

istic criticism has been considered for many decades as significant in modern literature as Anatole France's and Jules Lemaitre's essays or Oscar Wilde's essays in this country. Always a passionate champion of an elegant style, Kerr exerted a tremendous influence on German prose writing. The neat, syncopated, staccato phrasing in his seven compact volumes of *The world in Drama*, (1937-1939), are still a model of beautiful writing. Since he was expelled from Germany, Alfred Kerr, who has lived for the last eight years in this country, has often written directly in French.

JANKO LAVRIN, was born in Slovenia in 1886. Studied in Russia and has been professor of Russian language and literature at the Nottingham University for the last fifteen years. His best known works written direct in English are *Heroic songs of the Serbs*, (1920), *Dostoyevsky and his creation*, (1920), *Ibsen and his creation*, (1921), *Gogol*, (1926), *Introduction to the Russian novel* (1942).

MAX LERNER, was born in Minsk (Russia), in 1902 and brought over to U.S.A. in 1907. Graduated at Yale and Harvard. Assistant editor of the "Encyclopedia of the social sciences" and editor of "Nation" between 1936-1939. His best known works in this country are *Ideas for the ice age*, *It is later than you think* (The need for a militant democracy) and *Ideas are weapons*. At present he works on a *History of the cult of power and anti-humanist trends in Europe since Machiavelli*. Lerner doesn't think that seeking his own gain is "an inherent or universal trait of man," but rather a part of an historical method of organizing economic life." As professor of sociology he pioneers for a "democracy militant enough and a collectivism democratic enough to survive."

ROSE MACAULAY, born in Cambridge, novelist, historian and critic. Works: *The two blind countries*, poems (1914), *Pottersism* (1920), a novel preceding *Babbitt*, *Dangerous ages*, novel (1921), *Told by an idiot* (1923), *John Milton*, 1934), *The works of E. M. Forster* (1938), *All in a maze: a peace anthology*, (1940).

HUGO MANNING, is a young English poet and literary critic. Has contributed to "Horizon," "Manchester Guardian," "The Windmill," etc. During a voyage of studies in Latin American countries published *Dead season's heritage*, poems (Buenos Aires, 1942) and *Argentine Anthology of modern verse*.

WALTER DE LA MARE, born 1873, poet, essayist, novelist. Like Maeterlinck he is considered by many critics as "a master of the shadowed borderline between reality and unreality." De la Mare himself said in one of his most characteristic essays "Our only hope is to get away from realism in the accepted sense. An imaginative experience is not only as real as but far realer than an unimaginative one."

DENIS SAURAT, professor of French languages and literature at the London University. Born Toulouse, 1890. Has been Director of the French Institute in London between 1923-1945. Publications: *Blake and Milton*, *The three conventions*, *Tendances* (*Essais de critique*), *La littérature et l'occultisme*, *Blake and modern thought*, *La peur de la peur*.

Books Received

EDWIN HONIG: *Garcia Lorca*, the first full-length account of the life and work of the Spanish poet. Editions Poetry, London, 7s. 6d.

AUGUST WEBER: *A new Germany in a new Europe*, translated by Moray Firth. Lindsay Drummond, Ltd., 7s. 6d.

WALTER DE LA MARE (Editor): *Essays by divers hands, being the transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, New Series, Vol. XXI, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press.

ANTHONY IRELAND: *Byron in Piccadilly*, a play in three acts. Jonathan Cape, 3s. 6d.

JONATHAN WILSON: *Poems*, with an introduction by G. M. Young. Jonathan Cape, 3s. 6d.

CHARLES WILSON: *Holland and Britain*. A general account of this country's historical interrelations with Holland, published in "The Nations and Britain" series edited by W. J. Turner. Collins, 8s. 6d. net.

T. W. BARP: *French painting, with 44 illustrations in colour and monochrome* produced by Avalon Press and Central Institute of Art and Design. A comprehensive analysis of French schools and styles from Poussin to Braque. 8s. 6d.

WILLIAM GAUNT: *British Painting, from Hogarth's day to ours*, a volume in crown quarto, with 31 illustrations in colour and duochrome. Avalon Press Ltd. 8s. 6d.

REVUE DE LA MEDITERRANEE (Tome III, No. II), a continuation of "Revue d'Alger," published in Algiers under the editorship of Jean Alazard. Pierre Martini publishes a study on Stendhal and England.

THREE, a promising new magazine published by No. 3 Formation College, Chiseldon. 6d.

THE WIND AND THE RAIN (Vol. III, No. 2), edited by Neville Braybrooke and John Leatham and published by Phoenix Press. 1s.

MONDO EUROPEO: *rivista di civiltà europea*, a promising publication of European interests edited in Rome by Vincenzo Spicacci in Italian, French and Russian.

IL' 45, a remarkably well produced review of art and poetry edited in Milan by Raffaele de Grada and Stefano Terra.

