

1952

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# NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY



**Featured Artist HERBERT GOLDMAN**

**Achilles Fang Lu Ki's "Rhymeprose on  
Literature" (translation)**

**Robert Creeley Jardou (story)**

**Hartley Burr Alexander The Serpent Symbol and  
Maize Culture**

**Stories, Books and Comment, NMQ Poetry Selections**

**POET SIGNATURE, XIV:  
ARTUR LUNDKVIST (Sweden)**

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**75 cents**

**AUTUMN 1952**

**\$3 a year**

# New Mexico Quarterly

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## PERSPECTIVES USA

*A new anthology-magazine of American Arts and Letters*

*Perspectives USA* is to be published quarterly by Intercultural Publications Inc., a non-profit corporation established by The Ford Foundation. The magazine is designed primarily for distribution abroad, but it will also be made available to readers in this country. The distribution abroad—in English, French, German and Italian language editions—aims at giving foreign readers an insight into the intellectual life of the United States today.

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## THE EDITOR'S CORNER



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**POETRY EDITOR.** One supposes that four years is a long time for anybody to be poetry editor of anything. It is a hard, consuming job. The thanks are small, and even the inner rewards diminished at a time when the quality of much published poetry is questionable, the achievement of it shifting in the light of new half-years. So we understood well enough when Edwin Honig, poetry editor for *NMQ* since 1948, recently asked to be released—or perhaps he said “relieved.” Anyway, it was understood. But not unregretted. In creating and building up *NMQ*’s poetry signature, in opening the pages to a wide variety of poetic talent, and in criticizing with a fine conscience, he did a job for which thanks are either inadequate or not the point at all. Many of us profited by the act, and are grateful to him for it.

JOHN DILLON HUSBAND has consented to succession. Head of the creative writing program at Tulane, where he also teaches courses in modern literature, Mr. Husband has contributed poetry to *NMQ* since 1935. His work was featured in *Poet Signature*, III (Winter, 1949). A listing of his publications would be too long to serve any real function; the fact is that he has published a lot of good poetry in a lot of good places. *NMQ*

is glad to have him for its new poetry editor.

### CONTRIBUTORS.

HARTLEY BURR ALEXANDER (1873-1939) was a philosopher, teacher (University of Nebraska, 1908-1927; Scripps College, 1927-1939), and humanist whose interests ranged from Plato to Popocatepetl. His combined knowledge of linguistics and cosmology makes his work on Indian myth singularly rewarding. A previous article, “Giver of Life,” was published in the Autumn 1950 *NMQ*. The present piece is an excerpt from the same manuscript.

ROBERT BUNKER, a frequent contributor, spent seven years in the Indian Service, and has recently finished a book on Indians.

WARREN CARRIER, at present teaching at the State University of Iowa, is the founder and former editor of *Quarterly Review of Literature*. His novel, *The Hunt*, was recently published by New Directions.

RICHARD CORDELL, when not riding buses in France, is a member of Purdue University’s English Department. He is the author of *Henry Arthur Jones and the Modern Drama*, *W. Somerset Maugham*, and other books.

ROBERT CREELEY has published poetry and prose in *Kenyon Review*, *New Directions* 13, *Origin*, et al. He is at present living in France.

RALPH DOUGLASS designed the new lettering on the cover. Mr. Douglass, Professor of Art at the University of New Mexico, has exhibited in the

*continued on page 372*



Achilles Fang

LU KI'S "RHYMEPROSE  
ON LITERATURE"

文  
質

**L**U KI was China's first articulate literary critic, and one of its greatest. He was born in 261 A.D. in the kingdom of Wu, where the Lu clan enjoyed the confidence of the Royal House. After the kingdom was conquered by the Chin, Lu Ki and his brother Lu Yün crossed the Yangtse to try their fortune in the northern capital. He was too scintillating for the comfort of his jealous contemporaries; in 303 A.D. he, along with his two brothers and two sons, was put to death on a false charge of high treason. A powerful poet and a writer of spirited prose, his literary reputation has never waned, for he was one of "the inventors" in the Poundian sense.

The *Wen-fu* is considered one of the most articulate treatises on Chinese poetics. The extent of its influence in Chinese literary history is equalled only by that of the sixth-century *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* of Liu Hsieh. In the original, the *Wen-fu* is rhymed, but does not employ regular rhythmic patterns: hence the term "rhymeprose."—*A.F.*

PREFACE

WHENEVER I study the works of gifted writers I flatter myself that I know how their minds moved.

Certainly expression in language and the charging of words with meaning can be done variously.

And yet beauty and ugliness, good and bad can be distinguished.

By writing again and again myself, I obtain more and more insight.

My worry is that my ideas may not equal their subjects and my style may fall short of my ideas.

The difficulty, then, lies not so much in the knowing as in the doing.

I have written this rhyme-prose on literature to tell of the consummate art of past writers and to present the why and how of good and bad writing as well.

I hope it will prove in time to be a comprehensive essay.

Surely, hewing an ax handle with a handle in hand, the pattern should not be far to seek.

However, as each artist has his own way to magic, I despair of doing him justice.

Nevertheless, whatever I can say I have set down here.—*Lu Ki*

# 文質彬彬

## PREPARATION

Standing at the center of things, the poet contemplates the enigma of the universe; he nourishes his feelings and his intellect on the great works of the past.

Concurring with the four seasons, he sighs at the passage of time; gazing at the myriad things, he thinks of the world's complexity.

He grieves for the falling leaves of lusty autumn; he rejoices in the frail bud of fragrant spring.

He senses awe in his heart as at the touch of frost; his spirit reaches for the vast as he lifts his eyes to the clouds.

LU KI'S "RHYMEPROSE"

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He chants the splendid achievement of his forebears; he sings the clean fragrance of his predecessors.

He wanders in the forest of letters, and hymns the order of great art.

Moved, he puts his books aside and takes the writing-brush, to express himself in letters.

PROCESS

At first, he shuts his eyes, listening inwardly; he is lost in thought, questioning everywhere.

His spirit rides to the eight ends of the universe; his mind travels thousands of cubits up and down.

At last, his mood dawns clearer and clearer; objects, clear-limned, push one another forth.

He pours out the essence of letters; he savors the extract of the six arts.

He floats on the heavenly lake; he steeps himself in the nether spring.

Thereupon, submerged words squirm up, as when a flashing fish, hook in its gills, leaps from water's depth; hovering beauties flutter down, as when a soaring bird, harpoon-string about its wings, falls from a crest of cloud.

He gathers words untouched by a hundred generations; he plucks rhythms unsung for a thousand years.

He spurns the morning blossom, now full blown; he spreads the evening bud, yet unopen.

He sees past and present in a moment; he reaches for the four seas in the twinkling of an eye.

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

Now, he selects his ideas and puts them in order; he examines his words and fits them into place.

He sounds all that is colorful; he twangs everything that rings.

Often he shakes the foliage by tugging the twig; often he traces the current to the source.

Sometimes he brings to light what was hidden; sometimes he traps a hard prey while seeking an easy one.

Now the tiger puts on new stripes, to the consternation of other beasts; now the dragon emerges, and terrifies all the birds.

Maybe things fit, are easy to manage; maybe they jar, are awkward to manipulate.

He empties his mind completely to concentrate his thoughts; he collects his wits before he puts words together.

He traps heaven and earth in the cage of form; he crushes the myriad things at the tip of his brush.

At first they hesitate upon his parched lips; at last they flow from his deep-dipped brush.

Reason, supporting the substances, bolsters the trunk; style, hanging from it, spreads luxuriance.

Emotion and expression are never at odds: all changes in his mood are exposed on his face.

If the thought impinges on joy, a smile is ineluctable; no sooner does grief find words than a sigh escapes.

Sometimes words flow easily as soon as he holds the brush; sometimes he sits vacantly, nibbling on it.

LU KI'S "RHYMEPROSE"

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THE PLEASURE OF WRITING

There is joy in this vocation; all sages esteem it.

We wrestle with non-being to force it into being; we  
beat silence for an answering music.

We lock a whole infinity in a square foot of silk; we  
pour a deluge from the inch-space of the heart.

Language spreads wider and wider; thoughts probe  
deeper and deeper.

The scent of sweet blossom is diffused; the thrust of  
green twigs is budding.

Laughing wind will fly and whirl upward; pregnant  
clouds will arise from the forest of writing-brushes.

GENRES

Figures vary in a thousand ways; things are not of  
one measure.

Confusing and fleeting, shapes are hard to capture.

Words vie with words for mastery, but it is mind  
that disposes them.

Faced with creating something or leaving it unborn,  
he groans; caught between light touch and deep in-  
cision, he chooses boldly.

He may depart from the square and deviate from the  
compasses; for he is bent on exploring the shape and  
exhausting the reality.

And so, he who would dazzle the eyes exploits  
splendor; he who intends to satisfy the mind values  
cogency.

He whose reasoning is rarefied should not be fettered by details; he whose discourse is noble may unbind his language.

. . . . .

*Shih* (lyric poetry) traces emotions daintily; *Fu* (rhymeprose) depicts things brightly.

*Pei* (epitaph) balances facts with fancy; *Lei* (dirge) is gripping and mournful; *Chen* (admonition) praises or blames, is clear-cut and nervous.

*Sung* (eulogy) is natural and free, rich and full; *Lun* (disquisition) is compact and subtle, bright and smooth.

*Tsou* (memorial to the throne) is quiet and penetrating, genteel and decorous; *Shuo* (discourse) is dazzling and extravagant.

Different as these forms are, they all shun depravity and interdict license.

Essentially, language must communicate, and reason must dominate; prolixity and verbosity are not commended.

## THE MUSIC OF POETRY

Literature is a thing that assumes various shapes and undergoes many changes in form.

Ideas should be skillfully brought together; language should be beautifully expressed.

The mutation of sounds and tones should be like the five colors of embroidery sustaining each other.

True, moods come and go, and embarrass us by their capriciousness.

LU KI'S "RHYMEPROSE"

275

But if we can rise to all emergencies and know the correct order, it will be like opening a channel from a spring.

If, however, proper juxtaposition is not made at the proper point, we will be putting the tail at the head.

The sequence of azure and yellow being disturbed, the color scheme will be blurred and vague.

THE ART OF REWRITING

Now you glance back and are constrained by an earlier line; now you look ahead and are coerced by the anticipated passage.

Sometimes your words jar though your reasoning is clear; sometimes your language is smooth while your ideas are lame.

Such collisions avoided, both will gain; forced together, both will suffer.

Weigh merit or demerit by the milligram; decide rejection or retention by a hairbreadth.

If your idea or word has not the correct weight, it has to go, however comely it may look.

KEY PASSAGES

It may be that your language is ample and your reasoning rich, yet your ideas do not round out.

If what must go on cannot be ended, what has been said in full cannot be added to.

Put down terse phrases at key positions; they will invigorate the whole piece.

Your words will acquire their intended values in the light of such phrases.

This useful device will spare you the pain of deleting and excising.

### ORIGINALITY

It may be that language and thought blend into perfect tapestry—fresh, gay, and exuberantly lush,

Flaming like many-colored broidery, mournful as multiple chords;

But there is nothing novel in my thinking, if it tallies with earlier masterpieces.

True, the shuttle has plied my heart; what a pity, that others preceded.

As my integrity would be impaired and my probity damaged, I must renounce the piece, however proud I am of it.

### PURPLE PATCHES

Perhaps one ear of the stalk has opened, its tip prominent, solitary, and unsurpassingly exquisite.

But shadows cannot be caught; echoes are hard to hold.

Standing forlorn, your purple passage juts out; it can't be woven into ordinary music.

Your mind, out of step, finds no mate for it; your spirit, desperately wandering, will not surrender it.

When the rock embeds jade, the mountain glows; when the stream is impregnated with pearls, the river becomes alluring.

When the arrow-thorn bush is spared from the sickle, it will glory in its foliage.

Let's weave the market ditty into the classical melody; perhaps we may hold on to what we find beautiful.



## FIVE CRITERIA

### *Music*

Perhaps you are toying with anemic rhythms: living in a desert, you only amuse yourself.

When you look down into silence, you see no friend; when you lift your gaze to space, you hear no echo.

It is like striking a single chord—it rings out, but there is no music.

### *Harmony*

Perhaps you fit your words to a feeble music; merely gaudy, your language is not charming.

As beauty and ugliness are commingled, what is good suffers.

Like the harsh note of a wind instrument below in the court-yard, there is music but no harmony.

### *Sadness*

Perhaps you forsake reason to strive for novelty; you go after the inane and pursue the trivial.

Your language wants sincerity and is deficient in love; your words wash back and forth, and never come to the point.

They are like thin chords reverberating—there is harmony, but they are not sad.

### *Decorum*

Possibly by galloping unbridled, you make your poem sound well; it is loud and seductive.

Merely pleasing to the eye, it mates with vulgarity—a fine voice but an unworthy song.

Like *Fang-lu* and *Sang-kien*, it is sad but not decorous.

*Richness*

Perhaps your poem is clean and pared, all superfluities removed.

So much so that it lacks even the lingering flavor of a sacrificial broth; it resembles the limpid tune of the vermilion chord.

One man sings, and three men carry the refrain; it is decorous, but it is not rich.

VARIABILITY

As to whether your work should be full or close-fitting, whether you should shape it by gazing down or looking up,

You must accommodate necessary variation, if you would bring out the latent qualities.

When your language is uncouth, your conceits can be clever; when your reasoning is awkward, your words can be supple.

You may follow the well-worn path to attain novelty; you may wade the muddy water to reach the clear stream.

Perspicacity comes after examination; subtlety demands refining.

It is like dancers flinging their sleeves in harmony with the beat, or singers throwing their voices in tune with the chord.

All this is what the wheelwright P'ien despaired of explaining; nor can mere language describe it.

MASTERPIECES

I have been paying tribute to laws of language and rules of style.

LU KI'S "RHYMEPROSE"

279

I have come to know what the world blames, and am  
aware of what the masters praised.

Originality is a thing often looked at askance by the  
fixed eye.

Emerald and jade, they say, can be picked as so  
many beans in the middle of the field,

As timeless as the universe and growing co-eternally  
with heaven and earth.

The world may abound with gems; yet they do not  
fill my two hands.

THE POET'S DESPAIR

How I grieve that the bottle is often empty; how I  
sorrow that True Word is hard to emulate.

And so I limp along with anemic rhythms and make  
indifferent music to complete the song.

I always conclude a piece with lingering regret; how  
can I be self-satisfied?

I fear to be a drummer of an earthen jug; the play-  
ers of jade instruments will laugh at me.

INSPIRATION

*Flow*

As for the interaction of stimulus and response, and  
the principle of the flowing and ebbing of inspira-  
tion,

You cannot hinder its coming or stop its going.

It vanishes like a shadow and it returns like echoes.

When the heavenly arrow is at its fleetest and sharp-  
est, what confusion cannot be brought to order?

The wind of thought bursts from the heart; the stream of words gushes through the lips and teeth.

Luxuriance and magnificence wait the command of the brush and the silk.

Shining and glittering, language fills your eyes; abundant and overflowing, music drowns your ears.

*Ebb*

When the six emotions become sluggish and stagnant, the mood gone but the psyche remaining,

You will be as abject as a dead stump, as empty as the bed of a dry river.

You probe into the hidden depth of your animal soul; you spur your spirit to reveal itself.

But your reason, darkened, is crouching lower and lower; your thought must be dragged out by force, wriggling and struggling.

So it is that you make many errors by straining your emotions, and commit fewer mistakes when you let your ideas run freely.

True, the thing lies within me, but it is not in my power to force it out.

And so, time and again I beat my empty breast and groan; I really do not know the causes of the flowing and the not flowing.

## CODA: THE USE OF POETRY

Literature is the embodiment of our thoughts.

It travels over endless miles, sweeping all obstructions aside; it spans innumerable years, acting as a bridge.

Looking down, it bequeaths patterns to the future; gazing up, it contemplates the examples of the ancients.

It preserves the way of Wen and Wu, about to crumble; it propagates good ethos, never to perish.

No realm is too far for it to reach; no thought is too subtle for it to comprehend.

It is the equal of clouds and rain in yielding sweet moisture; it is like spirits and ghosts in effecting metamorphoses.

It inscribes bronze and marble, to make virtue known; it breathes through flutes and strings, and is new always.

NOTE: This is not the first translation of the *Wen-fu*; a number of sinologists (including E. R. Hughes in *The Art of Letters*, Bollingen Series XXIX, 1951) have already worked on Lu Ki's *ars poetica*. If it is true that the translator has to bring over not what a man says but what he means, then these sinologists have failed. In my opinion, they have not managed to convey what Lu Ki means, nor sometimes even to comprehend what he says. This is understandable, for it is not easy to translate from the Chinese, a language supposed to have been invented by the Devil to prevent the spread of the Gospel. Whether the present version can meet Bernard Berenson's challenge (after detailing the difficulty of rendering words like *Gemüt* and *sophrosyne*: "Then dare to translate the ancient Chinese and Indian thinkers"), I am not the one to say; I have done what I could. Previously, in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (Vol. 14, 1951), I published a sinological translation, with text and *apparatus criticus*. I consider this present translation my definitive version, and refer the reader to the *HJAS* for sinological footnotes.—A.F.

Robert Creeley

## JARDOU

... und leise tonen im Rohr die dunkeln  
Floten des Herbstes ... —TRAKL

CLEARING, the wind left, and the sky was very light, and walking along behind them, he sang, but softly, saying, you want to pick all the olives, but I will pick them all. And sang, again, feeling very good, the sky now altogether clear, and from behind the high house in front of them a single white light climbing down and falling all over them in one heap.

But she was in a hurry, and had the boy's hand in her own, to hold it, pulling, as they went on. We are late, she said, and looking back, found him still there behind them, and waited until he had come up to them, to take his hand too. Opening the gate, he went in and they went in after him.

I love you, he said, and stopped to shout, hello, and heard it echo around the building to be answered from the field, another shout, and they started, calling, the boy running in front of them.

He had expected some diligence, to put it that way, or some aspect of determination. But he now saw them almost finished, the mother by the furthest tree, reaching up and pulling off the olives. There was no hurry, he thought, and saw the trees were very old, the branches filled with the fine leaves, fluted, and still wet from the rain. He waved again, to the husband by himself, in the wet grass, and listening, heard the first sounds of their speech not understood, but it was, she said, *le jardin des olives*.

