalls doing carpentry work. I wondered if Dr. Mitchell was comparing the present enrollment figure of 3,500 with the enrollment figure of his first year here (1912), at which time there were ninety-nine students. Both men have recently retired, and it was nice to see them together, for they symbolize the finest traditions of academic life at the University of New Mexico. Not many of those hundreds of students passing by knew those two men, yet every one of them will benefit by the educational foundations which they helped to build at the University, by the teaching standards which they established, and by the ideals which they upheld.

George Curry of Kingston, New Mexico, is eighty-five years of age, but at the present time he is busily engaged in putting the finishing touches on his *Memoirs*, which will soon be published. Few men living today have had a more colorful life than this former Governor of New Mexico. You may fill in the dramatic background for yourself, or better still, read his forthcoming book; but here are the highlights. He was born in Louisiana before the Civil War, and when his father, who had been a captain in the Confederate Army, was killed during the Ku Klux Klan activities, his mother moved to Dodge City, Kansas.

Here the young Curry became acquainted with Wild Bill Hickok and other desperadoes of the period. When he was eighteen years old he went to the "buffalo country" in Texas, and there became acquainted with many of the famous buffalo hunters. In the 'seventies he drifted into Lincoln County, and there took an active part in the Lincoln County Wars. He knew Billy the Kid, and other "bad men" of this area and era. He served with "Teddy" Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War. In the later years of his life he was appointed Chief of Police of Manila, and rounded out his eventful career as the Governor of Samar in the Philippines.

Most everybody knows that Conrad A. Hilton, who was born and reared in San Antonio, New Mexico, has achieved fame and fortune in the hotel business. Perhaps you may not have heard that Thomas Ewing Dabney is finishing the manuscript of a book on this nationally known hotel man. Dabney, who sold the *Socorro Chieftain* last year in order to devote his entire time to the project, is the author of *One Hundred Great Years: the Story of the Times-Picayune*, which was published by the Louisiana State University Press in 1944. In preparation for the job of writing this book, Mr. Dabney read every issue of the *Times-Picayune*, a task which consumed nearly five years. In recognition of his scholarly contribution the author was awarded the Kappa Tau Alpha prize by the University of Missouri, and just recently was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa key by Sewanee, where more than forty years ago he made a straight "A" record. When questioned concerning this belated recognition of his scholastic record by his alma mater, Mr. Dabney laughingly replied that Sewanee didn't have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter when he was in college.

A few years ago I heard Robert Frost make the statement during a lecture on modern poetry that in his opinion the making of a beautiful book was as great an achievement as the writing of a great poem. He was at the time specifically paying tribute to a former Amherst student of his who showed great promise as a poet but who turned to the printing of beautiful books as an outlet for his creative talent. Certainly Carl Hertzog, designer and printer of El Paso, would measure up to Robert Frost's standards in the book trade. Mr. Hertzog's recent volume entitled *Calendar of Twelve Travelers through the Pass of the North* is perfectly beautiful, and the achievement of a perfectionist. The first edition was limited to fifty copies and sold for twenty-five dollars. Tom Lea has done the illustrations of the twelve travelers and they are superb. If you haven't seen the *Calendar* you must do so

because of its beauty and because it will definitely be a collector's item of Western Americana. Following are the twelve travelers that the famous artist gives us: Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Fray Agustín Rodrigues, Antonio de Espejo, Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, Juan de Oñate, Fray García de San Francisco, Diego de Vargas, Zebulon Pike, Juan María Ponce de Leon, James Magoffin, Alexander Doniphan, Big Foot Wallace.

Another recent de luxe edition designed and printed at the Pass on the Rio Bravo by Carl Hertzog is the volume of stories and poems by Eugene Rhodes called *The Little World Waddies*. This volume was done for William Hutchinson of Cohasset Stage, Chico, California, who handled all orders for it. The book must have delighted all of the admirers of Rhodes. J. Frank Dobie wrote the introduction for it, and Harold Bugbee illustrated it. The stories included are "The Tie-Fast Men," "Aforesaid Bates," "Trail's End," "Shoot the Moon," and "The Bird in the Bush." There are twenty-eight Rhodes poems, and among them is the better-known one called "A Ballade of Wild Bees." It first appeared in *Out West* in March, 1902. Here it is: What do you think about it?

#### A BALLADE OF WILD BEES

Far, in a dim and lonely land,  
Where desert breezes swoon and die,  
She dwells, and waves of drifting sand  
In league-long silence 'round her lie;  
She hears the wild bees humming by  
In drowsy minor melodies;  
She calls them friends—yet scarce knows why—  
My Lady of the Honey Bees!

She loves at eventide to stand  
And watch the sunset flame and die.  
Shading her clear eyes with her hand  
She marks her cheerful comrades fly  
Athwart the golden glory nigh;  
She hears the night winds in the trees;  
She joys in God's fair earth and sky,  
My Lady of the Honey Bees!

Dear, have you learned to understand  
The wild bees' lore and mystery?  
The love that makes all labor grand,  
The grateful heart, the patient eye,



LOS PAISANOS

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That from a barren land and dry  
Can gather sweets and song—like these  
Your wise wee kin, whose courage high  
Is yours—my Queen of Honey Bees!

*L'Envoi*

Brave heart! Too strong for moan or sigh,  
You shame us in our slothful ease;  
Sing on! The grudging fates defy,  
And learn life's lesson—from the bees!

Hasta la próxima vez.

JULIA KELEHER

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## EXPERIMENTAL POETRY: A SYMPOSIUM

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Experiment, Revolution, and Tradition . Thomas Howells

The Scope of Experimental Poetry . . . Meade Harwell

A Theory of Dealing with Experimental  
Poetry . . . . .

Kurt H. Wolff

Notes Toward a Marxist Criticism . . . Thomas McGrath

The Nightmare. A Story . . . . . Jean Byers

Thank You, I'm All Right. A Story . . . Lois Jacobsen

My Little Genius of the Malayan Spell . . . Dean Cadle

Poems, by Deane Mowrer, Carol Hall, J. S. Moodey,

Helen Burlin, Mary Ruth Funk, and others

Book Reviews . . . . Book Lists . . . . Other Features

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# QUARTERLY REVIEW

VOLUME XVI

WINTER, 1946

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## CONTRIBUTORS

ALAN SWALLOW, editor of the symposium on experimental poetry, teaches English and creative writing at the University of Denver and is also associated with The Swallow Press and William Morrow & Co. Contributors to the symposium are MEADE HARWELL, author of *Poems from Several Wildernesses*, who is a graduate student at the University of Chicago; THOMAS MCGRATH, of New York, whose first collection of poems, *First Manifesto*, was represented in the volume *Three Young Poets* and who will have another volume of poems appear this year; THOMAS HOWELLS, who with Harwell, Wolff, and Swallow published the magazine *Experiment* and who now teaches English at Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington; KURT WOLFF, who teaches in the sociology department of Ohio State University and who has published poems in various magazines and experimental fiction in *Partisan Review* and other journals.

L. R. LIND, who teaches classics at the University of Kansas at Lawrence, Kansas, has had publications of poetry and prose in a number of magazines and has done translations of verse and prose from seven different languages. JEAN BYERS, formerly a commissioned playwright for N. E. A., has published numerous plays and musical comedies; she now teaches English at Stanford University. DEAN CADLE, a college senior at Berea College, interested mainly in writing about the Philippines, has made an excellent record in college writing contests and has published in a number of magazines. MARK NEIDER, born in Roumania, is a teacher by profession but during the war worked as a shipfitter in a Jersey shipyard; he has published fiction in various magazines. LOIS JACOBSEN, who lives in Iowa City, Iowa, has had fiction appear here before; another of her stories was in the March issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. LEON WOLFF, of Chicago, appears in this issue with his first piece of published fiction, although he has published articles previously.

All poets in this issue are new to the NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY REVIEW. DEANE MOWER, a graduate student at the University of Denver, has published poems and articles of criticism in *Modern Verse*, *New Republic*, and *Furioso*. CAROL HALL lives in Ithaca, New York. GLADYS HYDE recently went from Texas to New York to study and to work as a librarian; she has published one collection of her poems, *From the Gyrat Bit*. ALBERTINE FOX was born in the Cook Islands but now lives in Los Angeles, where she works as a waitress; she has published poems in several magazines and is working on a novel. WILSON C. DENHALTER is an undergraduate at the University of Denver. J. S. MOODEY lives on a ranch near Sanger, California. HELEN BURLIN was born in Boston and educated there and in Paris; she has pursued a musical career and has published poems in a number of magazines and in one collection of her own verse. JAMES HALL, an instructor in English at Cornell, has published in *Harper's*. MARY RUTH FUNK, who teaches in Skinner Junior High School in Denver, has published stories, poems, plays, and articles in several women's and educational magazines. MAE WINKLER GOODMAN lives in Cleveland and has published poems in many magazines; her brochure, *Foam against the Sky*, won the 1945 publication award of *American Weave*. JACKSON MAC LOW, a poet and painter, lives in Bearsville, New York, and has published poems and critical essays in *avant garde* magazines.

Of the reviewers for this issue, ALBERT C. F. WESTPHAL is a member of the history department of the College of the City of New York, where his major interests are public law and foreign policy; RICHARD F. BEHRENDT is Professor of International Affairs and Chairman of Area Studies at Colgate University, Hamilton, New York; DINSMORE WHEELER, new to these pages, lives in Huron, Ohio; LLOYD LÓZES GOFF, an Albuquerque artist, is at present living in New York; MARY WICKER, whose specialty is Spanish translation, lives in Albuquerque; VINCENT GAROFFOLO also lives in Albuquerque, where he runs the Guadalupe Art Gallery and Book Shop. Other reviewers, most of whom have appeared here formerly, are all members of the teaching staff of the University of New Mexico. W. P. ALBRECHT, KATHERINE SIMONS, DANE FARNWORTH SMITH, E. W. TEDLOCK, JR., and C. V. WICKER are all members of the English department; THELMA CAMPBELL and ALBERT R. LOPES are of the department of modern languages; WALTER KELLER is a member of the music department; and DOROTHY WOODWARD teaches history.

LYLE SAUNDERS is assistant professor of sociology and research associate of the School of Inter-American Affairs at the University of New Mexico. JULIA KELEHER, whose "Los Paisanos" is a regular feature of this magazine, is a member of the English department.

## EXPERIMENTAL POETRY: A SYMPOSIUM

*Edited by Alan Swallow*

### INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

**M**ORE THAN THIRTY YEARS of spectacular effort have gone into the making of experimental poetry. I take it that we are not sure there is any other experimental poetry besides this body of it; indeed, our custom is to use the concept *experimental poetry* with perhaps a tolerable air of agreeing what we mean, but without any precise knowledge of what poetry it points to.

Sometimes I think our period is somewhat analogous to that of Shakespeare, when the official, expressed criticism tended to talk about a poetry which was relatively little written. The relationship between Sir Phillip Sidney's *Defense of Poetry* and *Hamlet* is hardly that of a good critical estimate of what is in the play. In the taverns and wherever the poets of the time met, there must have been talk which was closer to the writing of poetry which was being done. Nowadays our poets are more scattered, and only sporadically in the little magazines, in the Greenwich Villages and Left Banks, or in groups gathered around a college or a magazine, has this kind of talk been possible. Our official criticism has improved to make surely the most explicit and satisfactory critical vocabulary ever achieved. Yet even this criticism has been only partially helpful in bringing us to terms with experimental poetry of the day.

Many of the "established" experimental poets have contributed brilliant poems, but few have added to our critical knowledge of their work. If the newer poets are to continue this work, I think it would behoove them well to know what it is they are continuing, extending, increasing, and to be able to say it critically. Hence, I have wished to get together a brief symposium of what four of these people would say in trying to indicate the nature of experimental poetry.

One significant consideration of experimental poetry has been contributed by those who relate it to past poetry. Their point of view is, I presume, indicated by Mr. Howells' notion of "revolution," that is, that much can be learned about *modern* experimentalism, at least, in noting how it shrugs off some trappings of an immediately preceding poetry and returns

to some fundamentals of a former poetry. This apparently was a premise of Ezra Pound and the Imagists. And the critical point of view is most valuably indicated in such works as Cleanth Brooks's *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* and in a number of essays by T. S. Eliot and Allen Tate.

Surely this point of view is not quite sufficient, however. In reading experimental poetry one must at some time note the differences between this poetry and any former work—that the French Symbolists, the Imagists, or any of the others, are not direct descendants of the metaphysicals or any others but have injected a note of their own. The work spills over the cup of poetry which we have made sensible with criticism. Valuable criticism has been contributed by Yvor Winters, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Kenneth Burke, and others in an effort to bring our critical knowledge to terms with our observable reading of poetry. One of these, at least, Mr. Winters, has found that modern practices in experimental poetry demand some new concepts in critical reading. He has not placed a large importance upon “experimental” as one of these. But continued use of the term indicates a need to examine it more closely, a problem Mr. Harwell has evidently set for himself, defining the term mainly by exclusion and coming out with the feeling that the term has validity. Mr. Wolff has a similar regard for the need for defining the term and for finding it useful.

One of the most significant experimental groups has been the Marxists. With a set of concepts and a philosophy derived from studies usually considered outside those of literature—from philosophy, economics, politics, and history—and with a need to extend aesthetic sensibility and knowledge into heretofore little touched segments of human experience, the Marxists were essentially experimental in this notion, at least, of “extending” literary activity. I hazard the opinion, also, that they might well have been more experimental in extending the traditional modes of literary perception in any way demanded by the new perception or sensibility of the Marxist philosophy. I believe this is part of the charge Mr. McGrath makes against Marxist criticism. Instead of examining experimental poetry from a Marxist viewpoint, he has taken the valuable liberty of examining Marxist criticism from the viewpoint of the experimental poet who sees the need for recognition within Marxist thought for experimental literary activity.

Ordinarily I suppose it is not just for an editor to enter into the discussion he has provoked. A part of the original plan of this symposium as suggested by Mr. Harwell and seconded by the others was that I should attempt some critical examination of all four essays. Because of the length of the project for magazine publication, however, I shall instead put down a few remarks from my own point of view.

An analogy with the present situation in poetry has been attractive to me for a number of years. An amusing trick question in a comprehensive examination in English literature is to ask, “Why don’t we have a course in



the poetry of the fifteenth century?" The answer, of course, is that there wasn't any adequate poetry of the century. This answer ignores a good bit of fine folk poetry, but it does serve to indicate the nature of the literary scene when the sixteenth century was opening. Carry-over from an older poetry in the new century was mainly an effort by Stephen Hawes, Edmund Spenser, and others to keep alive the allegorical narrative and the pastoral. Language, insight, philosophy had changed, and a new poetic method was evidently demanded. One of the first to jump into the breach was John Skelton with a poetry which reminds me very much of modern experimental practice and which W. H. Auden has found worthy of imitation. Skelton's practice, however, was left still-born. From the Continent Sir Thomas Wyatt imported a poetic method which was found more resourceful for the needs of the sixteenth century, more resourceful in the sense that it was more versatile and complete in communicating the sensibility and insight being developed. Surely both Skelton and Wyatt were great experimentalists, both grasping new methods of writing; the one grasped a method which was judged, historically, to have little survival value, and the other grasped a method which was accepted, developed, and used by some of the great poets in English.

I have called this early sixteenth-century situation analogous with that of the modern period. But already it is apparent that the analogy is faulty. We have had many revolutions in recent times and are surely within one now, which I trust we may direct, but these are all within the shadow of the Renaissance. We are not ushered into—or ushering into—a completely new cultural *milieu* which has no contact with the past. Many of us well think that the grip of the past must be loosened more than it has been; yet revolutionary thought of all kinds today seems to be posited on use of some old methodologies, in some cases use of some aspects of our culture to change other aspects (social institutions must change to fit a changing and modern world; economic institutions must change to meet the realities of production; or whatever the proposal).

Response in the literary world has been various, according to the estimate of the situation. Perhaps it would not be too false to say that there were three main estimates. One was that the traditions of English verse were resourceful enough to meet the needs of modern sensibility. I must judge this one of the most appropriate responses, since close to a half of the best modern poets made such an estimate, and since many of the "experimentalists," such as Eliot, Stevens, Pound, and Tate, have felt their practice to be in many ways within the tradition and have depended upon their reading of the tradition for many elements of their practice.

A second response was that of "revolution," in Mr. Howells' use of the term: to throw over qualities of late nineteenth-century verse to return to some older practices, and to extend those practices as need be. Proponents

of this judgment of the situation are probably most numerous among poets of some quality of recent years. They are usually called "experimental," and I think rightly, since their contact with the tradition was flickering, frequently confined to certain resources abstracted from the tradition, and variously successful. They worked toward new combinations, extension of their readings of the past, and development of new methods. New combinations, extensions of the old, new developments—all involved experimental activity.

A third reponse was one of nearly complete experimentalism—finding methods which were as new as possible. I am dealing with tenuous categories which in the end may not be very fruitful; yet one must distinguish in the large between the experimentalism of Eliot, say, and the experimentalism of the surrealists or of Dylan Thomas; probably William Carlos Williams and the "objectivists" are appropriately considered fully experimental, with little contact with traditional practice (unless one would consider the practice of primitive poetry, merely because of its existence in history, as a part of the tradition; similarities between the poetry of the primitive peoples and modern experimentalists are evident, but I think they are not there because the moderns were striving to imitate the methods of primitive poetry).

Experimentalism in poetry, then, is evidently a "real" thing. Our most inclusive account of its methods in the modern period is that of Yvor Winters under his terms "primitivism" and "decadence." But there is a place for a more inclusive term historically and categorically, and that term, apparently, is to be "experimental." The term refers to two matters, so far as I can judge:

(1) Historically it refers to efforts to create new methodologies, new technical resources for perception and communication, and to the critical test of these in the trial-and-error "laboratory" of writing a poem.

(2) In the modern period, this inclusive meaning of the term has not fully been realized. In most cases it has referred to excerpting from the tradition, isolating certain resources of poetry and extending them into a new context. This experimental effort has been justified in criticism by a feeling that the "matter" of modern life required certain techniques to handle it; that the poet had been isolated by the *bourgeoisie* and must investigate the unsullied realm left to him; that the impact of science and loss of faith had fractured the experience and created the dissociated sensibility. Whatever the drive or rationalization, modern experimentalism has netted us possibly a very few new techniques of carry-over value to later generations. But it has netted us some very fine poems—undoubtedly several great poems—which are of the sort which investigate one corner of our experience with great ability; to say it another way, in these poems we have a remarkable and permanent record of the dissociated sensibility.

## EXPERIMENT, REVOLUTION, AND TRADITION

*Thomas Howells*

EXPERIMENTALISM IN LITERATURE, as I understand it, is the point of view supporting the recurrent attempt to achieve a literary form or manner which will be adequate for the representation of new insights and new outlooks not implicit in older forms and manners. The fundamental postulate of experimentalism, I should think, is this: that the possibilities of expression by a literary form are implicit in the terms and conditions of the form itself. With increasing use, the possibilities, while not necessarily diminished, are liable to be prejudiced. Originality—which I assume the experimentalist to equate with creativity—is not likely in the latter stages of a form, whether it be the periodic sentence, the heroic couplet, the novel of manners, or the characteristic diction of an age, a cult, or a class.

In his desire for newness, the experimentalist does not invariably assert that existing forms are exhausted and unfavorable to further achievement. But the newness he seeks is that of kind, not of example.

The experimentalism I have been trying to define is of the extreme, one-hundred-per-cent variety. Literature has its partial experimentalists just as politics has its partial revolutionists. And in poetry as in politics, the more extreme one's position is, the less doubt there is about it—at least with regard to classification. No one would question that *Finnegans Wake* is experimental writing. In diction, in imagery, in arrangement, in the manners of connection—including intellectual and emotional connection—in purpose and theme, the work is constitutive of a kind and not exemplary. But how many novae does it take to constitute a kind; and once constituted, how many further examples are required to make the kind traditional? Is Kenneth Fearing an experimental poet, thirty years after Carl Sandburg? By general report, Hopkins is an experimentalist and Robert Frost a traditionalist. Yet is the total effect of Frost's poetry any closer to Longfellow's than Hopkins' is to Swinburne's or Sidney Lanier's?

I think we would be better off in dealing with cases if we granted that a poet may be an experimentalist in one or several of the elements that make up the poem, and a traditionalist, with or without fervor, in the others. This conception helps us understand how likely it is that the same people who would not have read Frost in 1910 because he didn't sound like Emerson were reading him with enthusiasm in 1930 because he sounded more like Emerson than T. S. Eliot did. The rhythm of Hopkins' poetry has a startling urgency about it which in the 1930's made it seem as new as Ezra Pound's. But Hopkins' diction is traditional—not to say archaic—compared with Frost's. How are we to call Hopkins an experimental poet and Frost a traditional one unless we say that the test is solely one of rhythm?

Is an experimentalist one who is habitually willing to gamble on the expressiveness of a new form? Does he seek to create new forms, or does he simply improvise form on the spur of other necessities? Is he one whose poems are exhibitions primarily of form, new form? The poets who played at rondels and triolets at the end of the last century used content only to body forth their form. Were they not experimentalists only for the reason that their forms were old, bearing the stamp of origin in another age? Auden recently has used forms like the rondel—is he still an experimentalist?

These questions preceded in my own thinking the answers I was able to devise for them. I believe we can see what experimentalism is about if we place it in critical relation to two other conceptual names for attitudes and methods in the arts: tradition and revolution.

I should distinguish the revolutionary from the traditional in the following way. Revolution in literature is an attempt to extend the tradition of letters by a recovery of its primary motive force and a reassertion of its basic qualities. Revolution is historically protestant in its directions—it seeks to recapture what has been lost or obscured in the sequence of events and operations from an original source. The aesthetic of the Renaissance revealed this protestantism in its aims and standards. Wordsworth, another innovator, sought to recover what had been lost to poetry, not to gain what poetry had never had. The imagists and free versifiers of the 1912 movement were also endeavoring to restore qualities which had abounded in a golden age. These revolutionists went farther afield than their predecessors—the golden age had many different locations, chronological and geographic; but the animating principle was the passion traditional to revolutionists: what had been lost must needs be found, what was basic must be reasserted.

Experiment, I believe, achieves work of permanent value when it serves as a technique for the literary revolutionist; it becomes, I think, strictly contemporary, a random exploitation of blind alleys, when it leaves the hand of the revolutionist and sets up a program of its own, when it ceases to be the instrument of change and becomes the instrumentalist. Self-sufficing, experimentalism achieves neither the old nor the new. It may achieve the unique, which having no referability and no power of attachment to the past has likewise none for the future. The new is that which stands in a recognizable sequence from the old. The genuinely new, I believe, is most likely to come as the result of a search for the fundamental undertaking in protest against the conventional.

As others have done, I would distinguish the conventional from the traditional for the same reason that I have distinguished the experimental from the revolutionary. The strictly conventional is no better fitted to maintain the old than the strictly experimental is to discover the new. They do not so much advance their causes as render them insupportable.

Tradition is, I think, simply the principle of continuity in the arts, as in other activities of civilization. T. S. Eliot has much the same conception. I disagree only with his apparent idea that literature is a sort of investment trust, self-funding and self-perpetuating. It may be a trust, but it is not self-funding; and it has no unique power of survival which preserves it from an oblivion which overtakes all other aspects of civilization. Literature is never the only part of a civilization that survives. We know civilizations which have survived in various ways but the relics of which do not include any literature they may have had; yet we do not have any literature which is the only extant relic of a civilization, unless one were to denominate the Homeric age and the Periclean age as different civilizations—as I am not willing to do.

It is in their different solutions for the problem of communication that I think we can see the radical difference between experiment and tradition. Experiment renders experience without classifying it; tradition represents experience by classifying it. Which is right? I suppose the preference turns on the question of whether there are new experiences in a generation of literary experimentation or only new experiencers. Certainly no one would deny that twentieth-century man has some experiences beyond the opportunity of man in Homer's century. But what about nineteenth-century man and eighteenth-century man? Does the citizen of our time have experiences which are unique, entirely unconnected and unconnectable to theirs? I should like to repeat my belief that whatever has no connection with the past will prove to have the same irrelevance to the future. The purely unique in form would be the purely contemporary in significance; its merit would not be a valid question, for merit is an affair of continuity. The most that could be found out about the unique work of art, aside from its uniqueness, would be its functional relation to the unique conditions which gave rise to it and the unique artist who achieved it.

I am not sure that I can accept the idea of pure uniqueness in the arts, not after five thousand years of work in progress. Surely the difference between *Finnegans Wake* and the *Book of the Dead* is not one of unrelated, unlikable objects. Both move in the domain of literature and draw their significance from the renewable human experience which gives content to that domain.

If we deny that absolute uniqueness is possible in the arts, we then fall back on partial uniqueness—and there we had better give up the idea of uniqueness altogether in favor of the unassimilable, the unattachable, the contemporary. I should not admit the idea even of the purely contemporary, from an unwillingness to believe that any contemporary event or situation or work is totally without relation to the past. A work of art may be purely contemporary in its duration, at least in the sense that it has no power of self-extension into the future of art. But we know enough of the

shadowy life possessed by the host of Elizabethan writers who lie on the edge of the outer darkness surrounding Shakespeare to understand what the value of the "strictly contemporary" writer can be to future times—that is, enough survival value to make a penumbra out of an aura, given a sufficiently intense investigation.

In twenty years, more or less, of concern with poetry, I have seen its modernism successively oriented toward the Greek, Latin, and medieval poets, the Elizabethan poets, the metaphysical poets, and now, currently, the Augustan poets. There have been side excursions into French, Chinese, and Italian periods; but this ranging in cultural geography has been subordinate to the recapitulation of cultural time. This modern revolt from the conventional in poetry is productive of permanent worth, I think, in so far as it seeks to reassert the fundamental and thus to extend the traditional. I believe that a considerable part of the experimentalism in the modern movement, omitting some of its slogans, has been productive of worth by being revolutionary in the sense I have discussed. The part which has been experiment for experiment's sake is smaller than a recent judge like Karl Shapiro, surveying the scene in his *Essay on Rime*, seems to believe. There is, on first thought, a singular discrepancy in that *Essay* between the praise Shapiro bestows—rightly, I feel—on individual poets like Eliot and the contempt he heaps upon the movements he finds them to represent. But when I realize that Shapiro is choosing between experiment for experiment's sake and experiment for poetry's sake—and the sake of all it can mean to man—the discrepancy turns out to be a discrimination.

At the start of these remarks I said that a basic belief of experimentalism is that the possibilities of expression by a form are inherent in the form. I believe that, with some reservations about the nature of "inherence"; but I do not believe that the creation of a new form necessarily changes the possibilities of expression or even increases them. New forms do not mean new expressiveness necessarily—that depends in large part on the one who does the expressing and on what he has to express. A poet can, God knows, be just as trite in free verse as in a sonnet. New expressiveness comes when a new poet, having something new to express, succeeds in doing it. He may use or make a new form in the process; but the newness of his form is ancillary, not primary, to the newness of his creative act. Not all new forms are inherently well expressive of new good things; some are very possibly inherent with bad expressiveness of bad things, and old bad things at that.

As the experimentalist would equate creativity with originality, I would equate it with authenticity. That equation makes me a traditionalist, I suppose, in experimental eyes. But personally I feel more inclined to revolution, the protestantism of the arts.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SCOPE OF EXPERIMENTAL  
POETRY*Meade Harwell*

IT IS A CHARACTERISTIC of our time, in its confusion, that the development of poetry away from its tradition, while looked upon as valid activity and even anticipated as inevitable, has nevertheless been objected to as it has taken its "experimental" step. Ironical, too, is the fact that the reader, even while taking pride in his "openmindedness," has tended oftentimes to regard the departure from the tradition as illegitimate. For while recognizing the legitimacy of "experimentalism" as a method of discovery in scientific procedures, the reader, impressed with the general skepticism of the scientific method, has exercised the cautions of "suspended judgment" upon a phenomenon which has appeared strange in the light of his previous reading experience. The advantages of inconclusive experiment and suspended judgment in science have been fully extolled. Less emphasis has been made upon the probability that tendencies resulting from "suspended judgment" lead to intellectual sloth, indifference, and the inability to make any decisions or name any preferences. Regardless, the effects of skepticism have registered with the reader of modern experimental poetry. Thus, the discrete result: the reader, conditioned into trained obedience, accepts the traditional, familiar statement in poetry, refers the experimental poem to a later pronouncement, or, if it is seemingly "vague," "too new," "strange," or the like, rejects it as an unrealized and incommunicable result.

