

TRACE

A CHRONICLE OF LIVING LITERATURE

featuring
WALTER LOWENFELS
Magazine

also
RUTH FORBES SHERRY
Angry Young Men

and
ACTION - STRIKE
Gil Orlovitz
Guy Daniels
Vincent Ferrini
Sam Bradley

coming in next issue
JOHN CIARDI
talks informally

37

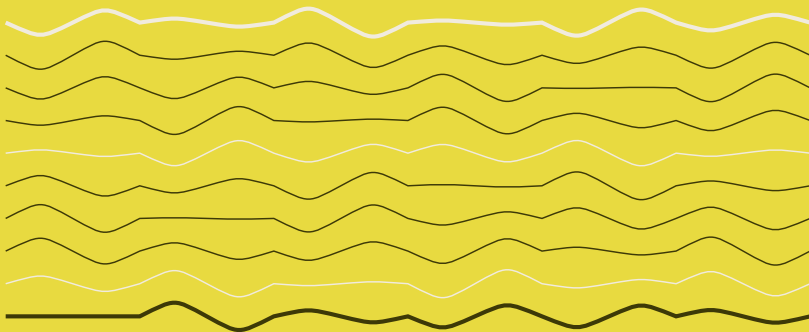
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TRACE

No. 37

Living Literature

Essays & Articles · Poetry · Reviews

May-June 1960

Edited by James Boyer May

A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

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

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

CONTENTS

Publication Information	5
Notes on an Editorial Board Meeting	6
<i>To Appear in Trace No. 38</i>	10
Towards Print	11
<i>A Dialogue for Two Poets</i>	11
Editors (and Others) Write	15
<i>That Big Beat Word: Love!</i>	15
<i>Clarence Major (Coercion)</i>	17
<i>Robert Vaughan (Editor, Element)</i>	20
Finnegan	24
<i>A Sketch</i>	24
‘Action—Strike’	32
A Cultural Lobotomy in the West	36
Angry Young Men	40
Some Items Received	46
Two Guest Reviews	62
<i>A Panegyric</i>	62

<i>And Some Conjunctions</i>	63
James Colvin's Blast	66
Addenda	69

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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ISSUE P. 1 · SCAN P. 3

MAGAZINE

NOTES ON AN EDITORIAL BOARD MEETING

Walter Lowenfels

I saw that road junction
where the map is green
and the trees of the earth
are people smiling
where that map lives
and those people laugh
is not tonight — my darling fellow elders.
The green grass of the world
has a white tinge in our hair.
Our voices have that caw caw
of certain black birds
circling over the corpse
of a dead deer
in my Jersey pine barrens
O seasons! O magazine!

Now poetry is this and that one of us interrupts and I don't want to interrupt or take the floor too long but I think you are spitting at it . . . and I object says another voice the man has not read a word of poetry since Shakespeare. I resent that another of us screams and I don't know why when I try to speak I never get a chance. You son of a bitch one whispers in her quiet eyes you've already had the floor 25 minutes and why can't we get along with the purpose of this meeting says the chairman which is to keep Magazine alive?

Alive? Alive? Did I hear the word green?
O green I want you to be more green.
What can I do when I'm riding my pony
to Cordova with my saddle bags full of
olive oil and wine
and the road is so far and I don't think
I'll ever get to Cordova today.
O Garcia Lorca! O Rimbaud! O Magazine!

At this moment in this living room
at this wake of our hopes —
scratching the Sahara's of our minds
for the bones of some dinosaur piece
we could print and startle the world
for being so with it —

could one more word of love
keep us from the final act of the deer?
O arrows of desire! O shot guns of gold!
The hunting season is tomorrow's calendar
and one of us is breaking his heart because
we neglect the poems of yesteryear.
O Whitman! O Horace! O dragons of Chu Yuan!

All I want says the unpresent reader
is a beautiful piece of print —
shot with tomorrow's smile
lit with today's Strontium
telling us how to survive in this land
Columbus never discovered and we are still trying
to find.

O show us the road to the Indies
lead us to that continent of our dreams
where the workers are always right —
a poem is blooming on every oak
in Louisiana —
the bayous are full of songs with vine leaves
in their hair —
and Miss America is Billie Holiday.
O seasons! O Little Rock! O, land of ever-returning
spring!

I predict this meeting will not end.
Magazine will not die. There isn't time enough
for us to pass away to that bourne from which our
Authoritative Critic has not returned
because he likes it better than today's crappy
Modernism which you can take he says in a
final burst of illumination and shove up.
Now Emily Dickinson — that was a mensch! refusing
our offer to let him write it in four pages
I WON'T BE LIMITED AND I WON'T BE HEARD he screams
behind the closing footfall of a T. S. Eliot door
that he has been quoting to his pupils
in the seminars where nobody dares
call him a son of a bitch
because he means well and it is only his mind
that has gone to live with Kossuth and Heine
in the 1848's that he adores.
O Critics! O Keats! O kittens of the universal bitch
Yesterday!

Yes Magazine will survive. It's easier than to pass away
and let something new arrive. And believe me your
honors

I am as guilty as anybody else and pulled the trigger
and yanked the cord and ripped the parachute and
we all plummeted to earth and it wasn't the color of
green

we are aiming to find.

And so we took the elevator away from our board
meeting and

on the

street level I saw the truth plain like beauty on a
subway poster

with our Critic grinning away at his sybilline
irrelevance.

Yes it's all been said but never for the last time as we
walk down

the street to the A train that leads us away from
a million automobiles

wrapped around our ten million critics

rushing through non-stop streets

in a dream cloud

compared to the eternal fixation

of our editorial board

O Marlowe! O Myakovsky! O Apollinaire!

In Conclusion (Comrade Editors . . .)

A poem is a forget-me-not in a button hole that never
closes.

Angels of the gardens sweep around our wings

and the chandeliers have tiny flippers telling us

A poem should be about nothing and so full of love you
don't even have to shout the word

just a whisper bringing down manna from the heavens
softening the desert stones and arroyos with that
vowel that makes all the difference.

Beauty is but word deep and our will to speak cannot
be murdered until the language goes the way of all
flesh O Chichen Itza! O Pyramides! O Magazine of
the Dodos we are leaving behind!

*(Please note that this featured piece in poetical form is not
indicative of any change in TRACE policy not to publish poetry as
such.)*

TO APPEAR IN TRACE No. 38

CIARDI ON THE CAMPUS, by Guy Owen (quick answers to many
sharp questions put to the poetry editor of SATURDAY REVIEW,
by faculty members and students at Stetson University);

AUTUMN STATICS, by Mary Graham Lund (further
evaluations of James Franklin Lewis, with parallels drawn
from Gottfried Benn);

THE INTERMITTENT SPOTLIGHT, by Lawrence Barth (leisurely,
yet 'loaded' discussion of new and old periodicals);

WHERE TO READ? by David Gunston (a mirthful and
flavourful essay upon a serious, widespread addiction).

TOWARDS PRINT

by Gil Orlovitz

A DIALOGUE FOR TWO POETS

This feature, in TRACE No. 36, erroneously carried the Gil Orlovitz by-line instead of that of the Editor. Caused by a mistake in the final make-up of pages, this could not be corrected until after the initial mailing. The Publisher extends apologies to Mr. Orlovitz; and the Editor wishes to state that all opinions expressed in that T.P. were his own, and may or may not have been fully endorsed by his Associate.

A: Look here, I've got an anthology set. Tentatively entitled American Political Poetry, 1950-1960. Care to contribute?

B: Oh, very much, contribution being the first lore of mankind as we mythically put it. And we Americans are always asked to give, aren't we? We may look on your request as the Fund For Needy Political Poetry, so to speak. And we would wipe the ARS POETICA and POLITICS of Aristotle simultaneously. We'd clean up the whole filthy scene, eh?

A: Well, I don't envision anything quite so revolutionary as you imply. Still, we might kink the status queue a bit at that. I assume, then, that you've a pertinent piece.

B: Well, to put it bluntly, I would like to contribute. But the fact is I haven't got any political poems.

A: But you have thought about writing in the genre, haven't you?

B: Yes, yes of course. Truthfully. I suppose I never wrote them because I'd no idea who would possibly want to print them. Come to think of it, political poems haven't been written in Russia, either, for some time. Communism consciously doesn't allow dissidence while the United States unconsciously disallows it. Odd that the two nations should

be so alike in their negative characteristics. Well. What we need is a charge of positive thinking—as, for example, your political anthology. Satirically-metaphored swipes at the major political contenders. Emotive-laden involvements with political ideas. What happened at Suez between Eden and Eisenhower. Ah, let's see—Nixon's mystiquen reasons. Stevenson, de Gaulle and Franco-American destiny. Yes. Urban depopulation of the youth as it gravitates towards middlewest parity. Security on the farm threatens Wall Street. Despair and taxes, a Kierkegaardian statistic rendered into the tense metrics of contemporary American life. The bare bodkin of the cost-of-living index. Veterans Administration requests more veterans—oh, no no. That—that's going too far, obviously. I mean, one doesn't want to foment war by a political poem. I mean, here in America we've got a sort of middle grandeur of living, no? I mean, for example, taking the number of suicides per capita per nation—we're around the center. We prefer to die in the middle-of-the-road, you might say. Which, if you look at it, rather conforms to our mortality from automobile accidents, eh?

A: Suppose I put my request in somewhat different form?

B: Please do. Lack of conscience makes political cowards of us all.

A: I see you do have ideas.

B: Well, one becomes weary of confusing the issue silently, so one does it at times aloud. It gives one such a good feeling to be able to baffle someone other than oneself.

A: Could you consider writing a political poem for our anthology?

B: Well, you understand one has to be emotionally moved before one can write a poem at all. Deeply moved.

A: True.

B: I must confess that it's been some time since I've been deeply moved—politically, that is. The question is: Can one

afford to be deeply moved? Politically.

A: Do you vote?

B: Certainly.

A: Without emotional involvement?

B: One needs all one's reason at the polls, clearly.

A: Really? To vote for candidates selected either for their financial independence or relative innocuity? Do you need reason to mark your ballot for one or the other? Have you forgotten you're living in the United States of the present?

B: All of which has absolutely nothing to do with composing a political poem.

A: I agree. If you've surrendered politics to the politician, the general, and the financier, then you can have nothing to do with political poetry. I might even suggest you have forgotten about poetry altogether in the very strong sense that poetry is a category of politics. Poetry sets forth tensions expressing the joy of human hating, human sexing, human evacuating, human eating—and human polity. It is nothing if it is not human. I have the curious foreboding that you'll be experimenting with inhuman writing. Am I to understand that you're a non-political animal?

B: You remarked before that you did not envision anything too revolutionary.

A: One does not have to be a revolutionary in order to be engaged either in politics or poetry.

B: Well, I will tell you that you will find no political poems. It is not that we are frightened to death of writing them, but that we are so banal as to mask our uninvolvement in politics by composing heavy-hammered satires about the hydrogen bomb and our leaders' incompetence at coping with the problem. As long as we cannot impel ourselves to politics, we scream at a Bomb. Stupidity hardly makes for a poem.

A: What, then, do you propose?

B: That you delay your anthology for a decade while we re-enter politics.

A: Are you sure we can be sufficiently comfortable without screeching or wailing in that time in our post-office jobs, our unemployment compensations, our junior executive positions, our university tenures?

B: I suggest we vote on it.

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

Usually, only what excites negative reactions, if not violent disapproval, brings a very large mail. But, a section in TRACE No. 35 ITEMS concerning the word 'love', proved an exception; and so that the Editor is breaking a rule, not to print what chiefly 'yeses' him. The longest of these reactions is, nevertheless, quite condensed: from Sam Bradley—who also titled his contribution.

THAT BIG BEAT WORD: LOVE!