He listened, then went to the mother, saying, hello, again, not caring that she would not know it. I love you, he said, but to the other, coming up now to join them, and she made a face back, laughing, the woman standing still nervous, her skirt held out to catch the olives which he began to toss down. Straining, he raked them clear, then dropped them to her, not looking, and saw the olives above him he could not quite reach.

Those, he said, and pointed at them, and his wife explained, the speech wavering, breathy, and she said, he thought, even things he could not understand. Bringing the chair, they both held it firm, and he got up on it, quite safe. Stretching, he picked more, leaning back to get them, and found himself among the higher branches. He picked what were left to give them to the woman, and shook the branches. Getting down, he looked at her, then felt the chair give and put out his hand and touched her, quickly, then stood on the ground.

Once there, they all sat down, and he lay back against the tree's trunk not caring about the wet. The father still sat past them, over to the side, and watched the children. They did not think to bother him at first, then called, and getting up, he came to sit with them.

They grew quite content, under the tree, the father stretched out by the women, an old hat pulled down to the back of his head, nearly reaching the ears. His hair fell very straight beyond it, curling slightly at the neck.

But he was not, even so, unformidable. There was a very precise weight present. The younger man might not have budged it, he thought, but thought then of the woman, and looking, saw her dress almost worn out, and pulled tight about the shoulders.

I love you, he said, and echoed it in invariable silences, saying, each time, I love you, but never feeling very much.

Shall we begin again, his wife said, and translated it, to them, so that they both stood up, waiting, but the father was not very interested.

You are not concerned, he said, but could not think of the right words, and his wife repeated it, to the man, smiling, and he shrugged in answer.

I had thought to pick olives, he said then, to his wife, and grew angry. This doesn't seem very close?

And laughed. One didn't care. And got the chair and brought it to another tree, placing it under the higher branches, and then

climbed up on it, to stand there. Following, both women took hold, so that he might have been their own, held there, in some attitude of attention.

Still the children ran by them, shouting, and played, very happy, the boy tagging after them to join in. Above them all, he looked down, thinking to pronounce any spell, perhaps, saying that it could be that way, but they waited, and he went back to picking.

He gave it, now, all care, parting the leaves with his fingers, and trying to find all those which might be left. It was difficult because the colors were too similar, and hiding in all shadows, it seemed there might be one more. But, below him, they pointed, and following their hands he saw the olives, and picked them, dropping them down.

All done, he said, but asked, and looking down, saw them pointing, and he reached out, to get it, then tossed it down to them.

Are you done, she said, and he got down off the chair, falling down beside them, then took the bag from the woman, smiling, to look at it.

Back of them, the father came back, and stood in a tangle of brush, and lifted a camera, holding it steady, to point, the hands very quiet. But the children would not hold still, and all crammed together until the father shouted at them, something, and they stopped and grouped themselves nicely, the grass brushing against their legs. He took the picture, then bent to wind the film, and went off to the house to leave them, there, by the trees.

Let go, the children would have run off but the mother held them, pulling down the youngest to sit on her lap, and he saw the cloth pull tight, watching, and called to his own boy to come.

Sitting him on his knee, he stroked the hair, the boy chafing, but held quiet there and let him do it. He would have spoken, but couldn't, and looking to his wife, wanted to push, then, at her, to explain, but did not know what he wished explained.



The woman watched, even so, intently, and smiling, he thought, or perhaps she smiled. Behind her, the other children stood all looking at him, and he wished to say something, but knew no words to.

She spoke to his wife, and listening, he heard them wander into sounds so very distant he could think of nothing they might mean, and said, stop it, and hearing him, his wife stopped, to smile, and getting up, he pointed again to the trees.

Some left, he said, but the women still sat and looked after him, and would not come. Behind him, their voices grew alien, and broke too far away to make him listen, so that he walked to the field's edge and turned to see no one but the children, still running among the trees. He watched, then brought them to him, calling, then sent them up into the trees for no reason, and they brushed past him, climbing into the branches.

Waving, he tossed up twigs, and old bark, and looked for more in the trampled grass, then threw what he found up to see it fall, past the children, to the ground. One, now above him, sang, and he looked up to see her there, braced tight against the crotch of the limbs, and white along the ankle, and up the legs, to her skirt, and waved to her, crying out.

But she said, come, and turning, he saw them there now behind him, and nodding, he took the bag they had given her, and put it into his pocket.



*Herbert Goldman,  
Sculptor*

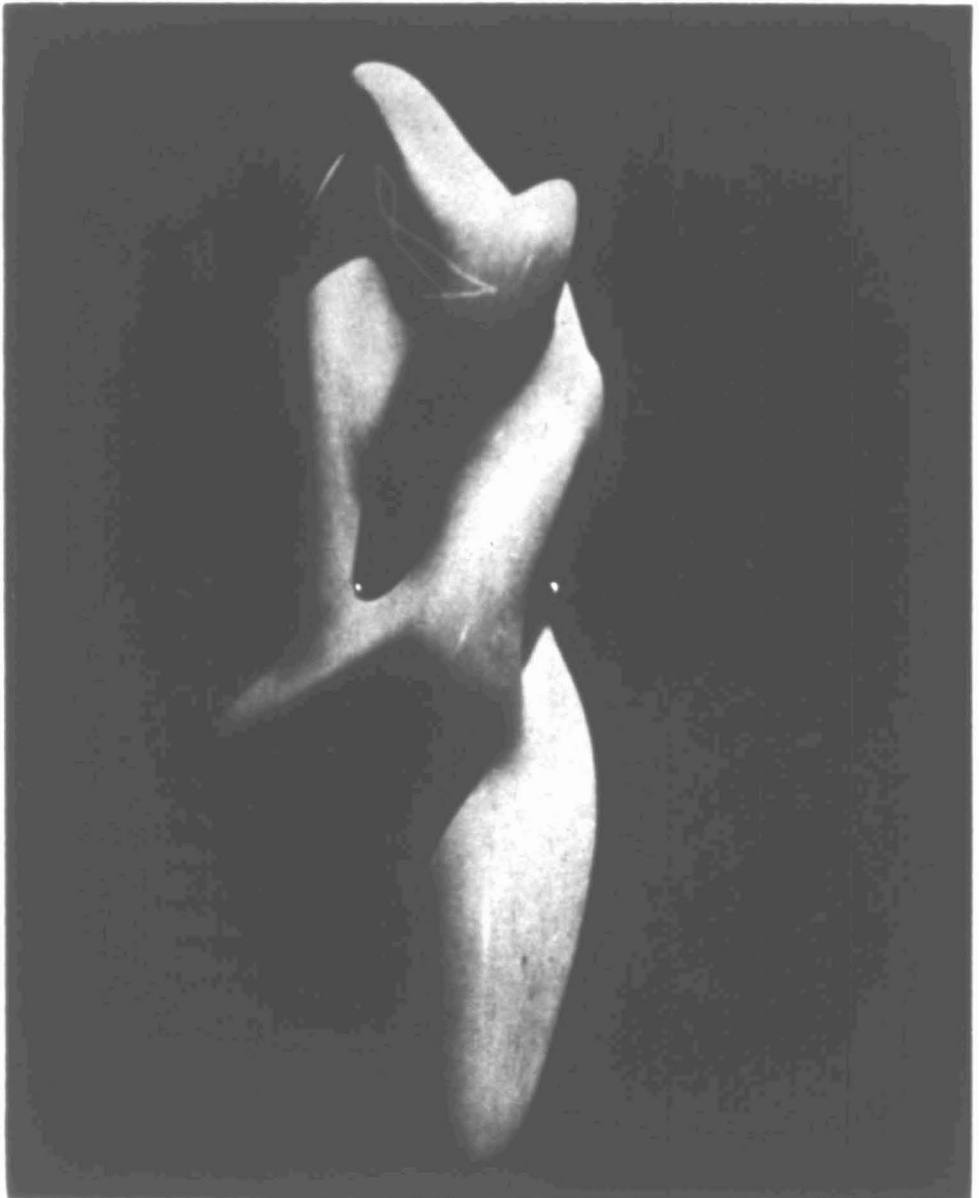
**H**ERBERT GOLDMAN, born in Detroit in 1922, began training at the age of twelve as apprentice-assistant to S. A. Cashwan, Detroit sculptor. He stayed with Mr. Cashwan for seven years, then went on to further training at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Wayne University, and the Beaux Arts Institute of New York. After serving in the navy, Mr. Goldman moved to Albuquerque and entered the University of New Mexico, from which he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1949.

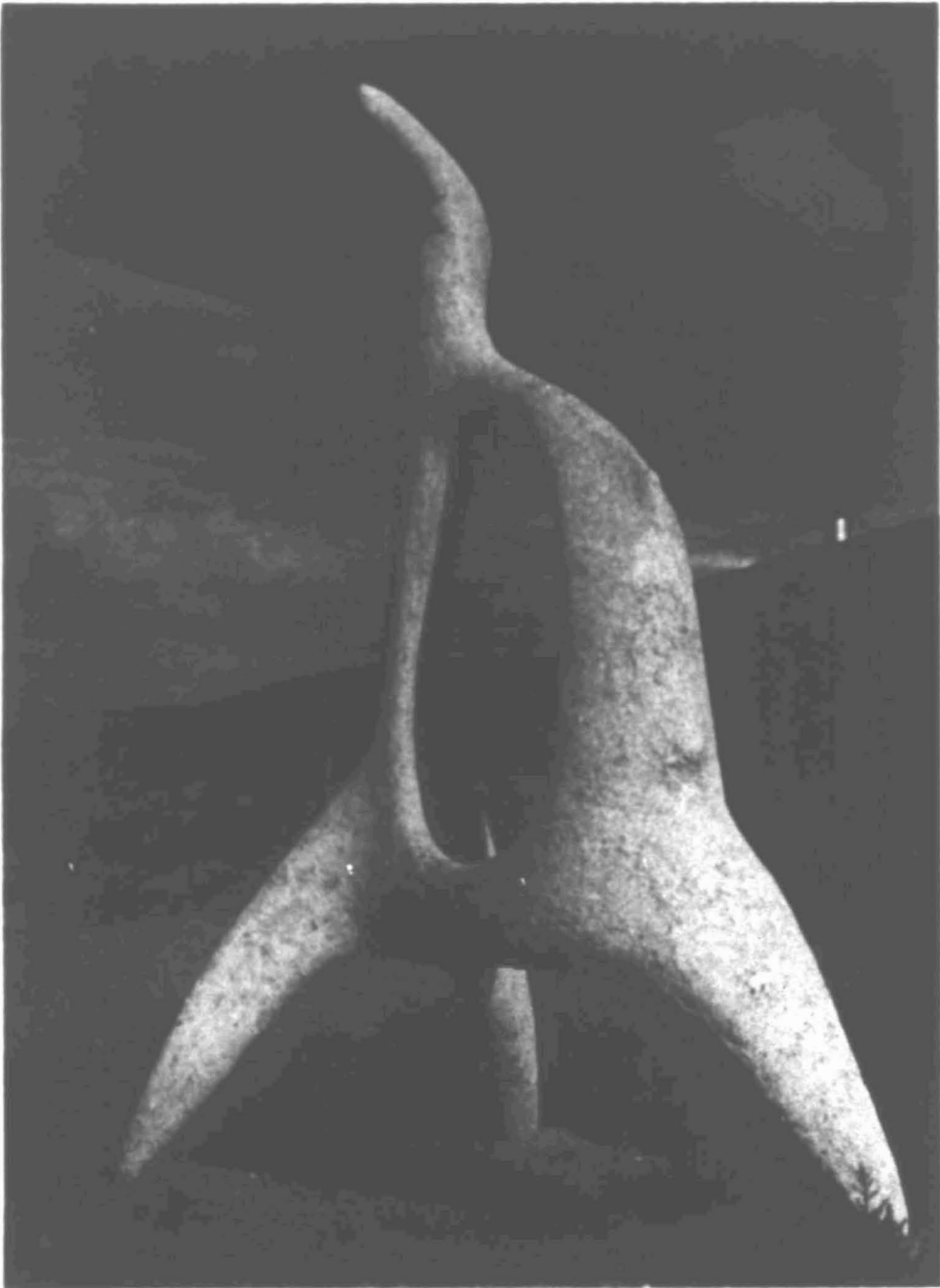
His sculpture has been shown in group exhibits at the Botts Memorial Gallery, the Jonson Gallery, and the University of New Mexico Gallery in Albuquerque; the Santa Fe Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Art, and the San Francisco Museum



GOLDMAN RESIDENCE. 1952.

I O R S O . 1952.





GARVER RESIDENCE. 1951.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION  
REGIONAL OFFICE, 1951.

BANK OF NEW MEXICO, 1950.



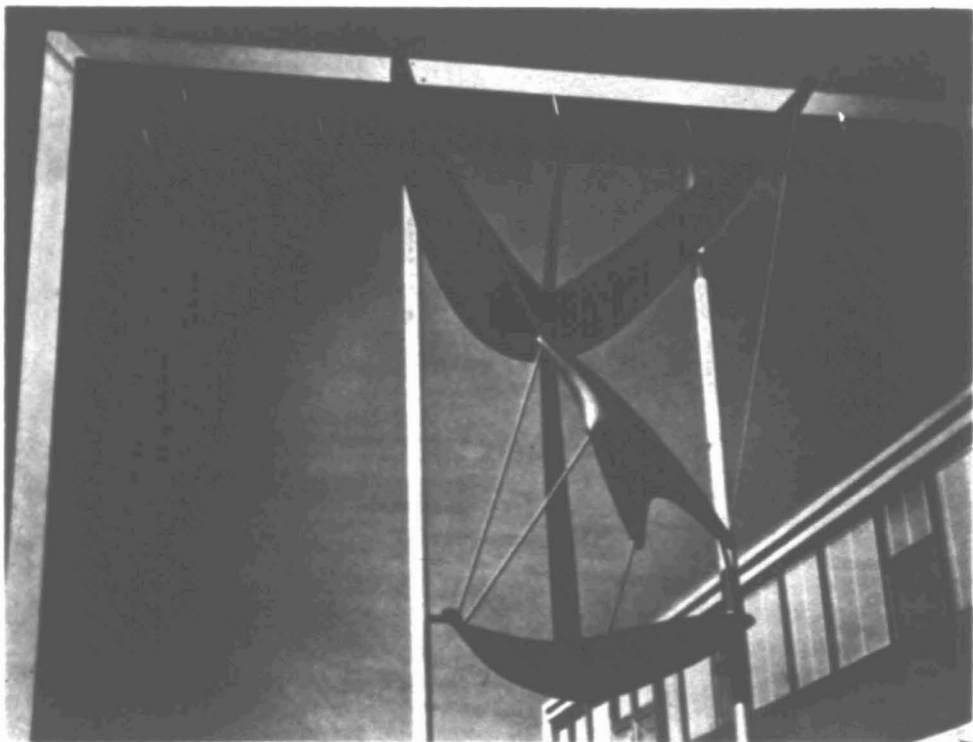


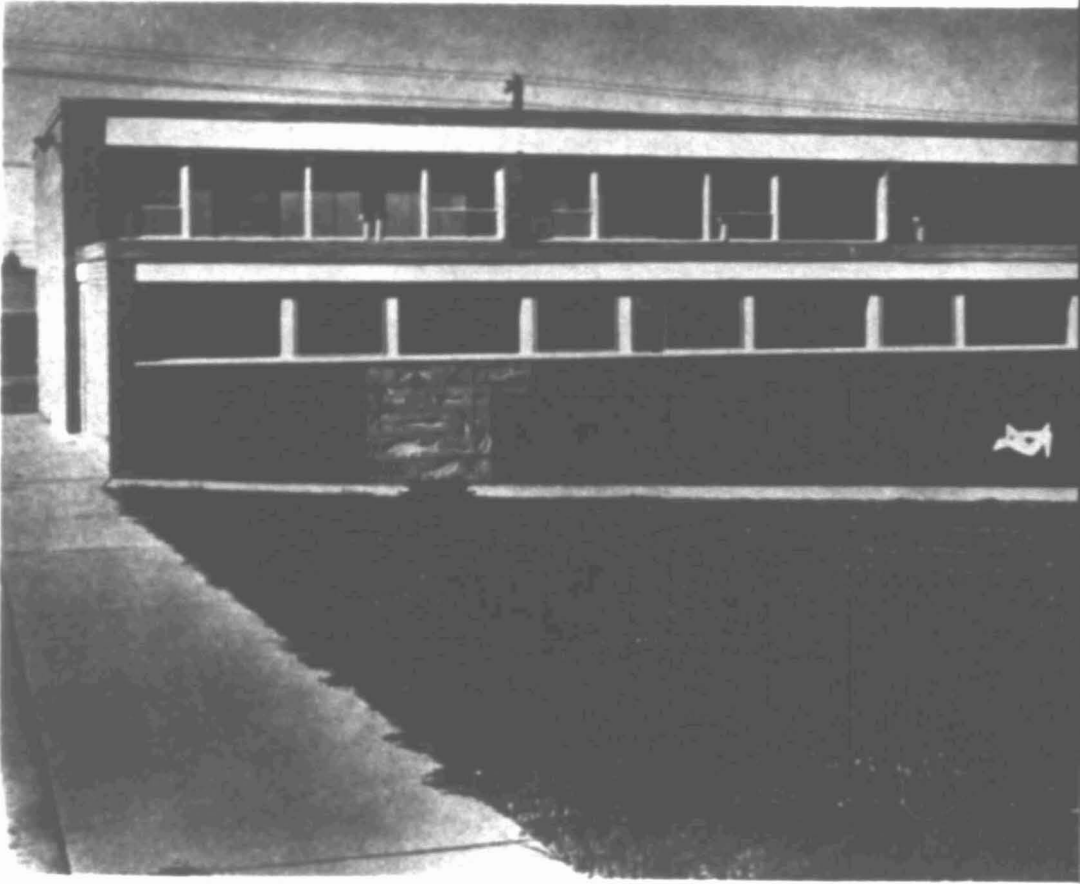


MEDICAL ARTS SQUARE. 1950.



MEDICAL ARTS SQUARE (other view).





TEMPLE ALBERT, 1951.

HERBERT GOLDMAN

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of Art. In 1950, he had a one-man show at Contemporary House in Dallas. In 1951 and 1952 he had one-man shows in Albuquerque.

Perhaps of more significance is the fact that Mr. Goldman has had commissions in Albuquerque, and that most of these commissions involved architectural use. Among the more important are those done for St. Francis Xavier Church, the Medical Arts Square, the Bank of New Mexico, Temple Albert, and the Veterans Administration Building. Samples of this work are included among the photographs given here. With the exception of the church, all the buildings were designed by Flatow and Moore. It is no small thing to find architects and sculptors working together again.