But part of the difficulty has also been with the creator himself. In his zeal to manifest the "new," or to place the processes of change into adequate poetic synthesis,<sup>1</sup> he has profoundly diverged from the tradition of poetry which, in its expression, was more nearly a continuum of ideas and modes of structure, at least up to the time of the Imagists. In consequence, poetry has at times appeared, if new, almost polar to the traditional aspects, and frequently beyond the comprehension of the reader. As Yvor Winters has illustrated in *Primitivism and Decadence*, modern experimentalism can lead to obscurity if not consciously constrained from a too rampant and arbitrary use of modern techniques. It goes without saying that the presence of obscurity has tended to deter much appreciation of experimental poetry which would otherwise have been investigated to the point of yielding its final meaning.

But the experimental creator who is obscure cannot be condemned more than the modern critic-exponent of modernist poetry. For quite often

<sup>1</sup> "Adequate" in the modern sense has involved in general a simultaneity of symbolic activity, implications on the Self which are Freudian in tendency, intellectualism, intellectualized mysticism, urbanish rhetoric, evocative subtlety of expression, a tendency toward abstract statement.

the latter has appeared to follow uncritically in the wake of the creator rather than to act as a guard against the tendency of the poet to set forth an uncompleted act in the poem itself. Any explanation of this fact is inevitably oversimple; yet part of the problem certainly lies in the critics' examination of structural parts of the poem rather than its structural entity as a poem.<sup>2</sup> A part of the difficulty lies in the general lack of closely accurate measurements by which a poem may be examined and related—rather than its present-day demonstrations, for instance, as a convenience of personal taste, as a cultural derivative, as a psychological phenomenon, or as a synthesis of intellectualist ideas. This is not to suggest that, in search for the constant, inclusive measurement, one should return to the Humanist equation based on a romantic-classical dichotomy. It is possible that examination of poetry on this basis will ultimately prove ineffectual and too simple for the complexities of poetic criticism. But it is to suggest, as negative inference, that, insofar as the poem is examined in terms of touchstones, paradoxes, tensions, or as a dynamic, a mystique, or the like and insofar as these terminologies are investigated at the expense of the poem's accomplishment as a structural, communicable entity, there must be as well the inevitable tendency to accept the poem that fulfills the search of one's particular and fragmentary fancy, rather than the poem in which structural accomplishment is complete. A basic irresponsibility of judgment, regardless of the critic's personal integrity, must be the result. And such criticism becomes indeed a rationalization of particulars in art, with corresponding effects on experiment in poetry, rather than an explanation based on a rigorous and inclusive inspection.

The instances of such criticism are available almost daily to the reader. Thus one reads the sage prediction that Hart Crane's poetry represents a fundamental cosmic Oneness with his times and will someday be too clear rather than obscure as now.<sup>3</sup> Wallace Fowlie, in a statement on St.-J. Perse, writes that "without possessing the architecture of Dante's realms, the realms of St.-J. Perse are the site of the modern voyage. The realms of Dante narrate the epic of theology. The realms of . . . Perse narrate the poem of a spiritual quest which never defines itself."<sup>4</sup> Granted the correctness of Mr.

<sup>2</sup> This fact has been perhaps most recently dramatized, as effectively perhaps as by any past group, by the Neo-Aristotelian group of R. S. Crane, Norman MacLean, and Elder Olsen at the University of Chicago. And it is possible, as Kenneth Burke suggests in *Accent* (Winter, 1943), that herein may be the egress from such a dilemma of criticism.

<sup>3</sup> This paraphrase refers to Waldo Frank's introduction to *The Collected Poems of Hart Crane*. It is not certain just what Mr. Frank's definition of "too clear" denotes, but it is reasonably safe to state that one of the things which it cannot mean is that the poem will ever exist as a completed creation. It is possible that time may produce an amalgam estimate of *The Bridge* which will stand in estimate of its communicable qualities. But this will hardly be adequate, nor will any other device which resides outside the demonstrations of the poem itself. Crane, as a visionary, was an inchoate conceptualist. His theme, though realized in part, remains an inspired, unrealized emanation in other parts, and in final projection falls short of indubitable communication.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace Fowlie, "The Poetic Tradition of St.-J. Perse," *Chimera*, Summer, 1944.



Fowlie's statement, it must be added that in the midst of the poet's imaginative rhetoric one observes a definite limpness of impact due to too much undefined unarchitectural voyage. To take still another instance, Lawrence Hart discusses the effect of "distortion" in poetry as practiced by his Activist group: "Their content—especially that of Miss [Rosalie] Moore's poem—is not supposed to focus until after a number of readings. (Of course the writer needs to make such a poem interesting enough so it will be pleasing to reread it until it focuses.)"<sup>5</sup> Perhaps Mr. Hart should indicate the *number* of times such a type of poem should be read. Thus he would provide the reader with at least a clue as to when he might reasonably expect to arrive at a grasp of the poem. The assignment of a definite reading period would be no more sophisticated than his assumption that a poem should arbitrarily not have "to focus" until after several readings. Needless to say, to secure "distortion" in poetry by such a device is to reduce poetry to a final and deathful obscurity, for it is probably true that no poem can ultimately survive that is not written with the ideal of sensible communication in any and all readings.

These examples are merely illustrative of the situations that exist, and perhaps inevitably so, when poetry at any time attempts to step so boldly from an accepted periphery of statement. On the other hand, in suggesting certain deficiencies, one must observe that the experimental impulse in poetry has resulted in an extraordinary heightening of expression in poetry, and has literally seized the modern poetic temperament in some of its most talented manifestation. It is of less wonder, in consequence, that in criticism of the negative aspects of experimentalism there has often been a tendency to associate with experimentalism many failures in poetry which are not exclusively of an experimental type. At least one reason for this has been the neglect of the profound relevance of traditional poetry in the modern scene. Any use of the "experimental" presupposes a relative existence of the "traditional" in poetry, as the alternative for comparison and analysis; and traditional poetry as such has been much more relevant in the modern affair of poetry than as a mere historical influence from another generation. A further reason has been that, in the general tendency to associate all modern poetry with the experimental, there has been a correlative failure to establish specific points of demarcation between experimental and traditional poetry, a fact that has automatically made all experimentalism the sufferer—for instance, of the charge of being "inchoate." Of course, it is not certain that such a demarcation can be accomplished. The methods that we have, either of science or of the more qualitative impressionism of literary critics, are not supremely satisfactory for the purpose.

It is reasonably certain that variant attitudes toward experimental poetry will continue, as well as attendant confusions on the subject, until

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Hart and others, "Ideas of Order in Experimental Poetry," *Circle*, No. 6.

more cogent understandings are established of the relation between the experimental and the traditional. And probably any attempt to criticize these confusions will be negligible in result. Still it is of some relevance to attempt an examination of a few of the challenging aspects of the attitudes upon the subject that prevail. Perhaps by the attempt a more approximate concept of the nature of experimental poetry may be obtained, and indeed a greater awareness of the relation of experiment in poetry to the tradition. There are, then, four prominent attitudes which may be examined. Although they by no means offer a complete representation in regard to the subject, perhaps they will at least illustrate some of the problems involved.

1. *Experimental poetry is an obscure and/or incomplete poetry.*

This criticism exhibits a characteristic tendency to accept a part as indicative of the whole, as well as to relate the difficult-to-understand with the obscure. Perhaps even more importantly, it is related with that aspect of scientific experiment which is an incompleting effort. Modern experimental poetry can be and is, on occasions, obscure and incomplete. But the statement is applicable also to almost any modern traditional poetry. The critic must realize that no poetry, experimental or traditional, can exist if it functions merely as obscure or incomplete poetry, and that if experimental poetry were indeed to be characteristically obscure and incomplete it would be doomed to ultimate failure as expression. Likewise, in using the term "experimental," one must see this poetry as something beyond the experimental process of the laboratory in which conclusive results have not yet been ascertained. All poetry may be described as laboratory experiment in the sense that the essential process of determination of word, structure, and final conception represents a series of trial efforts. Experimental poetry is capable of completed statement just as the laboratory is capable of producing a completed experiment; being thus capable, it has potentialities of something more than the inchoate or incomplete.

An incomplete poetry represents a failure of sensibility or of sensitivity, or of both,<sup>6</sup> and sometimes incorporates obscurantist elements as a part of the failure. Its incompleteness may be technical, intellectual, or emotional. Obscure poetry is more directly a failure of sensibility, a case in which the poem has failed as a communicative judgment and exists instead as a dangling, semi-understood, provocative, unrealizable thing to be examined, re-examined, variously interpreted, and never encircled with a generally

<sup>6</sup> By *sensibility* is meant the intelligence and dynamic force of the poem, the elements of rational communication by which the poem achieves meaning to the reader—the underlying definitiveness of a poem which makes it a completion and an entity. By *sensitivity* is meant the refining emotives of a poem which place the sensibility of the poem in its exact status by imagery, words, and symbology. Sensibility and sensitivity in a poem are, of course, interlocked and indispensable to each other as form and content are, in their popular meaning, in a definition of what is contained in a poem.

accepted meaning. Shakespeare failed to give sufficient reference for all his sonnets, and, as previously mentioned, Hart Crane's *The Bridge* possesses only fragment sensibility. Eliot's "The Waste Land" has not yet come into the completed experience of general reader-understanding, and it is possible that parts of it will not do so simply because Eliot has evocativized in part beyond the denotative action necessary to sustain it. The distinguished failure of modern poetry has been its failure of sensibility. Where this failure has occurred in experiment, it has involved an inchoate or obscure experimentation; and as experimentalism has participated in this inchoate obscurity, it has eliminated its potentialities as accomplished experimentation. The modern experimentalist has the privilege of his experiment; but the obscurity or incompleteness of it will derive largely from the extent of his awareness of poetry, his strength of intellect, and his ability to survive the trap of modern chaos.

That this can be done is suggested by past poets—Crashaw, Donne, Dryden, Hopkins—whose works were experiments in statement in their own ages. In modern times experimentalism has been a completed effect consistently; thus, in T. S. Eliot—"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "The Hippopotamus," "Ash-Wednesday"; in John Peale Bishop—"Speaking of Poetry," "And When the Net Was Unwound Venus Was Found Ravelled with Mars," "In the Dordogne"; in W. H. Auden—parts of "Songs and Other Musical Pieces." It is one of our failures of judgment that if a poem appears fresh and original but also unfinished, it is then likely to be denominated experimental and a failure. The reader should naturally know the relation of inchoate poetry to experimentalism in poetry, but it is probable that we read with less identification of the poem in relation to its influences and to a tradition than we should. Indeed, it is more probable that we complete our examination of poetry precisely at the point where it should commence—that is, with the question of whether or not the work possesses sufficient creative power and originality to warrant its being read. But to enjoy a poem to its completest manifestation it is desirable to go further, and at least one direction is the identification of its originality in accordance with its experimental or traditional impetus, and the continued examination of it as a poem until its merits, and deficiencies, are unassailably known and related. To do less is to encounter the constant danger of misappraisal, not only on the above grounds, but also a misappraisal of the experiment, which may be simply a more intelligent work than a reader can manage. The man of genius demands an intelligent audience to apprehend the levels of his complexity brought into a complete understanding. It is quite possible, where terms are applied so loosely as the terms "obscurity" and "incompleteness" are today, that *all* poetry, and experimental poetry in particular, will continue to be labeled by these terms with indiscriminating rapture.

2. *Experimental poetry is necessary to poetry but remains an essentially fragmentary statement.*

The statement to follow, a rather typical folkway, was made by James Laughlin in "Editor's Notes," *New Directions VIII*: "Our effort has been, and always will be, to foster and cherish the principles of experimentation or variation from the norm, and original, if sincere, self-expression. Without these forces the writing of any period is liable to go very dead and dry. They are not terribly important as ends in themselves but are very necessary to the overall health of a culture. You might liken them to one of those mysterious chemical substances which must be present in the bloodstream to keep it virile; by itself the substance would never nourish the body, and yet without its action the blood would fail in the job too."

It is ironic that this statement, representing a very decent attitude toward experimentalism, is symbolic as an inchoate statement in itself. For instance, Mr. Laughlin endows experimentation with "principles," which is thus to grant it capable of possessing entity, and with a horizon defined as "variation from the norm." Yet he qualifies the "principles" of existence with the conclusion that "they are not terribly important ends in themselves" and are mainly necessary as regenerative influences on the "overall health of a culture."

It is, of course, anyone's privilege to allot to experimental poetry such importance as he sees for it; but it is also quite possible that to consider experimental poetry in such a manner as Mr. Laughlin has is to blight it practically to extinction. Experimental poetry, if considered on the basis of the individual poem, has oftentimes been an entity of expression in the modern scene; thus, T. S. Eliot's "Prufrock," Wallace Stevens' "Peter Quince at the Clavier." And while it can and does, if one cares to see it thus, "nourish the body" of poetry (minimumly and maximumly, depending on the situation in which it is being written), it is capable of making a profound contribution to poetry in excess of the tradition. Poetry, if it is regarded on the traditional-experimental basis, is then the structure of both the traditional and the experimental. It is possible, furthermore, that the terms exist, as Mr. Laughlin suggests indirectly, as judgments beyond a time consideration, each individuated from but related to the other, and finally contributory to the form and content of a poem by its usage of experimental or traditional properties. Thus E. E. Cummings is quite experimental in that his originality of expression is innovative rather than traditional; which is to say that while remaining within the scope of poetry he achieves a mode which is distinguishable from traditional poetry and cannot be contained successfully in it.

One final remark of Mr. Laughlin should be observed. I refer to his association of "original, if sincere, self-expression" with experimental statement. This attitude appears to evolve out of the tendency to associate

original creativity as automatic experimentation. The statement is but a half-truth at best, and the alternative, as related to traditional creativity, is probably more close to the truth. Shakespeare's sonnets are original self-expression, as are T. S. Eliot's "Ash-Wednesday," Karl Shapiro's "Scyros," Wallace Stevens' "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle," Keats' "Ode to a Grecian Urn," W. H. Auden's "Canzone" ("When shall we learn what should be clear as day"), and Hart Crane's "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen." But obviously these do not fit collectively into the experimental or into the traditional mold. The fact is that original "self-expression" is both or either depending on the properties of its originality. A fresh or original poem may include experimentation but does not necessarily have to in order to be creative. Experimentation, on the other hand, in necessarily involving creative activity, becomes a fresh and original aspect of the creative process while not becoming a component part of all creativity. Experimentalism establishes a new vista of creativity, in which case it is fresh and original as well. Meanwhile, fresh and original creativity may also find a representation in the more familiar vista of the traditional. This difference is important, for today, though the period in its relation to the poetic tradition appears to be dominantly experimental, there are many poets, such as Karl Shapiro, J. V. Cunningham, Randall Jarrell, Yvor Winters, and Allen Tate, whose writing is creative but fundamentally or completely non-experimental.

### 3. "*All poetry is experimental poetry.*"<sup>7</sup>

This statement of Wallace Stevens upon first observation appears to burgeon with truth; a second observation betrays the fact, however, that the statement can mean anything, perhaps everything, and as a final statement represents an attitude of almost complete nihilism toward poetry. For the statement is, in practical application, too simple, too over-inclusive, and leads ultimately to more confusion than realization of concept. An equivalent—a better one, but still insufficient—is to invoke the Aristotelian definition of poetry as an act of catharsis. However, the implications of a position such as Mr. Stevens' have offered a certain attraction to critics and readers whose concept of poetry is essentially pragmatic. As such, then, it should be examined for whatever value it may have.

Offhand, the statement may be approached in two ways: (1) as a statement by the creator who, in the act of composition, senses the flux and flow of phenomena which compose a poem; and (2) as a statement by the reader who senses the "difference" of any poem from its predecessors.

In the first case, the assumption apparently is that each poem presents its own drama of creation; hence no two poems involve the same problem of form, and therefore each poem represents an adventure of creation, iden-

<sup>7</sup> Wallace Stevens, "Poetica Materia," *View*, 2nd Series, No. 3, 1942.

tified as an experiment, which continues until the poem is completed. This view, although reasonably valid in regard to the poem's creation, must fail as a statement regarding poetry. We cannot call all poetry experimental if the term is to have any definitive meaning. Even assuming a latitude for subjective creative processes, the poet customarily creates within a tradition, within, that is, a cultural milieu which in its strength tends to influence the poet sometimes to the point of restraint even of his natural talents. And even though subjectively the poem may undergo an extraordinary rearrangement of properties, the actualized poem is more likely to illustrate a traditional rather than an experimental impulse. Karl Shapiro and J. V. Cunningham are two modern poets who, although differing in ideas on poetry, are still both modern in temperament while tending toward the traditional rather than the experimental in poetry. On the other hand, Stevens and W. C. Williams, modernists in temperament and statement, write characteristically in a mode of experimentalism.<sup>8</sup> To conclude, all poetry must be judged by its actualized historical realization, and any judgment made which is contingent principally on the subjective processes of the poem can result only in chaos.

Nor can the statement be sustained from the reader's point of view, the second possibility enumerated above. Every reader, probably because of the modern stress on individualism and the statistical stress of quantities at the expense of the qualitative, is prone to consider every poem as new or different, hence as an experimental gesture. The problem lies, as in the case of the creator, in the confusion of a uniqueness of the poem with its possible status as experimental poetry. Every poem has the effect of uniqueness. But uniqueness is, so to speak, the effect of completion of the poem. The poem is the communicable structure speaking its unique message in its particular mode. As such, it is related to the experimental or traditional properties which dominantly inhabit the structure of its uniqueness. But neither the quality nor the poem, the vessel of the quality, is rigidly restricted to the experimental as a means of final expression, and indeed the uniqueness as either experimental or traditional is finally known only upon the completion of the poem as statement. Every poem has the privilege of being experimental at its time of creation. It is more likely to be traditional. It will always be, unconditionally, unique. And the reader's

<sup>8</sup> It would be of interest to be able to relate Mr. Stevens' statement to his own manner of creation. An inspired poet, he symbolizes the search of the experimentalist for expression. Unquestionably an enormous amount of experimentation must occur within Mr. Stevens before any poem is ever written by him. It is an important correlate that Mr. Stevens is, as well, one of the most aware poets of our time. His handling of metrics, of textures, the insinuating obliqueness which he projects, all represent one of the most skilled objective treatments of poetry. A point of interest would be to document the relation of one's awareness of his art and its tradition with experimentalism. It is probably true that no experimental poetry is more than mediumly successful without a supreme objectivity in knowledge of relationships of the experiment to the tradition.

feeling of "difference" may ultimately be more profitably used in his gaining an awareness of this fact than by any arbitrary assignment of "difference," unanalyzed, to experimentalism in poetry.

4. *The experimental and the traditional are disparate elements in poetry.*

Any absolute interpretation of this statement is of course impossible. If the experimental were completely apart from the traditional there would be no basis of their comparison. Nevertheless the statement has a pertinent implication in the modern mind largely because of the tendency to make experimental and traditional differences the correlatives of the Humanist division of poetry into romantic and classical disparates. Such a classification of poetry has perhaps been exhausted and abandoned by the more serious critics. Still the classification carries on, largely as a remnant of an old memory in judgment, and more seriously as evidence of the failure to develop other classifications of poetry based on the poem as an object. The result—the pairing of the romantic and classical classification with the experimental and traditional ones—is probably more unconscious than not. Still, since it does persist, it should be briefly considered.

At least two basic differences in the two classifications exist:

(1) The judgments on romantic and classical classification represent a specific assignment of values independent of trends in poetry. The experimental and traditional classification is a more flexible concept, involving judgments considerably bound to trends in a particular period.

(2) The former represents a division of poetry into a classification the values of which are regarded as absolute, timeless, and polar. The latter is more accurately posited as differentiations from each other, rather than polar in relationship, and as variant values in time.<sup>9</sup>

From the vantage of modern poetry, which is probably always the period in which traditional and experimental relationships are the most active and prominent for critical discussion, the absence of dichotomy is striking. Thus one witnesses in Eliot's "Ash-Wednesday" a traditional theme (worship, confessional, attitudes of humility and adoration) and an experimental structure (metrics, imagery); or in Carol Ely Harper's "Sunday Morning Service," a traditional theme (backwoods country Sunday preacher with attendant scene of Sunday School and members), and an experimental structure and symbolism (punctuational devices, free verse; use of attendance chart as nuclear symbol); or in E. E. Cummings' poem "LII," in *One Times One*, a traditional structure and theme (sonnet form, constant flux of Mind in contrast with changelessness of the form of Beauty), and experimental devices (arbitrary conversion of verbs into nouns,

<sup>9</sup> The variant in value must be allowed until its more serious but still unknown plausibility as an absolute may be known. Some further mention will be made of this later in the essay.

decapitalized sentences, variations on traditional usage of adjective and conjunction).

The experimental is in constant process of building from the status quo of the traditional toward its own uniqueness. At no time, however, does it ever depart completely from the tradition. In fact, it is a closer observation to state that its development is so gradual and stumbling that its removal from the tradition is almost inscrutable. There are moments when the experimental trend may be heightened extraordinarily. Thus, today, with the semi-collapse of morality, the redefinitions of conduct by Freud, the extension of scientific and social fact, the investigation into the psyche, a new war, changes in educational concepts, an inevitable extravaganza of experimentation may be predicted in continuation of the experimentation that has already occurred. For it is probably true that experimentalism in poetry is an associate of cultural experimentation in the same period. Likewise, it is even probable that any experimentation in poetry may be measured by the intensity of fermentation and the dominance of chaos and dilemma over the alternative status of social stability. It is probable, finally, that in the extremities of such social fermentation experimental poetry will tend in part, as today, to become a potential rather than an actualization. But this statement cannot be a complete truth: the creator is constantly faced with the requisition of his own decision in a poem and, regardless of the period, is to be held culpable for the performance of his work. No period is free from confusion. The major experimentalist, and traditionalist, pierces through the chaos, out of the dilemma, into entity. Within the determinism of any period lies the face of the individual's own identity and will.

Generally, then, this discussion suggests that experimental poetry is capable of considerable expansion from its present interpretation—in its relation to originality, to the creative process, and to its actualization as a completed work. Likewise, the essay suggests that, by the fact that experimentalism can lead to a completed act, it possesses legitimate entity as a process of art, correlate with and perhaps even parallel with concepts of traditional poetry. And, finally, it suggests that “experimental” and “traditional” effect a logical division in poetry which possesses marked capacities as a sociological and historical introduction to poetry on a systematic basis, and that the terms are to be recommended as a potential “system” for discussion of other criteria in poetry.

Certainly a necessary consequence of any consideration of poetry on such a basis must be an acceptance of experimental activity as more than a fragmentary phenomenon which is catalyst and servant to the tradition. But whether such is possible should not be decided until a fuller measure of poetry has been made as to its experimental-traditional properties, to



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determine if experiment's projection in poetry is as great as it seems to be today. Further, it would seem advisable to test the potentiality of experimentalism's efficacy as a universal concept. Certainly as a psychological urge to new expression, experimentalism has been a part of any change that has occurred through all the steps of civilizations, and the experiment as an implicit mode of the scientific method is by now unassailably justified. As well, perhaps, there are aspects of poetry in the past which may be described best by the term. Thus Hopkins' "Windhover" remains after fifty years an experiment in poetry. And Crashaw, as Yvor Winters has suggested, could gain added identity if examined as an experimental poet. The research for such an investigation through all or even a part of poetry would be a quite extended labor. But its results could be quite profound as well. And conceivably it could result in an ideal of systems: a system in which the particular and the general in poetry may become resolved into something coherent and logical rather than the thousand-meaninged tangents which characterize the approach to poetry today.

## A THEORY OF DEALING WITH EXPERIMENTAL POETRY

Kurt H. Wolff

THERE ARE FOUR MODES in which one may deal with experimental poetry. One can, first, word it, exemplify it, embody it, that is, write *as* an experimental poet, not *about* experimental poetry. Second and third, one can write *about* experimental poetry, but in two ways which are often mixed: interpreting it immanently, from the inside; and interpreting it transcendently or extrinsically or socio-historico-culturally—from the outside. Fourth, one can write, as I am doing, about the way to write about experimental poetry, suggesting a program of dealing with the phenomenon or would-be phenomenon, or of trying to locate it.

Obviously, any product written by an experimental poet in that capacity is an exemplification, a wording, an embodiment of experimental poetry. But what is an experimental poem, who is an experimental poet? Is he who says so one? Or is he so classified by others? Originally (historically), probably the latter; and subsequently, that is, after the formulation had been furnished, some poets declared themselves experimental. It follows that it is impossible to be aware of, or to recognize, an experimental poem or poet without either an original definition or, in case a definition already exists, a classificatory step. In either case, immanent interpretation is involved—as an original enterprise (as a definition: "this ought to be called experimental poetry because . . .," and now you explain, define, interpret), or as consent, qualification, or negation (as a classificatory step: "yes, since this is such and such, it falls under the category

of experimental poetry," or "to this extent, this is experimental poetry, but on the other hand . . .," or "no, since this is not such and such, it does not fall under the category of experimental poetry"). Which leads to the second mode of dealing with experimental poetry, immanent interpretation.

Immanent interpretation of experimental poetry is the attempt to define its "nature," its "essence," its place within the development of poetry, showing poetic influences acting upon and from it (intra-poetic interpretation as part of immanent interpretation); or, if the interpretation is of an individual experimental poet or a group of them, it includes a study of their syntax, grammar, vocabulary, style, influences, and attitudes, and many other features as revealed in their poetry, but all found *within* and through their work, that is, without going outside and drawing on outside sources for elucidation. For instance, Meade Harwell's definition of experimental poetry, except for the last sentence, is an example of immanent interpretation:

By *experimental poetry*, we refer not to the formless inchoate verse which, if experimental, is likewise immature in project and a failure aesthetically. We refer to the poetry, rather, which is innovative, or even a discovery, and whose effort is completed. Likewise, we define experimental poetry historically as poetry which in its newness is comparatively unknown to the reading public, and is not yet in the mainstream of the poetic tradition.—*Experiment*, I (April, 1944).

In the first two sentences of this definition, Mr. Harwell states that experimental poetry is not, and is; but merely by way of classifying types of poetry ("inchoate" vs. "innovative," etc.). But in the last sentence, he sets experimental poetry in relation with phenomena outside itself and outside poetry in general, namely, with a given historical moment ("newness") and with certain sections of the population ("reading public") from which the poet comes or to which he—at least potentially—addresses himself. Thus, the last sentence is an example of socio-historico-cultural interpretation. Which leads to the third mode of dealing with experimental poetry, transcendent interpretation.

Transcendent interpretation of experimental poetry is the attempt to explain or understand the results of its immanent interpretation in social or historical or cultural terms; that is, in terms of the "social backgrounds" of the author, or group or school of authors, concerned (family, class, socioeconomic status, occupation, education, social, political, religious affiliations, etc.) and of hypothetically outstanding features of his or their society (classes, power distribution, political structure, etc.); in terms of the poet's or poets' "culture" (attitudes, beliefs, values, knowledges, etc.) and of hypothetically outstanding features of the culture of their society (for example—in ours—anxieties, competition, materialism, return to religion, democratic, fascist, communist, socialist ideologies, etc.); and in terms of hypothetically

outstanding features of the historical moment or period in which the poet or poets live (for example—in our time—World Wars I and II, depression, inflation, deflation, New Deal, etc.). I stress “hypothetical,” because the sociology of knowledge (which has begun to develop the difference between immanent and transcendent interpretation and the implications of each) has made it clear that we must be very careful when positing social determinants or categories of determinants and that much of earlier intellectual or social or cultural history has been largely intuitive and arbitrary: we are only now beginning to accustom ourselves to the fact that the interpreter himself lives in a given society at a given time and has a given culture, all of which co-determine his own interpretations of others. But enough of hints at theoretical and methodological difficulties which, however, lead to the fourth mode of dealing with experimental poetry, writing about the way to write about it.