The word 'beat' indicates an emotional cul-de-sac; everybody falls into it. I am not sure that this generation is more de-personalised than any other recent one, any more nearly than Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or Eliot's hollow-man. But, we are all today caught in stereotype attitudes toward the self. One of the most important of these attitudes cuts content and significance out of love, and calls it sex.

We are 'beat' when we surrender love to the world of non-loving and non-aspiring. When our thoughts concerning our nature and our human involvements no longer lead us in meaningful searches of existence.

As the editor of TRACE said in the Jan.-Feb. issue, love is belief, and 'beat' poems may amuse, but lack in content. One of the magazines of which he is critical is CONTACT 3, in which I appear; and while I am curious about what offends him as critic, I find myself in substantial agreement with his statement that "love" is a term imperfectly verbalising always-individual and-subjective life attitudes: a man's intimate regard for himself applied to his world.' I probably would say: 'himself and others,' shifting the emphasis; but, in general, I agree.

If there are two kinds of poets, 'beat' and 'non-beat,' we might divide up the list, or even divide up the poems, of

today's poets. We can call the early Eliot 'beat,' the later Eliot 'non-beat.' The reverse would be the situation with some authors who move from settled, perhaps conventional attitudes, toward dissatisfaction and rebelliousness. After all, we are the generation which has keenly felt modern man's broken sensibilities and his pyramiding dilemmas. Like Kafka and Camus, we are all too aware of the many uncertain factors that conspire to make life meaningless.

All this foregoing, is not to ask poets to avoid the word 'love,' but to write more love poems, to give us—heaven help these poets!—more useful philosophies of love. I honour the insight of one who can show me how what is writ in flesh is more significant than what is writ in water, in the inevitable turnings of nature.

Or is love but a tension between nature and the spirit? I am quite willing to grant that there is now too little joy in love, too little belief in love. Often, I have supposed that knowledge and part-knowledge of Freud and other 'scientific' investigators have made us too selfconscious, too full of doubt. Seldom does full-bodied, naive emotion drive the green fuse of a poem. The truistic axiom of our age is: too much head, too little heart. Or to rephrase it: too much finality given flesh, too little making of covenants. O body electric! Full of short-circuits.

Any 'beat' amongst us—it is a common infection—can believe with D. H. Lawrence in 'the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect.' This but reasserts the old dualism between body and spirit, and the dualism breaks our sense of oneness, of entity, of integrity. Hence, it is no wonder that love is, for the common taste of poets, editors, critics, something to spit at, on, or in. A poem of love can be an ocean's roar, the puff-out of a breeze, a yelp, a howl, an uh-uh. But shall we be content with that? Where is the poem in which animal feeling changes into something rich and strange, so that body becomes part of the spirit's music?

Paul Blanchard, Jr., writing *A PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE*, some months back, stated his attitude thus: 'We two billion and more chips off the block of God are finite creatures occupying given niches in time and space. In our pattern, the clock is a servant and not a sovereign. Life is a selection and not a scramble to do all. It will have meaning as we choose well and do well.' Reconsideration of love is crucial thinking for modern man, whose oneness with mankind is threatened. And whose very life is threatened.

Therefore, I concede to the editor of *TRACE* that love, for us, is hardly distinguishable from belief. Love is belief? Then, can the poets freshen up this mortal sky? Can they show again that love is a key to our courage and significance? Can there be a healing of 'beat' attitudes, a marriage of heaven and hell, of spirit with instincts, of division with harmony? Perhaps we are glibly saying: 'Physician, heal yourself.' Nevertheless, I am happy to see any poet—or editor—who regards love as more than convention, or sham, or self-indulgence, or played-out myth.

CLARENCE MAJOR (COERCION)

I once read somewhere that no two races in history have successfully merged . . . and again, I have heard this in conversations. On the other hand, successfully or not, whole tribes of American Indians were swept up and ultimately lost in the Negro population of America. In South America, blacks and Latins merged, perhaps dangerously. In reference to David Rafael Wang's comments on segregation in *TRACE* No. 35, I must agree with him in one thing: that all races are, indeed, superior, in their own ways. But, their ways are no longer their own; and because there are no pure races at large, their ways will never again be their own. This may be an international psychological danger, true enough; but, perhaps in 2,000 years, there will be, I hazard, but one big "mulky-coloured" human body.

I do not think this will seriously damage poetry, however. And this statement, as I reread it, is very funny to me. I am a Negro. My grandfather was white; my grandmother was half-white; and the other grandmother was about three-fourths Indian. And then the rest of me is perfectly blended with African blood. David Rafael Wang is a fine poet, a good friend—and we have even become “brothers” and I respect what he believes. However, I do not believe, as he obviously does, that it is necessary to dedicate oneself against the evil of white supremacy.

To my mind, the fight seems a defeat in itself . . . Dave, I agree that dedication is fine. But, how can you advocate segregation of the races even in cultural matters, even though, as you say, all races are (apparently, I would say) different? It is too late now. It is far too late now. Picasso uses African symbols. Jean Paul Sartre has written a play about racism, in *THE RESPECTFUL PROSTITUTE*,—and without living in Alabama. Poe had a strong effect on some French poets . . . And—about the “standard” of the white race—I know many Negroes who try to identify with/and accept white standards. I imagine there are many Chinese of the same persuasion.

I think you are wrong, generally; at least, even if you are right, friend (indeed, brother), it is too late even to consider holding together a firm “separate” racial culture.

‘Please do not waste any more time fighting a lost cause. Write those beautiful lovely poems you are so capable of making.’

Rozana Webb (see TRACE No. 35): ‘. . . found the complementary articles by Spingarn and Orlovitz quite interesting. Also, somewhat controversial, in my eyes. Both have an underlying thought concerning the continuation and enlargement of serious and revolutionary and very very dead writers’ thematic approach to the art of writing. They condemn our phallic democracy in print, while holding up to

the mirror of admiration the ancients who so shocked their own generation. In so doing, they are personally guilty of the thing they most deplore, Censorship . . .

I wonder how far a really high-powered ad-man and an editorial office could really go in the presentation and sale of a book — any book. I believe . . . it would be possible to sell — and I mean, record-type sale — a million or more, any book, no matter how good or how bad. I would like to see a top company try, — step right out and give it all they've got . . . using a nondescript or very fine unsexed literary novel or a mixed-up roundhouse . . . just any book, by a completely unknown author. With the right grey suit to back it, anything would sell. When writers, critics, et al sit down to criticise editors, I wonder if they don't realise the poor devils are just as helpless in the face of the ad-men as are those of us who only suffer from an excess of filter-tipped . . . cellophane-wrapped ennui. I had a letter from a wellknown editor concerning a novel I sent him. He was quite frank and wrote at length concerning his reason for turning down my work: item one — it is a literary novel; item two — I am not known in the commercial world; item three — the publicity office did not think it had sales appeal. Notice the wording there. Not the editorial office; it was the publicity office that apparently had the final say. I believe we should start there . . . with the ubiquitous ad-man . . . yesyesyes.'

JOHN HAINES (an Alaskan author): 'On D. V. Smith's letter to a contributor to OLIVANT, I don't think Jack Green should have the last word (TRACE No. 35). I think Smith is perfectly within ethics. He may be a little hot-tempered? Of you may question whether "putting our work over" is going to be good for literature; but there is nothing infamous about his letter, or his attitude.

'As a publisher, working under handicap, trying to put out the work he thinks is worthwhile and pay his writers something decent, I don't think he can be condemned for

asking the writer to help if possible. One can be reasonably sure he is not trying to get rich himself!

Last year, Smith accepted a group of my poems for eventual publication. He asked me to help support the magazine. I was not insulted, I merely told him that I had no money at the time and could not do anything. It was not demanded of me, and I doubt if he has approached his other contributors any differently.

What this all boils down to is: If we, the poets, for whom — after all — the magazines exist, are not willing to do all we can to keep them afloat, who in the devil will?

There is something crass and irresponsible about writers who expect to see their work in print, yet who withhold any support for the magazine which they know perfectly well exists by the labour and, certainly, the sacrifice of someone else. It's too much like saying: "Let others pay the fare—I'm going to ride for nothing."

I'm as poor as anyone, and probably a lot poorer than most; but I try to help out any magazine that will print my poems, or at the very least, anyone who will give them intelligent consideration and hope for future publication.

'Gratitude, it seems to me, lies equally on both sides here.'

ROBERT VAUGHAN (EDITOR, ELEMENT)

'Here is an answer to an ad mailed out for subscriptions: "Dear Robert Vaughan, I am not a parton (sic) of the arts. I do not buy magazines, I fill them. Rather ask me for the best thing I have to offer, my work. Check (names here another quarterly)." . . . Signed by one who calls himself a young writer. My reply is this open letter (addressed to the Young Writer):

I wish to thank you for taking the trouble to answer my circular . . . mailed . . . to raise a little capital to supplement what little money I have for publishing. It is apparent . . .

that you are at least as well established as, say, William Carlos Williams, who owes much of his early encouragement to the little magazines, and who still has a poem to send to those who want it, and sometimes a dollar or two to help them along. . . . I (should) certainly expend every effort . . . to secure a copy of the magazine you have named, for I would not dare miss any work by a writer who is so far above his craft that he cannot even consider offering a little aid to its continuance. I hope you do not have a change of heart and decide to subscribe to *ELEMENT* . . . as some of the contributors to the first issue do not have near your magnificent talent; for, they wished us luck, and some even went so far as to subscribe. Do, though, send me some of your poems, as you suggested. I need some good work; for, a magazine of the type I am trying to publish needs poetry more than money. The money, I can beg, steal, or borrow; but the poems have to come in a way over which I have little control.

In conclusion, I . . . assure you that I shall keep an eye on your career in the future; since, as a writer who does not buy magazines, your work must be absolutely free of any influences—and equally free of any awareness of what is happening in the present scene.’

LAWRENCE BARTH (author of *UNIVERSE INSIDE ME*): ‘It escapes me how D. Vincent Smith can arrive at conclusions like these, in *TRACE* No. 35: that a magazine’s praising a writer whose work doesn’t happen to appear in it automatically “shames” the writers it does publish; this “amounts to treason . . . going over to the other side”;’ that it shows the editor doesn’t believe at all in the writers he publishes; that the fact a magazine is unable to pay its own writers proves this nonbelief in them; that it was in effect an announcement “that its own writers are ignoble.”

This twisted logic is of no help to little magazines, to writers or editors. It is not argument, but extreme hysteria;

and hysteria is one thing we certainly can do without. Mr. Smith's unfortunate review seems in the same category as his letter in No. 34, which Jack Green rightly reprimanded. It seems, too, to fit in with the impossible arrogance Smith showed on the cover of OLIVANT No. 3 (1958) in the motto: "The only independent magazine in America you dare not miss." That issue, thus modestly launched in the language and spirit of an ad agency, cost \$3 for 57 small pages in which writer's works were repeatedly mutilated by typographical errors.

D. Vincent Smith says that he has the advancement of literature much at heart. If he wants to prove that, it's time for him to look at his own editorial policies, his logic, his sense of humanity again, with a sharply critical eye. His emotional drive can be very helpful, his intentions can contribute to the literary struggle—if he can keep them from turning into ranting tactics. I hope he'll try.'

FELIX ANSELM (THE PROFESSOR'S UMBRELLA, in No. 35 TRACE): 'I hope you will once again let a mere author invade your EDITORS WRITE column, where editors unburden themselves with such cathartic abandon on a variety of subjects—including their marital feuds with ex-co-editing ex-mates, and the outrage committed by one editor in not accepting a fellow editor's poems. (Stunned by such infamy, one can only mutter, WHAT NEXT?!)—Well, in contrast to all that colour, my own request is drab and modest: I am asking you to correct only three of the several printing errors in the text of my piece in your No. 35, to wit: on page 26, line 24, read "nyet-wits" instead of "nit-wits," (whosoever doesn't get it, is the latter); on page 29, line 9, read "holding on to theirs" instead of "holding onto theirs;" on page 29, line 13, read "dispensable" instead of "indispensable." Thank you for your courtesy.'