Richard B. Vowles

## FROM PAN TO PANIC: THE POETRY OF ARTUR LUNDKVIST

A CERTAIN fascination always surrounds the country boy who makes good in a city way, the more so when he becomes the complete cosmopolitan. And so it is with Artur Lundkvist, the country boy of southern Sweden, who, two years after his arrival in Stockholm, partook in the early ferment of Swedish modernism, of which he has ever since been the dominant figure. Poet, novelist, essayist, film critic, editor, world traveler—he is a man of letters in the widest sense. Yet he is neither precious nor pontifical in the fashion of literary moguls, but cultivates his pungent provincial accent in order to avoid any taint of the aesthetic. No specialist, Lundkvist has made all literature his domain; his championing of the little known Czech writer Nezval, his flying visit to Pablo Neruda in Chile, his editorship of the ground-breaking *Europas litteraturhistoria 1918-1939* (Forum, 1946) typify the ubiquity of his interests. It is not surprising, then, that Lundkvist's poetry is of international stamp. I shall be concerned not merely with its uniqueness but with what might be called its barometric quality. Lundkvist's poetry is a sensitive record of that shift in poetic values which has taken place in the last three decades, a shift concentrated in the phrase of my title, "from Pan to panic."

Nils Artur Lundkvist was born on a farm in the province of Skane, March 3, 1906. Some twenty years later, after a folk school education and a brief stint of farming, he arrived in Stockholm. In his important debut volume, *Embers* (1928), he is intensely conscious of origin:

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I was earth and rain,  
I was soft clay—  
formless.  
But I was burned to brick,  
I grew hard  
and assumed form's angular laugh.

A major theme of this volume is the resolution of conflict between city and country:

We must find the primordial  
and carry it to our cities.  
Spring shall laugh in the doorways,  
verdure climb factory walls,  
grapes ripen about our chimneys.  
Color your pale hands with earth  
lest they wither away.  
Bathe your bodies in dark water.  
Rest on the earth, wait calmly, breathe deep  
while the full moon rises . .

These lines are from "Evangelist" subtitled "A Sketch for a Lawrence Portrait," and certainly the influence of D. H. Lawrence was at that time powerful. As late as his review of the *Four Quartets* Lundkvist could call Lawrence a profoundly more religious poet than Eliot, and Lundkvist was happy to practice the same kind of devotion. But there were other influences, that of Walt Whitman most discernible. Lundkvist early addresses him poetically: "You, brother of all; you with the embracing heart; you, strong wanderer in life's storm." The two influences coalesce in Lundkvist's early hymns to the city: its streets "twisting like laughing women"; its billboards "screaming with red mouths"; its factories, "giant insects sucking honey from the world's heart"; and its whores "blooming in the darkness, poison between their leaves." Unlike so many poets of the twenties Lundkvist does not shudder at industrialism, for he feels that

The factory whistle should be a cry of joy cutting  
blood-red through space—  
Not a whip lash on tired shoulders.

Man shall be liberated by the factory, poetry shall be unshackled by the machine. This "impure poetry" sings its songs to "machines bathing their bright steel limbs in blue oil"; it describes no boundary between the ugly and the beautiful, merely discovers

. . . something of life and fire, beauty and damnation  
 Something that stirs us up, kindles us to flame,  
 Or cracks us in the jaw . . .

It can even, in the manner of Lautréamont, one of Lundkvist's progenitors, "paint the delights of cruelty." If not actually brutal, it is certainly poetry with a hard core of survival.

Lundkvist was not alone in this; he was, in fact, the central figure of a school of five diverse talents who appeared together in 1929 in *Fem Unga* (*The Young Five*), the central document of a neo-romantic doctrine called *vitalism*. All of this poetry was of the soil, embraced the primitive, eschewed the academic in all shades and forms, sought out the great Life Force or dark inner stream, or some such Laurentian entity. It was not strenuously "engaged" to any particular cause, though the political tendency varied among the shareholders. Certainly Lundkvist soon parted company from the group when it showed Marxist inclinations. But he persisted in his cult of the instinct, continued "stretching his young golden limbs" through two more volumes which appeared in rapid succession—*Naked Life* (1929) and *Black City* (1930).

Lundkvist characterizes his brand of vitalism in *Nigger Coast* (1933), the reflective product of his African trek in search of the real meaning of primitivism. "I am a sexual romantic," he asserts. "I seek something else: the unknown. Something that explodes life's narrow limits. A world as fresh as on the first day. I have sought the elemental, the superperson, in myself and in woman. As individual I found woman as trivial and boring as myself. I sought her out as element. A sexual romantic. Why? To what purpose? Perhaps to none at all. . . ."

For better or for worse, then, woman is the center of Lund-

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kvist's poetry. He can upbraid her for her cold silk in his early impatience with conventional mores, but he goes on to immortalize her in "Song of Woman," one of his longest poems, which appeared in *Crossroads* (1942). Woman has experienced all:

You have seen the silver in old wood  
and the sun like an egg yolk in the waters of spring.  
You have wandered through the chasm of sudden  
silence in street traffic. You have seen  
the sparrows rocking on a bar sign. You have felt  
a choking steam rise from street gratings.  
You have known the pain of dying fish  
casting themselves between ice wedges.

But the romance is there too:

Your lusting call comes  
from the depths of the fountain. Your glance is  
a scythe in the untamed grass of my dreams.  
Your temples: the first swallows of spring  
over rain-wet roofs. Your eyelashes:  
the black in the poppy's petals. Your breast:  
a snow landscape where the sun sets . . . your loins:  
inscribed with a god's blind initials.

Lundkvist's pagan deity is unmistakable. Divinity and sensuality are compounded in the early poetry, and as late as 1944 Lundkvist titled a volume *Poems Between Beast and God*. The satyr image of Pan is at the very heart of Lundkvist's poetry; his poems range from hymn to propitiatory gesture. This lusty, lusting god is expressive symbol of an attempted fusion of ecstatic belief and abandoned sensuality; and Lundkvist's early poetry is a kind of *danse champêtre* spirited to city streets.

IN THE thirties the expansive energy of Lundkvist turned to criticism, and in addition to a spate of articles for the established Scandinavian journals he made himself felt in one "little" magazine after another—*Clarte*, *Fönstret*, *Fronten*, *Spektrum*, and *Karavan*. The last, under Lundkvist's editorship, did much in its

five issues to establish Rimbaud, Breton, Jolas, Malraux, and Faulkner in Sweden. If Lundkvist's criticism is seldom brilliantly imaginative, it has ranged freely and conveyed its views with unusual clarity. It is doubtful whether any Scandinavian knows American literature as well as Lundkvist. In the essay collection *Atlantic Wind* (1932) he writes wisely about Whitman, Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson, and O'Neill; in *Flight of Icarus* (1939) he admires Faulkner, the visionary, and analyzes the Henry Miller who can speak of "a divine conscience, a dionysiac condition in which the world exists as a poem." This condition was the ultimate aim of the vitalist impulse which continued to spark Lundkvist's maturing poetry of the thirties—the three volumes, *White Man* (1932), *Bridges of Night* (1936), and *Siren Song* (1937).

The spirit of Freud imbues much of this poetry, increasing the phallic content of its imagery, filling it with snails, bell-buoys, chalices, eyesockets—in short an array of protuberances and concavities. Freud gave scientific authority for what the poet has known all along. Lundkvist's panegyric in *Crossroads*, though in part a rather prosy cataloguing of case histories, concludes with a penetrating, if abstract, analysis of the Freudian position:

All has a meaning, all has a secret cause,  
something is hid in each habit, each error:  
man is a burial place for unlived life.  
He finds himself in the shadow of his action  
and cannot discern it. He is his own light  
and cannot distinguish himself, nor sense his presence.  
He is alarmed at weaknesses, but the hidden  
breaks through somewhere else, unexpected. Caught  
within his emotion he can know but little of reality.  
All real knowledge lies beyond human feeling  
and then it is meaningless. White and black  
are only a question of lighting. In itself  
each and everything is nothing. Water and air  
are nothing, unless they are wanting. Thus  
need gives to all things their reality.



Lundkvist took his poetic rationale from psychology, accepting Jung's insistence that creative energy comes from the unconscious and that the poet is no more than instrument. He turned to automatism, or the free association of the surrealists, as a logical extension of the Whitmanesque manner. He admired its "mystical faith" in the unseen relationship of disparate objects (the sewing machine and umbrella of Lautréamont, the typewriter and frying egg of Eliot), a faith which carried metaphor into new realms of possibility. He was glad to see science and poetry to a degree reconciled. Lundkvist's poetry began to take on the quality of a Cocteau film, the quality which Cocteau himself best describes in his analysis of *Blood of a Poet*. He favored, he said, "a kind of half-sleep where I labyrinthed myself. I was concerned only with the lustre and detail of the images that emerged from this deep night of the human body." Lundkvist's achievement could not better be described.

LUNDKVIST is today writing what he likes to call "panic poetry." The term is felicitously chosen, for it suggests that the beast-deity Pan is still central to the poet's mythic intent, and it denotes an atmosphere of heightened terror and fright. This is, by definition, a "sudden and convulsive poetry, throwing itself forward in startling leaps, fragmentary but intensive, even in its omissions." The notion of the convulsive is straight out of Breton; the rest is largely an outgrowth of spontaneous practice, and derives its impact from that spontaneity, but to a certain degree Lundkvist's program takes sustenance from Vicente Huidobro's "*creacionismo*," as he readily admits. Whatever Lundkvist may say about the convulsive, his is an increasingly controlled poetry. It is less scattered, more consolidated on the page than his early poetry. While free verse is the preferred medium, Lundkvist tends less and less to write one long and continuous poem in the manner of Eluard. He now employs more care in structure, sometimes by means of pseudo-stanzas, or stanzas that are spaced but not syntactically

unified, and other times by solid attack and clean conclusion.

One central dictum of Lundkvist's program is that the "word must not capture but liberate." And so it is with the image. Lundkvist's images send out a concentric radiation like Van Gogh's lightbulbs. And he is prodigal with them. This richness, which critics have called "tapestry poetry," is well demonstrated by the following poem composed in 1946:

There the green deep darkens like a mine,  
rests on buckled iron and slimed wood.  
The blanket of canvas parts slowly, without sound.  
Bubbles rise abruptly from a shinbone flute.  
Iron-clawed fast to the rocks of the sea bottom  
the bell-buoy clangs and turns with the wind.  
Phosphorescent face of a wristwatch gleams  
on a skeleton's arm. The brainpan emptied  
of its luminous gruel is the dwelling of fishes:  
where thoughts beamed like a lighthouse  
the blood-filled crowns of fish gills move.  
And the bell-buoy clangs! Eye and ear in one  
it is painted in red and white  
like blood and bandage, like sunset and snow.  
A curl of blood-black oil rises from the depths:  
spreads itself out around the bell-buoy  
like the garb of a thousand drowned peafowl  
like the skins of a thousand rainbow fish.

Here, descriptive density does not totally exclude theme, as some of Lundkvist's critics would have it. "All is vanity," the poet is saying, somewhat after the image pattern of Hardy's "Convergence of the Twain," but with less moral insistence. And "all is the substance of art, all has its beauty," one might advance as sub-theme.

But Lundkvist appears to be getting away from figures for their own sake, or "ebullient patches of delight," as C. S. Lewis likes to call them. He can write with sinew and austerity:

Monday came with a morning anguish that passed  
into noisy security. All was easier

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than one feared and harder than one hoped.  
The chalk drawings slowly wore off the sidewalks.  
The names of yesterday's heroes were already heard less  
often.  
And the wind rose, toyed idly with matchsticks at street  
corners.

While this poem is less static than most, we would scarcely wish excised from Lundkvist's poetry the imagery that is his particular genius, even when it amounts to nothing more than an aimless chain reaction. We are dealing with a highly charged poetic content when we encounter "eyelids heavy as tropical fishes"; starvation "fastening green lilies at the temples"; woman "like a water-lily in a lightbulb"; a priest, "a flute without holes"; the wind "paring the landscape like a fruit"; an old woman "plaiting her thoughts like straw"; a night "with lips of stone." Lundkvist makes of the image a poem in miniature.

However, it must be recognized that in recent years Lundkvist's poetry has undergone a devaluation. One feels that he has been too prolific, that he has in fact driven his poetry to keep pace with his critical writings in the daily press. More serious, though, is a diminution in melodic fluidity which may be related to the disappearance of the buoyant optimism of Lundkvist's early poetry. In 1950 Lundkvist, who had always maintained a kind of aesthetic disdain for political involvement, came out for the so-called "third position," a minority Swedish compromise between the extremes of democracy and communism. Possibly this near-espousal of communism was motivated, however unconsciously, by a desire to recapture past eminence as a literary spokesman. It succeeded, however, in merely revealing Lundkvist's political naïveté and turning his early detachment into an empty gesture. I need say no more about the vanity of Lundkvist's recent dogmatizing; it has not affected his poetry.

What, finally, are the implications of Lundkvist's shift from Pan to panic? Panic, poetic or otherwise, is the central emotion of

our time and Lundkvist's evolution suggests that it is the product of Pan-worship, of a divided allegiance to body and soul. We have a kind of mythic and semantic verification, in that panic was said to have been a state induced by appearance of Pan with his disparate divine and bestial members. But it would be a mistake to chart social history from the performance of one minor poet.

"Panic" does this for Lundkvist's poetry: it creates that strange visual brilliance of kaleidoscopic images—those images that flash through the mind in the moment of fear; in short, a kind of lucid, controlled delirium. But this is lyric journalism; the reportage of a sharpened inner eye. Perhaps, in Lundkvist's case, this feverish vision will lead back to belief. It must, in fact, to produce a genuinely new poetry.

## POET SIGNATURE

*Artur Lundkvist*

### SAGA OF A SHE

She saw women washing by a lake with boiling water.  
They moved about in the steam with their great red arms,  
And behind them the heavens were white with hung wash.

She saw two lovers lying in the grass by a cliff.  
The earth began to crumble, the ground gave way,  
but the lovers sailed off on an isle of green.

She saw a dog drinking from a pool full of stars.  
The stars disappeared one after another: lapped up by a dog.  
And the hound spoke and said: I suffer from melancholy.

She sat together with many women against a wall.  
The sun gilded their up-turned faces like masks.  
When they began to caress her she changed into a man.

She looked in through a window where people were dancing  
naked in the firelight, shameless women with spilt hair  
and heavy swinging breasts like sacks of wheatflour.

She met a bull in the woods and fled round a tree  
till it tangled its arched horns in the branchwork  
and looked helplessly up at her like a child.

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ARTUR LUNDKVIST

## THERE IS A CITY

There is a city by the sea, white and towered.  
Windows flash there to the sound of morning's trumpets.

Uniforms and morning coats embrace each other.  
The barrack walls are worn as the plush of bordellos.

The rocking chapel stuns itself with bell-ringing  
Birds fly like white spirits in the circles of sound.

Night's moisture lingers on the slabs of cafe tables  
Drinks scream like caged birds, green, red, yellow.

The dice are yellow from nicotine fingers  
and their worn out eyes are blind to each chance.

Spent droskies wing by on crooked wheels  
Cabs that spew up their contents like intestines.

Indolence leers in warped mirrors with quivering chins,  
but industry rings in the factories like a silver coin.

## P O E M

Your glances lash the water like tentacles.  
Serpents of sun fly into the night of your armpits.  
You open a bird's blue breast and pull it  
over your head in pride and melancholy.

The bucket can be heard scraping the walls of  
your sorrow's well. Oh city of memory with your crystal turrets  
and rotten boards, your piles in the earth and flesh!

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The lash cut stripes on the frost-covered boots.  
Doves idled on the harnesses' black lyres. The beggar  
slept in his green, iced beard, or poisoned himself  
with copper coin. And the backstairs Venus stole by  
with a brandy flask between her breasts.

Minstrels

dreamed behind eyelids heavy as tropical birds,  
with brows like the spiders' white egg pouches,  
pregnant with songs and unhatched revolutions.

Satin shoes danced recklessly on broken glass.  
Knife shafts burned like torches through the long night.  
Fur flashed on contact with naked skin  
and sprang to life as if around animals.

Morning came

with the broken comb left in the bed.

NO LINE IS POSSIBLE IN ANY LIFE

You are not at home with strength or weakness.  
You believe in neither the flower's labor nor the thought's  
innocence.

No line is possible in any life. The arabesque's  
mysterious copse is the colophon of all aspiring.

Woman's bite in your shoulder is no seal  
upon your love. But what rests on what  
in the perilous tower disappearing in fog  
its eagles sensing neither depth nor height?

The human is all web and membrane.  
You must wean yourself away and open  
a spring to the inhuman, the hard conditions  
that leave no leaf to gather one's tears in.

But observing the economy of the inexorable  
you renounce usual objects of rejoicing, servile  
placating solace, and bend your resources  
to breaking fresh paths and seeking new seas.

The evening sun coats its ripe honey-light  
under slate-blue skies, and scattered life  
is gathered in the poet's hands, filling its form,  
the golden image which becomes the lie of a new day.

The women who have already cast their children in the river  
and the maternal salt pillars who are through crying  
now gather at their feet the seafoam of the days  
and the man of smoke drags his shadow across the field.

Angels and demons plunge whistling out of space  
and change masks in the eddies of battle.  
Human dwellings are consumed in lilies of pure fire  
and water is flung from fountains in silver cascades.

But some with seashell, shark's tooth, or knife  
are carving in wood and ivory; time floats the shavings away  
and from these images a murmur arises  
of the shipwreck of desire on impossibility's shore.

## THE ART OF GROWING OLD

I

Entangled  
in life's entrails and daily skeins of barbed wire  
without root in the earth or wing in the clouds  
I return to that which I flee  
without knowing what is a tent of heaven  
or a hitching post in myself  
without knowing what is only dust  
or what was once a flower.



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The trucks of morning roll headlong on  
over the lamps of night, straw and champagne,  
marriage implicates itself in burials,  
coins sweat under the ardor of hands,  
warm oil flows over snowy alabaster  
and flames are caught in bottles  
like dead snakes in bottles.

I travel on a motionless river,  
a black and speechless violin  
which someone plays with his naked feet,  
but the shores keep on changing, keep moving by  
meaningless  
as house construction and conflagration,  
as the planting and felling of trees,  
as hearth and ashes.