This mode, in the present context, is a partial justification of my conception. It will be noted that this conception has several implications (and surely, I am not aware of all of them). One is the distinction between unscientific and scientific modes of dealing with experimental poetry—the first mode mentioned above being unscientific, and the second and third being, at least potentially, scientific. Of course, the first—exemplification—alone makes interpretation possible. But why do I advocate *scientific* interpretation? Here, the two relevant characteristics of “scientific” are, first, the utmost degree of awareness and doubt in intellectual endeavors of which a given individual is capable—of secularization, if you will, or of “naturalism”; and, second, the belief in the value of such awareness. I advocate this awareness and this belief in its value because I think acting upon them guarantees a greater clarity in dealing with experimental poetry, as with intellectual matters in general, than does following any other method. For instance, awareness of the differences among, and the implications of, the three modes of dealing with experimental poetry (implications not all clear to me and, much less, all indicated here) enables us to redefine documents in their terms, that is, specifically, to recognize mixed interpretations, or to avoid taking literally an interpretation which is but a wording of experimental poetry: in short, it enables us to go beyond impression and opinion and subsequently to arrive at agreement. Why, finally, do I value agreement reached through clear argumentation? Because I share the belief of many that there is “trouble” in this world, and that part of this trouble is due to confusion in locating and appraising intellectual phenomena (including confusion in language)—and that what hope there is of overcoming this confusion lies in systematic questioning and in the continuous attempt to discover what we actually live by, not in covering up, glossing over, declaring sacred, or proclaiming sacred cow.

So much for one implication. Another, closely related, is the antici-

pation of some objections. The various objections to the general background of my interpretive schema just outlined cannot be dealt with here, for lack of time, space, and pertinence to the specific topic under discussion. But as regards the schema itself, both certain poets and certain scientists will object to it directly. Some poets will find me a snooper or ridicule me as they will any person who ventures to suggest that rational analysis can "get at" the "essence" of poetic production. If so, it ought to be emphasized that their attitude is an important datum for interpretation—an emphasis which illustrates the inescapability of sociology. Some scientists concerned with the interpretation of intellectual matters, that is, social scientists, will think I am making much theoretical noise about nothing—as if experimental poetry were important in a world of the atom bomb, power struggles, and other major questions; or they will shy away from the difficulties of extending sociological analysis to intellectual phenomena hitherto hardly exposed to it. If so, it ought to be emphasized that their attitude is not only likewise an important datum for interpreting *them* (and thus it, too, illustrates the inescapability of sociology, in this case the phenomenon of backfiring) but, what is more important in the present context (if we think of the exemplification and immanent-interpretation parts of the schema), such an attitude, if juxtaposed with the best of poetry, experimental or otherwise, appears as "naive" and one-sided as that of the poets mentioned above; it appears petty, frustrated, out-of-the-world (of poetry); in short, as compared with the swiftness, boldness, and depth of poetry (the best), science is challenged by the inescapability of poetry and art in general: a statement which I am not making for the sake of symmetrical argument, but with great sincerity and seriousness. Nor do I believe that in talking of the poets and scientists referred to I am envisaging straw men.

I am quite aware that the battery of interpretations suggested is exceedingly difficult to put into practice, is beset with pitfalls, and asks for abundant labors. Also, I know of no demonstration of it which approximates anywhere nearly the thoroughness which this schema calls for. In other words, it is largely new, though mainly so in its formulation. It should furthermore be noted that for most purposes it need not be fully implemented since most purposes are partial and hence call for selective, rather than "complete," interpretations. Examples of such partial interpretations, both immanent and transcendent, are of course numerous; to mention a recent transcendent interpretation, Saul Rosenzweig's analysis of Henry James in terms of an accident in James's youth comes to mind. But as we think along the lines indicated, shortcuts will be found, that is, methods based on the ascertainment of uniformities, as has been true in the history of other disciplines. Finally, it should be emphasized that the interpretive schema proposed invites the experimentation with whatever methods of interpretation have been developed by literary criticism, philology, history,

sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology, as well as with any other methods which suggest themselves as heuristic tools for enhancing our understanding.

I am now abandoning the fourth mode—writing about how to deal with experimental poetry—to conclude with a few remarks, of an even more suggestive and sketchy character, which exemplify the second and third modes, that is, which contain elements of both immanent and transcendent interpretation of experimental poetry itself.

As poems of mine have been printed in *Experiment*, a magazine avowedly dedicated to experimental poetry, I suppose I am an experimental poet. I must add, however, that I do not know enough about poetry to be able always to distinguish between a poem and an experimental poem—yet perhaps enough to be uncertain as to whether such a distinction can always be made. Rather, it seems to me, “experimental poetry” is an attitude which does not unavoidably find recognizable expression in its (poetic) products. I do not know, either, whether this attitude, or its expression, will help to make the role of poetry as a cultural force or the poet as a social type more important in our culture and society than they are today and have been for a long time. But I am inclined to believe that the transcendent interpretation of the experimental poet as a type goes further in explaining his emergence and his characteristics than does mere—“unaided”—immanent interpretation. I would say that the experimental poet is a person disturbed and confused by certain aspects of our time; a person groping about—experimenting—where nothing is certain; seizing upon philosophies, poetries, trends, currents, fads, schools, forms, to make them, if he can, bases for (re) orientation. If this characterization is true even of only *some* experimental poets, there is the possibility, if not the hope, that experimental poetry will amount to more than did some intellectual curiosa of the twenties and thirties and forties; that it will have a constructive significance of sorts.

Experimental poetry belongs in the general historical situation which has been expressed and analyzed in innumerable books, beginning, perhaps, with Nietzsche or even Kierkegaard, and certainly not ending with the diagnoses of Professors Mannheim, Drucker, Sorokin, Burnham, and many others. There is refreshing hope in the very fact that these diagnoses, whether the experimental poet is aware of them or not and however much they sharpen and enrich his sensitivity, cannot relieve him of his groping: as a type, he is, if more confused, more profound and more ambitious than the prose writers, and not the philosophers and social scientists only. (The inescapability of poetry.) To him, as Christian Morgenstern similarly remarked to himself, the gesture (at the same time desultory, exuberant, and humble) is the hoped-for source of certainties and thus, eventually, of a culture as he saps and synthesizes it out of his habitat.

The incidental mention of some names with which the experimental poet, since he lives at a given historical moment, has to count in one way or another, lends itself to show that the often heard or implied contrast between poetic tradition and experimental poetry is untenable as an explanatory frame of reference. Tradition, including poetic tradition, is a historical given, but not in the sense of a homogeneous block which the experimental poet opposes or to which he adds, but in the sense of a storehouse of specific human experiences which he has and knows are at his disposal. Yet what he selects from among its contents is largely and in many different ways determined for him. (Hence the possibility of intra-poetic as well as of parts of socio-cultural interpretation.) Hazarding a hypothesis, I should say that symbolism, with its rediscovery of the symbolic aspects of the world and subsequent creation, routinization, and acceptance of a new attitude—poetic as well as diffused beyond poetry—is the most important forerunner of experimental poetry with its rediscovery of the “quest for certainty” and subsequent creation, routinization, and acceptance of what, for the most part, is yet to come. For there is an intensification of the quest for certainty (poetic, social, economic, political, international) from the *Gründerjahre*, when the yet pregnant tradition of symbolism was conceived, to our totalitarian or fascist or managerial epoch, in which “experimental poetry” received, at least, its tag.

## NOTES TOWARD A MARXIST CRITICISM

*Thomas McGrath*

IN RECENT YEARS left-wing writing has been lost in the horse latitudes. The changing social pressures and historical conditions which during the war years shifted our consciousness from national to foreign politics is one of the reasons for this. The class consciousness of the 'thirties was partially dissipated by the rising standards of living, full employment, and the necessity for unity against external fascism. The period of the 'thirties and the depression (which some had seen as a parallel to 1917 or at least to 1905, in Russia) turned out to be hardly more than a recapitulation of the Narodniki movement. The fact that the class struggles of the period did not reach their hoped-for fruition and that the tide of the working-class movement began to recede was reflected in literature by a reawakened interest in the problems of the individual in isolation or by themes which seemed to have little relationship to social conditions. Such a shift in literary interest was conditioned primarily by historical and social forces—which might be called “unconscious” forces—, and these were felt most strongly by those writers whose roots were in the middle class (or who were “declassed” in the sense that the middle-class intellectual most generally is or attempts

to be). This shift was most sharply revealed at the time of the fall of the Spanish Republic. This was the final quantitative change which sent a whole host of liberal writers away from social themes and away from the labor movement. Comparable results—to borrow another example from Russian history—followed the defeat of the 1905 revolution. Another example of similar phenomena is the attitude of many English Romantics to the last stages of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon.

A second reason for malfunctioning in the literary left is the result of incorrect or incomplete or dogmatic applications of Marxism to the theory of literary productivity. This second factor is perhaps the more important of the two, since, unlike the first case, the causes for failure cannot be assigned to blind historical processes, but are the result at least in part of the consciousness and reason, however faulty these latter processes may have been.

The great value of Marxism is that it sees literature not in isolation—as is the case with most bourgeois critics or historians—but as primarily a social product, the result of objective historical conditions which can be tagged and analyzed. The trap which many Marxists have dug for themselves is that they “forget” that, while a literary movement such as nineteenth-century English Romanticism is the product mainly of economic and political processes of that period, there are also many secondary causes which exist in the form of carry-overs, either in direct or modified form, of ideologies and attitudes common to earlier eras. This “intellectual lag” is apparent in society at any time to a greater or less degree—strongest in a period of social stability when the class struggle is dormant, and tending to disappear, at least for the attacking class, during periods of class strife and revolution. So strong is this tendency to carry over from the past out-moded traditions, institutions, and ideas, that Thorstein Veblen has said, perhaps with some exaggeration, that by the time an institution has been established, the situation which brought it into existence has already disappeared. And yet the Marxist critics go on forgetting that this condition is strongest precisely among writers (even excluding clerics and educators, who are the professional grave-tenders of ideas), partly because of writers’ class position—most of them being consciously or unconsciously representatives of the bourgeoisie—and partly because their function in society makes them citizens of the whole realm of ideas, past and present, and makes them, as it were, the continuator of literary traditions of earlier periods.

A third element which Marxists have generally neglected is the personal or psychological one. While masses react to a condition in ways which may be readily described or summed up in the form of a theory or social law, the fact remains that individuals do *not* all react alike and, while consciousness is a product of society, the literary man being first an intellectual is subject to conditioning from forces and times outside the immediate social

situation. Since he is generally of the bourgeoisie, these—what we might call ideological forces—act upon him more powerfully than they would upon a worker at the point of class struggle, where the latter has less room for maneuver and less chance of exposure to these cultural forces.

The failure to recognize these three powerful elements in the conditioning of any writer, and especially of the bourgeois liberal, has often resulted in a lopsided undialectical critical apparatus which weakens the appraisal of much of modern literature. Its effect is not only felt analytically, where this type of criticism—which constitutes nothing less than an attempt at “revision” of Marxist criteria—has cast false lights upon certain literary fields and figures. It has also had a deadening effect upon the writer himself where a narrow emphasis upon the relationship of the left-wing writer to the needs of the day-to-day struggle has often resulted in a subordination of his work to the most narrow aspects of that struggle and a consequent thinning out of the writer’s own experience. What happens here is what has happened to the whole concept of social consciousness.

The idea of social consciousness should be a valuable one for any writer, since it indicates a direction for him and a function for the writer generally; but the concept of social consciousness has with many of these revisionist critics been narrowed down to a point where it constitutes little more than political consciousness, and political consciousness only in a short-term or tactical sense at that. If we assume that the function of art is to communicate experience, we must also assume, if we are to consider the experience dialectically, that it will be composed of the most discrete, opposite, and conflicting elements, if it is to be whole. This is not to say that the experience will be a negative or “neutral” one in the sense that it is a unity wherein conflicts have reached the point of stasis, have “worn themselves out,” or have been cleverly stacked and balanced to avoid judgment and create the kind of fastidious irony which has been so fashionable in certain circles, of which John Crowe Ransom and the Southern post-Fugitive school may be taken as examples.<sup>1</sup> With the revolutionary writer, the experience is saved from this negative quality by class consciousness, which is, with this writer, a part of social consciousness which enriches his work and gives it direction. This class consciousness is certainly “political” as well, but it is political from the strategic, long-range point of view and

<sup>1</sup> This must not be taken as a judgment against the use of irony in poetry nor as a wholesale condemnation of the work of Ransom, Tate, and especially Robert Penn Warren. Actually irony (except “romantic irony” which is only sentimentalism with english on it) always acts to toughen and give inner structural power to writing. This does not define irony, which is so complex and has so many faces that to attempt to do so would require too much space. But it would seem that irony must not be regarded or used as a *device*. If it is so used it may strengthen a poem (especially its “texture” or “surface”) but, used thus, it imposes great limitations. It is within these limitations that much of Ransom’s work moves. Most of this work is minor (perhaps consciously so) in scope. But inside the imposed tolerances it is perfect.



has nothing in common with the extremely narrow and sectarian "politics" of those revisionists who would tailor every literary experience to the tactical demands of the moment.

On the question of social consciousness, taken at its broadest, it is worth pointing out that here left-wing writers have absolutely no monopoly. There are many cases of bourgeois or even reactionary writers who, as a result of the depth of their intelligence and the absolute honesty with which they wrote (that is to say, in other terms, as a result of things they were forced to see and understand because of their relationship to the social struggle), have managed to create works where social consciousness tremendously adds to and strengthens and gives clarity and depth to their creation. This was what caused the enormous admiration which, as is well known, Marx felt for Balzac, a man who was in no sense politically progressive, but whose politics may be taken as very nearly the opposite of those of Marx. The only way it is possible to understand Marx's great admiration for Balzac is, as Marx himself says, that Balzac's work presents such an honest and accurate picture of the impact of the totality of life at that period upon his characters. Another example is the admiration which Lenin felt for the great Russian writers of the nineteenth century, who he felt could not be compared to any writer of the time. What both of these examples indicate is that social consciousness, if it approaches being complete, is in itself a powerful, progressive, or even revolutionary thing. Coming into our own time it is worth pointing out that, by these criteria, a poem such as "The Wasteland" of T. S. Eliot, which has been the butt of attack by many so-called Marxist so-called critics, is among other things a very powerfully focused and expressed communication of the failure of bourgeois values in the present stage of society, and in this sense certainly has revolutionary implications. It represents a social consciousness which isolates and then relates some of the principal problems in values of the modern intellectual. It is, with all its echoes and allusions, a storehouse of literary tradition, although it must be admitted it is a storehouse where everything may not be completely in order. And, last of all, it is a very powerful communication of personal attitude and experience wherein is registered the impact of certain social conditions on the personality of the writer. What is true of Eliot is true in varying degrees of Proust, Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and others. In fact, we may take it almost as an axiom that a period of the break-up of accepted values of the bourgeoisie is certain to generate the most profound kind of social consciousness in this broad sense among bourgeois writers. While it is true that their class position often results in their turning backward in attitudes of negation or in the espousal of reactionary and fascist ideas, nevertheless this must be said of much of their writing, that it is a profound record of a society or a section of society, and in this sense, no matter what their class position or their subsequent

political orientations, these are works of art and will stand. And while shunning their negations and their retreats into obscurantism and fascism, the left-wing writer has much to learn from their methods: in enriching the content of his own writing and making his communication as complex, complete, and artistic. His own class consciousness will insure him against the reactionary attitudes of the bourgeois writer and enable him, in addition to his primary job of communication, to "make action urgent and its nature clear." This is what the left-wing writer must learn. And the revisionist critics must learn to let him alone.

## THE WILD DUCKS

*L. R. Lind*

IT WAS MORE FUN swimming around here under the cottonwoods in the little pool near the bend. He had left Jake and Heinie at the big hole where everybody came in the afternoon; they were busy trying out some tobacco they had brought along and had not missed him when he waded down the river. Now he was splashing across the ripples or catching hold of the cottonwood branches, lifting his thin naked body up to plunge it down again into the brownish water. The sun came through the pale green of the lowest limbs, covering the pool with patches of brilliant light.

After a while he grew tired of plunging up and down. Walking breast-high against the current, he let his feet drift out from the velvety mud and floated down to the bend. He did this three times, shutting his eyes against the noon glare, his head back, his feet fluttering a little. He reached out for a piece of wood as it drifted by and then turned over to swim, dog-fashion, to the opposite bank. Stretched out in the shallows among the straggling cress, he examined the white stick in his hand and could just make out the faded red letters on it: "Walker's Whiskey."

Suddenly he heard them. With a high shrill little "quack, quack," two white ducklings swam side by side around the bend, paddling fast not more than twenty feet away from him, like two tiny sailboats in a race. He thrust his toes into the gravel near the bank and stood up, staring at them. In the middle of the pool, they saw him and, with a ridiculous chatter of fright, veered to the other side of the stream, looking sideways out of their buttony bright eyes beneath pink lids until they scrabbled about under the bending branches and were half hidden from his sight.

He did not yet begin to swim toward them but tried to see what

they were doing there. They were the first ducks he had ever seen on the river. The hell-divers were common enough; now and then the older boys, who swam faster, would try to catch one before it disappeared, to come up again, a long way off, in the big hole where the diving board stuck out under the huge poplar. No one ever caught hell-divers; they were too smart, they played the game too well, and seemed to get as much fun out of it as the boys did. They never stayed around long if there were many swimmers; they soon went down out of sight past Larson's farm house. They weren't much good anyway; Bill Turner had shot one once with his twenty-gauge, but it was tough and stringy and smelled of fish. Bill threw it away. The Kishwaukee was no place for hunting, and the game warden might have made it hard for Bill if he ever found out about it.

But ducks—here was something worth watching and, maybe, catching. Cautiously, he dropped the piece of wood and let it float down. Then, wading slowly, he stuck his head into the water as far as he could and began to swim noiselessly across the river. About five yards now and he would be able to touch them. He had almost reached the shade of the outermost branches when they saw him coming and, flapping their miniature wings, rose a little out of the water and paddled frantically upstream at an angle. Far out of reach, they began to move around in a circle, watching him and gabbling excitedly to each other. Probably they were calling the mother duck; he looked down to the bend, but there was nothing moving in the ripples where the river swung round and was lost to view.

Now he swam slowly up toward the ducks; all they did was to swim higher and edge in toward the weeds among the lily pads where the cows came down from the pasture and left great round holes in the mud at the edge. He stopped in disappointment; this was not the way to catch them. He wondered whose they were, whether old man Larson had ducks in his yard. He had never got close enough to find out; Larson was always chasing the kids away from this part of the river, until they gave him up as a cranky old fool and kept to the big swimming hole upstream. Someone said he had taken a shot at one fellow who climbed up on the bank and ran up and down, bare naked, right where Mrs. Larson could see him as she fed the chickens. That was taking a big chance, just for a little fun; nobody tried it again.

Maybe they were wild; they acted wild, at least. But wild ducks weren't white; mostly brown speckled or blue and purple and green around the neck and head. Yet, how did he know? Some of them

might be white and probably these two had dropped behind from a flock that had passed over early that fall. They were too little to fly far; perhaps the rest had left them and flown on southward. The hunters on the Rock River killed them every year, he had heard; the last time he rode over to Kingston on Ed Franklin's grain wagon, the elevator man had talked a lot to Ed about duck-hunting.

He couldn't be sure, of course; ducks looked pretty much alike, white or speckled, tame or wild. He stood in the middle of the river and looked at them, thinking what Heinie and Jake would say if he caught them and showed them to the boys. They might think of him as more than just an eight-year-old kid who tagged along every time they wanted to go swimming, a kid who got sick and threw up when you gave him a clay pipe full of Bull Durham to smoke. "You'd better stick to corn silk, Bud," they said when he got white around the lips that day and had to lie down on the bank for an hour to get over being sick.

Then he began to plan how to catch them; a great resolve arose in him, tightening his small tanned face and widening his green eyes. A fellow would have to be quick; these ducks could move fast enough to get away. As he watched, the ducks paddled farther upstream and began to edge over to his side of the river again. In a flash, he saw his chance.

Up above the ducks the river grew narrow and rushed down with a great gurgle of brown foam, right where he had taken Hank Warnecke's dare last summer and had ridden Hank's black pony across, the day of the Sunday School picnic, when all the kids came down to the river on hayracks. The boys had been disgusted because they had to wear swimming suits, since the girls came along too, shrieking and laughing in the shallow water. Most of the boys didn't have swimming suits and wore old pants or wornout overhalls; many of the girls had faded calico or gingham dresses they no longer wore to school. The scout master didn't let them throw any pop bottles in the river, though; everyone had to take his empty bottle back to Lon Hazeltine's grocery truck and put it in the wooden cases.

The ducks certainly couldn't swim up against the current there; it had been all Hank's pony could do to keep from being swept off his feet. In the deepest part he had to swim hard until he touched bottom again in the gravel on the other side. Below this narrow place the river spread out again in a quiet stretch; but it was still rather narrow and the banks were pretty high. The ducks had now got into this part

and were swimming lazily round and round, not so frightened now that he had stopped chasing them.

Wading fast, he cut over to the bank and climbed up the blue clay sides until he reached the pasture at the top. Stooping low, he ran up until he came to the bushes right above the ducks. Then, gathering his scrawny legs under him, he jumped down into the water just as he did, with a great splash, up at the big pool when the diving board was crowded with big boys and all the little kids had to hang around the edge for fear of being pushed under.

He landed between them and came up fast, blowing water and shaking the hair out of his eyes. He had the ducks cut off; they couldn't swim down past him and it was clear they couldn't make it against the rush of water above. Scrambling hard, he got the nearest one by the neck and dragged him along until he cornered the other under a boulder on the river's edge, where his little yellow webbed feet were making a game struggle to carry him up the slippery bank. He breathed hard, lying there in the shallow water, getting back his wind, a duck in each fist. After a few minutes, he got up and climbed the bank.

He did not want to show the ducks to anyone now. Clutching them to his wet ribs, he reached the spot where he had left his clothes and, taking a piece of string from his pants pocket, he tied their feet together, holding first one, then the other, between his knees. When he had finished, he pulled on his clothes and set out for town.

The ducks became quieter as soon as he hit the road; passing wagons frightened them a little but, after a weak flutter, they subsided, to stare around in a silly way. By the time he crossed the wooden bridge and started down the alley behind Main street, they were almost asleep.

He went down past Cowley's drug store; Pete Cowley was stacking some Peruna cases by the back door and didn't see him. At the rear of Larkin's pool hall he heard the click of balls and the thud of a cue; he did not stop here, at the richest hunting grounds in town for collectors of Sweet Caporal picture cards, tinfoil, and matchbox lids. He went past Downey's Emporium and Turner's grocery store; Bill Turner was just backing the truck up to the screen door with a load of watermelons. It would not be long before a small army of boys would gather to help him unload, and he felt a pang that he could not be there too. Bill always gave them a half dozen of the softest melons to break up and eat.

A sweet smell of wood and sawdust behind Lambert's furniture store and undertaking parlors made him think of the first dead man he

had ever seen, a line-man electrocuted on a high pole. He had lain in the coffin in the back room among wood shavings, bed springs, and broken chairs, while Harry Lambert walked up and down beside his work bench, whistling. He still dreamed, on bad nights, of that gray face fixed in waxen silence against the purple silk lining of the casket.

He started to run past the rear doors until he came to Henry Talbot's butcher shop. Here he turned into the yard where the rendering kettles and the chicken crates stood, smelling of feathers and rancid lard. Sometimes, after school, when Henry was rendering a pig, he would join the fellows standing around and wait for the crackling that Henry passed out to them. Once it had been his lucky day and he had seized the pig tail first, the prize of prizes, rich brown and curling, with a few stubby hairs sticking to the delicious skin. There was nothing quite as good to eat as a freshly roasted pig tail, unless it was the fried oyster plant that Martin Rohrbach, the junk dealer, would give him now and then when he dropped into Martin's untidy back yard. Martin was a bachelor but a good cook just the same, although his hands were always dirty with rust.

He went into the back room filled with meat cases; the ice-box door was half open and he could see Henry pulling down a hind quarter of veal from the hook. He came out and slammed it down on the block. Then, turning to shut the door, he saw the boy standing barefooted in the deep pine sawdust, clutching the ducks to the bosom of his faded blue shirt. He laughed and said, "What have you got there, Bud?"

"Wild ducks."

Henry picked up the cleaver from the slot where it hung and winked at Tom Horsfeld. Tom was his cousin, and between the two of them they ran the butcher shop.

"Tom, here's some wild ducks. What do you think of that, hey?"

Tom grunted and kept on scraping the other block, moving his quid of tobacco from side to side in his sunken mouth. Henry Talbot, with an elaborate professional gesture, pulled the quarter of veal closer and lifted the cleaver. Before he brought it down, he said, "Well, what are you going to do with them?"

"I'd like to sell them, please."

With a great whack, Henry swung the cleaver into the veal and left it sticking there. Without looking at the boy, he shifted his huge body backward a little. Then, grinning:

"Well, Tom, what do you say? Are we in the market for some wild ducks today?"

Tom scowled; he was never very enthusiastic about anything.

"Aw, I don't care what you do. We've got more poultry than we can get rid of by Sunday right now, back in the shed. Suit yourself."

With a slow step and another laugh which sounded as though he were making fun of someone to himself, Henry went over to the cash register under the big red meat chart and struck the "No Sale" key. He took out a twenty-five-cent piece and dropped it into Bud's hand.

"Here you are, kid. Don't never say I didn't give you nothing, even if you stole them ducks. They look pretty tame to me."

"I found them on the river. Honest, I know they're wild; I had a hard time catching them." Conviction, born from visions of all he could buy with two bits, strove amid uncertainty against Henry's blunt distrust.

He gripped the money and backed out into the yard, still hearing the butcher's loud laughter as he threw the ducks into a crate, shouting something unintelligible above the noise of the grinder where his cousin was making hamburger for the few late afternoon customers. And now that the ducks were gone, he felt a little lonely and uneasy, as though he had parted with something precious, something he would wake up in the night to grieve for. It was not such a fine adventure, after all, catching a couple of helpless little ducks on the river, with the warm feel of their feathers still upon his chest and the wild terror in their eyes to trouble him.

On the way home he pulled out his sling shot and popped a few times, without success, at some sparrows on the telephone wires. In his own yard at last, he got up into the big apple tree in the potato patch and pretended he was riding a horse through the Australian brush, like Stingaree in the serial every Thursday night, out on the big limb that just fitted his legs. That wasn't as much fun as it usually was; after a bit, he went into the house and started putting together the Meccano girders again from the pile on the floor behind the kitchen stove.



## THE NIGHTMARE

*Jean Byers*

**T**HE FEVER BURNED IN MY FACE and eyes and throat. It was hard to drive with my cold hands sweating on the wheel. I knew the trip would take only four hours, but the flat monotony of miles seemed endless. If I can just keep driving till I get home to Jessie, I kept thinking. Jessie will take care of me.

My muscles were cramped and aching when I finally saw the high, clipped hedges of my home. I left the car in the driveway and stumbled into the house. Jessie was in the big, cool kitchen cleaning shelves when I came in. She was standing on a chair, her long arms stretching to reach the deep back corners of the old-fashioned cupboard. She turned as the porch door slammed, bracing her tall, full figure against the shelves. I saw the familiar expression of alarm come into her blue eyes. She stepped down quickly, wiping her hands on her apron and smoothing the gray hair that escaped from the heavy knot on her neck.

There was no word of greeting, no comment on my long absence. Just her anxious "What's happened to you?" as she hurried across the room.

"I'm sick, Jessie," I said. "I've got to get to bed. Come up and help me."

Her natural acceptance of the responsibility was almost a physical thing. I could feel the burden of illness drop from me onto Jessie's strong shoulders as she followed me up the stairs.

"Your room's always ready," she said. "Go in there." She hesitated on the stairs. "Is your bag in the car?"

"I didn't bring one."

"That's all right." She came on up. "Your old things are always ready, too." She hurried ahead in the hall to open the bedroom door. As she helped me to undress, I seemed to lose my sense of time and the present; to lose all awareness of myself as a grown woman. I was Jessie's

lonely little girl again, in need of her familiar, quiet mothering. Her fingers were knotted now, but as gentle as they had been in my childhood when she had dressed me nightly in a white cotton gown, heard my prayers, and lifted me onto the high, hard bed.

The pillow was cool on my cheek, and I closed my eyes gratefully as Jessie hurried downstairs for her store of remedies.