(Although the Editor never has spared the space—not even when occasional errors have made his own writings

more inept than they are—for corrections other than those of major fact or meaning, the above carried the following note: ‘. . . we shall soon see your editorial and character mettle and how you feel about editorial and human ethics and fair play, as matters apart from personal friendships, or personal neutrality, or personal resentments.’ This challenge seems rather disproportionate to the case; however, it raises the question of the contributor’s right to set himself up as an arbitrary judge. Elements of prejudice are present in all editors—and this one is no exception. But, to charge dishonesty (which is what this amounts to) is quite another thing. And TRACE’s Editor declares he never has consciously allowed either considerations of personal friendship or those of strictly-personal enmity, to influence his function.

Our contributor refers to ‘several’ errors; but only five were alleged. One was the correction of a mistake in grammar, and one was a corrected spelling. Of the remaining three, one was a typesetter’s slip, not caught in proof-corrections, one was a typing error which was caught, but became reinstated in reading against copy, and the last was this Editor’s own typewriter-slip (apologies!). Maybe TRACE should not appear unless better edited; however, besides the improbability of finding someone more efficient to work for less than no monetary compensation (as the present Editor does), letter-perfect periodicals are extremely rare achievements. Even most books have a few ‘typos’; and, speaking from experience of print for nearly forty years, the Editor has found errors in more than nine-out-of-ten publications of his own writings, in several hundred different media.)

FINNEGAN

by Guy Daniels

A SKETCH

The behaviour of Americans abroad is a subject which has engaged the attention of an impressive list of American authors, from Mark Twain to President Eisenhower. (Please note that I do not refer to the book, *CRUSADE IN EUROPE*, in which General Ike described the behaviour of a rather large number of Americans participating in ‘group’ activity’ in Europe. I refer rather to those little *Bon Voyage* notes the President dashes off for every American receiving a passport, in which he very properly reminds the future voyager that if he gets an ‘F’ in Department abroad, the same is likely to happen to America at large.) In view of this vast literature on the subject by authors worthier than myself, I do not propose to make any substantial addition to it here. All I want to do is to drop one small, scholarly footnote. Or perhaps two, since dropping only one footnote is like dropping only one shoe: there’s something asymmetrical about it that leaves the reader (or the listener down below decks) in an agonising state of suspense.

My footnote (or feetnote, if I come up with a pair of them) has to do with the form of greeting employed by Americans encountering one another in foreign lands. The natural thing, it has always seemed to me, would be just to say: ‘Hello, how are you?’ Or, in the case of touring Texans: ‘Howdy?’ Unless of course the other fellow is wearing a silk sport shirt, Ascot tie, and smoked glasses. Here, the simple, natural thing is to say: ‘Hi, Doll. How long’s it been?’

But, for some arcane reason, Americans abroad these days never say these things. What they do say, upon encountering one another, is: ‘What are you on?’ (This is in

case A recognises B as a com-patriot. If he does not so recognise him, the proper procedure is for A to pinch his nostrils together with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, and intone: 'Bonn Jooer. Jenny parlay Pa Fran say.' Whereupon B recognises A's nationality, and replies : 'What are you on?')

This mysterious form of address puzzled me for a long time. I began having dreams in which Ike, Khrushchev, and Marianne Moore would appear, with evil grins on their usually affable visages, and pin me wriggling to the wall with the overwhelming question : 'What are you on?' Nekita even went so far as to use the familiar ty (insultingly or endearingly?) 'Na chem ty?' he would demand, his Ukrainian bucktooth pointed directly at me. And he would grin evilly (endearingly?) as I twisted the sheets about me in desperate contortions, vainly seeking an answer.

The mystery finally became intolerable. I decided to have recourse to the approved modern American exorcism for all mysteries : a Research Project. I drew up a list of possible answers to the question 'What are you on?', dreamed up a thumping title for my Research Project (including of course the word 'interdisciplinary': that's de rigueur), and applied for a grant from the Chevrolet Foundation. Two weeks later, I had simultaneous letters from : 1) Percival (Butch) Scandandy, Poet Laureate of Oklahoma and three-time winner of a Chevrolet Foundation grant (also, by the way, Professor of Tennysonian Metrics at Oklahoma A. & M.); 2) Professor G. Stanley Fishmonger (whose erasers I had dusted out while at Princeton); and 3) Uncle Bogardus Booster, hottest Chevrolet dealer in all Iowa and rumored next in line for appointment as Postmaster General. Each of these letters informed me, 'strictly off the record,' that my Chevrolet grant was in the bag. (Professor Fishmonger took occasion, in a footnote, to point out that the first historically-recorded use of this expression was during the Napoleonic Era, when

Marshal MacMahon informed Napoleon, upon the arrival of the Foreign Legion at Magenta : 'L'affaire est dans le sac.') One week after that, I received a sizeable cheque and three 1931 Chevrolets. I cashed the cheque, donated the Chevrolets to Elvis Presley (having heard that the State Department was concerned over the size of the repair bills on Presley's Cadillacs), and set off for Europe.

It is customary for distinguished visiting Americans to pay a call at the American Embassy in Paris upon first arriving; so that's just what I did. The reception they arranged for me (they were also generous enough to admit a few foreign ministers who had strayed in off the boulevards for some free chow) was a brilliant one. And you can imagine how delighted I was when my hostess got my project off to a fast start by asking, as she proffered a very ancient-looking Scotch : 'What are you on?'

I flicked my checklist card down from beneath my cuff and read off the first answer I saw: 'The wagon,' I replied brightly.

With the rapidity of a frog's tongue spearing a fly, her hand shot out and snatched the Scotch from under my nose. 'There, there, naughty boy,' she admonished, smiling archly, 'that'll never do. You'll find the lemonade on the other side of the table.'

Disgusted with beau monde, I got the hell out of there and headed for Monmartre. I went into the first low-looking dive I spotted and ordered a double Pernod. Beside me at the bar, was a burly individual with American cauliflower ears. (French cauliflower ears, called oreilles à la choufleur, are different. Don't ask me why, but they are.) 'Have one on me,' I said, beginning to feel expansive.

No response. He was too busy watching the Ed Sullivan Show on the seven-inch TV behind the bar.

'Have one on me,' I said again, this time loud enough to be heard above the TV.

The burly individual turned halfway around, obviously annoyed. 'What are you on?' he demanded.

I flicked my card down from my cuff. But this time I took no chances: I played Eeenie Meenie Minie Mo.

My companion grew impatient. 'I said, "What are you on?"' he growled.

'To you, bud,' I answered affably.

I was revived several hours later by a dash of water in my face. A ten-year-old French girl committing suicide because her novel had been rejected by GALLIMARD, had chosen to leap into the Seine a few feet from where Cauliflower Ears had dumped me under a bridge. (Ah, Paris in the spring!)

It was some months before I got up the courage for another attempt. In fact, if it hadn't been for a threatening letter from the Chevrolet Foundation telling me to 'get on with it' or my allowance would be cut off (they must have agents everywhere!), I would have just dropped the whole thing.

The locale of my next interview was London; and my interviewee was an intellectual young lady from the Bronx who was at Oxford collecting poets. (She had once been to a reading by Dylan Thomas and heard somebody remark that he was a 'collected poet'.)

When she asked me: 'What are you on?' I didn't even bother to consult my checklist. By now, I knew the whole thing by heart. 'Third base, ninth inning, score tied, one down, and Mantle has just hit a long fly to deep center,' I recited. 'But I've got a bad charley horse.'

She tittered. 'Really, now. You should be able to tell just by looking at me that I don't know anything at all about cricket.'

I made a move to go away, saying I had to consult our host about some Sumerian tablets recently unearthed near Babylon; and besides, I just had to have some more of those delectable crumpets. But she persisted. 'What are you really

on?' she asked, clutching my arm in a viselike grip, her horseteeth bared in an impish smile.

I mentally consulted my list again, and what I saw in my mind's eye caused me to sigh heavily. But I had to get on with it. With a great effort, I said: 'The make.' Then, seeing the beginning of her swoondive, I hastily added: 'No, no! I'm not on the make! It's all a mistake.'

But, it was too late. She was already whispering moistly into my ear: 'I knew you were a poet the moment I saw you.'

Without dwelling any further on this interview and its consequences, I pass on to my penultimate adventure. It took place in Rome, whither I had fled to escape the damp clime of Britain and the damp . . .

In Rome, I played it smart, avoiding all Americans and associating only with minority groups like the Italians. Things went along smoothly for some time. I had faked some reports to send in to the Foundation, and had then proceeded to forget all about my research project in the pleasures of the dolce far niente. Well, not quite niente. I did have certain obligations vis-à-vis Clara, the Girl on the Via delle Botteghe Oscure.

All went smoothly, I say, until one day when Clara showed up for our date with a fine, clean-cut young Italian she introduced as her fratello. I was somewhat distressed at her bringing the family into the whole thing, but nonetheless greeted the brother cordially. Imagine my surprise when he responded to my Italian greeting with: 'What are you on?'

I was frantically seeking a way out, when Clara came to the rescue with an interruption. 'Luigi parla bene inglese,' she announced, proudly linking her arm in his. 'Ha studiato negli Stati Uniti.'

'Well, well,' I said, with strained joviality. 'So you studied in the States. Benissimo! Now, let's all go and have a drink.'

But Luigi was not to be diverted. 'What are you on?' he inquired again, his smile starting to fade.

‘Nothing at all,’ I said airily.

His smile disappeared completely, and his jaw jutted out à la Mussolini. ‘Every Americano in Roma is on something,’ he stated bulldoggedly.

No exit, I told myself. This is it. But then, there were only a few answers left on my checklist. And who was a safer person than Clara’s brother to unload them on? I decided to dump the whole batch on him at once.

‘Probation,’ I began. Luigi’s jaw clamped shut.

‘The lam.’ His eyes narrowed.

‘A can-can kick: long and high.’ He moved a step closer.

‘The stuff,’ I said, as Luigi grabbed me unceremoniously by the nape of the neck and muttered: ‘You’re under arrest.’ How was I to know the place where Luigi had ‘studied’ in the States was the Treasury Department, where they held a seminar for international narcotics agents?

Ten days and twenty cablegrams later they let me out of the historic dungeon. As I limped across the Piazza di Spagna that dark, rainy day, my eyes were blind to the sculptural beauty of the fountain, my ears deaf to the musical lilt of the lingua Romana as the Italians sang out to each other: ‘Guarda, there’s Ava Gardner!’ ‘Over there is Signor Kirk Douglas!’ ‘Bah, I spit on Signor Douglas. Just wait till you see mio caro Elvis!’ And so on, like the cooing of innumerable doves.

Still, I thought, there’s nobody asking me: ‘What are you on?’

Then suddenly, above the dark, pomaded heads of the Italians, above the tops of the Fiats and the Isettas, I heard it. The first time, I ignored it, thinking it couldn’t possibly be for me. But, when it came again — prefaced by: ‘Hey there! You with the knock-knees!’ — I knew I could not avoid it.

It was the fatal question, of course. And the one shouting it was a shapely young thing with reddish hair and smoked glasses. (‘The better to see you through the rain, my dear!’)

I stopped. 'Who — me?'

By this time, she had come up to me. 'Yes, you. What are you on?'

I made the condemned man's pathetic attempt at one last joke.

'My last legs,' I said.

She didn't think it was funny. 'I mean what set are you on?'

'Set?'

'Set, picture. Or maybe where you come from they still call them talkies.'

