

TRACE

A CHRONICLE OF LIVING LITERATURE

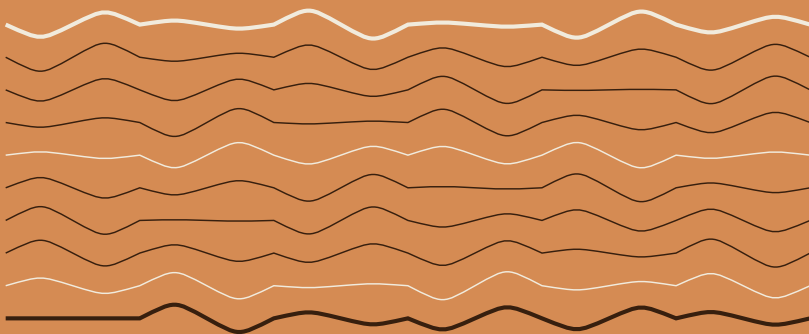
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TRACE

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Essays & Articles · Poetry · Reviews

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Edited by James Boyer May

A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

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

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

CONTENTS

Towards Print 4

Addenda 12

ISSUE P. 1 · SCAN P. 3

TOWARDS PRINT

(an expanded continuation of the feature in *Matrix Magazine*, U.S.A., by the Editor of *Trace*)

After a record postwar burgeoning of new literature — comprising what Australians prefer to call ‘ajays’ (viz. all amateur journalists, significant though a percentage of their writings invariably proves), the flight-conscious avant-garde, and also comprising solider reviews with paid circulations into the lower thousands — this once more is settling into categories which cut across these obvious classifications. At first, the attempt at a broad survey brings mainly confusion; for, in far the biggest group (many, poetry-only too) are those both eclectic and in part traditional and less-often essaying fresh departures. Their numbers cloudingly bewilder and render difficult to define even the brighter accomplishments of their own members. And yet, while three-fourths of these are less than semi-experimental in the usual meaning, and while typically just reflecting distinctive tastes and rebellions of their editors, each contains some symptom of the variant pioneering vitality most marked in more off-trail endeavors.

And since this attempt inescapably has to do with trends throughout the contemporary environment — not simply among small magazines nor solely in the literary domain — we oddly-seeming commence with one of two smallest groups. Fewer magazines than twenty years ago expound social reforms; and those which do chiefly preach in anarchistic or nihilistic terms. Less than a third stress Marxian concepts. Some on the surface appear actually reactionary. At least to the extent their exhortations obviously do encourage cultural-political modifications the reverse of those which were until the last couple of years regarded as progressive. Except for party-line leftists like *Masses & Mainstream* or *New Foundations*, or some

dwindling old-line socialistic publication like *Last Call*, providing little space for creative work anyway, these may not be said to foster any pat schemes for regimenting people into sundry enlightenments. Sounded not long ago, the editorial notes of most the others still sounding reform (and not a few have become comparatively neutral as re politics, like *Partisan Review*) actually might have been pronounced ultra-conservative! But the only reactive tone is that keyed by resistance to the proven stultifying effects of an urbanized rationale following over-rapid industrialization. In other words, there battles chiefly now a hardy little company championing individuality against the uniformities at last appreciated will ensue (however 'ideally') any rigorous centralized pattern for control. They battle all mass nostra — or, for that matter, mere mass suggestions. The latter almost have force of enactments, among populations conditioned by modern advertising. They also hint, for instance — to define them best from another phase — the desirabilities of restoring creativity not merely in the arts, but among lost handicrafts. Echoes of the protests grow, and not simply from lack of quality in machine products either. There's suggestion of relationship to agitations against assembly-line manufactures of such items as bread, neckties, and bedside tables — from humanitarian motives. Restoration of home-and community-shops and distributors quite logically might follow these pleas for independent morale to restore better purposive relationships within society — and not necessarily to be coupled with advocacy of community ownerships.

But, reverting to literary considerations, a large and less-demarcated group than the above contains nearly all true reactionarism. Contradictorily, these editors consider that they (and particularly, their own magazines — for often there's a warped, though understandable, perspectiveless arrogance) constitute the genuine 'advance,' yet scholarly

restraints upon contributors continue enforcing reverences for one tradition or another. They let slip through scarcely any material which hasn't some supposition of precedent. The magazines usually are prepared with an eye to classroom use, a majority receiving partial college or university support. And the editorial boards may be heavy with 'names,' plus long rolls of editorial advisers. Slight wonder, what with numerous cooks, that the editorial broth at times fails of any tasty definition, that contents prove as eclectic as in the first-named group — yet, often lack faintest flavor of editorial policy to condone this. Few such straitened miscellanies — less-seldom than among the semi-traditional eclectics — contain significance. And when so, with dubious back-page smirks. They're apt to carry lesser samples from long-recognized authors, while little-known or first-printed authors just are imitators of the same.