I could not think of her as a servant, for as long as I could remember it had been like this. Home to Jessie for protection and sure, unquestioning kindness. To Jessie with bruises or colds or fears or grief. For her praise had I brought home the good marks in studies and deportment. Only to obey her had I tiptoed through this house as a little girl in order not to wake the thin, frail lady I called Mother. My father, silent, brooding, undemonstrative, had been as remote from me in childhood as he was now. It had even been Jessie's task, not Father's, to tell me of death. Mother, she had said quietly, was no longer in the big east bedroom. She had gone to be with God.

I remember receiving the news calmly, puzzling only over the being "with God," but feeling no sorrow at the loss of a strange, invalid mother I had never known.

"May I play in the house now?" I had asked Jessie then. "May I make noise with my shoes?"

"Not yet," she had answered. "It wouldn't be right yet. Your father's going away for a while soon. Wait till your father goes away."

Always she had decided what was right, where I might go, what dress I should wear. No, she was not a servant. She was something indefinable to me; sturdy, quiet Jessie who tirelessly cooked or washed or cleaned the big, old-fashioned house, and who gave me, through a stern, restrained affection, the only security I knew.

The afternoon's brief nap dulled the throbbing in my head. I could smile to myself that night as I finished the spare meal Jessie had carefully arranged on the tray. I had known so exactly what she would bring. Beef broth, a soft-boiled egg, toast, and the glass of wine, half port, half hot water, that was the unmistakable mark of her cure. I felt time slipping back again. It was hard to realize that eleven years had passed since I had lain sick with fever and headache and cold in this same room. Not one detail of the room had been changed. There was the patchwork quilt, done with Jessie's fine stitches, folded neatly across the foot of the dark, polished bed; the white linen scarf with its plain, embroidered monogram and tatted edge on the rosewood dresser; the little green desk I had painted in high school; the books lining

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the wall between the closet door and the long casement windows. There were the same smells, barely perceptible through my cold. Lavender that Jessie kept among my old nightgowns in the bureau drawers, the thick oiliness of coal oil and lard, and the rubbing alcohol, faintly sweet, on my body. Even the sound that had broken my afternoon's sleep had been a familiar one. Old Charlie had come to garden and mow the lawns. Every Monday and Thursday, as long as I could remember, the sound of Charlie dragging a hose or a rake across the gravel paths had drifted up into my room, and on warm days would come the sound of the mower and the sweet, fresh smell of the cut grass. Only Jessie's appearance made me conscious of the years. The lines were deepening around her blue eyes; her tall figure was thicker, not quite so graceful as it had been.

"Are you all through?" she asked when she came in for the tray.

"Yes, thank you, Jessie," I answered. "It's nice having you take care of me again."

"You shouldn't live alone," she said. "It's not right, you living in the city all alone."

"I couldn't stay here," I said, smiling at her familiar complaint. "I'd soon let you do all my thinking for me. By the way," I asked suddenly, "where's Father?"

She picked a few crumbs from the white tray cloth and put them in a dish. "At the ranch," she answered. "He's seldom here since you left. He always brings the foreman with him when he comes."

"He was seldom here before I left," I replied. "I don't see why he keeps this big old place."

She made no comment as she placed the tray carefully on the bureau and came to smooth the pillows.

"Remember the last time I was sick in this room?" I asked. "Eleven years ago."

"Eleven years?" She hesitated a few seconds as she spread the patchwork quilt over the bed. "It doesn't seem that long."

"You make time stand still in this room, Jessie. Everything's precisely as it was then."

"I like to keep things as they always were," she said. She turned to pull the faded cretonne-curtains over the windows, her fingers catching them easily near the rods.

"I feel as if I must have dreamed the years between," I said drowsily, watching the precision of her gestures. "I'm fifteen again tonight." She gave me one of her rare, faint smiles.

"I wish you were," she said.

"You shouldn't, Jessie," I protested. "Think of the trouble I was to you then. Remember the nightmare I had?" There was a pause while she refilled my water glass from the pitcher on the bureau.

"No," she answered at last. "I don't remember you having nightmares."

"I had one then," I assured her. "I can still remember the horrible fear I felt when you came in with my tray in the morning. I forget the details, though. You probably explained it away as calmly as you did all my other troubles."

"I don't remember it," she repeated as she picked up the tray. She looked at me critically. "Will you be all right now?"

"Quite all right, thanks."

"Shall I turn off the light?"

"No, I may read a while."

"I think you should sleep. You shouldn't read so much. A good sleep will break that fever." She turned off the light as I knew she would. "Sleep now," she said, and closed the door softly.

The hot broth and wine had made me drowsy. Jessie was right, of course. I should sleep. Reading would hurt my eyes. How easy it was to let her decide things again. She had probably said the same things to me before. Eleven years before. I closed my eyes. How comfortable to lose those years for a little while. Could I always be fifteen here in this room? If Father kept the house, and Jessie kept things as they always were . . . . I dozed.

How long I was asleep I do not know. I think it must have been an hour or more, perhaps, but I'll never be quite sure. I only know that I found myself sitting upright, terrified, fighting the impulse to go out into the hall to discover the meaning of loud voices in our quiet, unemotional house. I clutched the bedclothes around me in instinctive obedience to Jessie's warning. If I took more cold I could not be in the high school play. And I must stay in bed. Father did not like my being ill. I must sleep to break the fever. I sat there trembling, fearing to move but unable to shout out those strange, harsh sounds.

Surely that was my father's voice, loud and angry in the hall.

"I'll remarry when I please and whom I please."

"But Calvin—" That was Jessie! Strange, her calling my father Calvin.

"And if Helen will have me, she's the one I'll marry."

"She's too much younger than you, Calvin." That name again.

"It would never work." Jessie's voice was clear and firm, but there was a note of hysteria in it I did not know.

"She'll be a companion for Elizabeth, Jessie. The girl needs a companion at fifteen. She's alone too much."

"I think I take care of her very well. No one knows her as I do. No one could—" The sound of crying stopped the rest of the sentence. I had never heard Jessie cry before. I hated hearing her deep, dry sobs in the darkness.

"Now stop it, Jess!" How rough my father's voice sounded. "You'll always take care of her. For God's sake, don't cry!"

"But—you'll not marry that woman?"

"She's just what I need, I tell you!" The words were swift and impatient. "I need someone young to give me life again."

"She's not the right one for you! She's not the one!" A little louder now, her voice rising.

Then Father's question with the cruel, cutting edge to it. "And whom do you have in mind, may I ask?" Jessie's wordless sobs then, and a long silence. "Never, Jess." A harsh finality in Father's voice. "And that's the end of it." A pause. "You'll stay on, of course, as housekeeper."

Some mumbled words from Jessie and a stifling of the sobs. Then her voice, high and a little shrill. "If you marry that woman, Calvin, I—I'll tell the girl. I'll tell her exactly how her mother died. She'll hate you, Calvin. Your daughter will hate you!"

The sharp slap of a hand against flesh, and Jessie's sudden gasping cry. I remained staring toward the sounds, breathing hard to fight this choking wave of fear.

Then finally my father's voice, hard and bitter and hopeless. "It wouldn't work in the long run, Jess. She'd hate us both, you know. Now go to bed. You'll wake her if you stand here crying."

Footsteps in the hall. The closing of doors. Then the long silence in the dark again, the quiet dark with its sickroom smells, and the restless, troubled turning, and then sleep. . . .

I was not awake when Jessie brought my tray in the morning. The sound of the door made me open my eyes.

"Jessie!" I cried, half lifting myself from the pillow. I felt an overwhelming desire to cling to her tightly for safety and protection. She put the tray down quickly on the bureau.

"What's the matter, dear?" she asked, her blue eyes wide and frightened on my face.

I could only stare at her, startled to see her hair gray, lines about her eyes and mouth, her tall figure heavy and thick at the waist.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked again, and put her hand gently on my brow. The cool touch of those knotted fingers cleared my head, and I felt the years rush back into their even line. I lay down again and closed my eyes.

"It's nothing, Jessie," I said slowly. "I'm really much better this morning. It's just that I didn't sleep very well. I had a nigh—I had a sort of—bad dream. Get me a bowl of cold water, will you, please?"

She brought the water and dipped a cloth into it. "It's nothing," I repeated, pressing the cloth on my forehead. "I'm all right now." I looked up and found her studying my face intently. She bent over then to smooth the pillows and prop them up behind me.

"I was thinking about Father last night," I said as she put a jacket around my shoulders. "Is he well? He never writes, you know."

"Quite well, I think," she answered calmly. "He's always at the ranch."

"I'd like to see him," I said. There was silence while she placed the breakfast tray on my lap.

"You should try to," she answered, looking away. "Perhaps your father's lonely sometimes."

I stirred my coffee slowly. "Why is it Father never married?" I asked. "He was still fairly young when Mother died."

Jessie was busy for a minute adjusting the curtains. She turned. Her blue eyes were narrowed; perhaps the glare of the morning sun had been sudden in the darkened room. "I don't know," she answered quietly. "I suppose he never found the right one." She left the room without another word.

I drank the coffee, trying to think of Jessie as I had the day before. But every familiar image of her seemed to cast a kind of shapeless shadow I could not dispel.

She glanced quickly at the tray when she came into the room again. "You haven't eaten anything," she said. "You won't get well that way." I did not answer but kept my eyes on the untouched plates before me. I could feel her searching look on my face.

"Jessie," I said at last without looking up, "I think I'd like to stay in some other room while I'm here. Would you mind? I'd like to try that little guest room at the end of the hall. I've never slept there." I glanced up then, and for the first time caught her eyes shifting quickly from mine. She seemed to force herself to look directly at me.

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"I've just opened the windows and put fresh linen on the bed in there," she said. "The change might be good."

She took the tray and went out. I sat staring at the fine stitches in the patchwork quilt, and a long time passed before I remembered about going down to the other room.

## MY LITTLE GENIUS OF THE MALAYAN SPELL

*Dean Cadle*

**T**HE AMADOR DAGUIO you'll meet now in Leyte's crowded and dirty little capital of Tacloban is in most aspects the same boyish writer-teacher who, dressed in creased white ducks, used to deliver manuscripts in person to the editor of the *Philippines Magazine* in Manila or used to spend all night long in conversation with other Filipino writers.

He still believes in his original precept that nothing short of perfection in a written piece should be considered by the author a finished product. He still accuses himself of being a lazy writer, still desires to visit the States and perhaps spend a year at Columbia's school of journalism. His wife Estela still calls him "Amador" when she is peeved with him, and when all is well, "Darlin'" or "My Little Genius."

Daguio has had published more than two hundred compositions—stories, essays, and poems—and has many more unpublished ones that have in them the ingredients of good stories, but need revision. His writings, from the time he entered the University of the Philippines to his arrival in Tacloban in 1941, had appeared in practically every Filipino periodical, the best in the *Philippines Magazine*, the *Atlantic Monthly* of the Islands. He was represented nearly every month for several years in this magazine, sometimes with a poem or an essay in addition to a short story.

Immediately after Pearl Harbor he dashed off a patriotic play and presented it in Tacloban's Mercedes Theater one week before the Japanese reached the Island. During the occupation he wrote and presented two others, not quite so nationalistic, of course. He is now working on a series of four novels, his aim being to give a picture of typical Filipino life, people on the soil and in the cities, from the



Kalingas of Luzon to the Moros of Zamboanga, from the tyranny of Spanish days to the coming and going of the Japanese.

The financial reward for literary efforts in the Islands has never been much more than a handout. The most Daguo ever received for one story was fifteen pesos (\$7.50). But that fact only strengthens his repeated statement that "I write because to me there is nothing more important."

Quite often he is the philosopher, especially in his poetry. In "Man of Earth" he wrote,

Pliant is the bamboo;  
I am man of earth.  
They say that from the bamboo  
We had our first birth.

. . . . .  
I might have been the bamboo,  
But I will be a man.  
Bend me then, O Lord,  
Bend me if you can.

His writer friend, Manuel Arguilla, read the entire poem and exclaimed, "Jesus María! You are an atheist!"

Daguo once wrote to A. V. H. Hartendorp, editor of the *Philippines Magazine*: "I object to your acceptance of poems that merely describe places, making little pictures and nothing more. What I send you are sincere products of the mind, not the results of leisurely practice." In a biographical note in the magazine Hartendorp replied that much of Daguo's poetry, "though full of fine poetic spirit, is too obscure for the average reader."

"What he means, Darlin', is you just don't make sense," Estela teased him at the time.

And she made a similar statement recently when I remarked to Daguo that the atmosphere of several of his stories reminds me of Sherwood Anderson. He had read only a few of Anderson's stories; so I obtained copies of two collections for him. After Estela had read them she remarked to me, strictly for her husband's benefit, "You are right. He is like Anderson. I understand neither of them."

He is like Anderson in that he portrays most of his people as lonely beings who all their lives have hungered and searched for sympathy and recognition from others, only to receive added injury and a deeper sense of futility.

Much of the well-knit naturalness and conviction of "Hands" are

lacking in Daguió's "The Life of Cardo," but in it is the same depressing mood of a driven creature, and a sharp portrayal of a man's great capacity for kindness being masked by his physical features from those who know him. Cardo had a monstrous face and a twisted body; women ran when he smiled at them; men struck him when he came too close, but babies returned his smiles over their mothers' shoulders and reached their arms to him when he passed. It is the same mood, whether you find it in the shaded streets of a small Ohio town or among the nipa huts and bilimbing trees of an island barrio.

But, as it is with every person who writes, it can not be said Daguió writes in the manner of any one particular writer. Joseph Conrad, Daguió says, has influenced him as much as any one man, both because he, as Daguió has done, learned to write in a language other than his own and because Daguió considers "The Heart of Darkness" his favorite short story.

Some readers might find a resemblance to Jesse Stuart, especially when Daguió writes of his love for the soil and its people, as he wrote in "Goodbye to the City:"

I want to go back to my country where the mountains are green and strong with trees . . . , where children play and scream and laugh in the rain, painting their bodies with soft brown mud, chasing each other up and down hills, and knowing not of bitterness as yet. . . . I want to go back where there is a sleepy town and women go to the springs carrying clay jars on their heads, with the bloom of the mountain winds on their bronzed and wind-hardened cheeks, and white, unopened, orange blossoms in their knotted hair. I want to go back where the looks of the nubile girls are shy and not brazenly sexual, where the songs are plaintive and old-fashioned, where the beauty of a woman is like the beauty of a running stream. . . .

Perhaps the phrase "lyrical prose" describes his writing. He is considered a passionate follower of the stream-of-consciousness writing, more so than any other Filipino. It is this music he writes into his words, giving them a poetic rhythm, that has prompted Filipino editors and critics to call his stories good examples of the type Saroyan produces so well.

Daguió deals for the most part with the conflict that is in the soul of each of his characters, with the individual's fight against loneliness and obscurity, and with his desire to accomplish something worthwhile.

"To write Philippine literature," he has stated in an essay, "My Literary Credo," is "to interpret the confusion or bafflement that has been brought about by the cross-currents of many conflicting cul-

tures. . . ." To write a literature of escape would not be true to Filipino life. Therefore, most of his writing is philosophical and serious, and he says it is so "because I have thought inwardly of the truth of existence. . . . I have thought of life and death and love in relation to the longing of man for immortality, and therefore his seeming futility. But man against the universe is not futile. It is this courage to face the laws of nature and God and challenge them that makes him heroic. Literature should concern itself with heroes. The glorification of man is his own meaning and immortality."

Daguio does not often portray the customs and characteristics of his people as being different from those of any other people. There are numerous aspects peculiar only to the Islands that you at times wish he would paint with heavier strokes. There is the unique process of securing from the coconut palm the intoxicating drink *tuba*, the harvesting of rice and wheat on the terraced hillsides and in the broad valleys, the fishermen dragging in their nets at dawn, the desolation spread by typhoons, and similar incidents that he keeps in the background as nothing more than line drawings. His people are plain ones living in a narrow corner, whom he portrays with the philosophical universality of being not so much Filipinos as just human beings. Quite often you wish he would make them strictly Orientals.

I do not know what his rating among Filipino writers would be; no such poll has ever been taken. He has submitted only a few stories to the States; they were to the quality magazines, and on each story he received highly encouraging comments.

His fine short essay "Tea" was reprinted in *Fact Digest*, in the States, before the war. The partially historical and legendary story, "The Old Chief," in which Daguiio pictures, through the resignation speech of an aged barrio chief, the end of tribal government in favor of provincial administration, has been reprinted in *The Philippines, a Nation in the Making*, a literature text published in Manila and used in the third year of high school. He was represented by "The Woman Who Looked out of the Window" in *The Best Filipino Short Stories*, a collection of twenty-five stories selected from approximately six thousand that had been published in Philippine periodicals up to a short time before the war.

Mr. Hartendorp more than once wrote of him as "one of the Philippines' most distinguished writers in English."

Daguio himself is not at all modest about his ability to write, and, unlike most writers, harbors no inhibitions about discussing proposed

stories with his friends. Once he wrote Mr. Hartendorp: "You will not be surprised when you will receive from me things I can be really proud of. I feel a . . . great insistent urge . . . an aching promise of good in me, and I am sure . . . you will not be disappointed."

Yet he says, "I have never written anything I am satisfied with . . . . The longer I keep my manuscripts and the oftener I correct them and the better they become, the more loath I am of turning them loose . . . for fear they are not up to quality."

He says that "having fallen in love at eight, I began writing at the age of twelve." He writes more slowly now than during his college days. "When I was younger I wrote what I saw and felt. Now I write more of what I think, and I feel it is a much better type of writing."

The actual composition is torture for him. As well as possible he closes himself up from intruders and distracting noises and drowns himself in the struggle of linking words to form correlated thoughts and pictures. Sometimes a writing period continues for many hours, at least not ending until the story or a phase is finished. His entire being goes into the creation, apparently, for Estela says he perspires a lot while writing and she jokes that he has lost a pound for each story he has written.

One Sunday in Zamboanga he came to visit Estela and spent the entire day alone in the living room writing a story about a half-Spanish girl he knew in Manila. That is the incident from which dates her irony-tinged name for him of "My Little Genius."

Daguio says that for a few months after their marriage every time he began writing Estela would tiptoe up behind him, put her arms around his neck, and whisper, "Darlin'." He says, "Always when I wanted to write she wanted to make love."

She soon learned, though, that such an interruption quite often meant the ruin of what may have been a good poem. One evening on a boat to Manila, Estela entered their stateroom to find him writing. He had got an idea for a poem from *The Man Nobody Knows*, which he had just finished reading, and was writing the second verse on a flyleaf of the book. In response to Estela's plea he closed the book and went on deck with her to watch the moon rise. She still has the book, but the poem was never finished.

One extremely significant essay of his is "The Malayan Spell and the Creation of a Literature," published several years ago in the *Philippines Magazine*. "The Malayan Spell" is simply a phrase he created as a name for the inspiration in the native writers to portray in

words the people and the customs and the scenes in such a manner as to be truly representative of the Islands. He styled himself spokesman for, as well as to, the other writers and journalists. "The creation of a national literature is our responsibility," he wrote. The task is made more difficult by the fact that the Philippines is "a soft paradise" and that there is in the people "only a contentment, a languor, an attitude of calmness and resignation. . . . We need to acquire an understanding and passionate evaluation of our own racial and national life, deeply rooted in the mystery and glamour, even the somberness, of the past."

Daguio's solemn face goes sad when the conversation turns to the war and he talks to you about the destruction that has come to Manila and has swept away that phase of "The Malayan Spell" of the earlier days when he often walked in the twilight along the Pasig River and through the streets of the Old Walled City and when he often spent many hours of the warm tropical nights with his friends discussing politics and literature.

His writer friends, many of whom he studied with, form a long list. There are among them N. V. M. Gonzales; Sinai Hamada; José García Villa, now in New York City; Juan Cabrerós Laya, author of *His Native Soil*, the only Filipino novel in English; and Manuel Arguilla, "discovered in the States by *Story* with "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife."

It was with Arguilla that he and Estela stayed during their visits to Manila. One of Estela's favorite recollections of those days is of the time Mrs. Arguilla and she were awakened about five o'clock one Sunday morning by loud voices from the kitchen. Daguió and Arguilla had got up early to do some writing, and, because of a remark from Daguió, were arguing hotly over whether Shakespeare did or did not imply a certain something in one of his poems.

"But, Manuel, I know he means it! He plainly says so!"

"You are no poet! You only think you are!"

At that moment someone pounded on the apartment floor above and commanded in a drowsy voice, "Will you gentlemen please go to bed?"

"We just got up!" Daguió yelled.

"Then go back!"

Now that the war is over, it is indiscernible what turn Filipino writing will take, just what influence Daguió and the others will have on "The Malayan Spell." Daguió realizes that the process of "creation"

is far from ended. He and the other writers have already produced the *Winesburg* of the Islands. To come yet are their *Arrowsmith* and *Good Earth*. One may only guess who will produce them. I do not say Daguio will. However, he is one of the Islands' best writers and is capable of putting into words an important picture.

## HANGOVER

*Mark Neider*

A PARTY WAS BEING THROWN in the back room of the old "Silver Slipper" for Walter. There had been no objections to a testimonial for him when the word had spread through Hull 513 that he had received his 1A and notice to report for a physical. Other men had left for the armed services after a few drinks and a fast handshake, but Walter had that rare quality of being liked both by the boss and his fellow workers. He was modest, with a tendency to blush, and did not indulge in backbiting or chewing the boss's ear. He was so well liked that he could work opposite another shipfitter and do a bit more without being accused of trying to show that man up. Even the oldtimers in the yard admitted he was a good mechanic and were sorry to see him leave.

The shipyard crowd on hiring the room usually included the breakage deposit as expense because their rackets ended too often in broken furniture and heads. But that did not stop them from coming back over and over again, for there was an aura of the underworld about the room which was conducive to stags. Once known as the back room of the old "Second Street Athletic Club," it had turned legitimate with the advent of the liquor license. Now it was used for all occasions, the front of the club having miraculously sprouted into a night club. But during prohibition the room had been used as a refuge for petty racketeers fleeing justice from bordering states. The club had been highly touted among a select clientele for its clean cots, congenial company, hard liquor and its "sociable" card games. And for phenomenal fees, the room had been used for operations of an illegal nature. Rumor had it, and was still widely accepted by the underworld, that the whiskey-sodden tables prevented infections.

The men were finishing their meal and beginning to feel their drinks. Outside it was snowing, and the room was rapidly filling up

with cigarette smoke. No one cared to open the two windows looking out upon the alley; heat was unanimously preferred to fresh air. It was a luxury to feel heat distributed evenly over the body. All week, six days of it, you had to huddle over a wood fire and feel your face roast and your toes so icy cold you had to thrust your feet into the fire until your shoes curled; or you had to take turns singeing each other with a burner's torch; or you had to keep sitting on a toilet seat, pretending to do things you couldn't do, until you developed hemorrhoids . . . yes, it was pleasant just drinking and smoking and sitting.

The men had seated themselves at the table by trades. The shipfitters, as hosts of the party and "brains" of the ship, a great many of them having served apprenticeships, had grabbed the head of the table as their just due, with Mr. Brash, their boss and guiding spirit, presiding over the entire gathering like Henry VIII in his guzzling of beer and gorging of meat. As a concession to dignity and responsibility, and to Tex and Walter at his side, he made automatic mutterings of "excuse me" when the food repeated and the belching commenced. Sometimes when the food repeated like a semi-automatic he ignored all concessions.

Opposite each other, just below the shipfitters, sat the welders and burners, the welders fat and soft from their sedentary jobs, the burners pockmarked by burns from the backfiring of their torches. Then came, followed by all the lesser trades, the lanky carpenters and the heavy-set chippers. There were short carpenters and frail chippers, of course, but God help them if they lost time and had to resume lifting planks and using the air hammer once more. They were like violinists, becoming stiff without practice.

All were seated except Bill, Walter's helper, who was drunk already and dancing with the lone waitress. He was a short man, but provoked more fights when drunk than anyone else. He had a habit of standing on his toes and blowing a cloud of cigar smoke in your face, which was quite annoying, especially when you were drunk also; then he would square off with a leer on his face while watching his victim choke. If you were infuriated and foolish enough to give chase, his hand would dart out as fast as lightning for anything dangling between the legs. Then he would squeeze slowly and carefully. Usually he was pounced on by the other men and beaten to the ground. He was quite mild and jovial when sober.

After a few minutes, when Mr. Brash was satisfied that everyone had finished eating, he gave a signal for the music to cease. Bill came to a stop in the middle of his jig, bewilderedly looking about him, but



not letting go of the girl. Tex, at another signal from Mr. Brash, slowly got to his feet at the head of the table and raised both lanky arms high in the air for silence. His eyes were transfixed, for he had become greatly religious after his experiences of the last war. His thin body, swaying slightly above them in his black suit, made them all feel as if they were doing wrong. Tex stared ahead and would not begin. Someone whispered to Bill to take his seat, and his face was suddenly purple with anger as he muttered threats and tightened his grip around the girl's waist. He ran his blurry eyes around the horseshoe table, his chin cutting the air belligerently. They were trying to steal his girl. She was frightened as he spread his stocky legs and moved his fingers into a fist for the attack. Then she whispered into his ear and his face brightened, but he reluctantly removed his arm. "You'd better!" he threatened through stiff unbending lips as she retreated towards the kitchen. She nodded and waved her arm to him as he dropped into a chair.

Tex's mouth had begun to move in silent prayer. His eyes were closed. One by one the men followed Mr. Brash's example at the head of the table and bowed their heads. The back room was suddenly quiet except for the cook quarreling with the dishwasher in the kitchen about the dirty dishes in the sink. They seemed to be using megaphones. But abruptly they ceased, and in a moment they were standing in the doorway, peering about the room. Tex's resonant "Amen" broke the silence and was the signal for them to lift their eyes. He was smiling good-naturedly now as they raised their solemn heads.

"Mr. Brash,"—he nodded to the boss—"Fellow Workers,"—he raised his scrawny palms before him in a sweeping comic gesture to include them all—"and last but not least,"—he turned to the embarrassed young fellow on his right—"our honored guest, Walter." Then Tex paused and sipped water from a tumbler. He was not averse to mixing theatrics with religion for effect. His voice was softer and sadder as he continued. "You all know why we are gathered here, tonight—it is not solely for the purpose of drinking and filling our bellies—we are here to send our comrade off into battle. And that is why I thought it both fitting and appropriate in our moment of joy to offer a prayer to our Lord. May we not incur the wrath of God with our evil living and visit our sins upon this righteous boy on the eve of his departure. Amen."

The men began to look uneasily about them as Tex sat down. There was an awkward pause as the silence spread, and everyone was

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The men began to look uneasily about them as Tex sat down. There was an awkward pause as the silence spread, and everyone was

afraid to breach it by lifting a drink to his lips. Finally Mr. Brash cleared his throat audibly as a sign he intended to speak. He made an effort to rise by pressing his ten stubby fingers down upon the table top, but when he was not vaulted to his feet he gave it up as a bad job. His whiskey-belly seemed to be wedged beneath the table. He adjusted his horn-rimmed glasses upon his purplish nose and began to speak gruffly without turning his head, as if he had a stiff neck.

"You fellas know I don't go much in for speechmaking. My job is to build ships, good ships. All I gotta say is that in thirty years of shipbuilding, which has taken me to all parts of this man's earth, I've never run across a buncha better guys. That's all I gotta say. Except that sometimes you run across a young fella who's like a son to you, who you can teach all you know." He turned to Walter, "The fellas wanna show their appreciation for working with you. They've appointed me to give you this war bond."

Before Walter could get up, Tex was on his feet once more. His lean face was yellow and haggard and there was a troubled look in his eyes. "All of you probably know how I've tried to get back into the Navy—but they won't have me. I'd do any thing to get back in . . . or even have a son in the fight . . . but I guess I'll have to sit this one out. But before I joined up, my father, who served before me, gave me his ring for a keepsake"—and Tex twisted the heavy ring on his finger. "I'd like to pass this ring on to another Navy man, who will keep up the tradition, I'm sure. God bless him."

Walter got up on the verge of tears to accept the bond and ring. He brushed back his dark hair from his face with his hand and felt a wetness on his cheek. The men, deeply touched by Tex's speech and seeking relief from their emotions, broke out into applause and laughter at Walter's embarrassment.