'Oh.' My relief was immense. 'But I'm not in the movies.' I straightened my knock-knees as best I could. 'Not yet.'

She made a moue. 'You look just like the guy they told me about.'

'What guy?'

'The guy they said I'd find here by the fountain at five. He's playing the professor in *THE ARISTOTLE STORY*. That's a picture I'm on.' She sighed. 'But then there are so many American professors in Rome these days. What are you on?'

'I already told you: I'm not in the movies.'

'I don't mean that. I mean what all Americans except movie people mean when they say: "What are you on?" I mean, what kind of a grant?'

At last, the truth! And it couldn't have come from a prettier mouth. (Revlon?)

I lowered my eyes modestly. 'The Chevrolet Foundation,' I said.

She sniffed. 'Only a Chevrolet! Still, that's better than an Austin. I know a man on an Austin who actually has to work one day a week to meet expenses.'

'That is tough,' I said.

'A Chevrolet must be better than that, isn't it?' There was an expectant look in her eyes.

‘Much better,’ I said. ‘In fact, I live like a king — a king just released from a dungeon. Just to show you, how’s about you and I having a Cinzano on-the-rocks?’

‘You’re on,’ she said.

‘We’re off,’ I said, taking her firmly by the arm.

ISSUE P. 27 · SCAN P. 29

GIL ORLOVITZ PROPOSES

‘ACTION—STRIKE’

‘A first-person declaration and appeal, illustrating how the man responsible to society is the frank individualist’—the Editor of TRACE, endorsing what some may be so timid as to call his Associate’s injudicious outburst. ‘If we do not make known our honest sentiments in our own sphere of endeavour, we may as well give up—we’ll all be lost!’

I PROPOSE straight off that all artists throw off the traditional role of being beggars at the plush opera of tax-free condescensions to their creative works and engage at once in a general strike against all Foundations devoted to the fraud of deciding who shall and who shall not receive cash to buy time.

If nothing else, we shall discover who of the American artists possess the unyelled gut. We will hear the anguish of those who will cite Michelangelo, da Vinci, Haydn, among many others, who received Esterhazian benefactions and suffered no impairment of their esthetic faculties thereby. We will, as an afterthought, kindly, request these same anguished souls to show us the monumental artists who have been lapping it up since the inception of the American art-foundations.

Before numerous allegations are made in an effort to malign this writer on the most obvious of scales, I must delightedly insist on admitting that I partake of no patrimony; that I have inherited no monies, large or small; that my wife is no recipient of familial favours; that I possess no investments returning me sums for the leisurely propagation of time; that I am not a ward of unemployment compensation. In short, I am that most despised of men—I

work for a living. In short, I could use a Grant to buy time in order that I labour unrestrictedly and concentratedly on my art.

But from this point on, I cry: Strike. With a single qualification, a most urbane and charming codicil.

I propose, then, that all artists and all those connected with the arts, who bear some probity, shall refuse henceforth to bend over and fill out applications for grants.

I propose that all artists and all those connected with the arts shall, if requested to make nominations of artists for grants, refuse categorically to do so.

I propose that all artists and all those connected with the arts refuse to serve in judgement on their fellows by participating in juries selected for the express purpose of rendering yeas and nays on artists who are candidates for grants.

I propose that all artists and all those connected with the arts reject the act of being nominated themselves.

I propose that all artists and all those connected with the arts who, having been nominated as candidates for grants before the appearance of this call for strike action, and who will be advised that they have been selected to receive grants — shall categorically refuse to accept these grants.

I propose, finally, my urbane and charming codicil, namely, that an artist shall indeed accept a cash grant from a foundation, without application and without nomination, if the artist has stipulated, entirely on his own terms, the amount of money he is to receive and the amount of time in which he is to receive it.

My reason for proposing this general strike action by artists and all those connected with the arts? Aside from the Soviet Union, which subsidises mediocrity in the arts in dimensions impossible to describe with any sense of discrimination, never before has there been such a titanic construction, a phenomenon resembling the American

foundation cornucopia pouring out circus-sums of money to recognise the crippling right of the second-rate writer, the second-rate painter, the second-rate sculptor and the second-rate composer of music, to enjoy his shadow in the sun. It is not enough — so goes the logic of the foundations — it is not enough that the commercial and political fabric of the United States is now thoroughly woven to secure the comfort of the mediocre. That is not enough. The Foundation deems it a duty to certify the apotheosis of the shoddy, the dull, and the unimaginative, by freely opting which of the shoddy, the dull, and the unimaginative shall be showered with the largesse derived from prior corporate enterprise made by men who belched in contempt at the shoddy, the dull, and the unimaginative beings they thought they were not. And when the Foundation makes so bold as to reveal the nature of its personnel and the names of the judges employed to decree who shall be granted and who shall not, again, once again, we are treated to the honored petrifications of the shoddy, the dull, and the unimaginative whose private dialogues are amongst the most banal of privileged paranoias:

‘I fear talent. It is despicable.’

‘The talented want nothing more than to displace us.’

‘The talented artist is undecorous, unkempt, undependable.’

‘Talent can never really be detected in the lifetime. It would therefore be foolhardy to make the effort to detect it.’

‘Talent is its own reward. After all, the mediocre can only look forward to false recognition and money and time in his life. Give the money to the mediocre.’

‘Give the money to the mediocre—they do not threaten us (they are one of us)—we feel safe with them.’

‘Democracy is the proper glorification of the mediocre. We would be un-American to run counter to this Harding-esque ideal.’

There is but one force that can hope to alter the Colossus of Crud which is overwhelming and suffocating the talented, and that is the force expressed by the combined forces of the talented themselves. It has been said that it is an impossibility that the talented act collectively. I do not believe so. I believe that, at the very least—and in this issue, it is the very most—the talented can act collectively by embargoing the Foundations for the Arts.

I do not, after all, shut all escape-hatches. You are free to accept a cash grant from a foundation, if you have stipulated, entirely on your own terms, the amount of money you are to receive and the amount of time you are to receive it in. Let it not be said that the talented are without urbanity and charm.

Aside from the qualified codicil, I propose neither urbanity nor charm.

I propose action—

Strike!

ISSUE P. 30 · SCAN P. 32

A CULTURAL LOBOTOMY IN THE WEST

S. H. Sanfield

News Item: 'Culture for your leisure: THE MIRROR NEWS on Monday will launch a weekly magazine devoted to Books-Music-Art—the first of its kind west of Chicago. It will be a complete guide for the intelligent and sophisticated reader.'

LOS ANGELES MIRROR-NEWS

Scene I The managing editor's office of a large metropolitan newspaper. The editor is interviewing an applicant for the position of book review editor.

Editor: Used to have the reporters do the reviews, but now they want to get paid for them. Copy boy did them for a while—not too bad either—but the city room said it cut into his regular work. Now, the front office wants me to put out a weekly book section like the New York papers. Add a little class to the paper. You know, a little of that culture crap. I don't know how I got stuck with the responsibility. I guess they couldn't get anyone else. Anyway, I need someone to take charge of the thing. You think you can handle the job?

Reviewer: Yes, sir. I think I can.

Editor: Ever work on a newspaper before?

Reviewer: No, I'm afraid I haven't.

Editor: Then, what makes you think you can do it?

Reviewer: Well, I studied under MacLeish at Harvard and Van Doren at Columbia.

Editor: You mean the guy in the quiz-show scandal?

Reviewer: No, his father.

Editor: How about that! I didn't even know he had a father. Go ahead.

Reviewer: For the last six years, I've been teaching literature and literary criticism at Sarah Lawrence. As far as writing goes, I've published about fifty articles and reviews in some of the more meaningful magazines.

Editor: You mean, like the POST and COSMOPOLITAN?

Reviewer: Not exactly.

Editor: Well, it's not really important. I'd like to get this thing off my back as soon as possible, so I'll give you a chance to show me what you can do. (Walks to a table and comes back carrying a stack of books.) Here's a few books. Pick out two and have the reviews back here, first thing in the morning.

Reviewer: Did you say two?

Editor: You bet I said two. Look — we're running a paper here, and that means we've got deadlines to meet. How long's it take you to read a book anyway?

Reviewer: All right, I'll have them ready tomorrow morning.

*

Scene II Managing editor's office, the next morning.

Reviewer: Good morning, sir. Here are the reviews you wanted. (Hands them to the editor.)

Editor: (Glances at the reviews and mumbles.) A little long, but our rewrite man can take care of that.

Reviewer: But . . .

Editor: Never mind. Let me read them. (Reads the first one quickly and looks up with an inquisitive expression.) Tell me something. Are you crazy?

Reviewer: Sir?

Editor: What kind of a thing is this to review? — THE THIRD ROSE. What the hell did this Stein ever do besides write a few things about flowers? And these other names you've got here, Katherine Porter, Greese . . .

Reviewer: It's pronounced Gris.

Editor: Gris, Greene. What's the difference? No one's ever heard of him. You want to make our readers feel they're stupid?

Reviewer: (A bit perturbed.) But he was one of the . . .

Editor: I don't care who he was. No one's ever heard of him, and that's that! Now let me read the other review. Maybe that's a little better. (Reads.) There's no doubt about it. You really are crazy.

Reviewer: What's wrong with reviewing that one? Her last book was on the best seller list for almost a year. Although I don't know why.

Editor: It was a damn good book. That's why. Good story, lots of sex, the stuff people like to read . . . And as for this review of yours . . .

Reviewer: What's the matter with it?

Editor: (Becoming quite excited.) What's the matter with it!! Just listen to this: 'Her latest effort reads like a dull carbon of her previous book, the only difference being that this one is even more poorly written.'

Reviewer: Well, what's wrong with that?

Editor: (Yelling loudly.) Everything! That's what's wrong with it. First of all, you've come right out and said the book stinks.

Reviewer: I'm sorry, but I happen to think it does.

Editor: That's not the point. What if it becomes a best seller, or what if they make a movie out of it?

Reviewer: I don't think I get your point.

Editor: They're going to call this paper stupid. They're going to say we called it lousy. That's what they're going to say.

Reviewer: But it's a bad book; and even if it does become a best seller, it'll still be a bad book.

Editor: Will you get off that bad-book kick? There's no such thing as a bad book. It was published — wasn't it? That proves it isn't bad. The only bad books are the unpublished

ones. That's one of the first things you should've learned. And look at the cover on just about every book. They're all filled with quotes about how good they are. You know, if we really applied ourselves, we could probably get on a few covers ourselves.

Reviewer: (Rises slowly and walks out of the office — shaking his head and mumbling.) No one will believe it. No one will believe it. No one will believe . . .

Editor: (Bewildered at the whole thing.) Hmm, I wonder what that was all about. Oh, well, it doesn't matter. (Switches on the inter-com.) Miss Sweeney, tell the copy boy I want to see him. I think I may have a promotion for him.

ISSUE P. 33 · SCAN P. 35

ANGRY YOUNG MEN

Ruth Forbes Sherry

*When I'm a little wave-length happy as a clam
I'll mount a supersonic and loudly shout, 'I AM'
But should I meet a meson it might be plenty hot.
Good Heavens, there's a sputnik — I'M NOT!**

**Courtesy, THE AMERICAN BARD.*

A VERY silly poem indeed. Or is it? Perhaps it has profound implications. When this first couplet was written—you will be able to reconstruct the scene—we had not even thought of war that would annihilate the race. We did not even speculate upon such a denouement of the long and perilous ascent of man through miasma and fog of history, to his present shining eminence—O, what a piece of work is man, said Pope, so noble in reason! Our values were solid and golden. They gleamed God, Democracy, Capitalism, Evolution, Progress. And only a low mutter could be heard, warning of disaster.