ISSUE P. 3 · SCAN P. 5

Another larger group deliberately carries forward obsolescent traditions — not surprisingly with sturdier support (by reason of more paying subscribers who prefer familiar sentiment to disturbing originality) than any of the foregoing. Maybe a few of these shouldn't even be part of this survey — except they're links with past culture and don't belong with mass-entertainment magazines either. Surely, some do not live in anything resembling the sense of Paracelsus, observing over 400 years ago: "Learning is our very life, from youth to old age, indeed, up to the brink of death; no one lives for ten hours without learning." By this, some of these aren't simply expiring or deceased — they're but poor stuffed replicas of worthier museum mummies.

And many more of the above endure than of publications self-consciously fostering definable experimentalisms. This is the fifth group, the other smallest one. Yet these few may be expected to influence most important aspects of future

writings. They, and the group powered by social scrutinies. Truly, the two are complementary, though strictly-literary editors dislike and even disdain 'messages,' and though socially-concerned editors call the others ivory-tower poseurs. Both at least do more, in their unique (and occasionally downright cranky) ways, and thus are the vital spirits of insurrection against any accepted literary 'attitude' which otherwise might set up exclusive worship of specially-evolved conformities adhered to by some advance-guarders surviving the Thirties.

Though they may not fairly be arrayed together, each magazine having a distinctive editorial line and distinguishing contents, the following hold sufficient in common to be grouped as having exhibited novel (and also definable) tendencies: Contact (Canada), The Golden Goose, Imagi, Intro Magazine, Mandrake (Italy), Nine (England), Origin, and Wake. Those evincing social awareness (and in fair measure, if not entirely, composed of literary contributions) have been The Delphic Review (England), Goad, The Grundtvig Review, Inferno, Last Call, Proteus Quarterly, Protocol (Newfoundland), Resistance Magazine, Retort, Suck-Egg Mule, and Upsurge. Two new ones, first issues of which at this writing haven't appeared, City (Australia) and Four Winds (U.S.A.) seem from the editors' statements to belong here too.

Contrary to reasoning that magazines consistently publishing what's generally acclaimed quality work may be deduced 'best,' reconsideration suggests (besides the fact that art is not competitive) that future generations likely will discover more precedents among the less finicky magazines in the above two categories. And research not astonishingly confirms that nearly all early works of power and genuine originality have been published among their ancestors and relatives — very few by those whose editors toed academic marks. In other words, these projects in at least one important sense better justify the touted purposes of such endeavors, despite conceded excellencies of several individual magazines in other categories; for this is not to deprecate any meritorious publications — nor among those devoted to staid poetry, for instance, despite most of these finally may not gain credit except for having preserved minor work otherwise lost. Simply that real blazing does mark trail in magazines of emphatically uneven timber (many with rank wild growths indeed!).

From Toronto, as example, the new and venturesome Contact already has been condemned by many. Yet, by very fact that the editors unmistakably explain intentions, significant things certainly will appear. They uphold poetry identified with immediate specific environmental problems, without censoring however almost-abstract contemplative and philosophical treatments in passages woven with quickening sensory imagery. Not only do these editors thereby define a trend direct from Sartre, but may be said to proceed along their own special self-conscious avenues concerning wider problems. Raymond Souster declares his interest in Irving Layton and other yet-obscure Canadian poets, but affirms they'll publish any good experimental work of purposes in the least relevant to the foregoing, no matter the divergent doctrine or the country of origin. So, within limits on this phase, a broader invitation is offered than

among typical periodicals with sharply stated social views; and in fact, magazines stressing literary ingenuity usually display broader latitudes than those of emphatic social convictions.

Perhaps exceptional among the others is *Proteus Quarterly*. Editor Frederick C. Heckel's ideas do also take form from a literary bias — if such it can be named — an intense admiration for Goethe. If not markedly aware of questions of technique nor a standard-bearer among knights of literary theory, Mr. Heckel's belief in robustness and round-fleshed sentiment in general imparts a belletristic unity rare among magazines primarily devoted to message (versus expression). This grows clearer in recent numbers of *Proteus*, which have accentuated signs of tightening editorial awareness of form along with a continued unquenchable search after honest sentiments kindred to those of the editor in re the enigmas of man.

ISSUE P. 5 · SCAN P. 7

Wake and Mandrake Review are the only two in these groups, other than *Origin* (which carries non-Anglo-American writing, but less of critical evaluations), extensively publishing translations and detailed appraisals of internationally prominent writers and schools. The *Grundtvig Review* announces larger space in future for writers of other countries, both originals and translations. This *Wake* (No. 11) contains new things by Conrad Aiken, together with essays about him by international figures, with Aiken bibliography and photographs. The same number contains Italian, French, and German sections — besides the editor's choices of significant contemporary U.S. writing.