The children newly born  
already fondle one another in the stacked timber,  
the young couple sinks into the community of fat  
among the water mirrors of the evident  
where they roll their future before them on wheels,  
the wonderwork of repetition which rolls  
over a carpet of bird eggs and broken feet.

The mills, the mills grind seed and glass  
between the daily walls of flesh  
under smoky trees and quivering lanterns.  
Swallows approach with small gold crosses in their beaks,  
rain strikes me in the face  
refreshingly contemptuous.

II

I flee my ocean depth with drowned lanterns  
and flowers that will drink no more than moonlight.  
The quiet work continues day and night,  
about me, within me,

in living tree, in dead wood,  
in metals that think themselves hard,  
in my own frightened flesh.

There are a thousand rotating diamond bits,  
the focal points of inner suns, centrifuges  
that drain the ocean of the heart,  
innumerable small knives and saws  
in the landscape of bleeding fabrics.  
It is the coral that spreads,  
the coral city's stiffened sunset in the blood,  
it is the tiger's soundless tread  
and a little smoke shut up in seedpods.

But I have a green window with buzzing flies,  
I have an ice window with frozen clods of earth,  
behind it my head lies in a bed of crystals,  
I have a snowdrift with violet eyelashes  
and the freckled flowers of bird flocks against the sky,  
I have hereditary hopes in the linden shades  
with roots bored into the fat, black earth,  
a tree shaking with buried machinery  
with a constellation glistening in its crown.

Yet I am no more than neighbor to myself,  
I never see me,  
only suspect that someone lives on the other side of the wall,  
someone waging naked battle with a nettle,  
in a smell of clothes that have lain long upon the ground.

III

The days burn without oblation or mourners.  
My god is mine, sculptured in wishes and denials,  
a brain of clotted diamonds  
and a crucible heart which burns in the night,  
a crystal sword bursting into peals at every stroke,  
a grotto in a living body,  
an organ where molten metals rise and fall,  
quite encircled by that measuring tape which

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spins from my mouth, in a vigil  
that waits in blindness, in an alley of statues  
whose eyes are consumed by expectation,  
among the maimed with their bleeding feet.

The sun sinks daily into this that much riper wall  
where faces darken like umbrellas in the rain,  
but like the branch in the wood  
I put up resistance to the cleaving axe,  
still sullen and flaming  
its limbs grown into the trunk,  
lit by the blazing strawfire of a late love  
where I quiver like a chandelier beneath a dancehall floor.

Desire rests like a spear among the roses,  
in a winter echo of drums and sleeping snow.  
The storm opens a still wider glade about me,  
only fallen trees, fallen trees everywhere!  
I see the hermit whip himself with juniper yet green,  
he has a hand in the nectary  
and a foot in the sinking water,  
scarcely a lightning rod  
but prepared for the ire of space.

*Translations by Richard B. Vowles*

*John A. Lynch*

## THE SYMPTOMS

**M**R. GIRARD began correcting his papers at nine-thirty. Earlier, he had read awhile, something from a magazine which he could no longer remember, and for a short time a piece that Professor Moore had left with him. He sat at his desk now, shuffling the papers abstractedly, marking here and there. Before him stood a dozen books in a row, arranged by height and held at the ends by glass tumblers filled with pennies. He looked up from the papers and read aloud the titles of two of the books. Then he looked beyond the books, out the window, and, where the lights from other rooms shone, he could see misshapen figures on the elm trees.

His curtains were of monk's cloth. Girard had hung them the day he had moved in, three months ago, after Professor Holmes had died and they had cleared away his things and sent them on to his relatives in Ottawa. Holmes's room faced away from the university, out past the elms to open fields, and Girard had moved in right away, carrying his books in armfuls across the campus. Finally he brought the curtains. He had taken them down with one last apprehensive look at the view he had lived with for thirteen years, the campus grounds in their ring of yellow-brick facades, and between the buildings the pattern of white, crisscrossing sidewalks.

The sidewalks had obsessed Girard. At first he had thought them only an occupational hazard, something to be endured. That had been in his fifth year at the university, when he had already become too settled in his position and had lost the initiative to move on.

Another year, however, and he had begun to study the particular arrangement of the sidewalks, had found it almost impossible to stay away from his window. Concentrating, he had tried to

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think<sup>p</sup> what it was the sidewalks resembled, what it was he had forgotten. He could think of nothing.

With pencil and paper, he had estimated the number of steps from one crosswalk to another, the number of feet, multiplied the numbers, added them, estimated the angles of intersection. But, as far as he could determine, aside from their functional pattern, the crisscrossing sidewalks stood for nothing at all.

He had considered himself in relation to others of his profession. Nothing again. He taught the same students, read the same books, ate the same food, and, for that matter, shared the same view as a dozen other teachers in the building, all of whom he knew quite well.

It was two years later that, irritated and for want of a better solution, he had bought the monk's cloth and drawn it completely across the window glass, to shut out the sidewalk pattern forever. Within six months, however, as if by some extraneous design, the pattern had begun to attach itself to other things. It was by no means constant, but from time to time, when he least expected it, the pattern had recurred. He saw it in the geometric figures of light and shadow in the hallway, in crossed pencils lying on a desk, in the angle of an open casement window.

Now, four years later, as he sat at the desk in Professor Holmes's room, Girard was seeing the pattern in the trees outside his window. Girard looked back at his papers and shuffled them loosely. He felt very tired. It was already ten-fifteen and he had hardly begun his work. He could see that only a few papers bore the marks of his pencil, and looking at the papers now he could not remember whose they were or what it was he might have marked.

Taking up his pencil, he drew a figure eight on one of the papers and shaded it in, holding his pencil at a low angle. He did it carefully, shading precisely to the limits of the figure. He made a broad elliptical figure and shaded it in also. He was about to make a third figure when he realized that someone was knocking at his door.

He laid the pencil down quickly and attempted to gather the papers into a neat pile, but he found his fingers moving clumsily. Then, suddenly aware of the figures he had drawn, he took up the pencil and tried to erase them. Instead, he succeeded only in making smudges on the paper.

Girard got up from his chair slowly, seeing the papers loosely piled on the desk, the row of books, and, beyond the curtain-framed windows, the elm trees. He moved to the door, half expecting anyone or anything, half expecting that there was no one there at all.

But a student was outside, and when Girard had opened the door, he remembered somewhat guiltily that the boy had asked that morning to see him.

"Hello, Mr. Girard," the boy said. "It isn't too late, is it?"

Girard stood still a minute, then said, "Not a bit." He closed the door and indicated a leather reclining chair for the boy; but the boy refused it momentarily and remained standing. Girard crossed the room to his desk and sat down, turning his chair around to face his visitor. "Not a bit," he repeated.

"May I smoke?" the boy asked, still standing.

"Of course." Girard himself did not smoke, but he kept an ash tray handy. He pointed toward his bookshelves and said, "You'll find an ash tray on top there, somewhere. Sit down."

The boy smoked in silence for a minute. Girard turned to his desk and collected the papers there. The one with the smudged figures he quickly slipped into the middle of the pile. Then, holding the papers in his lap, he began going through them.

"It's not about my work," the boy began.

"Oh?" Girard put the bundle of papers back on his desk. "I thought it might have to do with something here." He was beginning to feel cordial, even glad that the boy had come, just at this time.

"You haven't noticed, have you?" the boy said. "You haven't noticed anything?"

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Girard stared at him. "No, I must admit, I haven't." Then he reached to his desk and tipped the lamp so it showed full on the boy's face. Very slightly he said, "Nervousness, maybe."

The boy put out his cigarette and crossed one leg upon the other. He said nothing.

"Is this why you wanted to see me?" Girard asked.

"Yes, sir." The boy was lighting another cigarette now, holding the match in his fingers until it went out.

"Your work has been fine," Girard said.

"It isn't that," the boy said. "It's that sometimes I doubt if I'll be able to make the next paper, or the next class, or the next anything." He spoke suddenly, directly to Girard. "It's that everything seems to pile up inside me and I can't get loose and that something will have to give. I thought if I could talk with you, you might understand. It has nothing to do with my marks at all. Just that you might understand."

Girard didn't answer. He had let the lamp settle into its usual position, throwing a ring of light no farther than the desk and beyond that putting things in shadow. He got up and switched on the ceiling light. "I'm not sure that I do," he said.

The boy looked up at Girard. "Did you ever have something that kept coming back to you and bothering you? Something you really didn't want to think about?" He stopped and waited, but, Girard looked away from him. "It's hard even to write a letter sometimes," the boy said.

Girard walked to the bookshelves and began fingering the bindings along the top row of books. The top of the case bore a thin layer of dust, and he saw in it an octagonal spot where the ash tray had been. With his fingers he obliterated the edges of the design until it was no longer there.

"There were nine of us," the boy said, "and I never saw any of them again." Girard stopped, his hand on top the case; he turned slowly to look at the boy. But the boy was no longer looking at him, he was staring at the floor.

"We were all inside this barn at night and that's all I remember except that in the morning when I woke up they were gone and I was alone. No one ever saw them again. We never knew what happened to them. Not one of them."

Girard followed the bookshelves along the wall. He fingered the bindings with no intention of looking at the books, merely to be doing something. Below, outside his window, he saw a light go off suddenly.

"Did this actually happen?" he asked the boy.

"Yes, sir. In Germany."

"It still comes back?"

"Yes, sir."

"Often?"

"Yes, sir."

"You didn't just imagine it?"

"No, sir."

"It's a very definite thing then, isn't it?" Girard said, coming back to his desk.

"I'm all mixed up."

"I mean there's no doubt in your mind as to what bothers you. It's definite in that way. You really know what it is."

"I'm not sure. I've thought about it a lot, but I'm not sure. I know and then I don't know. Sometimes I get terribly depressed when I don't know."

Girard had sat down. He took the papers from his desk and turned them over, holding the thick bundle in his lap. With a pencil he began to draw a barn on the top sheet. The boy had said there was a barn. He drew a crude barn with a door in one end and no windows.

"I get depressed," the boy said. He was smoking his third cigarette now.

Girard drew a window in the barn.

"If I could find out what really happened to them," the boy said. "There doesn't seem to be any way, though."



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Beside the barn Girard drew the figure of a man. The boy was talking steadily now, and Girard looked up from time to time, trying to make the face on the paper resemble that of the boy. But he could not draw well and it looked like no one in particular.

"I suppose that's the crux of the thing," Girard said, answering the boy. "The *why*, that must be the crux." He continued drawing on the paper. Above the barn he drew a cloud, for no reason at all. Then he drew a star, for the boy had said it was night.

"I expect something to happen," the boy said. "I don't know what. But it's waiting for something, perhaps waiting to see them again, or to know what really happened to them. But I don't suppose I'll ever find out. And if I don't find out, I suppose I'll never be rid of this thing. I don't like to think of the time I'll spend waiting."

"It's a very definite thing, though," Girard said.

The boy did not answer, but went on puffing on his cigarette. Then he put it out and took the ash tray back to the top of the bookcase.

"The very fact that it is definite is in your favor," said Girard. "At least you have something you can put your teeth into. Imagine if you had nothing to go on."

Girard waited for a response but none came. "It's such a simple thing, really, isn't it?" Again he waited. Then with the pencil he began to shade in the cloud he had drawn. "You have a definite picture that keeps recurring. And you know that it recurs because it was quite a shock to you at the time. You know that, don't you?"

"Yes, I suppose," the boy said. "But knowing it can't make me forget it. Even if I knew all about it, I don't think I could forget."

Girard looked up from his papers. "But you know something. What if you knew nothing? What if you *didn't* know what was at the bottom of it? What if you had the symptoms, but had nothing at all to go on?"

The boy was silent for a while, then, as if he had not heard Girard, he said, "You're older. I thought you might understand."

Girard said nothing, but he returned the papers to his desk. He handled them for some time, straightening the edges.

"It's after twelve," the boy said. "I ought to go." Girard heard the leather chair squeak, and when he turned around, the boy was standing.

Girard stood up too. "I wish I could do something for you," he said. "If at any time in your work. . . ."

"No," the boy said, "I don't want to ask that."

They went to the door, and Girard stood there listening to the boy's footsteps as he walked down the corridor. He heard him approach the stairway and start down, but when the boy reached the floor below, Girard could no longer distinguish his steps.

Girard closed the door. He tried to think of the boy and of what the boy had told him, but his thoughts wandered. He recollected instead that he had been in Holmes's room three months now. He stood still in the room, listening, and he could hear his own breathing. Outside it was darker now, with most of the lights turned off. Only his own seemed to be shining. Girard walked toward the window, hearing his every step plainly.

As he stepped in front of the glass, his shadow fell hugely on the trees outside. Girard moved away, and the huge shadow moved with him. Reaching up, he drew the curtains together quickly, cutting off the shadow and the trees. Then he stood a minute, waiting, listening for a sound from somewhere that never came.

His papers lay in a neat pile on the desk, but when he returned to correct them he could not think of what he was doing. On the top paper he saw the barn he had drawn, and with his pencil he traced over its outline, the peak, the door, the window. He traced the cloud he had drawn above the barn, he traced the star. He traced over the figure of the boy he had drawn. And then, because he really couldn't help himself, he began to draw, further down, running to the edges of the paper, a pattern of dark, crisscrossing lines.

## *NMQ Poetry Selections*

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### THE GIFT

A clock for Christmas; it came  
unsigned. She had not heard  
for such a time: growing months of blame  
and silence. Now the ticks for words.

A precious clock of gilded brass,  
mahogany, and silver numbers.  
It made the jungle of her surroundings crass.  
She could not return it: a gift encumbers

like the grace of God, forgiveness of a father.  
The hammer springs on the hour,  
smashes her night, plots her  
day with sound. Time has such power

—she had not known. Chimes  
become the music of her very breath,  
waiting this expensive time  
for such a tiger as comes by stealth.

### NASCIMENTO

Mussel-soft, she rises  
(the sea rides the years,  
chambers of our discharge),  
with neck long and brown eyes  
(of ourselves, recollection and descant,  
whore, from whose immaculate conch:)  
she burgeons, Botticelli, for my delight.

WARREN CARRIER

## RECITATIVE

It is a most peculiar thing; but I want you to understand.  
I have kissed you in airplanes, belfries, beside the carrousel,  
In dancehalls, elevators, factories, garages, hotels and on islands;  
But not in memory.  
I have felt you warm beside me, gentle and alive:  
In jungles, kiosks, lounges, nooks and at the opera;  
In penthouses, on quays, in restaurants, in subways and taxis.  
But never now.  
We have put our lips together. We have shared  
Umbrellas, vestibules, wagons and xylophones. Together  
We have yawned and gone to the zoo.  
But this is today.  
I come and I look through the bars of time and I marvel  
while all of the world walks by and smiles and says hello  
in alphabetical order, excepting one.  
And that is you.

## TABLOID OF TIME

Abelard and Heloise  
Link their love among the trees.  
The seasons fly to watch the bliss  
Of death's devout, ecstatic kiss.

Hamlet walks within his brow,  
Himself the father of his now;  
Himself the guilty; but the scene  
Becomes again what might have been.

The murderess and Mr. Good  
Go off together in the wood.  
The gossips at the cripples' dance  
blame it all on circumstance.

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Shylock shakes his finger at  
The courtroom proletariat  
But the comic jury may  
Dance on Shylock's wedding day

ROBERT WISTRAND

ON THE GREAT RIVER

*Taos*

Blue bones, sunset, bleeding mountain.  
The brawling average and the Safeway  
Indian. Lorenzo, art is  
Homeless. Topophobia.

*Santa Fe*

Hill and cross, the dustless plaza.  
Texas man, his teeth and luggage.  
Children Pérez, Sánchez, and  
García. Anglophobia.

*Albuquerque*

Neon nightrest, bursting river.  
On her skirts the mushrooms. Her mixed  
Wine collapses every Sunday  
Noon. Amnesia.

*Corrales*

Adobe and sticks in the valley  
River-muck, tumbleweed, toad  
A horse turning turquoise in twilight.  
My melancholia.

EDWIN HONIG

TODAY EACH SIGN

Today each sign is on its guard,  
No cloudy emblem to be read:  
Surfaces are clear and hard,  
Blue enamel overhead.

I find myself in a tidy street,  
All simple as a monorail;  
Nothing to deflect my feet,  
No significant detail.

Those I meet are sheathed in tile,  
The teeth between their lips bright  
In the cultivated smile  
Tempest-proof and watertight.

Surfaces are hard and clear,  
No hint of film, crack, or bruise.  
How catch a glimpse? How overhear?  
How find the clues? How find the clues?

SAMUEL YELLEN

*Hartley Burr Alexander*

## THE SERPENT SYMBOL AND MAIZE CULTURE



**E**AGLE-BEAKED and winged, fire-breathing, scaly and serpent-bodied is the Dragon of European folklore and art. Yet he seems not native; in all his bodiments there is something of artifice and bugaboo unreality; he does not seem to "take" in the European environment, but remains a toy of the nursery or mildly an ornament—unconvincing from Roman to Wagnerian times. For a living dragon in the Old World, the true fire-vomiter, it is necessary to go to the Orient. Already the Serpent-of-the-Waters-Beneath appears on Sumerian tablets; but it is in the farther East, in the Sinitic empire, that the Dragon comes fully to his own. There he is a cloud-dweller, and swims, flame-splendored, through the mists and billows of the upper skies, flashing all the hues of the prismatic universe in his broideries,—azures of the East, reds of the South, blacks of the North, of the West the whites which for the Chinese is the color of death and mourning, and most imperially the yellows of the Middle

NOTE: This piece is an excerpt from an unpublished manuscript, "The Great Mysteries of the North American Indian," by Hartley Burr Alexander. The work was completed in 1935. A previous excerpt, "Giver of Life," was published in the Autumn 1950 issue of *NMQ*. One of the book's primary concerns is to trace the connections between old world and new world cultures, and to show that analogous modes of life create analogous modes of thought, regardless of "history" or geography. Furthermore, this is not necessarily a result of diffusion, but is rather a natural analogy of thought, philosophy, ritual, and symbol which is bound to occur to some degree when cultures share a basic parallelism. One aspect of the argument is presented in this excerpt.

Kingdom's earth. Further, for the Chinese geomancer, there are lakes in the four directions, and a dragon for the lake of each color and direction, and one for the Pool Beneath, all these in addition to the king-dragon of them all whose abode is the sky-realm. The whole cosmic scheme is convincingly analogous to that represented on the Mexican codices, where great serpents likewise govern the quarters and breathe cataclysmic disasters when time has counted its fates and run its courses.