"Let's drink to Walter!" Bill shouted, jumping up from his chair and waving his mug above his head. He began to sing, "For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow—"

And the men took up the song and quickly got to their feet, glasses in hand, and drank the boy's health in beer. Walter glanced hastily around the room at his good friends, his eyes smarting, his mouth quivering, and then back to his plate.

"Drink up, boy!" Bill shouted. "For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny!" And his eyes began to search the room belligerently, for was he not Walter's helper?

That night the party ended in its usual fashion. Mr. Brash drank

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until he had a heart attack and was taken home in Tex's car; and Bill, after an argument with a welder, was beaten to the ground and had to be put to bed by Walter, who was drunker than he had ever been in his life.

On a Thursday, a week after his pre-induction examination, Walter returned to work. His old badge and his tool checks were given back to him, but not until the doctor in the outer office examined his nose and pronounced him fit once more for shipyard work. It was near eleven before he again was an employee. The clerk looked up in surprise when Walter said he was going to take the rest of the day and the week off. He would start anew on Monday.

The restaurant across the street from the yard was empty of customers as Walter opened the door. It had not yet got over the onslaught of the breakfast crowd. Tables were out of line, chairs overturned, and the potbelly stove had lost its early morning redness. Several big black shipyard cats were sleeping on the sheet of tin in front of the stove. The owner poured a cup of coffee and salvaged a cruller for Walter from beneath the counter. His fat face was serious as he looked at the clock on the wall, and he blew air out of his mouth as he reckoned the time. "How do I do it, every day?" he muttered to himself.

Walter pushed aside some cups at a table and sat down. The sight of the heavy signet ring on his finger brought a frown to his dark face. Why the hell did he have to be rejected? And after they had thrown a party for him and got him drunk and shook hands all around. Walter gulped his coffee down, burning his tongue, and feeling the better for it.

Rejected. An old break, the doctor had said, an accident, perhaps?

No, he had bluffed, but he remembered with a sinking feeling the black and blue eyes and the strip of adhesive across the bridge of his nose of a year ago.

But, Doc, he had pleaded, accept me and I'll have it operated on before induction. The Army will get me anyway some day.

Sorry, son, and the doctor had shaken his head.

Walter left the restaurant and went out to catch a street car. He would go to a movie. Yes, that would help him forget that he had to go back to work on Monday. . . . It was too bad that his idea had not worked out. Then the fellows would never know that he had let them down. Of course, he would've always felt ashamed about the ring, but Tex need never have known that he had not gone into the Navy. . . .

They must have traced him through his social security number. The two Federal men had made him feel like a criminal when they had come over to his bench. They had flashed their badges and hustled him away in front of the whole machine shop. Then in the office they had been indignant and hurt as if he had offended them personally. Didn't he know he was essential to the shipyard? Where was his release? A bright gleam came to their eyes. . . . What was he—a draft dodger? Where was his draft card? Who did he think he was anyway, skipping around from job to job? There was a war on, bud, hadn't he heard?

Walter pulled his skull cap down over his ears as he stepped upon the deck. A group of men were huddled around a dying coke fire amidships. They sprung from the dull early morning in grotesque figures upon the bulkhead as a welder struck an arc. Walter quickly raised his head above the level of the flash. The sky flickered uncertainly as if a heat storm were brewing.

A short fellow in overalls broke from the group; it was Bill. Shading his eyes against the welding, he took the can of tools from Walter and glanced keenly into his face.

"Rejected," Walter muttered under his breath.

"No-o. . . . Too bad, kid."

"Hey, here's Walter!" someone said in surprise. "What are—what are you doing here?"

"Ah-h," Bill answered deprecatingly for the benefit of all, "they couldn't use him. Whatta you think of that?"

Walter glanced up and met Tex's eyes staring at him from the other side of the fire. Involuntarily their eyelids fluttered and their heads jerked away, but instantly they recovered sufficiently to nod to each other before dropping their eyes.

Three days passed before Walter decided to have a talk with Tex. He found him down in the hold putting up brackets under the Third Deck. Walter had to wait until the welder finished tacking up a bracket before getting Tex's attention.

"We-ll, it's about time you came down to visit me, stranger!" Tex said with a smile as soon as he climbed down from the scaffolding. He flicked a spark from his dungarees and then extended his hairy hand to Walter. They were both aware of the ring as they shook hands.

Walter mumbled something about being busy, and then he removed the ring from his finger and held it out to Tex. "I won't need it now," he said.

Tex hesitated but for a moment. It flashed through his mind that the fellows might censure him for taking the ring back after the great scene he had made in presenting it.

"No, son," Tex said in a deep voice, putting his arm on Walter's shoulder. "It's yours, lad."

But Tex went back to his brackets with a sour taste in his mouth and no heart for work. Hell, he had overplayed his hand. The ring was rightfully his—no one could deny that the boy was as free as a lark, and that he had given the ring away only because the boy was going into the Navy. To Walter it was just an ornament; to him it was his heritage. . . . And, besides, the boy had no right to the ring—he was not Navy.

Walter and Bill were making up a deck butt on the top deck when Tex came out of the hold. The sun was shining, but a strong shifting wind was sweeping the dirt and steel dust in whirlpools across the deck. Tex hunched his shoulders and shaded his eyes until he could get his goggles from his pocket, his dungarees flapping with a snapping noise against his legs. He leaned over the side of the boat until Bill went for an errand.

"Walter."

The boy glanced up from his squatting position and knew immediately from the look on Tex's face what was in his mind.

"I—I took into consideration what you said—"

Walter got up quickly, his face red as he avoided Tex's eyes. He moved out of earshot of the welder with Tex just behind him, his voice pleading with earnestness.

"And I've come to the conclusion—"

A wave of hatred swept over Walter. He was ashamed for Tex in his humiliation, and his nails bit into the palms of his hands. He began to walk rapidly.

Tex continued, increasing his stride. "—That you were right—" He stopped short as it came to him that Walter was trying to break from him. He watched him walk towards the gangplank. The boy flung a look backwards and then continued walking rapidly.

And then suddenly as an afterthought he snatched the ring from his finger and sent it skidding across the deck. "I don't want your damn ring either," he yelled into the wind. "You damn faker!"

## THANK YOU, I'M ALL RIGHT

*Lois Jacobsen*

MIRIAM RIPPET stood with her back to the people in the room. She leaned over the fat china punchbowl and dipped slowly the pink liquid from the bowl into her glass. Her cheeks felt swollen and almost sore with heat. Behind her the room hummed with polite and low-voiced arguments, and now and then the sound of a woman's voice, high and clear. The laughter came from the throat of Mrs. Harlow, that young woman so beautifully pale, who moved with grace like a panther, who spoke as though with her whole body, gently and quietly and faintly swaying, and who had sat to the left of Miriam at the table that evening.

Now as Miriam leaned over the punchbowl, she felt the laughter as though it were directed toward her stiff, self-conscious back. Over her poor warm cheeks another sheet of hot blood crept, and blotched her face. She rose nervously on tiptoe, pretending to be deeply absorbed in the contents of the bowl. Then she thought of how she looked to those behind her, so uselessly stretching over a table that sat below her waist. She dropped her heels quickly to the floor.

In truth, no one at all had taken the slightest notice of her except Mrs. Harlow's husband, who thought kindly, "Poor tortured girl. So healthy and normal to look at—why in the world does she put herself through all this? And what lovely legs she has, too." And then he'd turned away, feeling half guilty.

Miriam Rippet was a tall girl with a broad face and round cheeks. Her shoulders were narrow and rounded, her breasts small, her hips and stomach large and round. Her legs below the knees tapered gently down to small ankles under which sat large, long feet, not particularly ugly in themselves, but noticeable because they moved so heavily and self-consciously. When she walked, her feet were pointed out and slapped quite firmly on the ground with each step.



Now as she stared over the table trying vainly to prolong her absence from the center of the room, Mr. Harlow walked up, took from her hand the little silver dipper, and smiled at her gently.

"I'll have a drink too," he said.

Miriam raised her head and nodded and answered rather too loudly, "It's really very good, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Mr. Harlow looking into her warm face. "We were just talking about man's relation to the sun. Won't you come and help me out a little? They're all very much against me." He saw what large blue eyes the girl had. They seemed moist and pained. He took her arm, and quickly they walked back to the center of the room.

"He rescued me on purpose," thought Miriam gratefully. Then a warm shame went through her, for she knew he had been watching her. She looked out of the corner of her eyes at the neat Mr. Harlow—with his delicate paper hands, his fine strong face, perfectly pale and beautiful like his wife's, his high pale forehead that appeared never to have known pain and heat, his small lips that smiled so easily and rested so perfectly when closed, without twitchings or grimaces. Miriam leaned back in her chair. Now she was unnoticed and far away.

She heard the voices, softly, lightly, and the occasional laughter. She knew that if she should speak the room would be hers, and when she paused there would be a great silence until Mr. Harlow broke it gently. Then her cheeks would redden and she would be swept with a kind of anger and a passion, and speak more loudly and longer, her voice heavy with the groans of her very soul. They would all be shocked, disgusted, perhaps. Yes, the whole atmosphere would change. Miriam was aware of all this, and that it was in her power to cause all of them some flush of feeling, some unwanted warmth if only that of a super-delicate nausea. She kept quiet.

Miriam had been invited because she had written a book. At the beginning of the evening, they had turned toward her with interest and nods. They had asked questions that she answered vigorously, sometimes smilingly, but she could sense in a few minutes the distance between them. They looked at her bright naked eyes and her round cheeks, red with excitement as much as with health, and stepped back paces. One, two, three—one, two, three. She could hear the steps, actually. It was not so much the men as the women. The men stepped more softly, more kindly, perhaps.

For several minutes while at the dinner table, she had had a splendid time talking to the fat little artist at her right who laughed loudly.

They had made up a game of comparing the guests around the table to the various dishes of food. And when they came to call Mr. Harlow "Celery" and the fat little artist bit into a stalk, they both laughed until the tears rolled down their warm round cheeks, and they had to wipe them away with their napkins. They were watched with aghast expressions, or were ignored with frowns. After that Miriam knew she would have to stay close to the fat little man, but he was bound to go early, to catch a train, he said, and she was left alone.

Now she sat back and watched Mr. Harlow. She was grateful to him, yes, but she hated him. She wanted to call him Mr. Celery, but there was no one there to laugh her kind of laugh. She wondered if he would snap drily if bitten in two, and decided that he would indeed, as would all the others, except the fat little artist with the red face who had left early.

Miriam knew, as she hated them, she longed for them. A small, lovely girl with long straight golden hair was now standing up before them, doing a dance she had seen done in a club the night before. The party laughed and clapped, and the dancer sank gracefully to the heavily carpeted floor at their feet and turned her pretty face to theirs laughing and speechless. This was gaiety, this was life, simple, bright, happy, and golden. This was as she could never be. As she watched the fine movements of the girl dancing and heard the low, husky voice singing—not too suggestively, nor too blankly—she longed for that touch, that quality of the "just so," the feeling of the thumb pressed to the middle finger, little finger raised delicately. The precise, the balanced, the nice. The gay without drunkenness or ribaldry, the serious without groans or heavy-lidded eyes.

She longed to go home, to bed, to silence and darkness, to gain again her composure and dignity. There, alone, all things shaped up in her hands wonderfully. This moment became soft and sad, a small shrub, clinging so sadly, so tenaciously to a barren empty hillside.

She looked at them all. She liked to watch them, the way their voices sounded and their hands rested so gracefully on chair arms, or at their sides; the way they twisted their mouths and moved their eyes, in complete control of all their physical parts. Yet, she scorned them, and somehow gloried in what she was. She thought with disgust at the time she had spent bathing, powdering, dressing for them, of the excitement she had known only a few hours ago. Now she wanted to stand up and say in a quiet lie, "Excuse me, will you? I've really got to go. It's been a splendid evening." But she sat pressed against the back of the large

straight chair, waiting until they moved and stood up, so that she could slip out quietly among them.

"Well, my girl, you've not helped me much."

She turned at the low whispered voice and looked at Mr. Harlow. She felt more secure now, leaning back against the chair. She smiled and whispered politely, "They'd changed the subject before I had a chance."

"Just the same"—he patted her hand—"you were moral support."

She looked at his pale face, his flat grey eyes, and the fine dark brows. She liked him and she disliked him.

"Perhaps," he said, "you'll have dinner at our house some time. Mrs. Harlow and I would love to have you. Just you. It would be more pleasant that way. I don't care for large parties, myself." He patted her hand again, smiled, and looked away.

Miriam muttered, "Thank you," and looked at his quiet pale profile. "Mr. Celery," she said to herself, "Mr. Celery has the milk of human kindness in him. Well, well. Yes, I could come to your house for dinner. Not because I would want to particularly but because I could not help it. I am like the moth too, a fool who cannot stay away from the light when his home is darkness."

They left, and Miriam walked out softly and quickly as possible. There was a feeling of frost in the air. The others had cars or taxis waiting. Miriam turned the corner and walked toward the subway. The air bit into her skin, cleanly, strongly. The stars were cold and if you looked at them long enough they would probably freeze your eyeballs. There was a small wind, and not many people on the streets.

On the subway people sat in dull, slit-eyed silence staring at each other sightlessly. The subway jolted and jerked and swayed. The people sat and jolted, jerked, swayed. A little paper-boy slept on a seat, his head on a stack of Sunday papers. At the first stop, a tall man with only one arm staggered onto the car. Miriam watched him. His eyes were streaked with red and he swayed as he walked. The subway door shut just behind him. The rows of people slowly raised their eyes and stared, and the tall man stepped uncertainly toward a seat. The subway started with a jerk. He raised his arm wildly to grasp a strap, missed it, and staggered. He fell slowly, haltingly toward the floor of the car, then caught himself again and grabbed at the back of the seat upon which the little paper-boy was sleeping. His hand slipped again. The people sat in stiff rows watching, blankly, without fear or sympathy or malice. No one moved.

Miriam felt the blood rising to her face again. She leapt up and ran halfway down the car to the man. He had fallen on his side where the coat sleeve hung empty, and his head had struck loudly on the floor.

Shaking with anger, with shame, with loneliness, Miriam lifted her eyes and stared with loathing at the dull face of a passenger before her. "You foul ass!" she cried. Faces turned, eyelids fluttered with faint interest. She turned away from them. A young boy helped her now to lift the fallen man to a seat. She sat beside him then and whispered, "Are you all right?"

Lifting his head, the tall man looked at her, "Thank you, Miss," he said. "I'm all right."

She saw his eyes looking at her face, at her carefully gloved hands, at her neat fur-trimmed coat, and she knew that while he was grateful, he hated her. As she left him, her heart swelled. In that moment she longed to reach out her warm arms and gather in them the whole world that she could bind it with the benediction of her tears.

## A MAN AND HIS DOG

*Leon Wolff*

SIMPLE DREAMS dreamed the little dog under the piano, plotless, counterplotless and without direction, wistful as shreds of quiet fog on a road at night, simple as a red rubber ball.

Dreams of parboiled beef unfettered by cereal dreamed the little dog under the piano, nervous dreams of a dour shaggy enemy, dreams of parboiled meat, of furiously running through soft grass in a certain park to the edge of strange waters, poignant not vague but crystal-clear image of steak-bone, eager dreams of feline, elemental dream of favored tree and of making water, chilling dream of a man, thrilling dream of parboiled beef.

The little dog twitched and groaned and savored deeply of his dreams, but with the sound of the key in the lock slid swiftly into wakefulness and lay waiting motionless on his chest, head between his paws, and blinked slowly into the darkness.

The man entering the apartment knew without thinking that the dog would not come to meet him. The dog was now awake, he knew. He also knew that he was under the piano far in the corner afraid of him and (if such a thing were possible in such a dog) hating him with a simple and inflexible hatred.

He walked into the living room and snapped on a light. "Hello, Deke," he said. The dog stirred slightly. "Come on out, boy—I won't bite you." He waited a moment, then turned impatiently and went into the kitchen. He mixed himself a drink. He came back, sat down, and looked at the dog lying motionless in the shadow of the piano.

The dog had been alone many hours, was hungry, and needed badly to go outside. The man knew all this. After three years, the man knew all things at all times about this dog. He had bought him from a fashionable kennel at the age of four months, a mad and irresponsible character with an unoriginal impulsion toward slippers and piano legs. The little dog had matured quickly since then.

The man looked at him and drank his drink and considered pas-

sively the phenomenon of a dog with negative reactions toward his master. He loved this little dog on occasion, especially when feeling his liquor, but mostly despised him; when he thought of the dog at all, he did so confusedly and usually with irritation. But now, at this moment, he loved the dog, the damn apprehensive dog, the little soft damn scared dog in the shadow of the piano, well out of reach (they both knew) of anything but a golf club or a broom. He poured another drink and sat there breathing rather heavily, loving the little dog, and looking into the eyes that shone watchfully under the grand piano.

"Come here," he said. "Come here, Deke." The dog moved uneasily, awaiting developments, no longer aware of his hunger or the desire to go outside. "Come on, boy. Come on. Come on." The man spoke softly and insistently and tried to coax the dog out with neutral phrases of blandishment, avoiding certain words which he knew would engender an artificial and unfair temptation in the dog's mind. Patiently but unsuccessfully, wanting only to touch him, he tried to convince the dog that all was well.

"Jesus, what a pooch," he said finally, and set his drink down sharply on the table. "A hell of a rugged pooch you are, I must say," he said sarcastically. The little dog, on edge from the coaxing and the sudden crack of glass against wood, watched the man out of large, luminous eyes.

"Want your dinner?" the man said. This was one of the irresistible words. Now that the legal contest was over, and he had lost as usual, he used another. "Want to go outside?" The dog twitched and squirmed in a torture of desire and indecision that could have only one ending. "Dinner? Dinner? Outside?" the man repeated.

The little dog got up. Slowly and agonizedly he advanced toward the man, body shaped like a U and head to one side, a picture of ingratitude and embarrassment. When he reached the man's feet he collapsed utterly, looking up at him and causing his tail to flutter wildly with hope and fear. The man reached out to pet his head; as he did so, the dog shrank back, blinking spasmodically.

"Want your dinner?" the man said. "How about some dinner?" The dog came to his feet and looked into the man's eyes with silent intensity. "How about some dinner?" the man teased. "Dinner, Deke, dinner." The dog whined softly and stared at his master, trying to force him into action by the sheer chemistry of vision.

"What do you say we go outside, first?" the man said. "How about it, boy? What do you want—dinner or outside?"

## A MAN AND HIS DOG

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The little dog barked with excitement and desire. The man smiled. This was the way he liked the pooch—showing a little spirit, a little interest in life!

The dog rose on his hind legs and clawed the man's chest in a frenzy of anticipation. His rough pads scraped across the man's satin tie and produced dusty streaks on his white shirt.

"God *damn* it," the man breathed, and slapped the dog viciously across the muzzle. The dog spun once on the floor, and snarling in surprise and bitterness darted under the piano, into his shadowy corner. "You ignorant little jerk," the man said, getting up. "When will you learn to stop doing that?" He finished his drink. "Just for that you'll wait a while."

He thought for a moment, the dog now being forgotten, then snapped off the light and left the apartment. The door slammed.

The little dog, who had been trembling where he stood under the piano, now sank down on his stomach, head between his paws, and blinked slowly into the darkness. Soon he was dozing again and fitfully dreaming, fearfully of a man, yearningly of a tree and of making water, deliciously of meat, hopefully of a tree, quiveringly, desperately, half dream half not-dream of a certain tree in a certain park where many dogs passed the time of day in a very social and pleasant manner indeed.

## POETRY

### FOUR POEMS

#### DEPARTURE

In this quotidian of my setting out  
I fumble at the latch and hesitate  
Before my froward shadow on the step  
Blotting the sprawling sunlight from the stone.

There was a time when I would not have gone  
Beyond this door, when sorrow's tentacles  
Were strong as hemp. (And what grave image there  
Was hoist for matins in that darkened hall.)

Pressed by impedimenta-freighted brain  
Resilient tendons dared not stretch. Prostrate  
On polished timbers mummied time aroused  
No horror of the rodent hours. But now

Departure-chastened, desuetude propounds  
New formulae for taking leave. Upon  
The threshold I have paused to give entail  
And benediction to my termite heirs.

#### FOUL CONJUNCTION

O foul conjunction joining this bright soul  
With carrion-food for worms—no sacrament  
Hallowed this tainted marriage making whole  
Two ones; rather carnivorous sediment,  
Earth's belly (womb and tomb!) awaits return  
Of flesh and bone. As surely as that proud



Cloud-flaunting hill where lavic cones now burn  
 Sea-buried once shall feel the watery shroud  
 Once more, so body back to dust. But where  
 In daisied fields or fiery-dappled sky  
 Shall go the transient-and-eternal fair  
 Divorcéd one, unknown and knowing I,  
 (O lonely soul that will not be compost  
 For fecund earth!) the lost and homeless ghost?

## VANTAGE

He had seen travelogues depicting the  
 Picturesque villages, marvelled at quaint  
 Costumes, viewed an Oroscau panorama  
 Whose real and fabulous conjoin in paint.

And he had heard one, wiser than many,  
 Say, "It is a strange and terrible land;  
 Not for the half-hearted." But the frenzy  
 Of departure was in him. So he planned

A sojourn, mapping an itinerary  
 To include the latitudes of Whence and Why.  
 After that brash incredible journey  
 He stared at the implacable vast sky

As once might one of Cortez' baser men  
 Who came, mazed in cold greed of scrutiny,  
 And compromised with fear. Could he not then  
 Cull some truth from this gaudy pageantry—

Rash fables hatched to gull poor traveling  
 Fools? Or was truth adamant in mountains,  
 Trapped in rock-sealed strata with the deathling  
 Fossils of old Time? Such were the questions

Troubling him who looked beyond a landscape  
 Toward history's mirage. The mango's taste  
 Exotic on his tongue, a dancer's shape,  
 Maguey green-armored in a desert waste

Were gloss and comment, program-notes to read  
 Curiously after the event. But now,  
 Cogitating the swift allegoried  
 Show, he remembered that absolute bough

Whose fruit is brittle in mortality,  
 And found the play authentic: the villain  
 Genealogically sound; homely,  
 And familiar, as original sin.

#### LACUSTRINE THOUGHTS

##### I

It was there. And we had seen it. Beyond  
 The circling swan it rose, mammiform and  
 Opulent. No one could ever dream that  
 Green harbor . . . that lush-breasted promise of

Repose. Yet suddenly it was not. And  
 We saw only bits of inverted sky  
 Strewn in the fractured lake. And the swan swam  
 In proud orbits — wide as despair . . . as doom.

##### II

That day we did not see any islands.  
 There was nothing — only gray water and  
 A solitary swan. The sun laid down  
 Its gold highway for night to enter on.

But we, mazed in a sullen latitude,  
 Could not descry one patch of green, one brash  
 Intimation of islands burgeoning  
 Out of the fertile word. Lost . . . lost . . . betrayed

By what was and what would be—we heard earth's  
 Ancient anguish—Time's stale proleptic sigh.

III

Once more we watched the proud swan circumscribe  
Its solitary ambit round the lake;  
And heard the prowling winds descant on man  
And his sad genesis. "Begat in sin

And doomed . . . and doomed . . . and doomed . . ." The words recurred,  
Reverberated through brain and blood. Then  
My tree muttered—"Not only man . . . " Lakeward  
We looked again. And the lonely swan swam.

IV

Lush and mammiform that island rose brash  
As the germinal word tongue-warm on that  
Glad lake.

Our thoughts coupling in green transit  
Found perilous conjunction on rathe waves;  
While under-arching all the sky, inverse  
And subterranean, girdled with sly  
Aulic lechery our laughing isle.

But

We—more sure of our meridian—passed  
By that bright illusion . . . passed straight to our  
Green island—our brashly-burgeoning *Now*.

DEANE MOWRER

AMELIA, 1904—

Daughter of a comfortable insurance executive  
In a medium midwestern city, she always felt  
At her back the cold breath of poverty.

Conway claimed her at the membership dance  
(Checking coats, slowly achieving college).  
He had her only three times, because her mother

Preferred a plastic clerk whom she did not,  
Eventually, marry. She was fond of Proust,  
And wrote in a small still hand like copper plate.

He married. Fifteen years later she suffered  
A superfluous change of life which wandered  
Now to her thigh, now her contracting bosom.

CAROL HALL

## TWO POEMS

### VOICE OF ODYSSEUS

The empty hides walk ghostly here,  
The flesh bellows within the flesh;  
The mind tauter than a leash  
Strains from the gods, pulls back in fear.

Stirring the sacred sin of dust  
Like cattle in corrals of sun  
We brand upon the self a tone  
That burns upon the hip of lust.

The churches mad within the head  
Swear vengeance for the sacred cow;  
We fear the sun will leave us now  
And go to shine among the dead.

### PAN

I met him in the month of May  
When I was sweet sixteen;  
I looked into his heart and saw  
A hunger curled and lean.

They said he drove about the town  
Hunting corners of the moon  
Before he took his fiddle down  
And began to tune  
The strings upon a look of grief.

And the velvet shoulder pad  
Trembled gentle as a leaf—  
It was like the joy he had.

Took a wife and left her cold,  
Colder to drink berry wine;  
Starved hungerly but never sold  
The strings and keys across his mind.

Once I took the music stand  
Placed it near the window  
Let him guide me with the hand  
That could draw hurt splendor  
From the gut and crooked bow,  
That could make a tone  
Tremble so a heart would crave  
His whiskey of the sun.

And he died of drink they say  
Left his wife so cold  
Weeping where she lay.

I have traveled far to find  
Nothing, nothing in my mind  
That can be as gold  
As the woven music spun  
Whirling from his drunken sun.

GLADYS HYDE

### SONNET: PEACE

Along the actual streets the living rush,  
Their four dimensions hung on them like pride,  
While up the beaches of Salerno push  
Eternally the dead against the tide;  
While under meadowlands in Normandy  
And under rubble that was Stalingrad  
There sleeps not sound, there sleeps not restfully,  
The early slain, the dead, the shattered lad.

Oh you along the streets of living run—  
 Your profit freedom, but the price, their grave;  
 Your breath come freely, but their breathing done  
 That there shall never breathe another slave:  
 But hear them restless in their early tomb—  
 Your living thrust between them and their doom!

ALBERTINE FOX

## TWO POEMS

### THE SCHOLAR AND THE CHILD

A scholar studies the ocean's solemn text;  
 Two rivets span the preface of his mind  
 Linking the acetylene years of his intelligence  
 With the universe. Callipered tides move  
 On the mirrors of his ancient eyes.

Upon the beach a child, building a castle  
 In the sand, smiles and lifts his hands  
 In innocence before his eyes—then laughs.  
 The laughter bursts the crucible of the scholar's  
 Brain (formulas spill slowly from his hands) —  
 And the child's fabulous dream dissolves.

### REFLECTIONS ON AN OLD, OLD THEME

Death is our final exile from the sun,  
 Wherein is lost our brief inheritance of light;  
 Where all the dry, abortive legacies of noon  
 Fade from the desolate margins of our sight.  
 Death is our silent exodus from day,  
 Where lusterless and dull our eyes discard  
 The remnants of desire, the soul's decay.

WILSON C. DENHALTER

POETRY

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TWO POEMS

NIGHT SONG

From reservoirs of silence  
The veils of evening come  
Upon imponderable winds  
To cover us, and some  
Will share kind sleep with other  
But most will toss alone,  
Night being gentle mother  
To no child not her own.

MORNING

This is the end of quiet  
When motors far away  
Begin a loud conspiracy  
To mechanize the day.

All day they will go roaring  
In our accustomed ears,  
Who lost the prize of silence  
In our own boisterous years.

And now what comes so rarely  
Is never ours to keep,  
In rigid mountains far from home  
Or on the edge of sleep.

J. S. MOODEY

TWO POEMS

SUMMER END

My thinking heart told less of what it knew  
Than what it saw,  
Summer gone, summer repeating,





POETRY

489

Is not important now. The Brandts, well-bred,  
Discuss Peron, do not expect  
Replies to mend a childhood toy.

JAMES HALL

VALEDICTION

I do not turn to lift my emptying arms—  
The ruin of a rose torn in despair  
Will sublimate to an enduring splendor  
The end of what we made a love affair.