In the second couplet, we meet trouble—something really bigger than ourselves, though too tiny to see in a microscope—a meson. And it's plenty hot! Then, when we are merrily astride our supersonic in a shower of constellations, there is sputnik. I'M NOT. How quick, powerful beyond any imagined enemy and carrying implications that reduce to absurdity all our former confidence, bravado, blindness! Racially speaking, a completely new concept, and a staggering one, is born. The end-of-the-world tenet, formerly held by crackpots, now confronts us all. This holy journey that is life may come to an abrupt end. This may be the last moment the world has, to turn away from despair.

Do you wonder that youth, having no sure shelter in the traditional God of his fathers, is hard beset, descends into a

beatnik inferno, escapes by whatever means he can,—not yet having learned to know that the ‘indwelling ideal lends all gods their divinity’ (Santayana).

He is angry. Many times, his anger turns to gall. He has not yet been sufficiently annealed in fire to will an emergent god, a god-image that is constantly evolving—not absolute—an image that engages the constantly-changing percepts of the race. Nevertheless, these young men and women, if not submerged in Nihilism, self-centredness, and defeat, are discovering a new pattern of thought which will rephrase their relationship to the universal. Our century has beaten the old morality out of people. This generation must produce a viable thesis to sustain its integrity. Only a negligible percentage, I think, persists in retreat to rudderless living, to tom-tom rhythms and to various and sundry isms. Those of us with more experience in endeavouring to pierce the veil of mystery that shields how-ness and why-ness, try to focus on reason and faith in life. We try, somewhat dazedly, to build with what materials we have.

Here is a San Francisco writer who bids fair to outlive his maggot-ridden pile. The graphic four-letter words are already shorn of their spice by repetition. Allen Ginsberg wrote *Howl*. Mr. Ferlinghetti was indicted for publishing it. At the trial, the judge said: ‘Pornography is inciting to obscene acts.’ He dismissed the case. However, the case had repercussions. The staff of *THE CHICAGO REVIEW* felt compelled to resign in order to print Ginsberg and some others. I believe free speech was at issue here.

Paris Leary (London) cites Kenneth Rexroth’s complaint against: ‘corn-belt metaphysics, Southern Colonels, Greenwich Village Pounds and sundry salesmen of Ransom, Tate, Warren, Ltd.’ But he thinks ‘undisciplined poetasting’ of Rexroth utterly devoid of poetry. Must we choose between a Jarrell and a Ginsberg? Can we accept Kerouac as a model

of prose-theme? And so the battle rages.

LOOK BACK IN ANGER is a play written by John Osborne, produced throughout Europe, and screened in the U.S.A. It is so rugged in its catharsis that already a new trend has set in, and even the 'posh quarterlies'—always a couple of years behind the university journals such as HUDSON, SEWANEE, PRAIRIE SCHOONER—will soon find a freer air grounded in intellect and using everyday language, rather than hashed-over phraseology, overstyled baroque, or the raw and often vile language of the California hipsters.

We must, as poets, sing. We must paint, as well . . . be engaged with the social scene about us. We must find a technique, each in his own idiom, to prick sensation of ear and eye and mind. We have, on the one hand, the rebel, on the other, the Academic. But, there are poets who combine colour, rhythm, and many variations of internal and end rhymes, with deep thought-provoking themes. Read Frost, Spender, Pillin, Melissa Blake; and a very talented poet, Donald Vincent Smith, publisher of OLIVANT, writes me that he is 'endeavouring to dispose of the conflict, but leaving it there in the work.' 'There is indeed a wide latitude of choice,' said Rossini. 'Any kind of music is good, save the boring kind.'

Let us condemn the whine, the limpsqueak that is the first reaction to an anger deep and valid against our time; but let us neither suppress publication in an unwarranted manner (freedom of speech must be at all times the writer's watchword) nor lose hope in this fine iconoclasm which must perforce precede the building of a new idiom in harmony with the awful forces that confront us — this vast and terrible zero. Let us not be overwhelmed by a meaningless cacaphony, or perish for a vision we cannot see. Let us gorge on bread and love and life. Stuart Chase says it — that it is in the searching out of variabilities, relationships, that one begins to find wisdom.

Then, there is this question of obscurity. Harvey Parker writes: 'Obscurity may arise from the fact that the reader has not educated himself to the level of grasping the sense of the author. But, another kind of obscurity is deliberate, unclear thinking.'

However, it does not follow that the author is to be condemned for translating what he sees with vivid imagery. It's hard work to write a book and get it published, and these people must have stamina and courage. We must not identify the Dharma Bum with Kerouac, nor attribute Jimmy's attitudes in *LOOK BACK IN ANGER* to John Osborne. I think we can tell by the tone of the writing whether it is autobiographical or written with the purpose of reflecting the scene. I have no idea that an O'Neill lived nor a Tennessee Williams lives like the people they have written about. However, I am sure that they — especially the younger ones — have outgrown sophomoric attitudes enough to see the whole picture and take on vicarious experiences. Here is where will comes to the rescue — education and orientation of desire. If we search for beauty, stability, and courage, we shall not be long uncovering it. Speaking from the peak of years on which I stand, I can 'see life whole' with Browning. And I find it magnificent. I find the values of a developed personality divine, or aspiring to divinity, and find them good. We do have to hold our noses sometimes; but does not this very odor of decay stimulate those of rationalistic and idealistic minds to analyse and proceed to defend what they know to be a greater truth?

On the Pacific Coast there is a group of magazines which have the air of exulting in their wrongs, rather than crusading for their rights. They stir the muck from the bottom. But a river flowing over pebbles clarifies itself, and the river is a far greater source of power than the silt it carries. Many magazines are setting true norms. Are you familiar with *EPOS*, *FIDDLEHEAD*, *OUT-POSTS* (England), the new

SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW, under Roy Miller, and William Ryan's CONTACT?

We must meet change of environment with change. Man has hitherto been able to meet his environment. That's why he's here.

Poets in all eras have been true leaders of thought. They are not so prone to look back in anger as to look forward. They set the norms, invisible as Ariel—yet as magic. They get into people's pulses with sound and fury,—and action ensues. Witness, makers of thought, of norms, of ideals. At random: Ruykeyser, Rilke, Neruda, Sandburg, Frost. Never defeatist or Nihilistic. They've subtly pointed goals. Philosophers, critics, essayists defile behind them. There are thousands writing poetry. Bring in your departments of History, Psychology, Anthropology, Astronomy—we can use them all. Indeed, we need never knock at Pollyanna's door. We cannot focus a future until we have reckoned with the findings of science and the humanities. Let us deal with religion—with changing concept of deity. Youth can no longer put his hand in the hand of God, and receive all the blessings he so ardently desires. Where pre-scientific thinking dealt with a god who created man, it is not uncommonly expressed now that the image of god is being created in men's mind. God's in Emergence, a concept that embraces science. Arnold said: 'The noblest work of God is an honest man.' Paine reversed it: 'The noblest work of man is an honest God.' Let's find God in emergence.

We are living in a world of unlimited power, unlimited possibility of catastrophe. How will this generation emerge from it? How set the norm? It is impossible to approach the urgent and distressful problems with any kind of lucid solution until a general background of known fact is put to use. It's a race between knowledge and catastrophe. We are not able to cope with astrophysics and the electron microscope; but writers must sift and deduce the impact of

this swift rush of ideas on the minds of men. I believe many of these angry ones will mature to this point. Beatniks will no longer go into spirals of despair, when all the chips are down. It is one thing to be iconoclastic; but, when the walls of Jericho are down, a new city must rise.

One thing binds us all. It is the longing of the human spirit to understand its derivation and its goal.

SOME ITEMS RECEIVED

by the Editor

CAIN'S BOOK, by Alexander Trocchi (GROVE PRESS, \$3.95, cloth—\$1.95, paper) is a thoughtful volume—not one of these superficially-similar, contemporary things dashed out in a fortnight, or expeditiously strung together from unconsidered intervals . . . and commonly dwindling to existential culs-de-sac. This is no dead-end, despite a statement near its close.

From time to time I think up epilogues . . . God knows if I'll ever be able to put a stop to this habit. I would need an eye in the back of my head and a hand to propel me by the scruff of my own neck. Wanting them, and with the creeping behind, the sudden onsets of panic, the epilogues are easily explained. To fall on myself from above, like the owl on the wee grey mouse.

To whatever extent Trocchi drew upon his subconscious, he has reflected long, and quite consciously reviewed these materials, with the rationality of the philosopher he is in fact. Perhaps, problems, not only of epilogue, but of several other phases could have been obviated by a utilisation of his authentic source-material — on relationships of drugs to personality, the psychology of so-called drug habits, and his provocative exceptions to official approaches to these problems in the U.S.A.—in a humanistic nonfiction study. But this isn't to suggest his is not a far-above-average novel. Particularly the first two-thirds of the book displays verbal imagination and lucidity in an individual style evidencing the genuine poet as well as the thinker.

How much of CAIN may be autobiographical is conjectural; yet, the narrator presents exceptional, often painfully-frank insights of the author's own world. And the

creations of memorable characters often must be re-creations of actual inhabitants of the shadow-realm of addiction,—and alongside of which, Nelson Algren's *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM* dwindles into the perspective of a painted backdrop.

And this book resulted from no mere urge to commercialise sensationalism; here, are neither 'beat' exhibitionisms nor offbeat concoctions of 'square' pretensions. Intensely sincere, the writing conveys facets (biological and contemplative) in a manner to stir fascinated interest, as only intimately-honest, personal-or-not confessions can do. The whole is filled with insights; and if many readers will take violent exception to many of the ideas (this writer would quarrel with what seems Trocchi's mis-use of the love-concept), the work remains uniquely worthwhile. Not every year brings even one volume to explore what's really been unexplored before.

Such praises demand substantiating quotations, difficult to provide out of context. However — here are some for hints of flavour, some for suggestions of thought.

Tom . . . still talks about kicking, and at the same time he denies that he is hooked, and yet he has agreed with me again and again that if you simply put heroin down you are avoiding the issue. It isn't the horse, for all the melodramatic talk about withdrawal symptoms. It is the pale rider.

The fort wall was a frail one between my father and his freedom. He shored it up daily . . . He gargled, watching his eyes in the mirror. He polished his shoes. He prepared his breakfast. He shaved. After that he staved off chaos until he had purchased the morning paper. Births, marriages, and deaths. He moved up and down the columns at the edge of himself . . . His hours were lived in that way, against what was gratuitous, and he was all the time envious . . . at the brink. There is no suspicion so terrible as the vague and damning awareness that one was free to choose from the beginning. (This writer's italics.)

Sensation, being the raw material . . . a hypocritical attitude towards it can be disastrous. In the Middle Ages the passionate love of a man's own wife was reckoned to be adultery. In the modern world all attachment which are not to the state are coming to be regarded as at least frivolous . . . Before we give up any sensual pleasure we should have explored it thoroughly, at least in sympathetic imagination; otherwise, history moving forward primly on its moral bicycle (in morals, nothing as complicated as the internal combustion engine has been invented) may leave something primal and essential behind.

We talked for hours, the ambiguous presence of rain and night silence seeming to hold us closer together . . . I told her that the great urgency for literature was that it should for once and for all accomplish its dying, that it wasn't that writing shouldn't be written, but that a man should annihilate prescriptions of all past form in his own soul . . . judge it solely in terms of his living.

In all this, there is no it, and there is no startling fact or sensational event to which the mass of detail . . . can be related. . . .

No beginning, no middle, no end. This is the impasse which a serious man must enter and from which only the simple-minded can retreat. . . . God knows it's a big enough confidence trick to make someone listen to you as you gabble on without pretending to explain how Bella got her bum burnt.