The Serpent appears among the Corn-dancing villagers of New Mexico as well. Again the Quarters have all their distinctive colors—colors mantic with the seasons and to each Quarter, and to the Pool Beneath and the Pool Above, whose mingling waters are the tides of growth, is assigned a magic Serpent, plumed to show his kindred to this day. On embroidered kilt and painted bowl and ceremonial altar the Avanyu (Tewa), or Koloowisi (Zuñi), or Polulukon (Hopi) is figured, as he was in the days when the thriving peoples of Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Keti and they of the cliff palaces of Mesa Verde adorned their altars and their sacred vessels.

It turns out, too, that Chinese Dragon and Plumed Serpent participate in like powers: for both are genii of the fruits of earth and of the fecundation of the fields, and hence ultimately of the whole thunderous interplay of sexual strife, whence Yin and Yang engender creation. But this does not infer missionizing or chance transference from Asia to America; for when it is understood that the Plumed Serpent and the Dragon both are but bird-serpent embodiments of the raincloud and of the fluid which alone to farming peoples can mean life, then the image needs no transfer from land to land, but is self-sown wherever agriculture becomes a state's foundation. Sumer, China, Mexico—all speak but the natural language of men who read the heavens for their seasonal gift.

In the New World the cult and myth of the bird-serpent, in identic or related forms, is mainly coterminous with the highland



areas which define the regions of the most ancient maize cultures. It is vivid and varied in the Pueblo Plateau as in that of Central Mexico and again on the Yucatec peninsula and in the Guatemalan highlands; in Colombia, and southward through Peru to Bolivia, recur the images of the serpent, the bird, and the cross, everywhere in relation to rain-forms and fertility. Naturalistically the myth-being is associated with moisture and with the waters of the world-regions and with seedings and fecundity, yet always, in his greater forms, with the sky. He is not only the "Green-Feather Snake" and the "Cloud Snake," bearded with rain, but he is also the "Son of the Serpent" and again the "House of Dews," and, transformed, the "Lord of the Dawn." He is, as the myths tell, driven by the Wind God, dissolved by the Sun, or sacrificed to the Sun; and he is conquered by the supreme male-female Master of Heaven, of whom, indeed, he is also represented as born and whose peculiar gift of generation is abundantly his. That the Plumed Serpent is first of all the rain-cloud, and in especial right the high-terraced cumulus cloud of midsummer (whence he is called also the "White God"), from whose black belly falls the reek of rain, is attested not only by myth and the imagery, but also by the art which in Mexico represents him as masked, now as bird, now as serpent, and in New Mexico as a serpent body whose dorsal burden is the cloud cumulus and whose tongue is the jagged lightning. The Chinese Dragon, it will be recalled, swims in just such billowing cumulus.

But there is another aspect which the Plumed Serpent assumes, with qualities not now derived from nature but rather from the dramatic course of human life. In his classic form he is the Quetzalcoatl of the Nahuatlani peoples, identical in name-meaning with the Kukulcan of the Maya and the Gucumatz of the Kiché—for all of these names have the one meaning of "Green-feather Serpent." The bird known to the Aztec, and thence to us, as the "quetzal" (*Pharomacrus mocinno*) is distinguished by long-flowing tail plumes, brilliantly green, and treasured by the Mex-

ican peoples as insignia of kings and gods; and like the tail plumes of the macaw, which for Pueblo folk are symbols of the bladed glories of the maize fields, so for Aztec and Maya were the curving splendors of the quetzal feathers—the “rich plume” which with the emerald stone is a favorite metaphor of Nahua poetry:

My Lord, let thine emerald waters come descending!  
Now is the old tree changed to green plumage—  
The fire-snake is transformed into the quetzal!

Now this Quetzalcoatl appears in Mexican tradition no longer as a cosmic serpent, but as a man, and a man to whom historical place is assigned. In the tales he was lord of Tollan, the ancient city of the Toltec fabled as the fountain of the glories of civilization, and in our day tentatively identified with the ancient pyramids of Teotihuacán, which are of the Sun and of the Moon and of the Plumed Serpent, as the sculptures show. But Tezcatlipoca, he of the mirror and of the windy roads, drove forth the ancient king; so that he departed with his arts and his precious gifts, and from the east coast sailed into the dawn, borne upon a serpent-twining raft—yet with the promise that one day he would return in the brightness of his power to reclaim and redeem his people. How Montezuma, in terror of this fable, thought to recognize in the Spaniard the god returning, and out of dread lost his life and his city and his people’s freedom is one of the epic tales of history—made vivid and present by the gauds of the deity sent to Cortez as the monarch’s propitiatory gift and now reposing in the British Museum. Plausibly the story of the departure of Quetzalcoatl may record the overthrow of the elder power, and perhaps of the king Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, named for the deity, at the time of the invasion by the eagle-guided Aztec Northerners, who built their capital where the eagle seized the serpent, and gave the emblem of Mexican power and nationality. Nevertheless, the tale of the coming of the god, bringing with him metallurgy, law, letters, and the arts of life, and after glorious years departing, but

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with promise of a redemptive return (formerly perhaps a myth of the returning summer with the wealth and joy of the fields) is found recurrently among all the more cultured peoples of ancient America, north and south.

Into it historical events may well interweave, of which probably the latest instance is in New Mexico, where the Pueblo peoples have since Spanish times created a legend of Montezuma, the fabulous emperor of the South, who in olden times was their lord and who, after bringing the blessings of Indian civilization, ascended into the eastern skies upon his royal eagle, there to abide the hour of his triumphant return. In this, the old legend of the Indian Messiah is mingled with an echo of history, while back of both lies a drama of Nature, as ancient in consciousness as the first maize-planting and the first rain-prayer.

Thus for the aboriginal peoples of America the domestication of the maize was the initial and key for the whole pattern of a human civilization, and the vivid coloring of a unique philosophy of life. Expanding north and south from its Middle American beginnings, this culture marginally encountered and mingled with the warrior-creeds of the braves of the Thunderbird, man-born from the Sky-Father; but within its own native centers, the whole complexion of thought had been for so many tens of centuries hued from the grainfields that men had no imagination outbordering them. Their own flesh and blood was maize in substance and creation: in the narrative of the *Popul Vuh*, which of our autochthonous literature is the greatest surviving monument, not alone is man maize-formed, but the images associated with the fruitful fields are archetypal of a civilization premeditated in the dusks of time, when the Seeds of Things were in cosmic generation. Like our own Semitic Genesis, the creation story of the Kiché Scripture figures the reflective thought of men for whom the transformation which of all has been most momentous in human time, from flesh-feeder to farmer, has long

since passed into an intimate understanding of Nature; and like the Semitic the Indian version possesses both maturity of reflective thought and majesty of expression.

Admirable is the account [so the narrative opens] of the time in which it came to pass that all was formed in heaven and upon earth, the quartering of their signs, their measure and alignment, and the establishment of parallels to the skies and upon the earth to the four quarters thereof, as was spoken by the Creator and Maker, the Mother, the Father of life and of all existence, that one by whom all move and breathe, father and sustainer of the peace of peoples, by whose wisdom was premeditated the excellence of all that doth exist in the heavens, upon the earth, in lake and sea.

Lo, all was in suspense, all was calm and silent; all was motionless, all was quiet, and wide was the immensity of the skies.

Lo, the first word and the first discourse. There was not yet a man, not an animal; there were no birds nor fish nor crayfish; there was no wood, no stone, no bog, no ravine, neither vegetation nor marsh; only the sky existed.

The face of the earth was not yet to be seen; only the peaceful sea and the expanse of the heavens.

Nothing was yet formed into a body; nothing was joined to another thing; nothing held itself poised; there was not a rustle, not a sound beneath the sky. There was nothing that stood upright; there were only the quiet waters of the sea, solitary within its bounds; for as yet nothing existed.

There were only immobility and silence in the darkness and in the night. Alone was the Creator, the Maker, Tepeu, the Lord, and Gucumatz, the Plumed Serpent, those who engender, those who give being, alone upon the waters like a growing light.

They are enveloped in green and azure, whence is the name Gucumatz, and their being is great wisdom. Lo, how the sky existeth, how the Heart of the Sky existeth—for such is the name of God, as He doth name Himself!

It is then that the word came to Tepeu and to Gucumatz, in the shadows and in the night, and spake with Tepeu and with Gucumatz. And they spake and consulted and meditated, and they joined their words and their counsels.

Then light came while they consulted together; and at the moment of dawn man appeared while they planned concerning the produc-

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tion and increase of the groves and of the climbing vines, there in the shade and in the night, through that one who is the Heart of the Sky, whose name is Hurakan.

The Lightning is the first sign of Hurakan; the second is the Streak of Lightning; the third is the Thunderbolt which striketh; and these three are the Heart of the Sky.

Then they came to Tepeu, to Gucumatz, and held counsel touching civilized life; how seed should be formed, how light should be produced, how the sustainer and nourisher of all.

"Let it be thus done. Let the waters retire and cease to obstruct, to the end that earth exist here, that it harden itself and show its surface, to the end that it be sown, and that the light of day shine in the heavens and upon the earth; for we shall receive neither glory nor honour from all that we have created and formed until human beings exist, endowed with sentience." Thus they spake while the earth was formed by them. It is thus, veritably, that creation took place, and the earth existed. "Earth," they said, and immediately it was formed.

Like a fog or a cloud was its formation into the material state, when, like great lobsters, the mountains appeared upon the waters, and in an instant there were great mountains. Only by marvelous power could have been achieved this their resolution when the mountains and the valleys instantly appeared, with groves of cypress and pine upon them.

Then was Gucumatz filled with joy. "Thou are welcome, O Heart of the Sky, O Hurakan, O Streak of Lightning, O Thunderbolt!"

"This that we have created and shaped will have its end," they replied.

None but a mind seasoned by the centuries and acquainted with thought of human destiny could have framed this last judgment; it lifts out of myth and into philosophy, recording no more the transient gloss of a sensuous imagination playing upon the broken surfaces of Nature, but the depth-shadowed thought of a mind long matured in reflection. It is just such a maturation of thought that flashes through, from time to time, in the scanty remains of the literature of the maize-raising peoples of America, giving evidence, which no archaeology is needed to corroborate, of a native development of the human spirit, centuries-seated.

## BOOKS and COMMENT

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Vernon Young



### GHOSTS AND FLESH, VINEGAR AND WINE: TEN RECENT NOVELS

**A**MONG these novels,<sup>1</sup> chosen for review with no careful premeditation of subject, *The Lighted Cities* is easily sovereign by possession of those ruling attributes of matured fiction—worldliness, imagination critically conditioned, a feeling for life convergent with a feeling for written language. Specifically, the direct way of asserting Ernest Frost's quality is to postulate Graham Greene, shorn of clerical masochism, rising to the full limits of his promise. Writing with verve and lyric nervousness of a cauldron of unholy loves in present-day London, Frost sounds the extreme notes that all of us can read in the living scale but can rarely harmonize: the notes of tenderness, of revulsion, of despair, of cold clarity, of hope and bewilderment. Frost is on the side of life but he is hard at the core; as a result, his insights and characterizations emanate an oblique beauty of expression which is best appreciated by generous quotation of his theme and variations:

Well, it's curious, see! A sort of deranged reasonableness about people living in cities which are lighted up for the peace, but it isn't really peace, and everyone's still at war within themselves.

. . . . .  
... the sad lights of the squat houses, like a village, reminded him of all lost, flat landscapes where people are taciturn and secretly suicidal.

<sup>1</sup> See bibliography, p. 330.

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His hands ran over her body. It was as though he were trying to find the handle of a door to pull open and let in an immensity of light.

. . . . .

His voice was consoling, pansy, and uncious with the smooth passage of life lived out in centrally heated flats off Finchley Road. He said he was at the B.B.C. His smile jogged the pheasant-meat of his Aqua-Velva'd face. . . . She was transported. The whisky was hands to stroke her nylon soul.

. . . . .

I will go on repeating this sonnet until I reach my room. I will make some cocoa and play the slow movement of Bartok's fifth quartet: the walk through the wet spring woods, the nightingale nailed to a tree in the rain. I will write to Arthur Godwin in the spaces between sorrow and sorrow. I will arrange some form of living to defeat this sin of despair.

. . . . .

[apropos a Schumann sonata] Not the man in the street, but the man with a heart. That's what is wanted.

. . . . .

The glad day came up like a madrigal from the darkness. Rainham heard it fluting beyond the slowly shifting veil of the curtain. . . . a clatter, a scandal of birds—the darkness shoved into corners of the square and there, islanded, stepping up from greyness, the fantastic wood, orchestrated by morning. . . .

Wyndham Lewis also writes of what Frost calls "the sad geometry of the [London] squares" but for Rotting Hill, a symbol of the whole, Lewis finds no passion, no music, no deeper touch for the tragic importunities of human need. This is a diatribe against the shabby features of English Socialism resumed in a collection of grumbling essays masquerading, without success, as fiction. Lewis is too drily angry to move his plaint into the realm of imagination and drama. Consequently, his book has a subject with no predicate, the subject being the predictable conquest of a particular society by its own machinery: "the same crass agency that eats up all . . . of our time, in wars, in queues, in rot, in all the subsidiaries of the central inhumanity of man." Monologues and dialogues in asperity, these chapters recount, without ceremony and without self-pity, the undeniable drift of a great coun-

try into at least the economic and civic aspects of Orwell's 1984.

V. S. Pritchett likewise chronicles the Nonconformist provenance of Britain's crisis but in a spirit of comedy that yet leaves one more often wincing than laughing. He should appeal to all those Americans who for some strange reason find the sado-masochism of Henry Green appealing. Pritchett is a better writer than Green—he is neither so precious nor so vulgar—but he is as unrelenting in his acute reproduction of parochial mores. Mr. Beluncle, a pious and energetic fraud, is one of the most gorgeous fools since Mr. Micawber. This history of himself and his skeptical family, whom he drags in his fortune-hunting wake, is alternately comic and sordid, set down in prose that perseveres in that rich, wry union of lucidity and eccentricity which is the peculiar, humane achievement of the traditional British novelist. Some of Pritchett's more golden, if ignoble, flights of caricature are worthy of demonstration:

Mrs. Vogg had peaceful blue eyes and small disappointed youthful lips. Out of the stale heap of clothes and flesh a precocious child was looking. When her eyes glanced at her arm or her knees, or when the arms or some part of her body moved, the impression was of a pair of animals in the same untidy basket looking strangely and mutely at each other.

... his straying, sandpapering voice had the weakness of one who had started to hang himself the night before and then had not the will to go on.

"It was a beautiful service," said the humble Miss More, who had had her hair cropped after the 1914 war, so that the oppression of being a woman should not come between herself and God.

What the humble Elizabeth Sewell has interposed between herself and God (and the reader) is a disastrous susceptibility to Kafka read in a teashop. With the best of intentions, I cannot speak kindly of her narrative, quite the most tepidly girlish example of the Woman-in-quest-of-her-Self sequence that extends



between Dorothy Richardson and Anais Nin. Brought up in India, Miss Sewell should have benefited from that somewhat unconventional coloring the Colonials usually acquire (cf. Roy Campbell, Patrick White, Aubrey Menen, et. al.), but an invincibly tidy Englishness prevents her from breaking the Chiselhurst stance, so that in the degree to which she essays allegory, symbol and Space-Time dissolution, she advertises her certain identity as a kind of Wendy undecided whether she should grow up to be Mrs. Miniver or Djuna Barnes. Her London is out of this world (and into the fire). Never was soul-searching during the Blitz conducted in such bodiless company; never were images of myth and psychoanalysis used with so cozy an intent to evade everything about one's self except one's own inviolate and infantile whimsy.

As with Miss Sewell, the reader of Jean Stafford is "absorbed," as one of the characters in *The Catherine Wheel* puts it, "into a mauve and female hour," yet, impalpable as this novel is in its own way, it is more concretely furnished than Miss Sewell's opaque structure of fantasy. This is a very strange book indeed, concerned with a mutual crisis in the lives of a boy and a fading woman during an ambiguous summer in Maine. Jean Stafford's subject is always, without exception, that of Loss, which she expresses in an extraordinarily leisured, measured (and sometimes clotted) prose that, for me, always misses the passionate center. She writes a profusion of pages in the English tradition of country-house literature, with the knowledge of an interior decorator and the memory of an elephant. Between this amply invested scene and her key symbol (here, as in *The Mountain Lion*, it is the title, equally overloaded), she spins a nebulous web of devitalized frustration that forever terminates in a compulsive destruction of the female. Perhaps some melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, misses the value by begging the question of her fiction. Her latest novel leaves me with the im-

pression that she is a writer of exceptionally subtle craft struggling, none too fiercely, to break through a stained-glass window of the mind.

Not so Mary McCarthy, whose windows are crystalline and firmly leaded. Or if a spun web is still the better figure, I would warrant that if, assuming M. M. ever engaged in the other preliminary allurements of the species, she would, if overturned, disclose a red hour-glass on her stomach. Her spiteful comedy is in an honored line of descent from Congreve to, say, Howard Nemo-rov, but as classic parody it is radically impure because, unable to sustain the disinterested, ballet-form of interpretation, she diverts its effects into a form of sermonizing that is no less morbid for being mordant; it savors of the theological paradox, flesh-hating and contemptuous beyond necessity. Everybody by now knows the story of *The Groves of Academe* and has prodigally quoted from its derisive crucifixion of *avant-garde* liberal education. It is as clever and as mirthless as the stories in *Cast a Cold Eye*, although nothing could be as ashen as "The Cicerone" or as Romanist-didactic as "The Friend of the Family." When one has applauded her comic fluency, her even-toned cerebral prose and her merciless flair for the generic (the first gift of the satirist), one is left with the suspicion that Miss McCarthy, despite her bitingly adult style, is an immature literary personality: a sick puritan like Swift who, finding the grown-up and mundane world unlike the heart's desire of pious childhood, reaches beyond the legitimate targets of the intelligence to enumerate all the frailties of flesh that have pained the expectation. She writes like a Penitente with a backbone of wit. Mind and eye have replaced body and soul; she is as deeply unlovable as she is, if you are in the right mood, highly readable.