That rose within the vase of stagnant water,  
Its shriveled petals falling in a shower,  
Is kept in memory of a vanished pleasure,  
Or chivalry toward the poor, dying flower.

Rejoice, then, that the red rose of our passion  
In cruel, razing violence has gone,  
Sparing us those sad, deciduous petals—  
The furtive glance at clock, the smothered yawn.

MARY RUTH FUNK

NEWS REEL

The mind is photo-flashed into the past:  
Upon the film a decade reappears  
And reenacts the roles that had been cast  
In the tenuous and the long-buried years.  
The time between is cancelled, and we seem  
To view a play that would be false, again—  
Now we behold the fallacy of dream,  
But happily we did not guess it then.

Here through the telescope of time, we see  
Our lives, like newsreels, running in reverse:  
We touch a lens, and by some sorcery

We watch the pantomime (ourselves) rehearse,  
Until the focus fails, the reels unwind,  
The dream projected fades against the mind.

MAE WINKLER GOODMAN

P O E M

The force of accident  
Shatters to cold excess  
Delight and pain alike:

The what we do not see,  
Or do not think to see,  
May bide its time, then strike,

And push us far beyond  
The hardly-captured bound  
That measure sets for us

Until by sleep or death  
We're hastened to forget  
Why we're meticulous.

JACKSON MAC LOW

## A REVIEW OF SOME CURRENT POETRY

- The Earth-Bound, 1924-1944*, by Janet Lewis. Aurora, N. Y.: The Wells College Press, 1946. \$3.50.
- Slow Music*, by Genevieve Taggard. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1946. \$2.00.
- The Bridge: Poems 1939-1945*, by Ruth Pitter. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946. \$1.50.
- Poems 1938-1945*, by Robert Graves. New York: Creative Age Press, 1946. \$2.00.
- Lord Weary's Castle*, by Robert Lowell. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946. \$2.50.
- The Burning Mountain*, by John Gould Fletcher. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946. \$2.75.
- Man and Shadow, an Allegory*, by Alfred Kreymborg. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946. \$5.00.
- A Man in the Divided Sea*, by Thomas Merton. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1946. \$2.50.
- XII Poems* by Francis Coleman Rosenberger. New York: Gotham Book Mart, 1946. \$1.00.
- Ultimatum for Man*, by Peggy Pond Church. Stanford University, Calif.: James Ladd Delkin, 1946. \$1.50.
- Sonnets to Orpheus; Duino Elegies*, by Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Jessie Lemont. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1945. \$4.00.
- A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry, English and American*, edited with an Introduction by Oscar Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. \$3.50.
- The Poetry Society of America Anthology*, Introduction by J. Donald Adams, edited by Amy Bonner, Melville Cane, Gwendolen Haste, Alfred Kreymborg, Leonora Speyer, A. M. Sullivan. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$3.50.
- Nothing Is a Wonderful Thing*, by Helen Wolfert. New York: Venture Press; Simon and Schuster, 1946. \$2.00.
- The Feudalist*, by Woodridge Spears. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$1.50.
- Release the Lark*, by John Black. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$2.00.
- The American Prometheus*, by Francis Blake. New York: Fine Editions Press, 1946. \$3.00.
- Against the Furious Men, Poems 1938-1945*, by James E. Warren, Jr. Emory University, Ga.: Banner Press, 1946. \$1.50.
- Borrowed Laughter*, by Syd Turner. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1945. \$2.00.
- An Oregon Interlude, a Narrative Poem*, by Anna Holm Pogue. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1946. \$2.00.
- Take It to the Hills, a Novel in Verse*, by Zella Varian Price. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1945. \$2.00.
- Poems of the Family Circle*, by James Peter Warbasse. New York: The Island Press, 1945. Price not indicated.
- Symphonic Poems*, by Salvatore Cutino. Published by the author, Los Angeles, 1946. Price not indicated.

Anyone who watches the poetry published in magazines and in anthologies will have identified Janet Lewis as one of our finest women poets. Publication of *The Earth-Bound* gives the opportunity of estimating her work of twenty years. There are thirty-six poems in a finely printed volume. The poems are of remarkably even quality, and that quality is extremely fine; yet the poems vary from the broad themes of "The Earth-Bound," "Country Burial," and "The Manger" to occasional poems addressed to a child, on presentation of a gift, and quatrains to friends. The sensibility which informs the poems is always alert, perceptive, and managed with a warm feeling and admirable judgment. The product is a minor poetry of the first order. "Country Burial," although possibly inferior to a half dozen of the other poems, is quoted because of its indicative method and because it struck me anew with the power of the ending:

After the words of the magnificence and doom,  
 After the vision of the splendor and the fear,  
 They go out slowly into the flowery meadow,  
 Carrying the casket, and lay it on the earth  
 By the grave's edge. The daisies bend and straighten  
 Under the trailing skirts, and serious faces  
 Look with faint relief, and briefly smile.  
 Into this earth the flesh and wood shall melt  
 And under these familiar common flowers  
 Flow through the earth they both have understood  
 By sight and touch and daily sustenance.  
 And this is comforting;  
 For heaven is a blinding radiance where  
 Leaves are no longer green, nor water wet,  
 Milk white, soot black, nor winter weather cold.  
 And the eyeless vision of the Almighty Face  
 Brings numbness to the untranslatable heart.

New books by two other women poets are considered next for useful comparisons and contrasts. Genevieve Taggard's *Slow Music* continues one of the more distinguished, and also one of the more quiet, careers among our women poets. This volume holds some disappointments: it is casual, as if Miss Taggard were not, here, doing all she has demonstrated she can do; and there is a little sense—one would hate to see it confirmed in later books—that she has given up on more ambitious work and settled into the casual, momentary vision, the poems which are almost starts or pieces of better poems which the author could write. The result is a volume which best shows one side of a versatile and capable talent, in this case some good poems of irony, whimsy, and occasional fine social comment.

Ruth Pitter has a deft but minor ability. Her themes and subjects are quite broad, varying from the occasional to the mystical. One admires the sensible, resourceful manner in which she works within a narrow range of feeling and technique; within a full book, a certain facility and an occasional lapse (for example, this line from "The Cygnet": "And loud within life undefeated answers") become a little appalling. Both her very good virtues and her limitations are illustrated by this stanza from "The Sparrow's Skull," a poem written on the fall of France:

Even so, dread God! even so, my Lord!  
 The fire is at my feet, and at my breast the sword,  
 And I must gather up my soul, and clap my wings, and flee  
 Into the heart of terror, to find myself in Thee.

In Robert Graves' new volume there is a considerable amount of poetry devoted to the casual, ironic situation such as delighted Hardy in his "Satires of Circumstance." Occasionally the interest goes beyond the ironic to the bitter and sensational, as in "To Lucia at Birth":

Outrageous company to be born into,  
 Lunatics of a shining age long dead . . .  
 Hark how they roar; but never turn your head.  
 Nothing will change them, let them not change you.

But the irony reaches the urbane, well-balanced level which we expect of Graves, and which makes him a significant poet in "Instructions to the Orphic Adept" and some other poems in this valuable volume.

*Lord Weary's Castle* contains seven poems from Robert Lowell's first book, *Land of Unlikeness*, plus well over thirty new poems. Lowell has moved rapidly and well in the two years since that volume. Gone is much of the strain, the image which becomes a "sport"; and we have a surer density of writing. Occasionally still there is a strained image (notice, in speaking to the Virgin Mary, "Your scorched, blue thunderbreasts of love," an image which surely can be explained in some sort of exegesis, but which won't be made to work as a line of poetry, I'm afraid, with any exegesis), an uneasy violence in communicating religious feeling (arising, I'm sure, not from the quality of the experience so much as from the method of tackling it in poetry), a bowing to fashionable style, and a common harkening, like Eliot, to other poets in style, image, and symbol (in this case, Yeats shows up strongly). But in this second book, I'm convinced that these are manners fairly close to the surface and that Lowell has a good chance to slough them off. In fact, the imitations have seemed to help him from the extremities of the first work. His talent is really fine, and when it moves directly on its subject, as in "Christmas Eve under Hooker's Statue" and other poems in the collection, it produces some beautiful lines and finely managed poems. Lowell has one of the significant talents among the younger poets, and a record of work and advance which would shame some of the others.

For some years I have been aware of a very fine interest John Gould Fletcher has taken in some of the younger and lesser-known poets. Knowing of this, and reading the first poem of *The Burning Mountain*, a poem entitled "Shadow on the Prairie," I looked forward to completing a volume in which Fletcher would show a broadening and a deepening of his poetry. What I expected, I think, was a certain abandonment of the surfaces Fletcher has customarily worked with in the past, an increased thematic ability, including an increased social awareness, and a tightened verse texture. In terms of these expectations, *The Burning Mountain* was mostly a disappointment. The tendency in all these directions is apparent in the volume, I am sure, but not successfully concluded. Poems showing these tendencies are side-by-side with the "symphonies" and similar poems which place an excessive sentiment upon place and surface; they are similar to those which provide

much of Fletcher's reputation in the past. Fletcher is a considerable poet, with virtues few but real, such as his awareness of oral qualities, a management of moods. If I am right in reading this new book, we are witnessing an effort which, if Fletcher can do it, will place him yet among the front rank of our modern poets.

At first look, Alfred Kreymborg's *Man and Shadow* is a book much too bulky for its apparently slight conception. Essentially, the pattern is that the poet walks through New York's Central Park for a day and puts down impressions, conversations, and thoughts evoked by meeting people of all qualities during the day. The slightness of conception is overcome in good taste, for Kreymborg makes the occasion a chance to get down a great deal about himself, his ideas, other people, covering an immense range. One wouldn't go around hailing it as a major poem and a masterpiece, but it makes a recommended book.

Thomas Merton's talent can be more adequately assessed now with the publication of *A Man in the Divided Sea*. The book contains the former *Thirty Poems* plus a larger number of new ones, many providing a developmental background for the latest work. Merton started with some methods from the objectivists, fortified with an engaging wit; to these were quickly welded a Symbolist sense of violence and sin beneath innocent-appearing surfaces:

But only where the swimmers float like alligators,  
And with their eyes as dark as creosote  
Scrutinize the murderous heat,  
Only there is anything heard:  
The thin, salt voice of violence,  
That whines, like a mosquito, in their simmering blood.

One presumes that this sense of lurking sin provided the basic motivation for Merton's conversion to catholicism and acceptance of monastic life. But when, after this change, Merton writes direct religious poems, most of the technical accomplishment he had achieved, minor but interesting, disappears, and no really adequate substitute is found. Merton has been hailed as the best Catholic poet in English since Francis Thompson. One hardly knows whether this is to be taken seriously, is an error in judgment, or is a reflection on the quality of Catholic religious verse. Surely it is an error in judgment; but Merton has ability and has a real chance to make it a good judgment.

Two attractive and good pamphlets are those of Coleman Rosenberger and Peggy Pond Church. Half of Rosenberger's *XII Poems* are concerned with the past of Virginia or with Thomas Jefferson. They are fine efforts in the assessment of history and of an important man in history. The other poems are more immediately topical, varying from the irony of "Notes for a Portrait" to "The Goats of Juan Fernandez: A Note on Survival." These also are done with care and taste. Peggy Pond Church has been impressed by the destructiveness of modern war and by the atomic bomb; her "ultimatum for man" is one of urgency: "Must I not pay / with my living breath?"; "Man . . . is master only of death, of death"; "Love is . . . the unequivocal ultimatum." Several of the thirty-four poems are movingly informed with this urgency. The only trouble is that, most of the poems being alike thematically, some suffer in comparison with the best and present a little too much of the same thing.

Jessie Lemont was the first sponsor of Rilke in English translation, and she continues to add to the number of Rilke's works she has made available. Newest of the books is one volume containing both the *Sonnets to Orpheus* and *Duino Elegies*. I am not a judge of the problems involved in translating Rilke, but inspecting the English poems which are a result lead me to think that Miss Lemont acquits herself well.

*A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry* is a better job of editing than Oscar Williams did with his *New Poets* volumes. I am inclined to think there are two main reasons for this, that it provided more space in which his taste could make itself felt, and that in covering older poets a body of critical work gave him leads and corrections for his own taste. It is remarkable indeed that he doesn't go outside that body of criticism to lead us to good work among the older poets who are not widely recognized. When Williams gets to the younger poets, he is as erratic as ever. Of the younger American poets, only John Berryman and Delmore Schwartz are substantially represented (Berryman with as many as, or more than, and Schwartz always with more than Thomas Hardy, Marianne Moore, E. A. Robinson, and Wallace Stevens), and many are not represented at all. On the other hand, heavy weighting goes to such English and Empire poets as Roy Fuller and John Manifold, among the youngest group. Oscar Williams is a special case, apparently, since he is represented by as many poems as William Carlos Williams, Robert Penn Warren, Yvor Winters, and Mark Van Doren all put together; and Gene Derwood has more than any of these and as many as Winters and Van Doren together. Others who get comparatively little representation are Louise Bogan and Hart Crane, besides the eight mentioned above; and some who get the largest representation are W. H. Auden, George Barker, E. E. Cummings, Robert Frost, Archibald MacLeish, and Dylan Thomas, besides those mentioned above.

This may seem little more than a parlor quibbling game. An editor must be allowed his taste, and of course any critic can find many poems or people whom he would want represented. Williams guards against this criticism in his introduction by saying that he has picked the poems which stirred him and not to give a critical selection of modern poetry; that is the reason he calls the book "a little treasury," although the publishers add "The best poems of the 20th century." One's retort is that Williams in that case convicts himself of inadequate taste or insufficient industry in coming in contact with much work he should know. In addition, the book is unfortunately arranged by topics rather than according to individuals, critical divisions, or chronology. In the end the book has a good place, for its only competitor is Louis Untermeyer's more inadequate anthologies; and the book is handsomely produced by Scribner's. However, the serious matter is that the faults of the editing keep this anthology from being the contemporary one the poets and the readers deserve. We are likely to await that book a long time, since the cost of producing such anthologies permits only one or two per decade.

The anthology of the Poetry Society of America is of interest mainly to members of the society, which is not broad enough in membership to represent modern American poetry with any completeness. Naturally the book suffers from inclusiveness; an organization of this sort has poor as well as good poets. However, it makes an interesting volume to pick over.

The remaining books, on a comparative basis, must occupy but a few sentences.

Helen Wolfert's *Nothing Is a Wonderful Thing* reports snatches from a day in the life of a young girl. At the local color level, the reports are frequently interesting; but the verse texture is slight and unimportant. Woodridge Spears I associate with Byron Herbert Reece and Howard Ramsden, two other young Southern poets who are working in the romantic method and doing good work. Spears, coming more recently, naturally sounds like an echo of the others; his work is inferior and needs to get its distinct voice, but he evidently has ability and may be able to manage it. Two other books from the Fine Editions Press are *Release the Lark*, by John Black, and *The American Prometheus*, by Francis Blake. Both are worthwhile volumes. Black is most interesting for an effort to get the boisterous language of the Whitman tradition into the sonnet and quatrain stanzas. The attitude behind the verse is humanistic, liberal, engaging, although the verse isn't particularly well realized. Blake's narrative is symbolic, with New England representing science and Mexico as an opposite; the attitudes are analogous to those of D. H. Lawrence, and the poem is decently executed. James E. Warren, Jr., writes quite a good poem in "Tarawa" and a few others; most of the time his verse is too vaguely and stiffly executed to be of any real interest. Syd Turner's verse is impressionistic, best when concerned with paradoxes in our culture. With the exception of a half dozen pieces which might have made an attractive little pamphlet, it is a question whether the book should have been published at all. Anna Holm Pogue's *An Oregon Interlude* is a tale of young Phil, later General, Sheridan, when he was stationed in Oregon. It is not done well. Zella Varian Price's novel in verse is concerned with the adjustment of the returned, crippled veteran. It is poorly written. Peter Warbasse presents a book of verse culled from a lifetime of writing poems for members of his family. The verses are homely, but only infrequently rise above that level, mainly in the poems addressed to the young children. Salvatore Cutino's *Symphonic Poems*, a pamphlet, lacks any of the textures we expect of poetry.

ALAN SWALLOW



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Suitors and Suppliants: the Little Nations at Versailles*, by Stephen Bonsal; introduction by Arthur Krock. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946. \$3.50.

In 1944 Mr. Bonsal produced a volume that won the Pulitzer Prize in history. It bore the title *Unfinished Business* and told the story of the drafting of the League Covenant. The material was drawn from the entries in the secret diary kept by Mr. Bonsal at the request of Colonel House. The present volume covers the same chronological span but deals with the role of the small nations at Paris—their hopes, demands, and personalities. It is no reflection on the captivating title of this book to suggest that it could have borne the same title as the earlier one.

Before 1914 the author had been a correspondent of global proportions—a hardy pioneer of what today is a very numerous species. He combined a reportorial capacity with linguistic ability. All that was wanting was the necessary stroke of good fortune to make these talents available where they would be most useful. A chance meeting in 1915 with Colonel House ripened into a friendship. In late 1918, while serving as a major in France, Bonsal was ordered to report to Colonel House, who had arrived in Paris to begin the peace negotiations. The Colonel's instructions were brief. "I think I can handle Lloyd George and the 'Tiger' (Clemenceau) without much help, but into your hands I commit all the mighty men of the rest of the world. . . . Most of them you knew and appraised before they were built up by war propaganda and nationalistic inflation. The war that has destroyed cities has puffed up some little men until they find their hats and their boots too small, much too small for them. I shall count on you to present them to me in their original proportions."

In contrast to the Big Ten the spokesmen—official, semi-official, and purely personal—for the "little people" were a variegated group. Understandably they were obsessed with the righteousness of the cause they represented. With minds unsullied by the subtleties of European diplomacy, they approached the Great Assizes (the author's phrase for the peace conference) in high hopes. It was Mr. Bonsal's task to hear, to alter, and to delete their representations. The result (and not the fault of the author) was more unfinished business, much of which is presently crowding the calendar of the peace makers as pending business.

Russians of all hues, Zionists of different complexions, Feisal and Lawrence, Kim of Korea, Bratianu, Father Hlinka and Paderewski were only the more prominent of the suppliants. From his secret diary the author has extracted the relevant entries concerning each and the cause for

which he pleaded. Such an arrangement has made for a more coherent presentation than would a strict chronological presentation.

Of particular interest because of their currency are the chapters on the Palestine problem as it shaped up more than a quarter of a century ago. The actors have changed but the plot is untouched. The pithy observations of Lawrence, admits Mr. Bonsal, contained more wisdom "than many volumes of Blue Books or White Papers." The main trouble, observed Lawrence, was easily identifiable: too many cooks. "From the beginning of the war and down to the present time (1919), the Intelligence section of the Indian government has been paying the Wahabite Emir (Ibn Saud) one thousand pounds a month to make war on King Hussein of Mecca, our ally; and at the same time our War Office has been paying Hussein about the same sum to harass the Wahabites. . . . There will be hell to pay, and that will continue until we get together and honor our wartime pledges. Mind you, I don't say we have deceived them intentionally, but we have reached the same result by not letting our right hand know what the left hand was doing."

This is a volume in which the principals speak fully and frankly. To their remarks the author has added his incisive delineations that appear in his diary. To the cold documentation of the peace conference literature this book adds both warmth and color. It belies the remarks of Joseph Chamberlain that "the day of small nations has passed away; the day of empires has come." Let us hope that today there is a Bonsal to record with equal candor the melancholy complaints of those knocking on the door of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

ALBERT C. F. WESTPHAL

*Inter-American Affairs 1944: an Annual Survey, No. 4*, edited by Arthur P. Whitaker. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945. \$3.00.

*Intellectual Trends in Latin America, Latin-American Studies, I*. Papers read at a conference sponsored by the Institute of Latin-American Studies of the University of Texas. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1945. No price indicated.

*Address Delivered before a Session of the Pan-American Round Table Annual Convention, April 25, 1944*, by Charles H. Stevens. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1945. No price indicated.

*Who's Who in Latin America*, by Ronald Hilton. Third Edition. *Part I: Mexico*. Stanford University, California; Chicago; London: Stanford University Press, The A. N. Marquis Company, Oxford University Press, 1946. \$2.50.

The fourth volume of *Inter-American Affairs* carries on an enterprise which already has become standard equipment to most persons seriously concerned with developments in Latin America. It also contains a brief chapter on Canada, but its main preoccupation is with the countries to the south. As in earlier editions, the editor has contributed the initial and closing chapters, dealing with political and diplomatic trends and events. He centers his treatment around the "Argentine muddle," military and political "upheavals," and the relationship between the Pan-American sys-

tem and the United Nations organization which began to emerge rather vaguely in the year covered by this volume.

Economic developments are now treated in three chapters, by as many authors. Of these, Sanford A. Mosk's discussion of "Main Currents of Economic Thought" is particularly timely and useful. Labor and Social Welfare and Cultural Relations are treated in separate sections. The rest of the volume consists of a highly selective list of references (books and articles, mostly in English), statistical tables, a list of chief executives and foreign ministers (already largely obsolete), lists of inter-American conferences held in 1944 and of bilateral commercial treaties and agreements negotiated by the Latin-American republics in 1944, and an inter-American chronology for 1944.

*Intellectual Trends in Latin America* consists of papers read at a conference held at the University of Texas on April 13 and 14, 1945. The twelve papers cover a wide range of subjects, including historiography, the various social sciences, philosophy, literature and the fine arts. Although most papers attempt to deal with Latin America as a whole, others concentrate on specific regions, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Central America. Some papers offer little more than a hasty review of some recent publications; others are serious analyses of representative trends during the past two or three generations. Fernando de los Rios contributes an interesting survey of "Intellectual Activities of Spanish Refugees in Latin America." It seems a pity that relatively few outstanding Latin-American scholars and artists have contributed to this conference. A great deal remains still to be done in bringing intellectuals from Latin and Anglo-America together for a systematic and creative interchange of their findings and organization of co-operation on specific projects.

Dr. Charles H. Stevens, Cultural Attaché of the United States Embassy in Mexico, describes in his address the objectives and methods of the cultural relations work designed to promote closer co-operation between scholars, teachers, artists and educational institutions in the two countries. Especially noteworthy is his emphasis on the fact that most Mexican educators and scholars speak English and his plea to United States educators and research workers to acquire a working knowledge of Spanish in the interest of a balanced and genuine inter-American relationship.

The first part of the revised and enlarged edition of *Who's Who in Latin America*, now published by Stanford University Press in co-operation with the publishers of *Who's Who in America*, marks a considerable improvement over the two earlier editions which were edited almost single-handed by the late Professor Percy Alvin Martin. Instead of one fat volume, the material is now scheduled to appear in seven comparatively slim volumes, according to the following geographic subdivisions: Mexico; Central America and Panama; Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela; Bolivia, Chile, and Peru; Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay; Brazil; and Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Haiti. This arrangement provides considerable additional space and has permitted the addition of many biographies. Foreigners residing in the respective Latin-American countries are included.

The delicate problem of who is worthy of inclusion in a work of this kind will probably never be decided to the satisfaction of all concerned. Issue could be taken with the editor in several cases, both in regard to names appearing and those left out. Certain improvements in editing would be desirable for the next edition. Thus, the word "director" is used instead of the English term "editor"; some titles are translated into English, others are given in the original. However, there can be no doubt as to the usefulness of this reference work in its present form.

RICHARD F. BEHRENDT

*The Masters and the Slaves: a Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, by Gilberto Freyre; translated from the Portuguese of the Fourth and Definitive Brazilian edition by Samuel Putnam. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946. \$7.50.

*Casa Grande & Senzala* (1933), here translated as *The Masters and the Slaves*, is considered by most Brazilian critics as one of the most significant books written in Brazil. The author, Gilberto de Mello Freyre, was born in Brazil, but received both his A.B. and M.A. degrees in the United States, the former from Baylor University and the latter from Columbia University where he did graduate work under Boas, Giddings, Seligman, and Carlton Hayes. Because of his study here in the United States, Mr. Freyre is able to make occasional valuable and interesting comparisons between life on the Brazilian plantation and that on our own Southern plantations.

*The Masters and the Slaves* is a rather detailed sociological study of Brazilian plantation life from its foundation until recent times. In it, Mr. Freyre discusses the importance of the three major races that contributed to the formation of modern Brazil—the Native, the Portuguese, and the Negro—, together with details of their daily life, food, sex habits, art, architecture, religion, and literature. Although some readers may feel that the book is not always thoroughly sound from a sociological point of view and that Mr. Freyre displays an undue interest in the sex habits of colonial and modern Brazil, *The Masters and the Slaves* remains, without doubt, the most important contribution to an understanding and an interpretation of Brazilian civilization. It is a "must" in the field of Brazilian studies.

An extensive glossary—including Brazilian, Portuguese, American Indian, and African Negro expressions, botanical and zoological terms—and a detailed index add to the usefulness of the book.

Mr. Putnam again proves himself to be a master at translation. This is an excellent and accurate rendition into English of a book that would be a challenge to any translator.

ALBERT R. LOPES

*Brazil: People and Institutions*, by T. Lynn Smith. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946. \$6.50.

The purpose of Professor T. Lynn Smith in his book, *Brazil: People and Institutions*, is "to organize, analyze, and interpret the materials on Brazilian demography and social institutions." It is largely a book on Bra-

zilian rural sociology, designed primarily for readers who already have some knowledge about Brazil, her history and her institutions. Such topics as cultural diversity, the people, levels and standards of living, relations of the people to the land, institutions (family, religious, educational, governmental), are thoroughly substantiated by generous excerpts from translations of earlier works (now very difficult to obtain), seventy-eight tables, twenty-nine figures, and a glossary. In spite of the somewhat technical scope of the book, there is a wealth of reference material (843 pages) for all interested in Brazil, whether from a political, economic, social, or literary point of view.

Although published in 1946, for all practical purposes the publication date should be 1943. The latter date is probably the date of the completion of the first draft of the book since events and material after that date have not been incorporated to any significant extent.

Professor Smith's book has been well received in Brazil, several very favorable reviews having appeared in Brazilian newspapers this past summer. Too, Professor Smith was granted an honorary degree from the University in Rio de Janeiro, in recognition of this publication.

ALBERT R. LOPES

*What the South Americans Think of Us*, by Carleton Beals, Herschel Brickell, Samuel Guy Inman, and Bryce Oliver. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1945. \$3.00.

This volume, presented under the often abused term "symposium," shows little evidence of that intelligent co-ordination and creative give-and-take among the participants which should be characteristic of a symposium. The division of the material by geographic areas rather than issues or problems has caused repetitions because of the many concerns which all Latin Americans have in common in relation to "the colossus of the North," different though they may be in many other respects.

From a practical point of view it is to be regretted that only South America was treated. The opinions of the peoples of Mexico, Cuba, and Panama, these peoples living as they do much more closely in the shadow of their big neighbor, could have been exposed with even more usefulness.

Carleton Beals contributes a chapter on Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, filled with his customary good intentions, shrill moral indignation, and sloppy reporting. He is duly indignant at the fact that the Bolivian tin ore mined by Patiño had to cross the Atlantic to be smelted in England, only to be carried back west to the United States; but at the same time he inveighs against "the scandalous and reckless farce of the tin refinery erected in Texas as a supposed wartime necessity"—without offering any explanation for this contradiction. He advocates United States participation in development projects but reports approvingly the Bolivians' opposition to "the determined efforts of the United States to change the whole face of their country" (p. 45).

Mr. Beals' habit of reporting South American complaints, apparently sympathizing with them, without, however, making it clear whether or to

what extent they are based on fact must be confusing to a reader not familiar with the subject.

Bryce Oliver, in a chapter distinguished by psychological understanding and balanced judgment, poses the pertinent question "why, in our official eagerness to make friends and influence the Latin Americans, we failed in Brazil, where our opportunity was the brightest" (p. 93). He points out that the greater familiarity among larger numbers of persons from both countries during the last war has not helped matters and that one of the greatest handicaps in this respect is "the distinctively [North] American preoccupation with race and color" (p. 94). There is, unfortunately, a great deal of truth in his remark that educational efforts to bring about a sympathetic understanding of the Latin American nations in this country "have managed only to create a certain amount of patronizing public good will toward the southern nations" (p. 123).

According to Oliver, even in Uruguay sympathies for the United States have diminished as a consequence of the grant of a large military base during the war. And he points to the deep-seated resentment of Uruguayans and Argentines alike at what they consider the unfair blocking of their meat exports to the United States.