And finally, recalling that, if there is objective purpose in any writing at all, a major portion of justifiable effect must be from the enlargement of human comprehension. Merely to provide some bona fide data (without the art) is some achievement of service. To project aid in a meaningful frame is to do more. Trocchi has done this,—and with a modest sincerity leading him to declare the entire work was drawn from his own personal need, and that he did not endeavour to impregnate his book with meanings to benefit others. Rare honesty reflects from every page; and the resolving factor was that Trocchi really did not escape himself (no more can anyone), and that his thinking years did remain and intrude to prevent irrelevant dispersions into what he erroneously pretends are random jottings.

What a difference between this and books of a Mailer or a Kerouac! For, Trocchi arrives, if partially, at integration of personality. He demonstrates the dictum that no one is likely to make a literary-artistic contribution without having gone some fairish distance toward the making of himself. Whether Trocchi himself or anyone else may feel keen admiration for the personality behind this work, there can be no doubting its presence. In the opening, he asks: 'What the hell am I doing here?'—and remarks how, at certain moments, he finds he is 'looking on my whole life as leading up to the present moment, the present being all that I have to affirm.' Again and again, in varied terms, he asks what he would be

doing, if not this. And thus, CAIN'S BOOK — more than a novel 'about dope,' proves to be a definitive querying of Destiny.

Surprisingly more effective than deficiencies first seemed to predicate, is *THE EXPERIENCE*, by Cecil Hemley (*HORIZON*, \$3.50). Happily readable, the novel is even captivating; and a majority of those looking into it undoubtedly will go on to the final page. But, to call the ending a conclusion would be to mislead; the book inconclusively does not reach past an awesome statement of the fortuities of non-reality, verbalised realistically. No solutions for modern man's failure to realise creations of his (each) image, are hinted. Thematic success here is just from presentation of common psychic dilemma; at the technical level, expert narrative construction has helped. But, the latter supplies the equivocal basis for believing that *THE EXPERIENCE* will be read in entirety by most who pick it up.

This somewhat vague opening was necessary; for, the first specific jotting was that the work's brevity saves it from dullness,—that, and a modish skilled execution which nevertheless has been surpassed by a few mere spinners of polished whodunits. Hemley's cleverness often is strained, his style frequently is affected, he achieves little genuine poetic condensation, and he artificially maintains tension through what amounts to an odd variation of tense out of the Latin historical present. In re the last, the narrator delivers snatches of recountals; diarylike, but without diary form. Though Hemley's characters aren't just types, at times they seem to be illustrative 'constructions' for his abortive metaphysical endeavours to go beyond Alfred Whitehead via soliloquies on the abstractions of Being and non-Being.

Meanwhile, there's much effective satirical humour—the uneasy trouble being that the casual development of this (like that of the sexual diversion, left quite unexplored) seems essentially purposeless, along with the lives described. The Countess Von Emsdorf (a comic-book seeress)

might have been the anti-Sartrean of his cast, but she proves too weak a foil even for those whose shallow scepticisms could not counter any profound adversary. Perhaps dramatic conflict isn't required for a theme of failure-of-faith, therefore failure of love and inevitable failure of self-or world-understanding/s is. Yet, in the finale, Hemley suggests that the George Huber who appears to have been projected as the main character (the narrator, Walt Sloan, more nearly fills that role) nebulously has 'arrived.' This suggestion remains unconvincing, to be sure.

The book's central shortcoming actually is that it conveys no pervasive or persuasive author-personality. Hemley also has published reflective verse, without manifesting his authentic self; less wonder that neither he nor his characters registers deeply in this novel. In verse, he has seemed to have explored at secondhand 'in the manner of' other poets; the novel, too, conjures personalities of other fictionists. Notably, Edmund Wilson and Charles Williams,—despite that Hemley's surface-expression is different from either. One of the differences is a vital lack in a poet: absence of the significant condensation occasionally accomplished by both Wilson and Williams. Though (see *HECATE COUNTY*) Wilson's observer-technique could have been one of Hemley's models, the personality of Edmund Wilson is transmitted. And, while Williams' theological ramblings may have been slight aid in his struggles to bring his characters alive, he, also, at any rate transmits the fascinating personality of Charles Williams.

In a sense, a yet-graver shortcoming, over and beyond not integrating personality with language: Hemley does not identify with a culture, much less a subculture. Universality of message never is achieved by assuming anonymity; and this book provides no means of identifying Hemley even as what might metempirically be called Occidental Man. Not simply a 'missing' author-individual, he doesn't register as a

member of any strata of American society. In fact, he well could be a Londoner who had resided for a time in New York. Not speaking for himself, he literally speaks for no one, in this relation. The work's undoubted success, flaws and all, is not in the category of novels — or in any sort of comparable literary expression — but in this very exemplification of confusion over identity, its terrifyingly-sceptical assertion of the self-doubt which is maddening thoughtful people at this time. Which does not contradict the second sentence in this paragraph; the book ends without anything said about THE EXPERIENCE!

- Nearly everything to be remarked about the outstanding book of poetry among the many received (James Schevill's *SELECTED POEMS 1945-1959*, softback distributed by PAPER EDITIONS Corp., \$1.50) the Editor has already remarked in articles, both on Schevill and on the earlier publications of material in the first section of this new offering of most of his better short poems and verse. Here is one of America's representative significant writers — for what he has said, and for his individualistic manner of saying things.

Items not in any of his prior books fill 45 pages, against only 22 pages of older work, it should be noted. Schevill's trend undebatably now is toward the topical and immediate, and away from the stuffs of high poesy. Not intending actually to censure him for this,— but bluntly to state that he's stopped drawing from the deep well (poetry exemplified in parts of the first section) and is exploiting his mastery of clever versification, provocatively and entertainingly writing off the 'top of the head.' The substance of his diversion is far from unimportant; and the blame perhaps may be attached to the times, which not only elicit, but seem to require this sort of writing. Perhaps Schevill is performing his truly intended function in pieces such as *A WOMAN STARING THROUGH A TELESCOPE AT ALCATRAZ*, 1958 (the longest, and concluding poem) instead of rising to more durable fame in

poems it had seemed might have ensued HERMANSKI, THE HOBO, AND THE HOTEL OF DEATH.

Similar tendencies are in many contemporaries. They are observable in a new English collection, AN IDLENESS OF AIR, by Arthur Wolseley Russell (SCORPION, 7/6, boards, 5/-, paperback, a guinea for a signed, numbered copy). In this case, the difference is that Russell exhibits not a title of the individuality shown by Schevill from the start. Probability of a major loss from this poet's absorption in immediacies is not in evidence; well devised though his pieces are — and well-fulfilling a poet's mission to enhance and expand awareness of life — no divine madness glitters through lines barely escaping triteness.

Not just increased preponderance of surface-topicalities, but a good deal of embittered frivolity, marks the decline of another poet from whom significant contributions had long since been expected. He is the Canadian, Irving Layton. His A RED CARPET FOR THE SUN (JARGON, \$2.50) is a beautifully-presented compilation of all he 'wish(es) to preserve.' The introduction reveals a depressed and disturbed mind behind the later poems; his dubiously-vindictory concerns with, and protests against, what he sees in the world are subsidiary to personal complaints. His talent with words and forms is superficially turned to slight (often childish) ironies out of petulance that his years are passing, that he's becoming less lusty, that he recognises the waning of creative powers he himself has allowed to wane. His actual age (48) provides no excuse for his feeling old, nor even middleaged (as he keeps harping), and surely no reasonable ground to speak of himself as 'now dead!'

To turn from this saddening prospect, to one who is new to this Editor: at age 25, Robert A. Perlongo (THE LAMP IS LOW — P. LAL, 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta, India, \$1) lacks the force and fury of a Layton, but he has other virtues as rare: crispness, tightness, and perceptive ebullience,—

realised with valid, unique personal flavour. Both because the piece is quotable and because it happens to be the only one in this attractive pamphlet which bears upon the topical-timely issue (Perlongo otherwise is engrossed in special insights of verities), here is AMERICAN NEWS ITEM :

AMERICAN NEWS ITEM

He was frantic on a high ledge
armed and stupendous
his heart wedged between his wild
teeth
The citizens were indignant in the street
what does he mean?
they grabbed for the police
instinctively
The sun hung in the sky from a wire
the wire slipped
and the madman came tumbling
down
The newspapers made the matter clear
his beautiful talented
american automobile had been
dispossessed

And aptly-contrasting comparisons might be drawn from THE COLLECTOR and other poems (ROUTLEDGE AND KEGAN PAUL, 12/6), by Peter Redgrove, also in his twenties . . . or from BEYOND THE LAST LIGHT (GOLDEN QUILL, \$2.75), by William DeLange Crage, an American . . . or from THE CLEVER BODY (THE SPENSERIAN PRESS, \$1.75), by Melvin Walker LaFollette . . . or from . . . This is by no means a careless, facetious suggestion of a long long list; for, we could go on, you understand (as Henry Miller likes to say), to refer to not a few new books of admirable verse. These three are verbally, sensuously, and intellectually stimulating; and yet, none of their adroit authors matches the poetic impacts of the

comparatively-naive Perlongo. None commences to match either Schevill or Layton at their best.

Exactly why should this be? And that is the question. Several routes lead to answers — different answers, each of equal validity in each frame of questioning arrival. However, one deep-down deficiency prevents any of the three from ‘making it’ with Schevill, Layton — or Perlongo. That a magical element is missing, becomes obvious in rereadings,— which virtually none of their contents will bear. The same may be detected by shifting from a segment of any one book to a segment of another; this will reveal that, notwithstanding each author has his personal variations in composition, the presently-modish styles are markedly similar. And the reactions they skilfully stir quickly are found to be — in most verses — conjured outside the lines themselves. Reactions have to be subjective — true enough — but these reactions are drawn quite apart from the slightly-realised individualities of phrases. Readers are led via their own fancies, through their own self-formed series of mixed memories and inventions. Contention may be that this then justifies the work; but good poetic prose is a better vehicle for such evocations, because free from selfconscious technical restraints of pseudo-poetry.

In brief, these writers fail as poets, because their words, phrases, and lines are not inseparable from what should be the inviolable entireties of true poems. Their expressions are not identical with aesthetic meaning-or-not effects; they are poetical narrators, who have used language, instead of having been used by language. No artifices of imagery, metaphor, simile, or melody can conceal that their words were deliberately and rationally chosen to fit their concepts, and not selected from spontaneous occurrences of phrases in heightened moods or in tense emotional conflict. These intelligent writings were not experienced integrally to their authors’ sadnesses, angers, or delights.

This is not to assert that even the most genuine of integrated spontaneities often produce poetry,—surely, not great poetry. From the beginnings of what usually is mistakenly-discerned as ‘literature,’ and recently more than ever, oodles of stuff that’s been ‘real’ enough has been pouring forth . . . and failing in sense, nonsense (which can be quite as valid, artistically), and/or originality (which has to be cultivated by each poet within himself). Genuine poetic success is over a hundred times more rare than measured success with stimulating and well-contrived verse. Coincidentally, another new collection is by Judson Crews (THE ORGES who were his henchmen—HEARSE, \$1). No better reference could have been searched out; for, whatever may be said of Crews, in terms of textual analyses, his every word poetically happens—be the results superb, mediocre, or downright bad. Crews stands confirmed as a Poet, regardless. This selection shows that he has become more self critical and is doing more self-editing. He’d probably deny this; but if he’s not consciously more disciplined, then he has endured long enough that his subconscious has become more discriminative.

Whatever the cause, much in this HEARSE publication is really splendid. The work is varied, and many pieces deserve to be quoted; but OF THE SELF EXCEEDED, besides providing an example of real poetry, tangentially says two or three things this Editor attempted to say above:

The page itself was part of the meaning
and the man reading was part
The sky above is part of the meaning
and the bird drifting like a feather
Because the page is as perfect as meaning
and sky is as perfect as air
The mind is startled in face of perfection
it hides from the limitless air
The bird is perfection of air, of air
but the mind is lost short of meaning.