Susan Yorke redeems her sex, and literature, from the absolutism of Mary McCarthy. Her strong wine is sealed against contagion; it remains strong wine, not vinegar. It is ungraciously natural for the critical reader to suppose that after writing that

virtuoso novel, *The Widow*, Miss Yorke would be unable to repeat, with her second, the controlled pitch and the deadly translucence of her first. She has not in fact been able to do so but this is no cause for ingratitude since she has, herself, provided us with the standard whereby to judge her, and we should not, therefore, bite the hand that cools us. *Naked to Mine Enemies* is, like *The Widow*, an icy—I do not mean frigid—development of the love-death motif, again with a South American colony as its setting. Written with an equally blinding measure of intelligence and grace, it is inferior to *The Widow* because, in a sense, it tries more, and ruptures at the plot level, which is inadequate to support its brilliant psychological edifice. Like Alberto Moravia's *The Conformist* in relation to his *Conjugal Love*, this novel is involved in a more complex social relationship than *The Widow*. By thus increasing its scope it loses the absolute purity of drive and design that distinguished the earlier work. Also, like Moravia's anticlimaxes, Susan Yorke's errors—in this case a central, manufactured coincidence and a spurious characterization in the final pages—are not fatal. They cannot dim the clarity of her perceptions, sexual or social.

Sharing the tempered irony of Katherine Anne Porter and the aristocratic confidence of Elizabeth Bowen or I. Compton-Burnett, Susan Yorke has, in addition, a method that exacts an even greater refinement from the art of clinical fiction: her literary substance evolves from a succession of symbols that contains and illuminates every flawless sentence. Even with an imperfect novel such as this, she is an orchid among shrubs; she leaves most of the male novelists of our day naked to their enemies.

Which brings me to the three American males in this interlude. The best that can be said for William Goyen has been said, with a different object of reference, by Paul Valéry. "A poetic idea is one that, put into prose, still calls for verse." *Screams*, rather than *calls*, would be the more appropriate verb in Goyen's case. Like Thomas Wolfe, he overtops his material with rhetoric

in excess of the fact, to give the fact an importance he fears it might not have unadorned, at least to those of us who cannot share his sympathy for the mindless poor wights of his bucolic landscape. I have no reservations concerning the single story, "Ghost, Flesh, Water and Dirt"; it is as indigenous as Fats Waller, penned in an accurately overheard lyrical idiom. Elsewhere, his inspiration, or incantation rather, arising from balladry, folk-tale and, I suppose, the actual lives of the weird inhuman denizens of the Texas back-country, rests insecurely between Eudora Welty and William Faulkner. For my part I am satisfied with Miss Welty and resigned to Mr. Faulkner. Goyen's prefatory aim—"to find a symbol to love, a symbol of love through which we might touch the permanent first things" seems to me to be overwhelmingly pretentious (to say nothing of its being vicarious) in view of the goblins with whom he disports in the stories. One can really read him only by a suspension of the intelligence, a negation that would doubtless flatter him since he is explicit in his resolution to dissolve the mind into what he sees as the swamp of innocence and, like Peter Pan (and Saroyan and Capote), never to grow up. He expels a great deal of verbiage intended to sound prophetic and nocturnal and too damned sensitive for words. On analysis it shows up as merely geotropic and regressive, sexually evasive, and necrophilic, not necromantic: for instance, his unfortunate participial claim of "moving among the eternal gestures of men, in the great, permanent ooze. . . ." Is it not precisely the great permanent ooze from which men *emerge* to make their eternal gestures?

Even Gore Vidal, moving somewhere between the ooze and the deep blue sea, might concede as much, being as he is the most obnoxious salesman of his own gestures among the writers of fiction today. *The Judgment of Paris* is a tedious and shameless romp in Sodom (ostensibly a year's adventure in European intrigue), and the unmitigated gall with which Vidal pretends classical-

myth parallels is but a minor feature of his general pseudonymous character as a writer. The novel is clumsily written, reeks with autobiographical impudence, and is stuffed with shallow *obiter dicta*. There is, this book reminds one, an alarming schism in American male writing today—The Butterflies and The Muscle-Men: on one side Capote, Donphy, Vidal, Buechner, Goyen; on the other Arthur Miller, Algren, Mailer, James Jones. In this corner preciousness, reverie, narcissism, the private dream, the sexless symbol; in the other the male strut, bumptious journalism, the loud thesis and a scorn for style—and too few Robert Ardreys, Van Tilburg Clarks or Penn Warrens in the middle. In any case there is a dearth of consciousness maturely committed to universal values.

Edward Newhouse is in neither of the camps designated above; he inhabits instead an effete neutrality of approach that leaves his material right where he finds it: in the limbo of denatured "social observation" which is the pusillanimous stock-in-trade of the more moribund *New Yorker* fictionists. I have no priggish disapproval of the *New Yorker*; I cannot conceive of our society without that wonderful leaven of urbanity and smart, smart fun. But Newhouse represents the consolidation of its worst features: a boneless photography of the middle-class everyday that exploits the "implication" with no guarantee that it has any deep conception of what is implied. Story after story in this collection—of G.I.s, suburban housewives, repressed business men, vapid intellectuals—hints at a point never sharpened, a feeling never aroused, a comprehension never developed. The excessive praise of Newhouse quoted on the jacket from writers as widely different as George Orwell and Oliver La Farge leaves me stunned with resentful disbelief—at least by recourse to this volume.

If any lesson for the art of fiction is to be glimpsed from this handful, it is that the prose imagination may pursue any world of feeling whatever from any coherent departure in style. But

unless it is governed by a clear, warm intelligence that can feel with a heightened sense the margin between imagination and delusion, and unless it is certain of its own emotional commitment, so that conviction can safely proceed from below the neck, it will dangle helplessly on the brink of the inane.

### FICTION REVIEWED

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Grover Smith

## MR. ELIOT'S NEW "MURDER"

THE ISSUANCE of a fresh version of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, expanded for the screen in collaboration with George Hoellering,<sup>1</sup> could be the occasion either for reappraisal of the play or for criticism of the film itself. Since the implicit standards of dramatic writing are ancient and very dignified and those of screen writing modern and very debased, no evaluation of the film, *qua* film, in comparison with other films would have any meaning whatever unless the critic limited his consideration to the directing, the photography, the acting, and the plot. The moment he began to consider the dialogue he would be dealing with something the values of which, by a mysterious rule I cannot pretend deeply to account for, vary in inverse ratio between the drama and the screen-play. For example Mr. Eliot, in the not uninteresting preface which he supplied for this printed text of his drama, reveals that he has grasped a fundamental truth about film making: that "the camera *must never stand still*." Being committed to the scheme of producing *Murder in the Cathedral* as a film, he could not have been expected to grasp also the corollary that *an actor's speech must never be more than thirty seconds long*. The permissible length of speeches is only one, though a very important, criterion whereby theatre and screen are incommensurate. If I seem to be pontificating, I can only ask the reader to cast back in his memory to the old-fashioned newsreel, which is just tolerable up to the point at which the audience have to listen to even a meager excerpt from an address or exhortation. I think that the boredom sets in partly because there the camera does usually stand still, but likewise I think that the vocal concentration itself deflects interest by betraying the

<sup>1</sup> *The Film of Murder in the Cathedral*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952. 110 pp. \$6.00.

artificiality of the medium. Or to adduce evidence more to the point, I propose that such pretentious efforts as *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Henry V*, both of them memorable for spectacular action, are bad as *films* because the dialogue is not subservient enough to what the audience *see*. Most of us are so accustomed to the Hollywood practice of stultifying an action by assigning to the chief actor a verbose testimonial at either the beginning or the end, that we are not likely to regard such a detail as avoidable. But it is far from inevitable; it is an evasion of the main duty of a film director, namely to tell his story as much by "business" and as little by words as he can. The film industry in America is holding fast to one great achievement, the invention of the cowboy-western. Technically that genre is the best that the film is capable of now that generalized social satire is impossible. The western can say everything by action; it has not much to say, but it knows that fact and does not usually make its dialogue an encumbrance.

In the theatre, by contrast, action—and I am still talking about "business," not plot—is of negligible use in comparison with dialogue. The better the play, the less need for the audience to see anything at all and the more nearly superfluous the theatrical staging; the best plays, for a good reader, may be more delightful in a book. But the theatre, the stage, must provide the standard of what a good play is. Only there, through the illusion of reality, can one test the "rightness" of language as speech. If the dialogue is wrong nothing will redeem the play. So we have the sharpest possible distinction between theatre and film, the one asking everything of the rhetoric, formal or colloquial, and the other asking only that the dialogue shall minimize itself—becoming, at the most crucial moments of plot development, altogether extinguished. It is almost hopeless for any play, filmed with its original dialogue, to compete artistically with a well managed film action. And the reason is that a film can sustain its illusion for the audience only while the interest is upon what happens *next*. A



prolonged speech, or especially a monologue, insists like a still-focused camera that the present moment is important, but a film audience in becoming conscious of the present moment become aware of watching only a picture.

What the publishers have put before us is the text of the play from which *Murder in the Cathedral* was filmed. For the past sixteen or seventeen years the original work, produced at the Canterbury Festival of 1935 and since then enacted many times commercially, of late by studious amateurs, has been familiar to academics. Now despite the remarks above, I suspect that the film really does more justice to it than any of the stage presentations could do, if only because of painstaking supervision by Mr. Eliot. And if one can overcome a sense of the preposterous in looking at the screen and try to estimate the production not as a film but as a *recorded play*, one will probably on the average concede praise especially to the performance of Father John Groser as Becket and to Mr. Eliot's invisible reading of the Fourth Tempter's part. In several ways, one rather important, this version of the drama differs textually from the second edition published in 1936 and widely distributed in this country. It contains certain new, preliminary scenes which comprise a speech by Becket to the ecclesiastics of Canterbury, extra choric material, a prose trial-scene featuring Becket and King Henry II, and a speech by the Prior to the people congregated in Canterbury Cathedral. Mr. Hoellering in a preface of his own calls attention to other changes which, unlike these embellishments, improve the play; the most welcome is the abbreviation of the Knight's speeches at the end. Instead of the pages of self-justification there are three statements of which only one is excessively long even for the screen. The final one, by the First Knight, slams at the audience:

If you have now arrived at a just subordination of the pretensions of the Church to the welfare of the State, remember that it is we who took the first step. You accept our principles; you benefit by our precedent; you enjoy the fruits of our action.

And so on—to the bidding, “. . . ask yourselves, who is more representative of the thing [*sic*] you are: the man you call a martyr, or the men you call his murderers?” Mr. Hoellering observes that in the earlier text the speeches “amused the audience instead of shocking them, and thereby made them miss the point—the main point of the whole play.” I am sure that the film version is an improvement in this respect. But I greatly doubt first whether Mr. Eliot’s censorious identification of the Knights’ virulent secularism with the modern diffidence towards “the pretensions of the Church” is in fact “the main point of the whole play,” and secondly whether it is even consistent with that point. Other critics have noted what the main point really is. It is simply that *right* action can never be motivated by the will of man: it must be motivated by the will of God and *consented to* by the will of man—in other words by an exercise of human free will which does not oppose the divine. God always has His way, even, as in Becket’s case, through the will of those who oppose Him. The Knights have their will but not their way, for the results of their action must be other than they foresee.

Structurally *Murder in the Cathedral* (if one disregards the jerry-built annexes to the beginning of the film version) has two parts, connected by Becket’s Christmas sermon. In the first part the Archbishop, who has returned to his See with the determination to *act*—that is, to become a martyr by will—learns from the Fourth Tempter to apply to his own dilemma of pride against pride what he himself has already told the Chorus of Women of Canterbury, that

action is suffering,  
 And suffering action. Neither does the agent suffer  
 Nor the patient act. But both are fixed  
 In an eternal action, an eternal patience  
 To which all must consent that it may be willed  
 And which all must suffer that they may will it,  
 That the pattern may subsist, that the wheel may turn and still  
 Be forever still.

Becket cannot suffer if he is the *agent* of his own martyrdom, and he cannot be its agent if he *suffers*. Perfecting his will, he must let God, the ultimate agent who acts through the Knights to bring good from evil, be the mover of an action in which Becket, the immediately moved, is the *indirect* mover or agent for suffering in the unhappy Women who constitute his following. The clew to all this is the imagery of the wheel, which in this context is fairly certainly from Aristotle's *De Anima*:

... everything is moved by pushing and pulling. Hence just as in the case of a wheel, so here, [*i.e.*, in the relation of mover to moved] there must be a point which remains at rest, and from that point the movement must originate. (III, 10)

For Aristotle the mover, or "point," is the good towards which movement or, psychologically speaking, "appetency," moves and which is at the same time the efficient cause of movement. If Becket, on the wheel, lets his will coincide with God's, the turning wheel is to that extent made congruent with the still center. In the treatise *De Generatione et Corruptione* Aristotle takes up the problem of action and passivity, an aspect of movement, using the instance of a physician as prime agent, a medicinal potion as intermediary or "last" agent, and, as sufferer, a patient upon whom the action of the physician takes effect through the medicine. In *Murder in the Cathedral* God is the physician, the Knights the unwitting "potion," and Becket the patient; but likewise, for the Women of Canterbury, distressed by what they have to witness, Becket is himself a curative intermediary who works their salvation. The second part of the play dramatizes Becket's consent to his rôle; the Knights murder him and the Women endure, at the extremity of the chain of action and passion, the suffering which Becket's death transmits to them. Consenting in their turn, they are the ultimate beneficiaries of the martyrdom. I do not have room here to expatiate on the resemblances between this dramatic pattern and the oblation of Christ to redeem man.

There might well be doubt whether Eliot has properly distinguished between Becket's passive action as an *imitation* of Christ's active passion and as an *identification* with it; but the play hardly means to suggest that Becket is atoning for the Women of Canterbury, except on an allegorical level which is not the main level or even a very conspicuous one. *Murder in the Cathedral* divides between the static representation of Becket as erring agent, rebuffing the first three Tempters out of pride, in Part I, and the kinetic representation of Becket as triumphant patient, submitting to the brutality of the Knights, in Part II. The sermon merely explains his decision concerning will; anyone who knows Eliot's other work will easily correlate this with a favorite quotation from Dante: "La sua volontate è nostra pace."

The Priests of the Cathedral are neither sufferers nor agents; they are only spectators. They are the official Church, as the Knights are the State, the Women the People, and Becket (figuratively) the Saviour. In Part I they typify mildly the same partisan arrogance which Becket before his awakening to humility opposes to the authoritarian principles of the Knights. Mr. Eliot has not written the play as a rejection of both Church and State politics, however; he has hedged. Although, unlike Tennyson in *Becket*, he has given us a saint devoted finally not to clerical prestige but to the spiritual values of consent to the divine will, he has in the very last minutes of the play, through the Knights' speeches, resimplified Becket's controversy with King Henry into the strife of ecclesiastical and secular powers which most historians of our day have told us it was. But everything else in the plot has urged the impression that Becket's martyrdom is not for the interests of the official Church so much as for the glory of God and the inspiration, or edification, of the miserable laity. Becket could serve the cause of the official Church just as well by a proud martyrdom as by a self-abnegating one, and if "the main point" consists, as Mr. Hoellering seems ingeniously to imagine, in a

kind of rebuke to Erastianism, then what is the use of the rest of the play? Mr. Hoellering has gobbled up Mr. Eliot's red herring, and has let the proper prey escape. What happens in the course of events is that Becket implicitly rejects the practical values of the Church as the Priests embody them, the values of caution, lets go of his personal ambition, which would have strengthened the Church in a different way, and renovates the Christian virtues by becoming Christlike and showing the Women how to be the same. Becket is a magnificent hero, the only admirable character in Eliot's poetry. It is too bad, especially since *Murder in the Cathedral* is a great deal better otherwise than the two mystification plays which Eliot has given us since, that instead of the devious obscurities about action and suffering there could not have been one short speech, as frank as the concluding slander by the First Knight, to explain in primer English that the wheel is a symbol for life, that God is its mover, and that for a man to arrogate God's position to himself is evil. One may infer all this from scattered contexts, but what will the unaltered theatre or film audience comprehend?

The imagery of the play has an important sexual connotation. Becket's true martyrdom requires his *consent*. In the choruses the Women too prepare reluctantly from the beginning of the play to succumb to a ravishment of will. They are to bear greater suffering than before. By doing so they are to parallel Becket's act of yielding himself spiritually to God as he yields himself physically to the Knights' swords. To them Becket's very arrival is a disquieting strain; it is the first indication of what shall happen. Gradually an antithesis develops between action as the masculine imposition of force and suffering as the feminine acquiescence in its demands. Quite early the Women associate their ordinary troubles with "births, deaths and marriages," with girls who "have disappeared / Unaccountably, and some not able to," with "private terrors," "particular shadows," "secret fears." As Becket's destiny, which they regard as their doom, becomes per-

spicuous, the terrors are magnified into "oppression and torture," "extortion and violence," "Our labour taken away from us, / Our sins made heavier upon us," "the young man mutilated, / The torn girl trembling by the mill-stream." And then they name the beasts—leopard, bear, ape, hyaena—which of course mean the approaching Knights, the instruments of cruelty. In Part II, just after Becket's first wrangle with the Knights, the Women separately acknowledge that death has violated them through all the senses, in an act of intimate knowledge which has joined them to the creatures of the earth and sea. And they go on to the agonized confession of "the shamed swoon / Of those consenting to the last humiliation," those whom the bestial has embraced:

... torn away, subdued, violated,  
 United to the spiritual flesh of nature,  
 Mastered by the animal powers of spirit,  
 Dominated by the lust of self-demolition,  
 By the final utter uttermost death of spirit,  
 By the final ecstasy of waste and shame. . . .

When they resume they face the dread of being "foully united forever, nothing with nothing," of being no longer human at all, cast out damned into the Void behind the Judgment. And as the murderers hack at Becket's skull the Women chant their tormented prayer for cleansing, for purification from the defilement, in "An instant eternity of evil and wrong," of their having been "united to supernatural vermin. . . ." But Becket has already consoled them:

This is one moment,  
 But know that another  
 Shall pierce you with a sudden painful joy  
 When the figure of God's purpose is made complete.

In these passages Mr. Eliot's echoes of Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 and of the *Nunc dimittis*—even, some may like to think, of his own "Fire Sermon"—tell us after a fashion how we should look

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upon this example of his preoccupation with the theme of death and rebirth. The Women must learn, as Becket has learned, to find in submissiveness "a tremour of bliss, a wink of heaven, a whisper. . . ." For, as he says with an evident reminiscence of Christ's "Consummatum est,"

all things

Proceed to a joyful consummation.

From the dark night of the soul there is release into the divine union. And, the final chorus exultantly announces, all creatures, the bad as well as the good, affirm the glory where all are reconciled.