Herschel Brickell, although ostensibly dealing with Venezuela and Colombia, has many things to say which are generally valid for all of Latin America, particularly in regard to the importance of a command of the languages of the area and of personal attitudes. He believes that the Russians with their approach to Latin America "have much to teach us, especially in the type of men who are sent out as diplomatic representatives of the Soviet Union" (p. 240).

Samuel Guy Inman sketches the conflict of interests between the traditional landowning gentry interested in the maintenance of the "colonial" economy and the new forces favoring industrialization and greater diversity of production in Argentina. In discussing the reasons for the almost habitually strained relations between the United States and Argentina, he tries to combat the impression that the beef question is the all-dominating issue and that it cannot be solved to the satisfaction of both parties. Inman deplores the tendency of the State Department to use reactionary Catholic elements in Argentina to foster good relations, thereby disappointing genuine friends of American democracy.

In discussing Chile, Dr. Inman asks: "How can we expect to have the same prestige as the English and the Germans when in all Chile there live fewer than two thousand of our citizens, while the English have so thoroughly identified themselves with the country and there are some seventy-five thousand Germans living in the republic?" (p. 345). However, his statement that "today they [the German colonists] completely dominate the land" in the southern provinces (p. 351) is open to doubt.

The most significant conclusion of the volume, unanimously pointed out by all contributors, is perhaps the failure of the official "good neighbor" efforts of the past years and the need for positive relations between the peoples, beyond the realm of diplomatic gatherings, lofty but ineffectual after-

dinner speeches, and commodity agreements favoring a few monopolists in the southern countries.

There seems to be equally general agreement that a United States policy which has the effect, as so often in the past, of upholding a corrupt and sterile *status quo* in Latin American countries—or elsewhere—, while benefiting unrepresentative cliques, will not promote truly constructive and lasting inter-American ties.

RICHARD F. BEHRENDT

*The Rest Is Silence*, by Érico Veríssimo; translated by L. C. Kaplan. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946. \$3.00.

*The Rest Is Silence* is a translation of the novel *O Resto É Silêncio*, written by Érico Veríssimo, an able young Brazilian novelist from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Veríssimo has been enjoying wide popularity in his native Brazil ever since his earlier novel, *Olhai os Lírios do Campo* (*Behold the Lilies of the Field*), became a Brazilian best seller.

Veríssimo owes his success to his unusual talent for depicting, in a most interesting manner, the minute details of everyday life in Pôrto Alegre, capital of Rio Grande do Sul. The streets, the buildings, the people, together with their daily toils and worries, do not belong exclusively, however, to Pôrto Alegre; they are a part of any cosmopolitan city.

*The Rest Is Silence* is another view of life in this southern Brazilian metropolis. An incident that occurred in the main square of Pôrto Alegre provides material for the central theme. While the author was making his way across the square, he chanced to look up just in time to see a young girl fall from one of the top floors of a downtown skyscraper. Veríssimo then proceeds to trace, for a period of two days, the effect of this accident (or suicide?) upon the lives of seven of the individuals who saw her fall: a retired public official, a business man, a novelist, an ex-deputy, a newsboy, an unemployed typographer, and the wife of a celebrated musician.

A Brazilian novelist of Veríssimo's stature should merit, it seems, a more accurate rendition than that given by Mr. Kaplan. The translator here, as in previous translations, shows, at times, a lack of acquaintance with even elementary Portuguese idioms and vocabulary.

ALBERT R. LOPES

*Music of Latin America*, by Nicolas Slonimsky. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945. \$3.50.

Although a great amount of informative material has been written in recent years about the geography, politics, and economics of South America, Central America, and the West Indies, in the domain of the arts, particularly of music, Latin America remains for most of us a virtually unknown land. To discover what is what and who is who in the music of Latin America, Nicolas Slonimsky, Russian-born conductor, composer, pianist, musicologist and critic, now living in Boston, visited the twenty republics to the south in the year 1941, giving lecture-recitals on modern music, collecting orchestral manuscripts for the Fleischer Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia, gathering biographical data on native composers,

both living and dead, and studying materials in folk music. Mr. Slonimsky has compiled and presented the results of this search in his volume *Music of Latin America*. In its comprehensive scope and detailed exposition, it is one of the most valuable books on the subject yet offered to United States readers.

Part one, entitled "Panorama of Latin-American Music," is a somewhat disconnected, though entertaining, array of incidents, observations, personalities, and anecdotes. From this all-inclusive landscape, however, the general framework of Latin-American musical history can be discerned. The Pre-Columbian culture contributed characteristic instruments (drums, panpipes, flutes, scratchers and shakers of all types), the pentatonic scale, and monotonous rhythmic patterns. The early centuries of conquest brought European influence: the Ecclesiastical music, the dance rhythms of the Iberian peninsula, the heptatonic scale, and in due course, as a result of slave traffic, the syncopated rhythms of the Negro. Further colonization by European settlers introduced the Italian opera and concert performances, which soon led to the rise of schools of native composers. The native musicians were at first exclusively European trained and imitated European styles; but gradually recognizing the wealth of their native folklore, they began to employ folk melodies and rhythms. It might be said that the divorce from Europe is not yet complete in view of the many European-born composers now residing in South America. These composers are, however, often the most ardent champions of folk sources for their creative work. There are not a few extremist innovators in the group of present-day composers, and many who may be classed as ultra-modernists. Furthermore, the great number of government sponsored orchestras which emphasize the performance of native composers' works, government operated music schools, and national contests for composers with ample rewards for the winners, present to this country an embarrassing but stimulating example of public pride in and enthusiasm for contemporary music by native composers.

The second part of Mr. Slonimsky's book discusses each of the republics in turn. A brief opening paragraph on the geography, population, and racial mixtures as they affect the music of the people is followed by a complete description and analysis of the country's musical resources and development. Each section concludes with a survey of all native and naturalized composers and writers on music topics including a concise biographical sketch and description of the works of each. Mr. Slonimsky's eligibility requirements for a composer's inclusion in this list are indeed liberal, however, and it is impossible even to guess the actual musical significance of much of the music mentioned.

Part three is a dictionary of Latin-American musicians, songs and dances, and musical instruments. Coupled with an excellent index, it makes the volume a handy guide for quick and easy reference.

The diversity of cultural and ethnological backgrounds of the several countries makes the synthesizing of the musical situation in Latin America a formidable task. Even though the author goes little beyond the point of presenting an informal encyclopedia and bibliography, we can be grateful



for the completeness and utility of the present volume. To our criticism that we feel he has said too little about the quality of the works collected in such enormous quantity, Mr. Slonimsky anticipates a defense in his reply to the accusation of "fishing with a net rather than a rod," voiced by the Guatemalan critic, José Castañeda. He writes (p. 2): "Here they are, all assembled between covers, and—who knows?—some of them may yet spawn significant caviar, which even the fastidious Castañeda will find stimulating."

WALTER KELLER

*Literary Currents in Hispanic America*, by Pedro Henríquez-Ureña. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1945. \$3.50.

When Charles Chauncey Stillman endowed the Charles Eliot Norton lectures in Harvard in 1925, he stipulated that the holder be chosen without limits of nationality from men of high distinction and preferably of international reputation. The man who occupied the post in 1940-41, Pedro Henríquez-Ureña, fulfilled those requirements to the highest degree. Besides having written many books and articles in his field, he is Professor of Spanish Literature and Philology in the University of Buenos Aires and the University of La Plata and the Director of the *Instituto de Filología* en Buenos Aires. After delivering the lectures, Dr. Henríquez-Ureña spent two and a half years rewriting them and preparing them for publication by the Harvard University Press under the title, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America*.

As its title indicates, the book is not an attempt at a complete literary history. Instead, its two hundred pages are devoted to tracing the lines followed by artists and writers in their efforts to express the developing life and social experiences of Spanish America's young nations. Dr. Henríquez-Ureña writes in a lucid prose that still bears, in spite of the rewriting to which it has been subjected, some of the rhythm and balance of the oratorical form it must originally have had in the lectures. Packed with information interestingly and clearly presented, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America* is one of the most readable books of its type recently produced. This fact doubles its value, in that it offers the layman a key to Hispanic-American psychology through an understanding of the artistic development that has recorded and helped to mold present-day modes of thought.

THELMA CAMPBELL

*Mexican Heritage*, photographs by Hoyningen-Huene. New York: J. J. Augustin, Publishers, 1946. \$7.50.

*The Inhabitants*, by Wright Morris. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. \$3.75.

These two books of photographs are, superficially at least, naturals for comparison. Both are by U. S. camera artists and both contain photographs expressly made for publication in book form. At first glance each work shows a similar preoccupation with architecture to the exclusion of human beings from the compositions, and a boldness of design which is singularly

striking. Each artist records a people through the use of buildings and landscape in which these people live. Closer inspection is therefore necessary to evaluate and compare the two works.

There are those who will feel that Hoyningen-Huene has the advantage of the more exotic Mexican scene and comes off better for it, while Wright Morris has the disadvantage of the prosaic U. S. scene and suffers from it. This reviewer prefers *Mexican Heritage* for deeper reasons. The matter lies in the comparative stature of the two artists. The backgrounds, training, and equipment of the two men differ, but it is their ways of seeing that make the real difference in their work.

In Hoyningen-Huene's book you will find, as Alfonso Reyes says in the short text, "photographs . . . unspoiled by the immediacy of captions . . . photographs (which) restore sight to the blind." Here without statistics or sociological or economic essays is a group of superior photographs, which does justice to Mexico, her people, and her moods. With *Mexican Heritage*, Hoyningen-Huene makes another contribution of significant freshness and deep perspicacity.

Mr. Morris' book, *The Inhabitants*, suffers from the use of what Stanley Young refers to on the dust jacket as the "preface to a new technique, the fusing of camera and word. . . ." Perhaps it is the self-conscious use of this "new technique" that accounts for the unevenness of the book. At times the "fusion" is eminently successful, but more often the conscious effort to avoid using either text or picture to illuminate or to illustrate the other, makes rough going. Particular texts and specific photographs have obviously been chosen to face each other on opposing pages. It is inevitable that they are thus associated. Rather than complement, they more often rival one another, fiercely. We find pictures and writing competing for attention, with the pictures winning because of their direct communication. That they are fine, regional photographs makes the book well worth owning.

LLOYD LOZES GOFF

*Of the Night Wind's Telling: Legends from the Valley of Mexico*, by E. Adams Davis; with drawings by Dorothy Kirk. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946. \$3.00.

Many of the legends in this book are from ancient Mexico, Toltec and Aztec creation myths, the four destructions of the world by water, air, fire, and earth, and the beginnings of the Indian nature gods. Some of these legends are well known from the old chroniclers; some have been made familiar by more modern writers such as Madariaga, who wove many of them into his great novel of the Aztecs, *Heart of Jade*. Others refer to the period of conquest when strange white men with new gods and incomprehensible beliefs came to confuse the simple theology of the Indians. Still other tales, and perhaps the greatest number of them, are concerned with the times of the viceroys when the Church vainly struggled by way of devils and exorcisms against men greedy for wealth and power in a new world. Only two tales might be called modern: one, a story of brutality and revenge against the French during the reign of Maximilian; the other, a recounting

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of the peons' belief that a spectral Zapata still rides his black stallion over the rocky rim of the great Valley. Although the tales as often deal with murder and dire punishment by supernatural apparitions as with love and intrigue, they are all told in a tone of credence, amusement, and philosophical resignation to the happenings that are beyond the understanding of mortal man.

Mr. Davis made many journeys to Mexico to collect these legends. Rather than spend his time searching musty archives, he loitered among *cantinas*, market squares, in odd and desolate corners in the city of Mexico, persuading ancient raconteurs to tell him the tales their fathers and grandfathers had told. With few exceptions the author heard the legends orally. Later he checked them with written versions already in existence, and where variations occurred, as they are bound to occur in stories which pass by word of mouth from generation to generation, gaining color and enlargement with each retelling, he incorporated into his oral version suitable details from old manuscripts. Sometimes he tells the story in his own words with excellent descriptions of the plaza, the house, or the church where the event took place. More often the tale is written as it might have been told to him in the words of an old man enjoying his rest in the shade of a *portal*. The simplicity of the native phrase is nicely put into English. Occasionally, the illusion of the raconteur is rudely interrupted by the author's use of a Spanish word parenthetically translated into English.

Although Mr. Davis appends a short bibliography of works consulted in his research upon Mexican legends in general, he has wisely dispensed with footnotes and with any tone of scholarly intention in writing the book. It is a book to be read for pleasure rather than for reference. It is gay, spicy, and often slyly humorous. Mr. Davis admits he had fun writing it.

Dorothy Kirk's generous number of pen and ink drawings are delightfully expressive of the text.

MARY WICKER

*Fabulous Empire: Colonel Zack Miller's Story*, by Fred Gipson; with an introduction by Donald Day. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1946. \$3.00.

*Maverick Town: the Story of Old Tascosa*, by John L. McCarty; with Chapter Decorations by Harold D. Bugbee. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946. \$3.00.

Countries, like people, are no longer young when they can look back upon a complete cycle in the past, when death as well as birth figures in the pattern of their memories. In that sense, we fail to realize the maturity attained by the "young West" until something—the two books listed above, for example—recalls how much of history it has seen. Both volumes are nostalgic accounts of past glories. *Fabulous Empire* tells the story of the famed 101 Ranch in Oklahoma that grew from a cow herd to a kingdom requiring 300 miles of wire fence to enclose its 110,000 acres. *Maverick Town* recounts the growth and death of Tascosa, Texas, once a rival of Dodge City and capital of an inland cattle empire.

The 101 Ranch was the personal achievement of G. W. Miller and his three sons. By pure grit and bull-headedness, by bribing members of the Army detail sent to run him off the Cherokee Strip, and by driving out rival cowmen, old G. W. laid the foundations of the ranch that was to become world-famous under his sons' management. In its heyday, it was one of the wonders of America. Western movies were filmed there. Its guest list included such names as Luther Burbank, William Jennings Bryan, and Mary Roberts Rinehart. Out of its activities grew a spectacular show, the 101 Ranch Wild West Show, which toured the country, featuring an unknown roper named Will Rogers. In those days, the three Miller brothers rode high, wide, and handsome. Zack, the trader of the lot, once bought—and sold at a profit!—the entire army of General Mercardo, who was forced across the Rio Grande by Pancho Villa. But with the crash of 1929, the glories of the 101 were ended. In crowded court rooms and under the auctioneer's hammer, another dream of empire died.

*Fabulous Empire* is a good story, made better by the sensitive handling it receives from its author, Fred Gipson. The reminiscences of old Zack Miller are retold in the lusty language of the trail country; and so firm is the control of the author that not even the "big windies" of an old man looking back can mar the truth and sincerity of the book. With its richness of character, variety of incident, and freshness of language, *Fabulous Empire* makes a real contribution to Western literature.

*Maverick Town* is the story of a town that grew up naturally at an easy crossing of the Canadian River in the Panhandle. The Spanish explorers, buffalo hunters, and Mexican shepherders were only the prelude to the coming of the big cattle companies with names that have gone down in ranch history—the LIT, the XIT, the Jinglebob, and the Frying Pan. Tascosa, supply center for the range, attracted all kinds of people. Billy the Kid and his gang lived there for a while after the Lincoln County War, and, as a natural result, Pat Garrett's company of Home Rangers had its headquarters there. The fencing of the ranges spelled doom for Tascosa, for the wire cut the town's communications with the rest of the world. So Tascosa died slowly and painfully, strangled by the first strands of "bob wire." Perhaps its very name would be forgotten now, were it not for Boys' Ranch which has brought new fame to the site of Old Tascosa.

*Maverick Town* is a source of valuable information for the student of ranching history. Its author John L. McCarty, a newspaper man in Amarillo, has devoted twenty years to thorough, painstaking research on the town and its history. Unfortunately, however, the book is not as readable as one could wish. The familiarity of the author with his subject makes him crowd in characters, incident, and detail until the reader seeks vainly for a landmark in the confusion. Although addicts of Western history will not read *Maverick Town* straight through for pleasure as they will *Fabulous Empire*, nevertheless it should stand on their shelves for reference whenever questions arise concerning early ranching days in the Panhandle.

THELMA CAMPBELL

*Tales From the Plum Grove Hills*, by Jesse Stuart. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946. \$3.25.

Jesse Stuart is essentially a tall-tale teller, proof of which is found in this collection of twenty short stories representing the best the author has produced in the short-story form during the past few years.

Few of Jesse Stuart's critics and reviewers have ever made truly balanced and unprejudiced criticisms of his work. Most of them either damn him as a literary outlaw or they heap on him unqualified praise, as has a *New Yorker* reviewer in referring to him as "a national possession."

Jesse Stuart is neither a literary outlaw nor "a national possession." He is a conversationalist with a series of personal tales to relate. And even when he is not telling a tall tale he continues to use his exaggerated comparisons which are definitely a part of his tall-tale language. "Another April," the portrait of a boy's grandfather, is an exception and is the tenderest story this author has written. Perhaps the two best stories are "The Storm," a parental quarrel, and "Nest Egg," the life and death of a fighting rooster. "Frog-Trouncin' Contest" is skillfully constructed and is perhaps the most humorous tale the author has written. On the other hand, "Another Hanging" is a failure. It is a gesture of insincerity that the person who wrote the above-mentioned stories and several years ago wrote "Love" should also release for publication the trivia that are in this tale of the taking of a man's life. It is little more than a laboratory exercise.

To Jesse Stuart the story—or the tale—is the important thing. His characters are secondary, and the dialogue belongs not so much to his characters as it does to Jesse Stuart.

He is practically always an objective writer. He does not use his objectivity as a means of expressing subjectivity, that is, of creating subtleties or as an aid to understanding the inner emotions of his characters. Rather, his objectivity deals almost exclusively with externalities. His characters are not remembered, except as Father and Mother and Son. In a sense, he paints his characters with a broad sweep of the brush, giving most of them caricatured proportions. And since to him the tale is more important than the characters, he could often strengthen a tale by giving his characters more precise motivations than the blanket ones of love and hate.

Jesse Stuart's aim is not to teach or to rectify an evil, and he certainly possesses no sociological zeal to expose a decadent or a sluggish phase of society as Erskine Caldwell has done in the South. He is simply a conversationalist sitting on the other side of the table relating a tall tale, constructing it with little previous planning, often clumsily, and perhaps with little revision.

Though there may be sufficient cause to charge him with an unfair portrayal of mountain people—as he has been charged—, he in his foulest moments gives them greater purity than Caldwell, for instance, gives to his Southerners. And though Jesse Stuart may at times say that he is writing representatively of mountain people and though reviewers may yell, "Amen," he of course is writing about the rough-hewn, land-wise characters who inhabit Jesse Stuart's tall-tale kingdom.

DEAN CADLE

*The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, by Henry Miller. New York: New Directions, 1945. \$3.50.

The formulated reactions of Henry Miller, of which *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* is one small collection, come tumbling out at such a rate that their considerable unevenness is no more surprising than with any other phenomenon of nature. Miller considers himself an artist. He can also behave like a prevailing wind: now persuading hard buds into blossom and fruition, now dry and sullen, now ripping off shingles and unhinging doors, now pushing at you with something full and forceful that you can lean into, something sharp and prickly that exhilarates, now annoying the hell out of you with sheer noise and persistence.

He fancies himself a refugee from respectability, but on the impressionable and thin-skinned the mark of the beast is everlasting. Beneath Henry-miller's corduroy slacks we see the bohemian eternally fleeing Brooklyn. As a free, simple citizen of the world and apologist for all arts and artists, he naturally knows nothing, cares nothing, about politics, economics, and such-like irritations. Nevertheless social analyses are continually forthcoming as if the articulate ignorance of Henry-miller were its own excuse for being.

Such contradictions assure us that behind the self-made legend there is no mechanical monster of incalculable breadth and industry but a man at variance with piddling consistency, with a world he never made, and with himself. We see these facets in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, and more: that Miller has a superior gift of comic fantasy and that he is at his best when castigating and dynamiting, exhorting and belaboring. He is best, not in *The Nightmare* and similar compilations but in those paper-backed books now banned in liberated France, too, so help us, those rough and raffish chronicles that discard the wholly ridiculous distinction between the spoken and the written word. It's to our friend's great credit that he waded in and set down everything unfit to print. And it's not his fault that *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* is tame by contrast.

The hard words Henry-miller tosses at Mankind in the abstract and his soft purring over individuals—the known and unknown geniuses he runs across—give one the impression that he is uncommonly kind and sympathetic and that he would love you, too, if he could only get to know you. When he blasts away at the mob, it is only because populations are unembraceable and because he wants everybody to be as unselfish, generous, charming, and devoted to art and the good life as his friends.

His prophetic denunciations and therapeutic curetings, inspired as they often are, might be more purposive if Henry-miller were less distracted by home-cured theology and the lavender mists of the esoteric. He blasts away at scientists, politicians, robber barons, the fat-headed and hard-hearted. Never does he attribute the degenerate culture and civilization in which we flounder to the workings of capitalism. He falls short of pointing up the basic, brutish fact that we are all trapped in the same net, exceptional, "saved" individuals, too; that the reason for living at all, for art-expression, for sensitivity, for humaneness and decency toward others is all

but nullified by the competitive, exploitative, profit-hungry social system under which we live and are perishing. He underscores the obvious idiocy of our culture . . . the air-conditioned aspect of it wherein gadgets become gods. And he is unmistakably on the side of freedom and fraternity. But his case would be stronger, his uncommon gift would count for more if he would pin the guilt where it belongs: on all-demanding, all-destroying capitalism and imperialism which above and around everything spread the nightmare of inequality, atomization, terror, and murder.

DINSMORE WHEELER

*Gib Morgan: Minstrel of the Oil Fields*, by Mody C. Boatright. Texas Folk-Lore Society Publication Number XX. El Paso: Texas Folk-Lore Society, 1945. No price indicated.

In this book Mr. Boatright makes his first report on his study "of the impact of the oil industry upon the folklore and the folkways of the American people." When he first heard tall tales about a driller named Gib Morgan, he thought he had encountered an entirely legendary character. Study revealed that Morgan was a flesh-and-blood oil-field worker whose fame as a storyteller reached its height about 1909. After that his fame declined. Drillers who worked before the first World War remember him; younger men repeat his stories but often attribute them to Paul Bunyan, the folk hero who grew out of the more widely distributed lumber industry and who received early attention from the students of folklore.

The book is divided into two parts, the first titled "The Life Gib Morgan Lived," the second "The Tales Gib Morgan Told." In the first part Mr. Boatright sets down readably a surprising amount of information about the real Gib Morgan, information which undoubtedly cost much time and pains. In the second part he has put into swift, able prose of his own, fifty-one of the tall tales which he credits to Morgan. In an appendix he reproduces the only known published work by Morgan. (In the first part of the book Mr. Boatright acknowledges that Morgan's genius was for the oral not the written story.)

The book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of how such tellers of tall tales as Gib Morgan become legendary and achieve a sort of immortality among the people of the industry in which they worked. (Eventually they achieve it in the world outside through such books as this.) The word "minstrel" in the title is perhaps deceptive because of its romantic connotations. Mr. Boatright thinks that Morgan's tales transcend the oil industry. "Created at a time when a resource hitherto unutilized and scarcely known was being spectacularly exploited, they symbolize the whole era of expanding geographical and industrial frontiers, the era of manifest destiny and spread-eagle oratory, the era in which the folk artists, as distinguished from the literary artists, in response to a deep social urge attempted to create a literature commensurate with the events of the times." When Mr. Boatright writes in this vein—he seldom does—I have doubts. At least I should like to know more of the reasoning that lies behind this reading of the stories' significance. Probably the oil business was a back-

breaking business for the drillers. If Gib Morgan could lighten it with tall stories, good enough. Why guess that he responded to a deep social urge? (It should be noted that Betty Boatright's illustrations are effective, Carl Hertzog's design of the book another good job.)

E. W. TEDLOCK, JR.

*Thieves in the Night: Chronicle of an Experiment*, by Arthur Koestler. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946. \$2.75.

Sometimes a man must write several books, or be heard saying many things about many, related or not, human situations, before you can be at all sure of the nature of his gifts, or the character of his anxieties. Koestler is such a writer. *Thieves in the Night* is not unlike one of the expertly constructed *March of Time* features: flashy, swiftly informative, and portentously inconclusive.

Koestler's talent is unmistakable. Yet something has happened, or something is now clearer since *Darkness at Noon* and *Arrival and Departure* (his strictly personal chronicles like *Dialogue with Death* and *Scum of the Earth* are not entirely comparable). Where in the earlier novels there was, you thought, a searching desperation, now there is an inquisitive disconsolation; where, before, you felt that justice, mercy, love, and fraternity were being horribly riddled with new experiences and slaughterous compromises, now there is disquiet and an appealing construction of "the universal law of indifference." The talent is the same, the effect, now, one of tableaux.

Koestler's themes are always topical: Franco Spain, Vichy France, the Moscow Trials, the hunted anti-fascist revolutionary, and now Palestine, the Zionist settlers, and the trained, fanatical terrorists. There are others: the British officials and the police, members of the Arab resistance group, and that standard romantic personality, the cynical, but good, alcoholic American newspaperman. The occasional power of a descriptive passage, the infrequent intensities of character development do not overcome the final impression of facility and haste.

Ironically, this new novel of Koestler's appears to be as absorbing an account (it is sub-titled "Chronicle of an Experiment") as one can get of the circumstances and forces in Palestine today. Its deficiencies as a novel of tragic character are grievous. Its interest as a report is considerable.

V. GAROFFOLO

*Annals of the New York Stage*, Volume XIV, by George C. D. Odell. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945. \$8.75.

George C. D. Odell will go down in history as the architect and builder of a great literary monument dedicated to the memory of the pastimes of the American people. The fourteenth story of this colossal edifice houses the offerings of a transitional period in the history of American amusement—1888-1891. During these years P. T. Barnum personally conducts his circus to New York for the last time. The old Madison Square Garden gives way to the new masterpiece of Stanford White. Steinway Hall yields gracefully



to Carnegie Hall, New York's first real musical center. Kreisler and Hofmann make their first appearance. The Germans lose their monopoly of grand opera.

The last great operetta of Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Gondoliers*, opened in New York at this time with a dubious cast, and became such a storm center that thereafter the public no longer regarded the product of these great collaborators as their darling amusement but directed their attention to the works of Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero, pioneers of the English renaissance which gave us Wilde, Galsworthy, Barrie, and Shaw. The impetus from the continent behind this new English movement also traversed the Atlantic. A series of lectures was given on Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen at his best was seen in *The Pillars of Society*; and for the first time *A Doll's House* was produced in New York.

American dramatists also came into their own. Bronson Howard in *Shenandoah* presented a stirring study of the Civil War, so successful that the Philadelphia company came to New York and two productions of the play were going on at the same time. Clyde Fitch made his New York debut with *Beau Brummel*, the title role of which proved to be the apex of Richard Mansfield's artistic career.

Despite these signs of vigorous new growth, the supreme achievement of the age was repertory. Coquelin, who has never had an equal in French comedy, was playing Moliere, and Sarah Bernhardt was interpreting Camille and the plays of Sardou. This best of entertainment in New York of 1881-1891 was to be found at Daly's, where the aristocracy of birth and talent each year gathered to see Ada Rehan, Mrs. Gilbert, James Lewis, John Drew, and Richard Mansfield, and where the revivals of Sheridan and Shakespeare were so authentic, so brilliant, and so centered in great personalities that they are still to be surpassed on these shores.

DANE FARNSWORTH SMITH

*The Use of the Drama*, by Harley Granville-Barker. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945. \$1.50.

The atom bomb ended the war, but it is still true, as Mr. Granville-Barker wrote in 1944, that "we are . . . involved in the machinery of many marvelous inventions" which "cannot of themselves civilize us . . . but may impower us to be greater brutes." Although, with the bomb, we have reasserted the forms of freedom, it is still clear that the forms "do not of themselves make us free." Agreement that civilization and freedom demand more than marvelous inventions is evident nowadays even outside of churches and literature courses; it is particularly evident in the revision of college curricula toward a core of general studies, and dozens of recent books and articles have urged the social value of the humanities. But *Life* magazine currently, and probably accurately, translates "Dreams of 1946" into convertible station wagons, television-phonograph-radios, black evening gowns, and twelve-gauge shot guns at \$562; and even among the professors a narrow materialism is entrenched. Therefore, still another book on teaching the humanities—particularly one in such clean, nicely shaded prose

—may be welcomed. The humanities teacher, however palpable his function may have been rendered by our liberal renaissance, must still face his critics—and his students. *The Use of the Drama* should help him with both. And in a less personal sense it should interest anyone concerned, as perhaps every literate person should be, with liberal education.