Partly in fairness to Crews, to remark that this is rather uncharacteristic. Most Crews pieces contain many specific images; but the Editor also was moved to demonstrate that abstractions (in the limited and currently-derogatory applications of the commoner definition) do form Poetry, too — besides to amplify his critical view, while letting Crews illuminate himself.

Less luminous, are some others which show that they were dashed off with the free left hand. The best of these recent booklets is O. W. Crane's VIEW FROM THE GARRET (first from 7 POETS PRESS — \$2, if purchased separately from the entire series, already announced). And Jonathan Williams, in publishing his own THE EMPIRE FINALS AT VERONA (JARGON, \$2.50), with collages and drawings by Fielding Dawson, has magnificently exhibited his genius in the art of book-design. But the writings shout the ultimate in diversion of whatever poetic talents to the ready topicality, while ballooning their time-dimensions through layers-upon-layers of the reaches of history. Regrettable, also, that Williams expends energies through intricacies of ironical humour which will be lost on all except those few whose mental agilities have made them simultaneously members of several select minorities in too many fields of the schizophrenic culture this startling large chunk of grapho-photo meld typifies.

Any discussion of POEMS BY SEVEN (VOYAGES PRESS, \$2 — announced in TRACE No. 35) would seem an anticlimax, were it not that one of the seven is Geoffrey Hazard, whose inclusion here is an anomaly: a lively young poet amidst dilettantes and poetasters. Here's a generous group of his short stabbing pieces. What is he doing here? And why has he not become better-known and published in his home England? The answers, of course, are fairly obvious: he provides work 'from abroad;' and for his part, he sensibly takes his print where he finds it, being too 'fresh' for the majority of British editors,— whose average dullness of

perception seems even duller than that of their U.S.A. cousins.

To which last, the editors of SCORPION PRESS have been exceptions. They offer Christopher Logue's SONGS from the lily-white boys (in collaboration with Lindsay Anderson, Charles Fox, and Oscar Lewenstein, for Harry Cookson's play, THE LILY-WHITE BOYS, 5/-), although this one is not to be regarded as a flare for the heights of Olympus — rather as a clever and bitterly-humorous commentary on other aspects of the U.K. scene.

Largely-adverse criticism of THE FUGITIVE GROUP: A Literary History, by Louise Cowan (LOUISIANA U. PRESS, \$5) can be shortened by stating that this extensive careful labour shares the defects of most 'outlines' in cultural fields. Particularly recalling those in philosophy, with their spritely bits on personal idiosyncracies of subjects whose thoughts are badly, and even misleadingly, suggested. Biographical histories often plead their own noteworthiness; and this one does so in marked degree; with Miss Cowan busily generalising upon influences and trends which could as convincingly be generalised upon for obverse purposes. The book suffers more from this than might a survey on a grander scale; Miss Cowan—while no doubt as accurate as possible in respect to valuable objective data (the contents of the FUGITIVE magazine, for instance)—undertakes to expand (metaphorically) this limited area by attributing exaggerated stature to members of the Group. That many respected critics have not found that these writers exerted either telling or praiseworthy influences, is scarcely hinted.

Getting down to it, the author herself supplies little real evidence to enhance their reputations,—repeatedly taking for granted far-flung effects from small area/s of recent activity. Her favoured methods of brightening the literary grandeur of the Fugitives, are in detailing places and times of bestowals of degrees and academic honours, and (odd contradiction!) in

quoting vaguely-undiscriminative ‘blurbisms,’ of which a large proportion well might be termed the self-serving commendations the Fugitives have from time to time supplied one another. In the biographical vogue, she has used the novelist’s omniscient viewpoint (also, an odd inconsistency—in a semi-scholarly work), weaving into the text, subjective speculations that are no more substantiated than are her editorialisings.

And, although she editorialises, she does not really display ideas of her own, or even her own reactions—as Donald Davidson, one of her key figures, did so successfully in a book covering much of the same ground, the highly-recommended *SOUTHERN WRITERS IN THE MODERN WORLD*. Perhaps the Cowan study should not be criticised for teacherly repressions of the author’s personality, were it not that, in other aspects, the work is by no means objective. Since the book is not ‘neutral,’ something more than unqualified respect for curricula and academy nabobs ought to be transmitted, at a level of pleasant readability for the general public. More-informed readers might then make allowances for understandable prejudice, and half-forgive the book’s bias. But, not only does Miss Cowan refuse to convey her personal feelings, she usually avoids specific descriptions of ideas and insights of her subjects—in the same manner she asks readers to accept ‘on faith’ that their get-together talks ascended to the rare atmosphere of high metaphysic. There are no clues indicating precisely what she may feel are poetical or philosophical contributions; if she’d broken over and at least tried to transmit her very own vital and unique feelings from impacts of poetry or ideas, she might have become more convincing than through boresome deference to textually-explicable virtuositities and/or faithful conformities with ‘standards’ . . . her utterly-impersonal endorsements of approved aesthetics.

EVERGREEN No. 11 should have sold well: a super-exhibition of 'high'-nonbrowed yellow-journalism for pseudo-avantgardists keeping faith with green-ever tradition. But, a couple of off-the-offbeat items win the fur-lined.

The leading article is a 'straight' from William (Sick) Burroughs—practically a testimonial recantation of sawdust repentance, which may or may not have been trailed tongue-in-cheek. However, it drags not simply strong, but reeking passages to discourage experimentation with narcotics (notably heroin). The irony is that—besides the question whether mere words may deter the hell-bent any more than they can 'ruin' the sane-of-heart—earlier EVERGREENs (and portions of this one) reveal that editorial purpose in featuring such a confession must be for sensational shock-value (\$\$wise).

The other item was more subtly unexpected: a piece by Warren Tallman, called KEROUAC'S SOUND. In the first place, the title itself seemed contradictory—Kerouac being unsound. But, reading on, to find out how Tallman distorts logic, one boredly learns that the apostrophe is possessive! This is a discussion of K's noise. And Tallman undertakes to relate it to honest jazz! The real contradiction is that he tries to accomplish this in a modified-academic pattern. He actually praises the total-dispersion of Kerouac's scribblings in pedestrian ('A' grade, for a fuggy Ph.D. thesis) language, devising mis-explanations of quotations from K's subconscious drive! Here's an unbeat fake-rational endeavour to join an apostasised version of creativity to the beat-label . . . predicated upon a false either-or, between rule-book writings and self-expression with 'animal suspicion of the meaning values toward which words tend,'—which he asserts Kerouac 'almost' harbours.

Meanwhile, back at the nativity scene of the pseudo-beat children of His Eternal Satanic Majesty, the Nos. 4 of both THE SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW and CONTACT carried forward

unheralded campaigns to prove there are no such real prophets to be ignored, in what was not their own country in the first instance. These periodicals, each in its own fashion, endeavour to provide lively demonstrations that by no means a substantial part of avant significance derives doubtful dreamstuffs from the incense of Mexican MaryJane and south-of-south sex. This, they are doing very well. Vastly better than *ESQUIRE*, a recent issue of which offered 'square' preachment, without providing any real avant-garde choir: that lewd never-maiden mob passing around ad-collection plates, of course. *SFR* never has hired any of these; and *CONTACT* encourages only demi-virgin relatives. In view of the spread of orgasmic exhaustion to utter boredom at the sweating limits of revolt, varied moderation proves more stimulating than the always-farthest 'out.' After all, when one is really 'gone,' that's it. To dig have dug — to put this crisply. Neither *SFR* nor *CONTACT* editors seem to feel they are saved the bother of making discriminative selections of the material for their pages, merely by checking their applicants' certifications of sex-mania or drug-addiction.

TWO GUEST REVIEWS

A PANEGYRIC

At the banquet of the wedding of Heaven & Earth, Henry Miller is the orphic priest. And His World of Urania, with Sydney Omarr (9th House, \$5 — and U.K. distrib. SCORPION, 30s.) is an invitation to the feast . . . of Lao Tzu bread, Buddha broth, Einstein steak, Krishnamurti vodka, and Heraclitean dessert. How the hell can anyone get up from this table and not be touched?! And there is no telling what will happen, or how, for it is continuous in one zodiac or another.

Henry Miller, the inebriant, not satisfied, rushes out of the House with his pitchfork, sticking it into the sleepers, inciting them to the marvelous element of Unpossession — you are in the midst of it, and have not connected — and they look up at him dazed! This must be the Devil Himself or a Dragon; and so it is, both! But it is the Dragon straddling continents with a sack of the unvisited familiars on his back, exhaling fiery talon-thoughts and loosening odd bottles of his brew (who can ever forget them?) upon nightmare cities. Lucky, the few somnambulists, who in torment of awakening, clutch another rung of the ladder. Rungs: when at the ripe moment, thunderbolted, you find yourself on top! And all about, you hear a music never heard. And behind you, hopping with glee, is Miller — & You are on the journey of the person that is you. Who today in that mechanical country is as intoxicated as this devilish Dragon? Yeah, I know, they are in the House of the above&below, soloists! choiring!

AND SOME CONJUNCTIONS

Either you are an aficionado, or you are not. Two days ago, I was told to reread the last three pages of REUNION IN BROOKLYN; and right out of it came Richard Groff, who is confronting the infernal American war machine by refusing to pay his income tax! And a small watercolour of a tiny boat, from a batch of pictures I was to frame, at peace on a tempestuous sea, and underneath on the shifting floor, 1951, Henry Miller. Then, that Belmont woman who said: 'My God, what filth, and from a man who writes so beautifully!?' They can stand only half a face. Yet, she it was who sent me THE COLOSSUS OF MAROUSSI, last February, a morning I was not all there. I picked it up and got plastered with its enthusiasm, the honesty and the phosphorescence Miller poured out was so torrential I had to read some of the pages aloud in the shop, so hot were they in my head, nor did I lay the book down till I was done with it. I cannot remember ever reading such lyric prose before. Last week, I automatically pulled his COSMOLOGICAL EYE, and I recalled not dipping in then, because I knew it, not having read it, and placed it under my GARDEN with its addenda and the second manuscript of my BOOK OF ONE; for what reason, or why, who knows? And then this new title, the URANIA, uranium! (saying: understand me, it is the human fall-out that is unremittingly destroying mankind) and I again remembered five years ago, I had had a hunch someone was going to horoscope his works; and that it should be given to me for review caught me by the neck. Astrology? A pabulum for egos, because of its quackery, it never had the least appeal, except as symbols for probing other strata of reality, as it has for Miller. Sign? naturally! The fascination of the night sky, the eyes of [...]

Loving. It is the 12th of March, I am at this paper, the moon's eclipsed, and it is snowing stars on Gloucester.

Vincent Ferrini

No doubt there will be some carping about this year's Lamont choice, Donald Justice's *THE SUMMER ANNIVERSARIES* (WESLEYAN U. PRESS, \$3 and \$1.65, softb.). It is a conservative choice, and there were some strong contenders among the other 46 volumes entered. Mr. Justice's is not a book that overwhelms you; he works by understatement, achieving a subdued grace. His poems are pitched in a minor key, and I think *THUS* suggests his style and indicates clearly his aim:

The major resolution of the minor,
Johann's great signature, would be too noble.
It would do certain violence to our theme.
Therefore see to it that the variations
Keep faith with the plain statement of the oboe.
Entering quietly, let each chastened string
Repeat the lesson she must get by heart,
And without overmuch adornment.

(Quite a relief after all the howlings and gasoline explosions, poems that growl, snap, crackle, and pop!) These poems have a quiet power — a force that is enhanced on re-reading.