Although, looking through the film edition, one might have an impulse to rejoice that at last the poetry of Eliot has appeared in a worthier format, the blessing is not total. The color plates are eye-catching; the monochrome shots from the film are no worse than such usually are; but the black-and-white drawings by Peter Pendrey are most undistinguished—for one thing, they are much too dark. But the art of illustration isn't very lively nowadays. I cannot forbear to remark a rectangular strip pictured on page 51 and captioned "The modulations on the sound track of the film made by T. S. Eliot's voice speaking the part of the Fourth Tempter." *The modulations made by T. S. Eliot's voice!* But they look to me a good deal like other people's modulations, and I have misplaced my reliquary.

Myron Ochshorn

## HENRY JAMES: *THE GOLDEN BOWL*<sup>1</sup>

CONRAD called him the historian of fine consciences—catching in a precise phrase the very essence of Henry James's value as a novelist. That was his essential territory, his world—the fine conscience in action. Not merely how it behaves but how it *should* behave. With top hat and walking stick he patrolled his beat for more than half a century, discriminating and refining all the time. When he was through he was walking quite alone. He had a few intelligent people to report to, and that was all.

*The Golden Bowl* is the most complex, the most elaborately exfoliated representation of his mature vision. The range of symbolic meaning imprisoned in the book is enormous. All the characters, scenes, and settings diffuse, as James would say, a sense of function. What the differing functions are, precisely how they mutually interact and complement each other, is difficult, if not impossible to say. The symbolism in James is not as pure as it is in Kafka. In Kafka, operating forcefully and simultaneously on several levels of significance (the psychological, the strictly sexual, the religious, the philosophical, and, above all, the social) the symbolism interlocks, so to speak, and moves forward steadily as a complex though comprehensible mass. What prohibit such a purity in James's art are his many other concerns, especially his concern for "character." Think for a moment of the respective arts of Kafka and Dostoievsky, of their *concern* for symbolic representation and character delineation. It is obvious that James falls somewhere between them. His concern for symbolic repre-

<sup>1</sup> Introduction by Richard P. Blackmur. New York: Grove Press, 1952. 808 pp. \$6.50.



sensation is less than Kafka's and greater than Dostoievsky's; his concern for character delineation is less than Dostoievsky's and greater than Kafka's. Since his symbolism is every bit as complex as Kafka's, the lack of absolute purity of concern makes for the greatest difficulty in interpretation. But there does seem to be a basic symbolic level, namely the reciprocity of evil and good, of appearance and reality.

Among other things *The Golden Bowl* retells the legend of Adam (Verver) and Eve (Maggie) in the Garden (Fawns). Evil and suffering are welcomed into the garden by the two innocents in the form of a desired "social situation"—this last to be supplied by the elegant lady of appearances, the serpentine Charlotte Stant. It's hard to "place" the Prince in the garden. He remains as enigmatic as a Cezanne apple. His presence lends vast temporal and geographical scope to the moral drama. He links the present action—Maggie's reaching out toward the full life, the real Golden Bowl (not the cracked crystal of appearances)—he links this action to all the moral initiations of the past. He is traceable. An entire room in the British Museum is given over to a recording of his family's great and terrible exploits. Innocent Americans can come to the room and take notes. He is there to be discovered. His name is Amerigo, not Columbo. Amerigo, the false discoverer of the Americans. He is not, that is, what he appears to be—the discoverer of the Americans; they discover him. He is the somewhat rotten apple, the worm-eaten fruit of the sinful ages of man. He is there to be tasted. Maggie, of course, takes the big bite.

There are only four characters of importance, all inextricably tied together in a "situation," and a fifth, Fanny Assingham, whose choric voice comments upon and alternately explains and confounds the action. "But the scheme of the book, to make up for that," James tells us in his preface, "is that we shall really see about as much of them as a coherent literary form permits. That

was my problem, so to speak, and my *gageure*—to play the small handful of values really for all they are worth.”

The handful of values *are* played for all they are worth—bewilderingly so, in fact. The *values*, that is, are made to encompass a range of symbolic meaning as vast as anything in fiction. But as for seeing all we should of “each of the real, the deeply involved and immersed and more or less bleeding participants”—as James, in the same preface, refers to his characters—why, we get to see only a large part of Maggie, much, much less of Charlotte and Mr. Verver, and next to nothing, really, of the Prince. And this despite the magnificent imagery which in pure blinding flashes brilliantly lights up the innermost recesses of his characters’ sense of being. Art is nothing if it does not represent, James says somewhere in his Prefaces; yet it is precisely the feeling that the Prince, and Charlotte, and Adam Verver, and even Maggie are not “represented” enough that one carries away from the book. One gets the disturbing sensation, in short, that there is more to his characters than James himself is aware of. And to have James plead guilty, as he frequently does, is not to have matters appreciably helped. No, Edmund Wilson was right: a vital part of the picture simply is missing. What *is* in the picture is enough, however, to make *The Golden Bowl* one of the finest (if not one of the greatest) novels ever written. This is an important reprinting, and Grove Press has done it handsomely.

Richard A. Cordell

## AMERICANA

**T**HE LEGION of readers who dislike fictionized biographies will find this novelistic study of Vachel Lindsay<sup>1</sup> far less annoying than most. Perhaps the turbulent, bizarre, and pathetic career of this social rebel and clamorous apostle of beauty demands the imagination and empathy of a novelist rather than the objective scrutiny of a biographer devoted to fact and documentation. Who can say whether the real Vachel Lindsay is revealed in this "novel," whether Mark Harris has succeeded more than Masters in making credible this anachronistic troubadour, this would-be reformer, this seeker of beauty singing his thumping songs in the crass Harding-Babbitt era? The question is legitimate, for the Springfield poet was in many ways a puzzle even to those who knew him well. Perhaps he was no more a mass of contradictions than many other people, but his mighty articulateness and his indifference to accepted patterns of life exposed more freely his contrarities and erraticism. More than two decades after his pitiable suicide, we perhaps are beginning to see him in relation to his age, as we now can clearly see that Poe was not out of time, out of place, but, with his personality and crisis, a plausible journalist and artist in the New York and Philadelphia of the 1830's and '40's.

The title of the novel refers to Springfield, where the Lindsays lived in the pleasant house once occupied by Lincoln's sister-in-law. Springfield is a not very attractive industrial, political, and agricultural center, which the poet longed to beautify and transform into a prairie Florence or Athens. How much was the attraction of Springfield due to Lincoln and family association? His letters reveal the overpowering influence of his executive-like

<sup>1</sup> *City of Discontent*, by Mark Harris. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1952. 403 pp. \$4.50.

mother, and one suspects that if she had removed to Peoria his vague civic utopianism would have transferred itself with her. The narrative of *City of Discontent* traces his familiar career—his lonely bookishness as a boy, his almost ludicrous attempts to study medicine at Hiram, his indifferent success as an artist, his abortive and primarily poetic love affairs, and finally sudden and wide reputation with the syncopations and booms and swings of "General Booth" and "The Congo." His decline as an artist, though not as an entertainer, followed pathetically soon after his first triumphs. He was always somewhat neurotic, and advancing years brought no corresponding maturity—he simply could not cope with the demands of every day life. Parenthetically one wonders whether Vachel's speech before the Springfield Noonday Luncheon Club as reported by the novelist is an actual transcript. If so (the novel very properly is undocumented), the poet reveals unexpected powers of humor and brilliant common sense. Marriage late in life and happy parenthood could not check the disintegration, and he committed suicide at the age of fifty-two.

*City of Discontent* is for the most part well-written, although some readers may fidget at the occasional streams of consciousness, others at the Dos Passos-like newsreels, and still others at four hundred pages of historical present tense. But the author is perceptive and sensitive and there are passages of power and beauty. We welcome the proper minor significance given to Lindsay's Campbellitism and Anti-Saloon League antics, but we are aware of whitewash—too little is said of his quarter-baked ideas, his occasional arrogance, his fantastic juvenility, his singular notions of business integrity.

This reviewer has two poignant Lindsay memories. Once, during a high-school "steak fry," a classmate pulled from his pocket a sheaf of manuscript poems he had that day received from his cousin in Illinois, and by the leaping flames read to us "The Congo." Why waste precious space trying to describe the overwhelm-

ing effect on the circle of excited high-school youngsters? One midnight, years later, in the reviewer's almost completely darkened living room Vachel chanted "The Chinese Nightingale," which glowed and rang with a temple-bell-like beauty it never possesses on the page, or from the prosaic platform of a lighted hall. With these two vivid memories it was not easy to read *City of Discontent* with complete objectivity.

THIS FIFTH and final volume of "Makers and Finders: A History of the Writer in America"<sup>2</sup> brings to a teasing stop Van Wyck Brooks's mammoth examination of American life and writing during the past century and a half. One says "stop" rather than "conclusion," for Brooks is well aware that the stream of American writing flows on as vigorously as ever, though much of it through new-cut channels which he does not feel inclined to try to chart and identify. The title of the book suggests that the American idealism of Jefferson, Emerson, and Whitman, the strong faith in humanity and progress, though often challenged, was not seriously threatened as a major force in American thought and writing until the years of the First World War. Since then, the negative attitude of "The Waste Land" has produced whole schools of poets and critics of highest brow who seemingly have reversed what to Brooks is the glorious American tradition.

Like the previous volumes, *The Confident Years* is an extraordinary synthesis and chronicle of American thought and culture, viewed with a perspective almost superhuman: what an achievement to come so near seeing America whole, to be at once sociologist, historian, psychologist, biographer, geographer, critic, anthropologist, nationalist and internationalist in the best sense! The pattern is largely geographical—from New York in the '80's to the South, Philadelphia, Chicago, the West, and back to the East, with substantial stops en route in England and France, and

<sup>2</sup> *The Confident Years, 1885-1915*, by Van Wyck Brooks. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1952, 627 pp. \$6.00.

American literary centers; but always Brooks sees these parts in a great pattern and stresses likenesses more than divergences. He permits us to see for the first time in proper perspective Crane, Ade, Brownell, Bourne, More, Roosevelt, Hunecker, Veblen, Norris, Hearn, London. Many almost forgotten writers—and Brooks's concern is with writers, not merely literary giants (he wastes no time, however, on mere best sellers and popular banalities)—such as Page, Frederic, Davis, Bunner, Allen, Field, Hapgood, Sedgwick, come to brief life again to help illuminate the age, as do figures not primarily literary such as Isadora Duncan, Darrow, Emma Goldman, Frederic Remington, Saint Gaudens, and Stieglitz. Moreover he does not neglect the powerful influence of Shaw, Wells, Tolstoi, Zola, and Nietzsche on our writers of the era.

Naturally there will be disagreement at many points. His near ignoring of Amy Lowell, H. D., Susan Glaspell, Nathan, Edward Bellamy, and W. E. Leonard will pique whatever followers they now have. Does not Witter Bynner deserve more than mention in one footnote? The author's forthright attack on the Eliot-Pound school of nay-sayers will wound the New Faithful, and some will quibble at his thrusting past his terminal date to write of Anderson, Lewis, Wolfe, and Faulkner. But no axe fell on 1915 cutting it off from the past, ushering in a brand new era—as no axe fell in 1642, 1800, 1832, and other dates beloved of literary historians. In the final chapter, "A Forward Glance," for the first time in twenty-five hundred pages Brooks has his dander up and takes up the sword against those intellectuals partly or largely responsible for our ebbing faith. Does this Punic faith on its lowest level generate the current hysteria which threatens to cripple thought and devitalize the arts?

Although Brooks is reluctant to pass literary judgment and is never pontifical, his excellent pages on Edith Wharton, Dreiser, Vachel Lindsay, Gertrude Stein, Mencken, Pound, and Masters will help us to clarify our own judgments.

ALTHOUGH Edwin Arlington Robinson has not been the subject of a flood of books, as have Hawthorne, Melville, and James in recent years, there has been an impressive accumulation of criticism during the past three decades. To the fairly long list of studies of Robinson, including those of such strange critical bedfellows as Rollo Brown, Amy Lowell, Lucius Beebe, Lloyd Morris, Charles Cestre, Hermann Hagedorn, Laura Richards, Yvor Winters and Emory Neff, is now added this analysis by Dr. Barnard.<sup>3</sup> If not an inspired study, it is painstaking and should contribute to a better understanding of Robinson's verse among readers of poetry concerned enough to consult a critique. Moreover it will probably serve as a useful Teacher's-Little-Helper, with time-saving hints about "Luke Havergal," "For a Dead Lady," "Eros Turannos," and other classroom puzzlers.

The author announces that the aim of his book is to extend understanding and appreciation of the poetry, not to recount the dull facts of Robinson's life or dissect his personality. He discusses the poet's views on the nature and function of poetry, the mysterious drive and procedure of creation, the causes of obscurity, his poetic style and organic form, his treatment of character, and finally the only surprising section of the book—an examination of his religious and philosophical views.

Perhaps the dulllest sections are those concerned with details of prosody; here the smell of doctors' theses and textbooks is unmistakable. The most rewarding are those tackling the problems of obscurity—there is no doubt that Robinson overworks the business of veiled implication—and the poet's great achievement, the creation of memorable characters ("These too smoothly turned etchings," Conrad Aiken said of them in 1919): Nightingale, Captain Craig, Matthias, Norcross, Cheevy, Mr. Flood, Anandale and the rest—no women among them. To the objection that nearly all are strange and twisted failures or psychological

<sup>3</sup> *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, by Ellsworth Barnard. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952. 318 pp. \$4.75.

strays, Robinson would no doubt reply that they are only unique persons.

This reviewer, who is only a reader of Robinson and not a student, found the discussion of the poet's philosophical optimism and religion unconvincing. For all the apt quotations pointing to the inadequacy of science, the meaningfulness of existence, the sterility of materialism and determinism, it is difficult to overlook a general Hardy-like gloom and the frequent note of very-dry ironic humor, not to mention such specific remarks as "The whole western world is going to be blown to pieces, asphyxiated, and starved," "The world is a hell of a place," etc. As for Robinson's religion, one is reminded of Lowell's couplet about Emerson:

For though he builds glorious temples, 'tis odd  
He leaves never a doorway to get in a god.

Dr. Barnard's study is for the most part sanely this side of idolatry. For example, he is aware that the frenzy of *Tristram* is sometimes far too fine, sometimes not nearly fine enough. There is room for this somewhat workaday book on the Robinson shelf, which still awaits a really comprehensive study of one of the great American poets.



Robert Bunker

## ANGER AND ABSTRACTIONS

**T**HE PICTURES are magnificent. The argument is admirable. If they don't fit together, still *Navaho Means People*<sup>1</sup> is an amazing, a challenging, an invaluable book.

Leonard McCombe carried his camera far over the Navaho reservation, for *Life*, in the winter of 1947-48. Presumably he knew before he started that Indian babies and old men have wonderful faces, and that he could get some remarkable effects of light and shadow on the sandstone cliffs. He had unusual opportunities in his introductions to Navaho family life, ceremonial, and tribal court. But McCombe was more than the impassive observer. By strong perspectives and contrasts, he has given us his own concept of Navaho strength and pride. The Navahos in his pages step out with a stride that matches the grandeur of the mountains behind them. This Navaho girl, pressing against the ewe with its newborn lamb, is intent with her own sense of life and warmth and physical certainty. This Navaho boy, first coping with knife and fork at school, watches the matron's busy hands, flabbergasted yet unafraid. This Navaho mother, every line of her back registering her grief, still walks erect, hammer in hand, from where her husband buries their child.

You feel, in McCombe's photographs, his love for Navahos or, more properly, for all who are wrapped up in "The People's" problems. He may show us the ugliness of the towns that we whites have built, and he may mock the missionary's billboards of large-lettered white man's wisdom. He lets us see the shameful school "dormitories" and the doctor's bald record on Mrs. Yazzie's dying baby. "Not admitted lack of bed." But any villains are off stage. The men and women we see here are the Indians'

<sup>1</sup> Photographs by Leonard McCombe, text by Evon Z. Vogt and Clyde Kluckhohn. Harvard University Press, 1950.

friends—kind, eager, almost frighteningly earnest in their effort to make do, somehow, with what little they have in the face of the Navahos' great needs.

This doctor's hands, probing after the splinter in his patient's eye, are clearly gentle. This teacher would not make so absurd a face, in the nose-blowing lesson, if she did not love her charges. This priest, arm so tentatively outstretched, surely has his young listeners' interest. Even this judge, cane in hand, is grieved at the Navaho boy's arrest for drinking.

Here McCombe's love, and here his anger. He has photographed Indian and bureaucrat alike as sensitive, but pitted against physical difficulties, some necessary and some unnecessary. And if we are not certain of his meaning, he concludes with page after page of what happens to the Navahos when they reach town. Navahos drinking. Navahos stretched out dead drunk on the streets. Navahos in court. Navahos in the squalor of Gallup's shacks. Perhaps, as Vogt and Kluckhohn say in their preface, in these photographs "the difficulties of adjustment to the white man's world are overemphasized at the expense of satisfactions remaining from the aboriginal culture and the genuine rewards brought to the Navaho from our modern world." But the comment is hardly relevant. Of course we wouldn't expect to find so many Navahos stretched out on the sidewalks in any brief walk through Gallup. The point is that one sensitive observer, fresh from observing the beauties of Navaho life and the devotion of at least some Indian Service employees, found some insufferable waste of this human vitality, and was moved to express his anger as well as his love in most effective fashion.

Now Clyde Kluckhohn and Evon Vogt have their own capacity for anger and for love. Ordinarily we could take their capacity for granted, despite the fact that it is expressed mainly in abstractions. Kluckhohn can, too, write most movingly of individual Navahos, not as poor battered playthings of social and ecological forces, but as men and women striving to see whether they may

not somehow give their world some shape of meaning. Taken by itself, I could write of the text, "The authors have abridged, for the hurried reader, Dr. Kluckhohn's masterly analysis as presented in *The Navaho and Children of the People*."<sup>2</sup>

Kluckhohn's analysis is of course masterly, regardless of context. Unfortunately, in their effort to be objective, and thus to make sure we understand, he and Vogt sound as if they did not realize that McCombe's pictures are of people, rather than of some totality of their "situation." Thus, the writers rather apologize for the photographer's having slighted farming, silversmithing, and weaving. They do not, on the other hand, seem to notice how much McCombe tells us by portraying the very openness of the gaze of Navahos who were, quite clearly, studying him and his camera.