Mr. Granville-Barker discusses "The Arts in General," "Drama in Education," and "A Theater That Might Be." With the shift in patronage from the wealthy few to the less wealthy many, he points out, the arts of music and painting have gained in general appreciation and have felt a new stimulus, but what education has done for these arts is less evident in literature. Literature still lacks a critical—or educated—audience; and it is the value and method of educating an audience by studying drama, together with possible culmination in a new theater, that Mr. Granville-Barker discusses. Conceiving of art as "a moral exercise," he finds in the drama unique values of co-operation as well as the more familiar values of discernment, human understanding, and continuity with the past. Just as drama involves the interdependence of play, actors, and audience, political and industrial democracy also requires a dynamic balance: "this art of combining active appreciation of the other man's point of view with clear assertion of one's own," and from those who would be truly represented in conference or debate, an aliveness "to the things done daily in [their] name. . . ." Yet it is not necessary to train college students as actors. The "art's generally educational uses" may be realized by a detached study of plays, with roles assigned to students for analysis and defense, with the play on trial as a whole and in its parts, and with the instructor exerting a minimum of control in the co-operative enterprise. Since the class will stop short of production, the best play for study is one in which physical action has the least share, one—like Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*—in which much of the meaning is left implicit but which "throws light into the very depths of human nature. . . ." The student's "business is to cultivate—to sharpen and refine—[his] hearing and appreciation until [he] can swiftly distinguish between what is significant and truly told, and what oftenest, in a poor play, is neither." With an audience of such discernment, or a degree of it, there would be hope for a true theater, "a stable organization of actors and actresses and directors, an institution in which the whole art of the drama can be cultivated for its own sake and made manifest." To create such an audience, only "a small amount of learning is involved; . . . the essentials of it can be slipped almost unnoticed into the regular course of our education. . . ." To justify such a theater, the drama "can, as no other art can, help to keep us vividly conscious of the continuity of our civilization. And without this continuity, without, what is more, the consciousness of it, is it too much to say that no civilization can survive?"

W. P. ALBRECHT

*John Keats' Fancy: the Effect on Keats of the Psychology of his Day*, by James Ralston Caldwell. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1945. \$2.00.

"It is the purpose of this book to show that ideas derived from the psychology of his day were of radical importance to Keats' creative life, to observe how these ideas affected his work-ways, and thus better to understand his poetry."

Having stated his intention in these words, Professor Caldwell proceeds with most lucid analysis to establish his case. He finds "that Keats' method of composition . . . was to fix upon a subject and let the mind take its willful way." To give the prominence of bare quotation to such a statement is, however, to misrepresent the meaning and value of the book. The book demonstrates conclusively that Keats was thoroughly conversant with "the association" even though he was not much interested in and did not talk about its theoretical anatomy. The influence of the Hartleyan association psychology on Wordsworth especially and on Coleridge is obvious to every student, but in showing that Keats too, in a very special way, was under the same influence, Professor Caldwell has made a most valuable and fruitful contribution to the study of Keats and of the whole period. He examines the poems and the letters in such a way as to construct an incontrovertible case. One may reasonably suppose that he has opened the way for a considerable amount of new and illuminating investigation.

Important as is this revelation of Keats's imagination at work the book will be most useful in additional ways. Not easily come by, for example, is such a clear and simple statement of the development of "the association of ideas" or such a convenient summary of Hartley's theories. Also valuable is the contrast between Wordsworth's and Keats's application of associationalism.

One may doubt that the book will much interest the general reader or the non-professional lover of Keats's poetry, who may even indeed be repelled by this scientific anatomizing of genius at work; but the proof is here, and if it does not explain the poet, it certainly goes far in helping to understand him.

C. V. WICKER

*The Little Magazine: a History and a Bibliography*, by Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946. \$3.75.

Those of us who have worked with the little and non-commercial magazines have long wanted a book devoted to them. *The Little Magazine* gives us the first comprehensive American survey of these magazines, and it supplies most of what we want in such a book. For that reason, and for the value of the little reviews in the last forty years, hardly any other book about recent literature is of more value than this one. It is an important addition to any library, public or private, which pretends to serious interest in contemporary writing.

Having said that, I wish to point out some faults in the book, but in no

spirit of quibbling. The fact is that the problems of publishing such a book are so great on the American market (and we owe much to Princeton University Press for doing it) that we are not likely to have another volume for a long time. It is best to get down the reservations and corrections and additions for future use. Perhaps even a supplement to the volume, participated in by a number of people who have the needed information, could be published and, together with *The Little Magazines*, provide the important materials we need. To verify some impressions, I have consulted Mr. Irvin C. Heyne, of Philadelphia, who has one of the best private collections of these magazines, and I wish to acknowledge his kindness.

1. In their historical discussion, Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Allen indicate only two functions for the little magazines: introducing authors who go on to make their names before the public eye elsewhere, and publishing experimental efforts. Indeed these are significant and primary functions of the magazines, but they are by no means all of them. In the first place, many writers do not "graduate" from the little magazines but continue to find them the natural outlet for any serious writing, early or late; or if these writers make a large name for themselves outside these magazines, it is usually with books and not in other magazines. The number of commercial magazines which have an editorial receptiveness to "serious" writing is hardly more than a dozen; the largest proportion of it must find publication in the non-commercial magazines. In the second place, almost our only contact with foreign literature outside books is in the pages of these magazines. Thus, the functions of the little reviews are surely at least four: (1) the continuing medium of publication for most of the serious magazine writing, creative and critical; (2) the discovery and development of talent; (3) the sponsoring of experimental efforts in writing; (4) the publication of significant writing by foreign authors.

2. The discussion and the bibliography are based on an arbitrary distinction between little magazines proper (for which the words *advance guard* seem to be the synonym) and some magazines which "do not answer strictly to the definition of the little magazine." This is a troublesome problem, but to put *The Dial* in one list and *Criterion* in the other, and to put *Prairie Schooner* and *University Review* in one list and this journal and *Arizona Quarterly* in the other provide distinctions too fine to follow, I'm afraid. The fault probably comes in equating the little magazine with the advance guard magazine; if this were strictly interpreted, only the magazines whose primary function is the publication of experimental writing could be included and not only Miss Ulrich's supplementary list but also half the magazines in the primary list would have to be cast out of the fold.

3. Errors are bound to creep into any work so vast as this one. In reading the historical discussion, I have been struck by few except in interpretation, as with the reasons for the end of *The Southern Review*. In the bibliography, a much vaster labor with detail, to be made complete in the end, surely, only with the co-operation of dozens of workers, the errors are of various sorts: (1) Failure to include a number of magazines, most of them short-lived but at least as significant as many included—*The Husk*, *Sage*,

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Prairie Prose*, *Montana Poetry Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, to name just five which occur to me without checking any lists or collections. (Also, since book publications are mentioned, I am privately sorry that no mention was made of the *American Writing* volumes, an effort to show the best work of these magazines in volumes which would also provide yearbook data on them.) (2) Missing bibliographical information—number of volumes, number of issues per volume, number of issues in case of irregular publication. *The Little Review*, for example, had a scrambled publishing history, including the burning of four issues by the post office. What issues were they? What constitutes a complete file of a magazine? These questions ought to be answered. Unfortunately the tendency in making the bibliography was to consult the first issue primarily and follow through publication only with a few magazines. (3) Lack of significant critical judgment in the annotations to the bibliography which were, apparently, to give us some idea of the value of the contribution each magazine made.

ALAN SWALLOW

*Fighting Liberal*, by George W. Norris. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945. \$3.50.

Autobiographies, diaries, memoirs, and letters are always of interest to the historian and to those concerned with the reconstruction and interpretation of the past. And this autobiography of George W. Norris is no exception.

Writing after his retirement from forty years of service to his country in the national Congress (1903-1913 in the House, 1913-1943 in the Senate), Mr. Norris has recorded from memory, private papers, and public records his participation in some of the history-making events of his age.

Born on an Ohio farm in 1861, he was of pioneer stock and he early learned the values and joys of a simple, frugal, hard-working life. Confronted with many difficulties through the death of his father and the struggle of his mother to maintain their farm home, George W. Norris grew up accustomed to hard physical labor. He had also developed a love of the land and a deep and satisfying conviction of the peace and joy that come from living in close contact with the forces of nature.

Under the strong influence of his pioneer mother, he strove for and attained an education, studying law and gaining admittance to the bar in 1883. Two years later he moved to Nebraska where he married, established his home, and reared his family. Here he began his public life as prosecuting attorney and district judge. Nebraska sent him to Washington, first as a Congressman and later as a Senator.

Mr. Norris was an ardent Republican, imbued with idealism; yet he refused to be dominated by the party machine in Congress. His honesty and sincere convictions on issues to which he gave long hours of study soon marked him as a liberal leader. He relates many contests and incidents within Congress: his breaking the power of the Speaker of the House, Uncle Joe Cannon; his interest in and work for the conservation of the country's natural resources which led from the Hetch Hetchy water project in Cali-

fornia through the exposures of Teapot Dome to culminate in the final establishment of the T.V.A. He led a successful filibuster against arming the Merchant Marine in 1917 and voted against entering World War I. To present his viewpoint in the last, much criticized act, he returned to Lincoln and held a great public mass meeting for his constituents; contrary to the opinion of many of his colleagues, it proved to be a triumph of faith and loyalty in his leadership.

He discusses his part in securing the Lame Duck Amendment, the unicameral legislature, lend-lease, in curbing inflation, and solving other public problems. His satiric speech on the election to the Senate of the wealthy Mr. Newberry of Michigan, his unsuccessful fight to defeat Mr. Vare, Republican from Pennsylvania, and his success in leading the movement to prevent Mr. Vare's sitting in the Senate are related with vigor.

Many other events are told; through them all we see pictures of public personages, friends, enemies, officials, and those whose influence often dominated behind the scenes. Valuable, indeed, are such comments upon contemporaries.

In his very readable book, we can follow this nonconformist through his long career. Sometimes his memories are pungent and emotional, but he emerges a leader for liberal advances, a sincere and honest citizen and loyal patriot, who worked to forward the interests of his beloved country.

A journalist, J. E. Lawrence, aided in the writing of the book. Pictures add to the text, and cartoons, likewise, though no acknowledgment of the latter is given. The volume is a strong reflection of the man of the soil whose life it is and who in his last days expressed one of his basic beliefs when he said, "Unselfish faith will prove to be America's greatest resource in the difficult years ahead."

DOROTHY WOODWARD

*Reminiscences*, by Maxim Gorky. New York: Dover Publications, 1946. \$2.75.

It is good to have such a book as this. Good for all the compassionate observations that Gorky made of his friends and fellow writers. Good for the way in which these reminiscences support the current unfashionable belief: that it is both possible and rewarding for a man to experience great affection for another man's work and character without pernicious condescension, to admire that work and that man without concealing the occasional paltriness of that man and his work; that a memoir can be discerning, memorable instead of merely disarming.

This book makes available, in a single volume, reminiscences which have not been heretofore translated or accessible in English. In a period when chitchat flourishes and flatters, this work represents a considerable publishing and editorial achievement. There are no laborious displays of odd accounts of the home-life, sex-life, et cetera which somehow continue to be passed off as special insight in some circles. Gorky apparently did not believe that if you related so many "inside" stories of Tolstoy's temperament or Chekhov's charm, with appropriate asides, you would come out with any feeling for or comprehension of the sources and evidence of their tem-

perament and charm. Instead, you have an informal, moving collection of Gorky's notes while visiting Tolstoy, correspondence with Chekhov and Stanislavsky, and recollections of Leonid Andreyev and Alexander Blok.

No man with Gorky's prodigious humanity could record the impact of other men, especially men with the creative powers, in these reminiscences, without divulging the springs and course of his own compassion. The notes of his visit with Tolstoy are not souvenir-ruminations to prove, later on, that he was there. Rather, they are the compulsive acts of the young writer to wholly involve himself, to wholly discover the character of his own predicament and destiny.

V. GAROFFOLO

*Tolstoy and His Wife*, by Tikhon Polner; translated by Nicholas Wreden.

New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1945. \$2.75.

*New Chum*, by John Masefield. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945. \$2.50.

*Flowering Dusk: Things Remembered Accurately and Inaccurately*, by Ella Young. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1945. \$3.50.

*Alexander Woolcott: His Life and His World*, by Samuel Hopkins Adams. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945. \$3.50.

*Raw Material*, by Oliver La Farge. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945. \$3.00.

*Wars I Have Seen*, by Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House, 1945. \$2.50.

Tardy mention of these six good books, owing to crowded review schedules, calls for apology from this section. But delayed comment has the advantage of perspective on more than a year's collection of biography and autobiography which illuminates the modern scene from Tolstoy to Gertrude Stein. This group of books reminds us anew how much personal narrative can contribute to an understanding of our time.

The Tolstoyan marital riddle is analyzed sympathetically and objectively by Tikhon Polner, contemporary and personal friend of the Tolstoy family. Simply and directly he recounts what he knows of the strange spiritual struggle which began for Tolstoy late in the 1870's and eventually, increasing in intensity, wrenched him from his home and broke the bonds of his forty-eight years of marital devotion. The characters emerge with almost the quality of a Tolstoy novel itself: the charming, tactless, practical Countess, driven by her desire to preserve family and fortune, puzzled and thwarted by her husband's religious and social ideas; the younger Tolstoy of *War and Peace* growing into the Tolstoy of the *Confessions* and the *Kreutzer Sonata*. Polner repeatedly testifies to the real affection which for so long tempered the clash of will and ideal and which made the final break so tragic and pathetic. Polner's report is close to first-hand, for in the years after Tolstoy's death, the Countess talked freely to him, saying, among other things, "Yes, I lived with Lev for forty-eight years, but I never really learned what kind of man he was." The book was written in 1920, but was translated only recently by Nicholas Wreden. It is welcome to those who have turned with renewed interest to *War and Peace*, *Anna*

*Karenina*, and the later writings in an attempt to understand the backgrounds of modern Russia.

Filling in the background for favorite books is one of the special functions of literary autobiography. In *New Chum* we are behind the scenes of *Dauber* with the thirteen-year-old Masefield, as he begins his apprenticeship in 1891 on the training ship *H. M. S. Conway*. The record is full of appeal, of sharply etched memories of the lad who bucked a quiet, unprotesting way through the rough badgering meted out to a "new chum," struggling with a diabolically active hammock amid the jeers of a derisive crew, living the daily miracle of going aloft, worshipping the gentle petty officer, H. B., experiencing the delights of "Liverpool Leave." The story is effortless, fond, nostalgic, but never sentimental. It belongs with the best of Masefield to reinforce the contribution he has already made to English maritime literature.

Other memories of the turn of the century and after come to us in Ella Young's *Flowering Dusk*. Here are the full spirit and activity of the Irish Renaissance and revolution, Yeats and Maude Gonne, Lady Gregory, AE, Douglas Hyde, and Padriac Colum. The book is an impressionistic diary, leaving one with the strange sensation of having witnessed violent segments of revolutionary activity through a magical Celtic haze. The figures in the landscape are forceful and vigorous; the narrative is shadowy, half-told, almost defying the reader to sense the full historical and literary event unless he re-lives—and he is sure to after this book—the Irish Renaissance and its subsequent political developments. Ella Young's reaction to people and places is delicate and intense, her Irish memories more satisfying than those of the United States, although Southwestern readers will delight in her love for this country. As I sat here searching for words to attempt to describe the effect of the book—no easy job for a practical reviewer faced with the fantasy and mysticism of Ella Young—I watched a sunset etching Mount Taylor on the western horizon. By day the same view is a path for jet planes. Quite by chance the book fell open to this passage:

"What mountain is this?" I asked a neighbor.

"It is Mount Taylor," was the reply.

Mount Taylor—the name meant nothing to me! I watched the mountain as long as I had sight of it. The sun flushed it with purple and rose, with ruby and violet, and the sky hung over it in a mist of rose and azure long after the sun had gone.

It blossomed in my mind for months and years till one day against a sunset in a land of rose and amethyst I saw it, snow-crowned, far off as I motored with two friends to New Mexico.

"What name has yonder mountain?" I asked, "the mountain double-peaked like Shasta—like Everest, the Goddess-Mother of the World?"

"That is Turquoise Mountain, the Sacred Mountain of the Navajos."

Its Indian name is *Tsodsichl*.

Perhaps Ella Young belongs to an Ireland and a New Mexico which an atomic world has taken from us for all time. But it is good to have her reflections on both of them stored up for us in this book.



Woollcott's world is ours, too, and Samuel Hopkins Adams recreates it like a social historian as well as biographer. Woollcott, this idol of old ladies and anathema of Bennett Cerf, could have been no easy subject for a biographer, and it is to the credit of Mr. Adams that his portrait of the irascible and sentimental Aleck makes the point of view of both the old ladies and Mr. Cerf perfectly understandable. On the *Times* and the *Herald*, onstage and off, in the Algonquin and at Wit's End, with pen and conversation and radio broadcast, Woollcott fretted and flayed and adored and capered with the literary great, touching the world of letters at so many points that a good record of his career—and this book is a good record—is bound to be barbed and racy literary history. Because Woollcott paddles in the shallows of the great stream of twentieth century writing, buoyed up by the waterwings of his own tenderly inflated ego, the history itself is doomed to shallowness. Its particular merit is a relaxing, chuckling, sometimes devastating intimacy with best-sellers, the kind of intimacy which is, after all, sauce and relish for the literary historian.

An artist in mid-career, turning back to modest personal record and self-evaluation, often enhances his own reputation and shapes his own future. Here, in honest stock-taking, Oliver La Farge analyzes what happens when a member of a privileged group seriously questions the values of his own background and strikes out for himself. Mr. La Farge, "the un-Groton boy" made his own life in the world of scientists, in New Orleans and the Southwest, and in his writing. Such summary over-dramatizes Mr. La Farge's account, for his is a quiet, clear-sighted examination. The patterns of the Social Register and the spectacular adventurer-scientist alike meet with his quiet scorn. The relish in his writing as he describes his delight in his Harvard rowing or his steady pondering of what a changing world will mean to the protected groups bring to his book charm and solidity. For us in the Southwest, the chapters on the problem of the Indian caught between his own world and the world "which involves Hitler, soil erosion and the conquest of ignorance and poverty" are the most arresting. Mr. La Farge knows better than anyone else the progress in his own understanding from *Laughing Boy* to his present sense of our responsibility to the Indian: "... one could raise a good deal of money with sentimental appeals to keep our Hiawathas beaded, feathered, and pure, but when one talks of soil conservation, advanced education and sustained-yield forestry, the yearners drift away and the supporters of liberal causes show their frank disdain. Indians are not a liberal cause but a sentiment; now the Firestone plantations in Liberia . . ." No one can read the last chapters of this book without feeling that now, back from his service with the Air Transport Command, Mr. La Farge is ready for a maturity of service as citizen and writer which will go beyond his previous accomplishment.

Since Gertrude Stein's death and the publication of her *Brewsie and Willie*, a comment on *Wars I Have Seen* may seem completely pointless. Somehow, though, the end of her story only makes the substance of *Wars I Have Seen* more significant. In it, as in the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, it is the personality of Gertrude Stein which emerges in a strangely

endearing fashion. Living through World War II in Bilignin and Culoz, with her French poodle Basket, her goat Bizerte, and Alice B. Toklas, she foraged sturdily "for cake" over the French countryside. Her face still looking like an antique Roman coin, she maintained her calm as, proscribed but unrecognized, she evaded the surveillance of the German occupation troops, chuckling as she bought her own forbidden book under their very noses. Serenely unafraid she wrote her record of what the French said and she said, what the villagers did and she did and the Maquis did during the years and days when the wait for American liberation mounted to almost unbearable tension. She gives us priceless history firsthand, plus a heartening sense of pride in her own loyalty to the United States and her confidence in liberation by our forces. This book is still as warm and vital as anything Gertrude Stein ever wrote. It is rich in typical Stein comment. She maintains that this war has finally killed the nineteenth century in us. Of it she says, "The nineteenth century liked to cry, liked to try, liked to eat, liked to pursue revolution, and liked war, war and peace, peace and war and no more." She notes with relish that "the old farmer on a hill said of the Germans do not say that it had to do with their leaders, they are a people whose fate it is to always choose a man whom they force to lead them in a direction in which they do not want to go." She describes the American soldiers of World War II: ". . . they have become more American all American, and the G. I. Joe's show it and know it, God bless them."

The legend of her life seems now, like that of Dr. Johnson's, to overshadow her writing, for it is in memory, anecdote, and in her autobiographical work that she lives most vividly for many of us. Whether she was amused at the bewilderment she brought us or puzzled herself at our failure to follow her we perhaps shall never know. I remember her once, though, in 1935, lecturing to a confused audience who shamefacedly began to slink out at the half, at which she queried, almost pleadingly, "You understand me, don't you? It's all so clear." We didn't understand her of course, but now it's all so clear—here she is, a legend and a curiosity since World War I, living abroad and becoming more American herself, living through one lost generation and finding another and understanding them both—a shrewd, sturdy, salty, strangely kindly personality. *Life* snapped her best monument: Gertrude Stein saluting on Hitler's balcony at Berchtesgaden, where she and Alice B. Toklas "sat comfortably and at home in garden chairs." For her own best epitaph one might paraphrase her words on the G. I.'s: "She has become more American all American and Gertrude Stein shows it and knows it, God bless her."

KATHERINE SIMONS

## A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF THE SOUTHWEST

*Lyle Saunders*

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**T**HIS BIBLIOGRAPHY, a service of the University of New Mexico's Research Bureau on Latin America and Cultural Relations in the Southwest, attempts to list, with such thoroughness as time and resources permit, current materials dealing with the Southwest. The Southwest, as here defined, includes all of New Mexico and Arizona, and parts of Texas, Utah, Oklahoma, Colorado, Nevada, and California.

The symbol (F) designates fiction; (J) is used to indicate materials on the juvenile level.

Much of the work of gathering items for inclusion in this issue was done by Jack Vogel. Included are mainly those titles which were published or came to our attention between October 1 and December 31, 1946.

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## LOS PAISANOS

### Saludo a Todos Los Paisanos:

As I walked across the campus to class one morning not long ago, I saw Dr. Clark and Dr. Mitchell chatting together in front of the Administration Building. There were students to the left of them, and students to the right of them; there were students fanning out in all directions to focal points, south, east, and west. One motorcycle "cop" was directing student traffic to parking areas, and another one was regulating the flow of traffic south to Central Avenue, where it became a blur of continuous movement. I wondered if Dr. Clark was reminiscing about his first appearance on the campus in 1907, at which time he found the president of the two-building institution of higher learning dressed in overalls doing carpentry work. I wondered if Dr. Mitchell was comparing the present enrollment figure of 3,500 with the enrollment figure of his first year here (1912), at which time there were ninety-nine students. Both men have recently retired, and it was nice to see them together, for they symbolize the finest traditions of academic life at the University of New Mexico. Not many of those hundreds of students passing by knew those two men, yet every one of them will benefit by the educational foundations which they helped to build at the University, by the teaching standards which they established, and by the ideals which they upheld.

George Curry of Kingston, New Mexico, is eighty-five years of age, but at the present time he is busily engaged in putting the finishing touches on his *Memoirs*, which will soon be published. Few men living today have had a more colorful life than this former Governor of New Mexico. You may fill in the dramatic background for yourself, or better still, read his forthcoming book; but here are the highlights. He was born in Louisiana before the Civil War, and when his father, who had been a captain in the Confederate Army, was killed during the Ku Klux Klan activities, his mother moved to Dodge City, Kansas.



Here the young Curry became acquainted with Wild Bill Hickok and other desperadoes of the period. When he was eighteen years old he went to the "buffalo country" in Texas, and there became acquainted with many of the famous buffalo hunters. In the 'seventies he drifted into Lincoln County, and there took an active part in the Lincoln County Wars. He knew Billy the Kid, and other "bad men" of this area and era. He served with "Teddy" Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War. In the later years of his life he was appointed Chief of Police of Manila, and rounded out his eventful career as the Governor of Samar in the Philippines.

Most everybody knows that Conrad A. Hilton, who was born and reared in San Antonio, New Mexico, has achieved fame and fortune in the hotel business. Perhaps you may not have heard that Thomas Ewing Dabney is finishing the manuscript of a book on this nationally known hotel man. Dabney, who sold the *Socorro Chieftain* last year in order to devote his entire time to the project, is the author of *One Hundred Great Years: the Story of the Times-Picayune*, which was published by the Louisiana State University Press in 1944. In preparation for the job of writing this book, Mr. Dabney read every issue of the *Times-Picayune*, a task which consumed nearly five years. In recognition of his scholarly contribution the author was awarded the Kappa Tau Alpha prize by the University of Missouri, and just recently was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa key by Sewanee, where more than forty years ago he made a straight "A" record. When questioned concerning this belated recognition of his scholastic record by his alma mater, Mr. Dabney laughingly replied that Sewanee didn't have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter when he was in college.

A few years ago I heard Robert Frost make the statement during a lecture on modern poetry that in his opinion the making of a beautiful book was as great an achievement as the writing of a great poem. He was at the time specifically paying tribute to a former Amherst student of his who showed great promise as a poet but who turned to the printing of beautiful books as an outlet for his creative talent. Certainly Carl Hertzog, designer and printer of El Paso, would measure up to Robert Frost's standards in the book trade. Mr. Hertzog's recent volume entitled *Calendar of Twelve Travelers through the Pass of the North* is perfectly beautiful, and the achievement of a perfectionist. The first edition was limited to fifty copies and sold for twenty-five dollars. Tom Lea has done the illustrations of the twelve travelers and they are superb. If you haven't seen the *Calendar* you must do so

because of its beauty and because it will definitely be a collector's item of Western Americana. Following are the twelve travelers that the famous artist gives us: Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Fray Agustín Rodrigues, Antonio de Espejo, Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, Juan de Oñate, Fray García de San Francisco, Diego de Vargas, Zebulon Pike, Juan María Ponce de Leon, James Magoffin, Alexander Doniphan, Big Foot Wallace.

Another recent de luxe edition designed and printed at the Pass on the Rio Bravo by Carl Hertzog is the volume of stories and poems by Eugene Rhodes called *The Little World Waddies*. This volume was done for William Hutchinson of Cohasset Stage, Chico, California, who handled all orders for it. The book must have delighted all of the admirers of Rhodes. J. Frank Dobie wrote the introduction for it, and Harold Bugbee illustrated it. The stories included are "The Tie-Fast Men," "Aforesaid Bates," "Trail's End," "Shoot the Moon," and "The Bird in the Bush." There are twenty-eight Rhodes poems, and among them is the better-known one called "A Ballade of Wild Bees." It first appeared in *Out West* in March, 1902. Here it is: What do you think about it?

#### A BALLADE OF WILD BEES

Far, in a dim and lonely land,  
 Where desert breezes swoon and die,  
 She dwells, and waves of drifting sand  
 In league-long silence 'round her lie;  
 She hears the wild bees humming by  
 In drowsy minor melodies;  
 She calls them friends—yet scarce knows why—  
 My Lady of the Honey Bees!

She loves at eventide to stand  
 And watch the sunset flame and die.  
 Shading her clear eyes with her hand  
 She marks her cheerful comrades fly  
 Athwart the golden glory nigh;  
 She hears the night winds in the trees;  
 She joys in God's fair earth and sky,  
 My Lady of the Honey Bees!

Dear, have you learned to understand  
 The wild bees' lore and mystery?  
 The love that makes all labor grand,  
 The grateful heart, the patient eye,

LOS PAISANOS

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That from a barren land and dry  
Can gather sweets and song—like these  
Your wise wee kin, whose courage high  
Is yours—my Queen of Honey Bees!

*L'Envoi*

Brave heart! Too strong for moan or sigh,  
You shame us in our slothful ease;  
Sing on! The grudging fates defy,  
And learn life's lesson—from the bees!

Hasta la próxima vez.

JULIA KELEHER

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