The book deserves a wide audience; and since it is published in an attractive paperback, as well as in hard covers, it stands a good chance of reaching more than the handful of readers usually reached by a first volume,— which you would never guess it to be from the display of control and technical assurance. For ten years, Justice has been writing poems, some of which have already found their way into anthologies. He is a slow worker and, obviously, a perfectionist. One gathers that pieces that are only partially realised are consigned to the wastebasket or remain in the poet's notebooks. (There is nothing reckless here; perhaps one might ask for a little more daring.) Here we have only 34 poems, most of them short lyrics. But they come off; nearly all of them come off. They are superbly controlled, highly

disciplined poems. They seldom soar; but then, none of them sprawl.

Justice is a poet who has been nurtured by the universities; first at the University of North Carolina, and later at the University of Iowa, where he now assists Paul Engle in the Creative Writing Workshop. However, he can't be called an 'academic poet'— whatever that means. He seems to leap over most of the pitfalls that beset the English instructor-poet, whose first volume invariably contains poems about books, paintings (Breughel, followed by Picasso), foreign places (thanks to the Guggenheim grants), and cute little pieces about insects or bizarre animals from the zoo or encyclopaedia (due to the influence of Marianne Moore, who is, since she won the approval of Eliot, America's most overrated poet). As I say, Justice is not pedantic; two poems allude to Henry James, and there you have it. Nor is he derivative. He has no doubt read Pound and Eliot; but, except for *ST. ANTHONY ST. BLUES*, which reminds one of *PRELUDES*, he seems to have recuperated successfully. From the looks of his songs, one gathers that he has gone to school to the Elizabethan and Jacobean lyricists, including the metaphysicals.

His subjects range widely, though many of his best poems seem to arise, without the taint of sentimentality, from memories of childhood: *ANNIVERSARIES* and *THE POET AT SEVEN*. One of his rare failures is *SONNET TO MY FATHER*, with its trite conclusion: [...]

Guy Owen

JAMES COLVIN'S BLAST

SINCE it is a crime to be human, I say: Let us commit crime at every opportunity.

By human, I mean the freedom to develop all our faculties on the basis of Man's Greatest achievements since the beginning.

Hundreds of Billions have been spent for experiment in armaments and Our 'Planned Obsolescent' (Economy), but very little, if any, for the arts which alone can give meaning to what should be continuous creation. Life is art, not business.

People no longer converse with one another. They feel hopeless, because words have lost their meaning: Velocity is confused with Felicity, War with Peace.

In our Concentration Camp way of living, all is congestion, frustration, and contradiction.

They psychically manipulate people's needs through TV and advertising. It neither tells, nor it it Vision.

Our great wealth has made no one secure, even Billionaires are beating the Income Tax.

Corporations expropriate patents like Atom Power paid for by the people, then deceive them about its implications.

The headlines of our Daily Newspapers report Embezzlement by Manager and Labourer alike. I suppose this is a kind of Socialism in reverse. Stealing ourselves broke.

We poison the earth, pollute the water, and contaminate the air — all for the sake of ' $E=MC^2$ ': Enervation equals money squared by the speed of light. And now, even our money is becoming worthless.

The people's great Art image for our time is the Western Cowboy riding a \$50,000 horse with a \$5,000 saddle, blazing away with his trusty six-shooter, killing everyone who gets in

his way. Would that killing might again be so simple! Hence, the nostalgia.

Screaming at us from TV, radio, telephone, movies, billboards, and skywriters (supersonic), to buy toilet paper and deodorants in a world burning alive with radioactivity. Ah! — just the sniff a good oldfashioned barnyard again — with real live relaxed animals in it, and wholesome manure smelling like a balance in nature. No Miracle Drugs.

How has all this affected the people? They walk through the streets with stony faces and empty-glass eyes (tranquilised) like doomed ones on death-row. Walk into a strange restaurant: people, inarticulate stare at you like a dog; any moment, you expect them to wrap their arms around their plates, and with lowered heads and sulky eyes, begin to snarl and snap in jungle style.

But wait. All isn't hopeless. We have one thing in common — Our Debts!

How — you continually ask yourself — can one keep his balance in this pressure-cooker of distraction?

For most, the answer is to freeze up and try to ignore it all. But, for the writer, at grips with reality, it is to find the way, no matter the cost.

Return to those unique moments of awareness that make the most sense, to recapture the original feeling, and re-create yourself in dreaming. It is the only electro-magnetism we human beings have to unite us in the common effort.

We must create the 'Poetry of Absence' — which means just about everything human that has been ignored. Public-relations words shall become doors and windows on a truly human world. The creative writer has all the knowledge and history on his side. By offering a real vision of what the world is now, against what it truly aspired to become, we need have no fear what choice will be made.

When the writer begins to become the spirit of the force he has released, first in himself through discovery and then through creation, he will release people for the adventure of life. The gasp, thrill, and song of fulfilment will govern his choice of syllables, words, sentence structures, stanzas, and poems—until he himself has become one with the harmony of the universe. Then, the movement of Man and the movement of stars shall be the same.

ADDENDA

Recently, this feature—rather than only a catch-all for miscellany—has been opening with hoped-stimulating tangential observations of less-classifiable sorts. These may prove contact-points for clues to curve-plots. But—leaving the simile, before the conics reveal the Editor is rusty on his math (a dunce-cap vision urges: ‘A way!’)—to proceed . .

Whether or not ‘Thought Should Be Taught’ (can it be?), as Clarence Van Vredenburg (St. Augustine, Fla.), through this slogan, would persuade the world, widespread renewal, perpetuation, and expansion of purposive consciousness (all levels) deserves encouragement. Impressed by radionic tests which (by inductive speculation, at any rate) lend new credence to subliminal theories, Van Vredenburg asks interesting questions rising from reported confirmation that only about 15 percent of the human brain is actively used.

This could lead to scientific re-examination of ages-old suggestions that thought is not a physical process, but that it moves upon and through incarnations . . . that what ancient wisdom has called the ‘deception’ of individuality, is at the threshold of more than speculative explorations. Among possible discoveries—should a broader concept of the nature of Mind be established—might be objective support for what are today generally identified as Jungian theories of so-called creativity. Especially, the writing of poetry.

- With TRACE focus on writings, the fact that many new centres throughout the world have more comprehensive intentions, has been little stressed. One of these (founded by Robert Alexander—Zack Walsh, secretary) is The Temple of Man, Inc., a Zen humanist fellowship with both cultural and social interests (15A Ave. 54, Venice, Calif.). . . . And while a recent THREE PENNY PRESS session at the UNICORN (8907 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles) featured Peter Carr of GALLINAS

PRESS, now back on KUSC with poetry, other programmes interestingly have ranged from Eric Nord on free love to Bob Alexander's exposure of THE NARCOTIC MYTH and Richard Liebow reading The Four Principal Yogas & My Year in the Hindu Monastery out of RICHARD'S BOOK (handmade, deluxe, individual watercolours, \$20)—from: Box 2783, Hollywood 28, Calif.). . . . Music, too, gets involved,—as at Malibu, where Curtis Zahn's new Pacificus Foundation features Bartok at both writers' and painters' gatherings.

- Since its awards are simply cash given literary-mag contributors chosen by annual surveys through an established Committee, performing arbitrarily and without apologies, THE LONGVIEW FOUNDATION, Inc. seems not to fall in the class of those criticised by Mr. Orlovitz. Dissent as one may from their 1959 choices, these 33 (each impartially paid \$300) surely include many kinds of writers: from iconoclastic Robert Bly of THE FIFTIES (now SIXTIES) and several socio-political leftists, to HUDSON and SEWANEE writers—in criticism; from Gregory Corso in BIG TABLE to Donald Hall in POETRY and CONTACT—for poetry (or what?); and in fiction, TRACE contributor Walter Lowenfels (for a SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW piece this Editor felt nearer qualified as poetry than either of the foregoing)—with extreme other directions in honours to NAKED LUNCH Burroughs and KENYON's Richard Stern.

- Coast to coast, and in between, public activities called literary are largely U.S.A. phenomena. San Francisco's CENTER readings were to include Stanley Kunitz, in May . . . a seminar under James Broughton, in June. . . . AVALON (New York) Conference dates have been announced changed to Sept. 10-12. . . . The Donnell Library auditorium has continued in use for poetry readings, notably under FOLDER sponsorship. . . . Up at Cambridge, Bennett Cerf (of RANDOM HOUSE) was scheduled to keynote the Radcliffe College annual Publishing Procedures Course, in late June. . . . WBAI

(see TRACE No. 35) now has two Wednesday-evening poetry programmes. . . . George Stillman reports on finals of season's readings at John Mitchell's Coffee House, and as re Will Geer's Folksay Theatre Group. . . . Henry Picola, whose New York notes also are many, took over poetry readings at the Capri (406 6th Ave., Greenwich Village) with co-operation of Mary Boyd Wanger, Alfred Dorn, and others, in endeavours to counteract what he has called the farcical 'beat' readings. Greenwich Village Poetry Society, headed by Anca Vrbovska, appears behind the 'anti' movement. . . . Wm. Stanley Braithwaite was scheduled to address the International Academy of Poets at Lambert Castle, Paterson, New Jersey—where, in April, societies from all parts of the world were participating in an exhibition of books, photographs, autographs, paintings, and famous original mss. . . . Houston, Texas, recently saw (and heard) choral drama based on HAWK (by Vivian Ayers), and there were tentative plans to bring the presentation to the Pacific Coast. . . . California's Chaparral Poets are holding their 21st annual convention in Riverside, May 21-22. . . . Among poets 'on tour,' is Robert Graves, on what is called a 'short-short'; while novelist James T. Farrell was on a countrywide swing, to terminate at Stanford University. . . . Not to be overlooked, back in New York—the last season's increased interest at the YM-YWHA POETRY CENTER, where there were March readings from W. B. Yeats' plays, with direction by Frank O'Connor and Liam Clancy.

- Though arranged alphabetically by authors, the ensuing books (most of which had not yet arrived, or had just been received) are noticed for a variety of quite different reasons—as their titles and authorships may indicate: T. H. HUXLEY, Scientist, Humanist and Educator, Cyril Bibby (HORIZON, \$5); SELECTED LETTERS OF WINIFRED HOLTBY AND VERA BRITTAI (1920-1935), edited by Vera Brittain, with Geoffrey Handley-Taylor (A. BROWN & SONS Ltd., £3 3s. Od.,

illustr. deluxe ltd. edit.); THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF HASIDISM, Martin Buber (HORIZON, \$4.50); HENRY JAMES, Leon Edel (U. OF MINNESOTA PRESS pamphlet, \$1); THESE THINGS, 'by Eldredge' (who is Everett E. Miller—GREENWICH, \$3.95); FACING NORTH, Terence Heywood and Edward Lowbury—illustr. in three parts: Poems and Pictures of the North . . . Trolls: A Fairy Tale . . . North Discoveries (MITRE PRESS, £1 or \$3); THOMAS WOLFE, C. Hugh Holman (U. OF MINNESOTA, \$1); MARK TWAIN, Lewis Leary (same, \$1); DEATH and the Christian Answer (PENDLE HILL, 35c); ANTI-POEMS, Nicanor Parra, transl. by Jorge Elliott (CITY LIGHTS series, 75c); A DEMOCRATIC MANIFESTO, Ferdinand Peroutka, with Introduction by Adolf A. Berle, Jr., and in both French and English editions (VOYAGES PRESS, \$3 and \$7.50 for ltd. edit.); COASTLINE Poems, S. Gorley Pitt (HUGH EVELYN Ltd., 9 Fitzroy Square, London, W.1, 7s. 6d. or \$1); LITHUANIAN FOLK-TALES and SELECTED LITHUANIAN Short Stories, both edited by Stepas Zobarskas (VOYAGES, \$4.50 and \$5).

(IMPORTANT NOTE: discovered too late for correction in No. 36 TRACE, a radically-wrong meaning from transpositions of words in Walter Lowenfels' PARAGRAPHS—'the burning children' instead of 'while somebody else takes care of burning the children!')

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