Their captions are often heavy-handed (as when the picture of a suckling lamb is matched with an account of lamb and wool sales), and as often merely obvious ("As Annie watches sadly, Charlie nails down the coffin's lid"). They seem almost not to recognize the effectiveness of the pictures; under one especially striking face they write, "Many older Navaho women are forceful personalities," and in description of an aged woman's calm contemplation we read, "Navahos typically hold cigarettes between the thumb and index finger."

The fact is that text and pictures do not merge to compose, as the authors claim, a "photographic essay on the Navaho." The pictures have nothing to do with a "pictorial case study of the possibilities and limitations of bringing a small nonliterate society into satisfactory adjustment with Western industrialized culture in such a way that . . ." These pictures are not abstraction. They represent not "possibilities" or "limitations" but some very vigorous people trying to cope in a situation that has been badly bungled. Why bungled, the pictures cannot fully tell

<sup>2</sup> Both written in collaboration with Dorothea C. Leighton. Harvard University Press, 1946 and 1947 respectively.

us. But McCombe's answer is not that of Vogt and Kluckhohn, at least as stated to conclude the book. Their answer runs:

What is needed in the Navaho case (as well as in other "underdeveloped" areas of the world) is an approach which extends beyond mere technical assistance and sees the problems in their full social and cultural complexity.

Whereas McCombe is telling us about the strength we can see in the people's faces and in their backs—in the poise and in all the amused curiosity of the little girl curled up with her sheep dog just opposite this last quotation. Vogt and Kluckhohn know what McCombe's story is; they have chosen and arranged the pictures which tell it. They know it is not really "an approach which . . . sees," but peoples themselves who see and who can shape their world, once they have aides who respect their "cultural complexity" or, more simply, their identity.

It is unfortunate that, by attempted presentation as one "essay," pictures and text were allowed to undercut each other. For surely both approaches, once specified as different though complementary, are valid even within the covers of one book. More than valid, both are invaluable, in what they state and in what they suggest.

Mischa Titiev

## RESEARCH IN CENTRAL AMERICA

OF ALL THE tribes of Indians that lived in the Western hemisphere before the coming of Columbus, the Maya were most outstanding because of their intellectual accomplishments. Indeed, it is not without good reason that they have sometimes been called, "The Greeks of the New World." An example of their achievements was the development of a highly complicated but accurate calendar, which was intimately related to their religious practices. From the recognition of this situation there have stemmed two distinct branches of anthropological research: Archaeologists have labored to discover and reconstruct all the details of prehistoric Mayan culture from the many ruins that these people have left behind in Guatemala and Yucatan; ethnographers and ethnologists have often sought to determine the extent to which aboriginal Mayan practices yet survive among their descendants. Maud Oakes' work belongs to the latter category.

It was in the isolated village of Todos Santos Cuchumatán, high in the mountains of northwest Guatemala, that Miss Oakes, after some preliminary explorations, decided to conduct her studies. Here she located a hamlet inhabited by Mam Indians, whose language and physical appearance gave every evidence that their forefathers were Mayan. The blend of ancient customs and post-Spanish habits that the author wished to investigate is represented by the two crosses mentioned in her title. "In front of the church at Todos Santos," we learn from the prologue, "stand two crosses, one tall and commanding in appearance, made of ancient wood, the other short and squat, made of stones and adobe, whitewashed. . . . The two crosses symbolize the Indian and the *ladino*" [a person of Spanish language and culture]. Several years ago, the Mam natives were ordered to pull down

their old wooden cross and to replace it with one of stone. A series of calamities followed, after which the Indians were given permission to re-erect the old cross beside the new one.

For seventeen months, from November 1945 to April 1947, Maude Oakes lived in a little house at Todos Santos. During this time she made first hand observations of the daily life of the community, participated in social events, served as village doctor, and studied in considerable detail the behavior of the local *chimanes* or shaman-priests. The last mentioned portion of her program, which makes up a large part of the volume under review, was carried out with the help of Don Pancho—"the only *ladino* liked and respected by the Indians." At the suggestion of Miss Oakes, Don Pancho first served as her agent in getting at the particulars of *chiman* activities, and later he undertook to gain further insights by studying to become a *chiman* under the guidance of an experienced practitioner. Don Pancho made notes of all his observations and experiences, and turned them over to the author, who has included them in her work.

*The Two Crosses of Todos Santos*<sup>1</sup> contains a great deal of interesting and instructive material, both for the lay reader and the professional anthropologist. The volume is handsomely printed and well illustrated. It is too bad that some typographical flaws detract from the attractiveness of the work, e.g., one line on page 17 is misplaced, and Atitlán occurs in several instances without an "l."

There is a provocative introduction by Paul Radin, and much that merits discussion in the author's account of her field techniques. Taken together with the new material on Mam culture that the volume contains, this book makes a welcome addition to the literature that deals with the lives of contemporary Maya Indians.

<sup>1</sup> *The Two Crosses of Todos Santos: Survivals of Mayan Religious Ritual*, by Maud Oakes. New York: Bollingen Series XXVII, Pantheon Books, 1951. xiii + 274 pp., 22 plates, 5 figures. \$5.00.

PROFESSOR Tax's volume,<sup>2</sup> like the book by Maud Oakes, is concerned with the impact of European culture on the lives of peoples now resident in various sectors of Central America. In method and content, however, the two works differ markedly. *Heritage of Conquest* presents the deliberations of a group of experts in Meso-American affairs, who were brought together in New York by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. The central core of the book consists of eleven articles on various topics, each written by a different specialist. Additional material is provided in three essays that make summaries or syntheses, a bibliography, and abstracts of discussions that occurred at various points during the oral presentation of the main articles.

Since the topics covered range all the way from efforts to define the boundaries of Meso-America to a treatment of dance forms, it is not surprising that the book should be essentially discursive. In fact, it is not until one approaches the final pages that he begins to discover a sort of conceptual framework that helps bind all the material together. Gradually it becomes apparent that nearly all the experts are concerned with varying problems pertaining to the societies now found in areas formerly dominated by Nahua-speaking (chiefly Aztec) or Maya Indians. There is general agreement, too, that the effects of European contact vary among mountain, coastal, or plateau dwellers; Indian and Ladino communities; urban or rural districts; primary and secondary agriculturalists; etc. In the end a consensus is reached to the effect that there is a tendency for groups to move from a centripetal, Indian type of social structure to a centrifugal, Ladino type of social system.

*Heritage of Conquest* is not the sort of a book to be read straight through, but it has considerable value as a reference text.

<sup>2</sup> *Heritage of Conquest: the Ethnology of Middle America*, by Sol Tax and others. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952. 312 pp. \$5.00.

A person interested in a given aspect of Meso-American culture would do well to read carefully the article bearing on his subject and to consult the relevant items in the bibliography. Despite the valiant efforts of Dr. Tax, there is little unity to the volume as a whole. Above all, the transcripts of the oral discussions are often lifeless and frequently pointless. Moreover, in their printed form they abound in grammatical and typographical errors.

As he read through the volume this reviewer was reminded again and again of a heavily loaded plane that goes roaring down a concrete runway but fails to take off.

## BRIEF REVIEWS

*The Later D. H. Lawrence*, selected, with introductions, by William York Tindall. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952. 449 pp. \$5.

THIS volume represents the coming back into print of still another important segment of Lawrence. Last year Knopf reissued the American novel *The Plumed Serpent*; the selections in this new volume, with the exception of the essays from *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, appeared under the Knopf imprint in the twenties and thirties, dating in composition from Lawrence's American adventure and the last years remaining to him in Europe. In this time of great hazard for publishers, such reissue of Lawrence's work seems a doubly important gauge of the re-evaluation of Lawrence in recent years. The important thing for the reader is that some of the best writing of our time is once more available—the novelette *St. Mawr*; essays from *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, *Mornings in Mexico*, and *Assorted Articles*; and the long stories *The Woman Who Rode Away* and *The Man Who Died*.

Tindall's introductions are modestly and sensitively done, with just the right amount of exploration of Lawrence's art to direct but not prejudice the reader. His study of symbol and myth never lapses



into the jargon which these critical terms often evoke. He does not catch the scope and poignance of these works, but the reader may. Most of them represent both physical and spiritual exile from home, *home* in the sense not only of England but of the traditions of Western civilization. Conversely they represent desperate adventure into unknown traditions and values, and the attempt to fuse something new from past and present.

Because one knows of the hazards that beset the approach to Lawrence, one considers this book gracious and blessed. Through such books a new generation of readers may come to enjoy the most alive and intense sensibility of our time. The style is a marvellously flexible instrument, achieving in much of this later work a colloquial ease that makes many of Lawrence's contemporaries seem self-conscious apprentices. The style is for Lawrence a weapon, fighting for a freshness of sensibility that has been lost by many of us in the exigencies of mere existence.—E. W. T.

*The Monk*, by Matthew G. Lewis. Original text, variant readings, and a note on the text by Louis F. Peck. Introduction by John Berryman. New York: Grove Press, 1952. 445 pp. \$4.75.

FIRST published in 1796, *The Monk* was the amazing product of a cultured and wealthy young man of nineteen. Matthew Gregory Lewis was always thereafter "Monk" Lewis. It is fitting that this "notorious" romance should have supplied its author with a nickname, for although Lewis wrote much else—plays, verse, and other romances—and left a minor mark upon the versification and themes of the greater romantics, notably Byron, *The Monk*, about equally famous and infamous, is his only work of lasting literary merit.

The novel is a synthesis of many elements in the new romanticism: the Gothic tale, the old ballad literature both native and foreign, sensibility, legendry, supernaturalism, black magic, the graveyard, and religion. It is not, though, a mere assemblage and copying; it is a highly original fiction, striking enough to have captured the interest and qualified admiration of Coleridge and to have won Lewis the friendship of Scott and Byron. Other writers—Poe, Hawthorne, Hoffman, Emily Bronte, to mention some—mined ore from it.

Opinions concerning *The Monk*, always opposed, remain so today; the book being what it is, they must remain so. It always has shocked

and offended many readers, and their like will necessarily be shocked and offended always. For most of these the grounds will be religious and moral. Yet, as a study in human depravity and damnation, *The Monk* will neither contaminate nor lead to salvation. Good and evil, mostly the latter, are its themes, but Lewis's figuration of both is so utterly fantastic that neither heaven nor hell can be found in it. It simply won't do to take certain aspects of the work too seriously, as does the introduction to the present edition, in which John Berryman measures the stature of Lewis's romance over other Gothic tales by its "impassioned realism" and finds Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* "frivolous by comparison" with the Faustian theme in *The Monk*. Actually, Lewis's book is a melodramatic medley of religion and sex, the weird inaccuracies in both realms being pretty well matched.

However, despite the lack of external realism, the work has imagination and feeling. Taken on its own terms, it manages to be delightful in its absurdity and enthralling in its horror. And, if the reader be more than ordinarily "willing" in his suspension of disbelief, he will find the book cleverly contrived. There is the main plot of Ambrosio, the monk (actually a Franciscan friar), and his damnation through the agency of Matilda, that remarkable character who is Ambrosio's seductress, a practitioner of the dark arts, and later, inexplicably, a fiend herself. Ambrosio's damnation progresses through his lust, his murder of his mother, unwitting incest with his sister Antonia, to the final pact with Satan from which he plans but fails to extricate himself. Two subplots are attached, the Lorenzo-Antonia and Raymond-Agnes stories, into the latter of which are worked the legends of the bleeding nun (which Coleridge found "truly terrific") and of the wandering Jew. The scene is Spain during the Inquisition (as inaccurately represented as most other things in the book) with excursions into Germany and glimpses of India and Cuba. Thanks to his study of Shakespeare, Lewis succeeds in bringing all his main characters together at the end. The bizarre potpourri is not without climax and form. The ten interspersed poems and ballads are all of considerable interest and quality.

This new Grove Press edition is a most welcome and very handsome printing of a fairly hard-to-get novel. *The Monk* is one of those books more written and talked about than read; thanks to the Grove Press the reason for its not being read need no longer be unavailability. Here, despite a few typographical errors, it is excellently printed in large clear type, with an introductory essay, quite helpful but

rather digressive and a bit out of critical balance, by John Berryman, who discusses the novel, its author, and its influence. There is a note on the text by Louis F. Peck, who supplies variant readings from the five London editions published between 1796 and 1800. A hitherto unpublished portrait of Lewis forms the frontispiece, and a facsimile of the original title page and a table of the incidental verse are given. Lest all this display of scholarship and apparatus deter the nonprofessional reader, it should be said that the variant readings are gathered in the back pages, where the interested may consult them and the uninterested will not be bothered by them. There isn't much else an appreciative reader will find skipable.—C. V. W.

*Under Western Eyes*, by Joseph Conrad. New York: New Directions, 1951. The New Classics Series. 382 pp. \$1.50.

IN AN Author's Note appended in 1920 to this novel first published in 1911, Conrad vigorously restated his psycho-political conviction. It has since been oft and approvingly quoted and has been more than justified by the moving glacier of political reality.

The ferocity and imbecility of an autocratic rule rejecting all legality and in fact basing itself upon complete moral anarchism provokes the no less imbecile and atrocious answer of a purely Utopian revolutionism encompassing destruction by the first means to hand, in the strange conviction that a fundamental change of hearts must follow the downfall of any given human institutions. These people are unable to see that all they can effect is merely a change of names. The oppressors and the oppressed are all Russians together; and the world is brought once more face to face with the truth of the saying that the tiger cannot change his stripes nor the leopard his spots.

New Directions' reissue of this book now is a welcome event, for it not only demonstrates an aspect of Conrad's art which latterday readers have ignored or understated, but also it establishes Conrad's link between Dostoievsky and such politically engaged novelists as Andre Malraux, Ignazio Silone and Arthur Koestler. So desperate is the nature of change in our time, however, that Razumov's predicament—that of the self-contained and self-righteous intellectual caught between two tyrannies—seems already historical, since now, over much of the world, there is only one tyranny, politically speaking, to combat or avoid.

Morton D. Zabel's introduction is informative and apostolic, al-

though somewhat congested as a zealous result of trying to provide us with so much historical, biographical, racial and critical background within twenty-five pages. We need not be intimidated by his (and Arnold Bennet's and F. M. Ford's) preference for this novel over others of Conrad, but if it does not display Conrad's purest literary art it does perhaps project his most vital subject, whereby it engages our deepest and most passionate concern for freedom of conscience and mind.

*A Sleep of Prisoners*, by Christopher Fry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952. 49 pp. \$2.50.

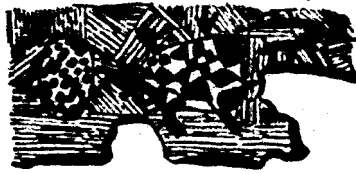
THIS is the furthest reach to date of Christopher Fry's poetic philosophy (or philosophic poetry), and by virtue of its excessive concentration of style and symbol may be the least negotiable of his plays in the direction of theatrical coherence. The patent situation is readily enough disposable as dramatic action. Four military prisoners, locked in a church, assume in dream sequences, their Old Testament archetypes. Thereby they re-enact man's eternal questioning of the illusion in which he seems to be imprisoned by the laws of his personality, by his needs and by his historically determined position. Fry's great wit and superior spirit of play are again in constant evidence. But the latent meanings, the triple identities and the metaphysical puns are so elliptical, they so overlap and coruscate, that it is hard for the reader to conceive of the unprepared theater spectator possibly grasping the manifold paradoxes of the work.

Fry is the one man writing in English today who deserves that perhaps old-fashioned adjective, noble. His plays, fashioned from the stuff of earth and never losing their allegiance to humane limitations, mount pyramid-wise, the apex connecting the broadly-based human with the divine. Fry has gone beyond sectarian affirmation to those aspects of religious experience which have served man's hope everywhere. And he has already covered most of the distance between the form which contains a symbol and the symbol which transcends form, that rarefied and almost nebulous stage of poetry which all poets, and novelists, seem to reach if they write long enough out of a continually unfolding philosophic vision. Fry, however, has the chance of saving his dramatic substance from total dissolution in metaphor by the gift of laughter. . . . "If this be magic, let it be lawful as eating."—V. Y.

Genevieve Porterfield

## A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF THE SOUTHWEST,

XLII



**T**HIS BIBLIOGRAPHY 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, Arizona and Texas, and parts of Utah, Oklahoma, Colorado and California.

In order to conserve space, items from periodicals that are indexed in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, the *Education Index*, the *Industrial Arts Index* and the *Agricultural Index* have been eliminated.

Included in this issue are mainly those titles which were published or came to our attention between March 1, 1952 and May 31, 1952.

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Corcoran Gallery, Carnegie Institute, the National Gallery of Art, and others. His book, *Calligraphic Lettering With Wide Pen and Brush*, was published in 1949 (Watson-Guptill).

ACHILLES FANG was born in North China, taught Latin, German, and English at various Chinese colleges. He came to this country in 1947, and is now at Harvard engaged in compiling a Chinese-English dictionary. Mr. Fang has published scholarly articles in *Modern Language Notes*, *Monumenta Serica*, and *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. He contributed an introductory note to Ezra Pound's *Confucius* (New Directions, 1951), and is preparing an exegesis of Pound's cantos.

EDWIN HONIG is Assistant Professor of English (Briggs-Copeland) at Harvard. His verse play, "The Widow," was published in the summer issue of *Western Review*.

ARTUR LUNDKVIST, Swedish poet and literary critic, has not published a volume of verse since 1949. He has, however, printed two books of prose recently: *Indian Fire* (1951) and *Malunga* (1952). "Saga of a She," "There Is a City," "Poem," and "No Line Is Possible in Any Life" are taken from his book *Dikter mellan djur och gud* (Poems Between Beast and God), published in Stockholm in 1944 by Albert Bonniers Förlag. "The Art of Growing Old" is from *Skin over Stone*

(*Skin Over Stone*) printed in 1947 by the same publisher. In this country, Lundkvist has appeared in an anthology, *Modern Swedish Poems* (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Press, 1948); this is his first presentation in a U. S. literary review.

JOHN A. LYNCH has published stories in *University of Kansas City Review*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Pacific Spectator*, et al. He lives in South Bend, is writing on a war novel.

MYRON OCHSHORN is working on a Ph.D. and teaching at the University of New Mexico. He has done considerable work on Dylan Thomas.

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RICHARD B. VOWLES teaches English at the University of Florida, but has in the past been employed as chemical engineer, economic consultant, vice consul. He has published many articles on Swedish literature, and is preparing a book on modern Swedish poetry.

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poetry in the quarterlies. He lives in Santa Fe, builds adobe houses.

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VERNON YOUNG's critical pieces appear regularly in literary reviews. He is working on a novel, *The Spider in the Cup*.