Outstanding specimens (current) of the first and largest group, those printing all types both of prose and poetry, are the *Canadian Northern Review*, *New Zealand Arena*, *The Window*, and *The Wind & The Rain* (both England), and

Shenandoah, published at Washington and Lee University. The British Adelphi becomes not undeserving of inclusion here, for some of the recent fiction. Prominent eclectics among those restricted to poetry and articles about poetry have been The Beloit Poetry Journal, Canadian Poetry Magazine, Epos.

Typical middle-ground belief appears to be that adoption of any 'ism' as editorial criterion may be dangerous and foster meretricious matter posing only illustrations of evanescent-spotlighted foci of the unceasing struggle between tradition and experiment. These aren't the exact words of any editor, but they summarize a position of some mainly guided by personal tastes and not consciously undertaking to drive toward definite selective synthesis. And there's justice in their charge that editors absorbed in exclusive theory of one sort or another — individual or that of a school — will publish much that just complies with over-special standards, and often (despite surface novelties) will publish no more genuine spontaneity than deeply-conservative editors. With too closely prescribed prejudgments, this indeed would seem all but unavoidable. And yet, as remarked, 'one-track' magazines still give birth, among them, to more consequential material than the eclectics as a whole (exceptions both ways, naturally).

The best of that most carefully edited academic group which, in the professorial eyes, are the worthiest of all these 150 publications, perhaps are: The Adelphi (England), Accent, Epoch, The Georgia Review, Hudson Review, Kenyon Review, Meanjin (Australia), The Pacific Spectator, Prairie Schooner, Queen's Quarterly (Canada), Sewanee Review, University of Kansas City Review, The Virginia Quarterly, Western Review, and Yale Review. Others falling in this category, but chiefly poetry and poetry criticism, include: Contemporary Verse (Canada), Canadian Poetry Magazine, Poetry (Chicago), and Quarterly Review of Literature.

To name a few less-to-be-despised (by avant-gardists) of the near-outrightly traditional — Folio, Poetry Chap-Book, We Offer (England) and Wings. Poetry Quarterly (London) has published a wider selection than its Chicago counterpart, and recently may be declared to have better typified the original purposes of that long-pre-eminent endeavor.

Falling somewhat between stools are unique endeavors like Furioso, which while not eclectic, hasn't adhered to a consistently-definable logic in selections either. And then, the newer A. D. Magazine, refusing to be regarded avant-garde, while announcing advocacy of a day-before-yesterday's notion among the then-advanced-persuasively-recognizable depictions of obvious realities as vs. the basic art-for-art's-sake idea that writers may create however-unreal worlds, to be 'understood' through their own curious distorting glasses. Also, as-yet less widely known: The California Quarterly, Carolina Quarterly, The Hopkins Review, Measure, and Phylon — all trending toward academism rather than experiment.

ADDENDA

by the Editor

An event comparable to a Northern Hemisphere snowfall in July — spring publication by Dodd, Mead & Co. of a first novel, *Every Crazy Wind*, by John Wallace Pritchard, whose only prior appearance has been a selection from this same ms.-in-progress, in *Matrix Magazine*. The book's preoccupation with a sexual theme is cited to explain the phenomenon; and yet, mankind's sexual nature now again generally being admitted without coy blushes, this scarcely suffices. . . . Editors of *Matrix*, by the way, no doubt will have completed arrangements for new editorship by autumn; but no valid address presently is available. . . . Among few recent suspensions has been that of *Berkeley: A Journal*, one of the finest of the littler magazines, featuring graphic arts along with every type of critical and creative work, plus articles of general cultural interest. . . . A magazine called *Koolinda*, devoted to the hobby of collecting little magazines, is published from time to time by: The Wayside Press, Elgin St., Gordon, New South Wales, Australia. . . . Should anyone be wondering what has happened to the old *Story Magazine*, the same chief editor, Whit Burnett, publishes an annual volume called *Story*, and selected from freelance ms. submissions. Address is: Story Press, The Old House on the Hill, Setauket, Long Island, New York, U.S.A. . . . Following what seems a growing custom among small literary magazines, Cid Corman of *Origin* plans a pamphlet entirely devoted to work of Charles Olson, and Louis Brigante of *Intro Magazine* has issued a Gil Orlovitz poetry pamphlet *Keep to Your Belly*, drawings by Paul Lett. . . . Glen Coffield's project of a poet-of-the-month series (*Grundtvig*) is delayed for lack of support; but he will prepare booklets in more-extended series, as funds are available. . . . A new quarterly is about to appear — from New York University.