ADAM

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

A Literary monthly in English and French

Editor: Miron Grindea

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JONATHAN CAPE

A D A M

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

Editor: Miron Grindea

T. S. Eliot

REFLECTIONS ON THE UNITY OF EUROPEAN CULTURE

BEFORE speaking on such a large subject, I think that I should present my credentials. For the unity of European culture is a very large subject indeed, and no one should try to speak about it, unless he has some particular knowledge or experience. Then he should start from that knowledge and experience and show what bearing it has on the general subject. I am a poet and a critic of poetry; I was also, from 1922 to 1939, the editor of a quarterly review. In this first talk* I shall try to show what the first of these two professions has to do with my subject, and what conclusions my experience has led me to draw. So this is a series of talks about the unity of European culture from the point of view of a man of letters.

It has often been claimed that English, of all the languages of modern Europe, is the richest for the purposes of writing poetry. I think that this claim is justified. But please notice that when I say "richest for the purposes of writing poetry" I have been careful in my words: I do *not* mean that England has produced the greatest poets, or the greatest amount of great poetry. That is another question altogether. There are as great poets in other languages: Dante is certainly greater than Milton, and at least as great as Shakespeare. And even for the quantity of great poetry, I am not concerned to maintain that England has produced more. I simply say that the English language is the most remarkable medium for the poet to play with. It has the largest vocabulary: so large, that the command of it of any one poet seems meagre in comparison with its total wealth. But this is not the reason why it is the richest language for poetry: it is only a consequence of the real reason. This reason, in my opinion, is the variety of the elements of which English is made up. First, of course, there is the Germanic foundation. After this we find a considerable Scandinavian element, due in the first place to the Danish conquest. Then there is the Norman French element, after the Norman conquest. After this there followed a succession of French influences, traceable through words adopted at different periods. The 16th century saw a great increase of new words coined from the Latin; and the development of the language from the early sixteenth century, to the middle of the seventeenth, was largely a process of testing new Latin words, assimilating some and rejecting others. And there is another element in English, not so easy to trace, but I think of considerable importance, the Celtic. But I am not thinking, in all this history, only of the *Words*; I am thinking for poetry, primarily of the *Rhythms*. Each of these languages brought its own music: and the richness of the English language for poetry

*This essay is part of a talk which was recently broadcast by the European Service of the B.B.C.

is first of all in its variety of metrical elements. There is the rhythm of early Saxon verse, the rhythm of the Norman French, the rhythm of the Welsh, and also the influence of generations of study of Latin and Greek poetry. And even today, the English language enjoys constant possibilities of refreshment from its several centres: apart from the vocabulary, poems by Englishmen, Welshmen, Scots and Irishmen, all written in English, continue to show differences in their *Mus.*c.

I have not taken the trouble to talk to you in order to praise my own language; my reason for discussing it is that I think the reason why English is such a good language for poetry is that it is a composite from so many different European sources. As I have said, this does not imply that England must have produced the greatest poets. Art, as Goethe said, is in limitation: and a great poet is one who makes the most of the language that is given him. The truly great poet makes his language a great language. It is true, however, that we tend to think of each of the greater peoples as excelling in one art rather than another: Italy and then France in painting; Germany in music, and England in poetry. But, in the first place, no art has ever been the exclusive possession of any one country of Europe. And in the second place, there have been periods in which some other country than England has taken the lead in poetry. For instance, in the final years of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th, the Romantic movement in English poetry certainly dominated. But in the second half of the nineteenth century the greatest contribution to European poetry was certainly made in France. I refer to the tradition which starts with Baudelaire, and culminates in Paul Valéry. I venture to say that without this French tradition the work of three poets in other languages—and three very different from each other—I refer to W. B. Yeats, to Rainer Maria Rilke, and, if I may, to myself—would hardly be conceivable. And, so complicated are these literary influences, we must remember that this French movement itself owed a good deal to an American of Irish extraction: Edgar Allan Poe. And, even when one country and language leads all others, we must not assume that the poets to whom this is due are necessarily the greatest poets. I have spoken of the Romantic movement in England. But at the time Goethe was writing. I do not know of any standard by which one could gauge the relative greatness of Goethe and Wordsworth as *poets*, but the total work of Goethe has a scope which makes him a greater *man*. And no English poet contemporary with Wordsworth can enter into comparison with Goethe at all.

I have been leading up to another important truth about poetry in Europe. This is, that no one nation, no one language, would have achieved what it has, if the same art had not been cultivated in neighbouring countries and in different languages. We cannot understand any one European literature without knowing a good deal about the others. When we examine the history of poetry in Europe, we find a tissue of influences woven to and fro. There have been good poets who knew no language but their own, but even they would have been subject to influences taken in and disseminated by other writers among their own people. Now, the possibility of each literature renewing itself, proceeding to new creative activity, making new discoveries in the use of words, depends on two things. First, its ability to receive and assimilate influences from abroad. Second, its ability to go back and learn from its own sources. As for the first, when the several countries of Europe are cut off from each other, when poets no longer read any literature but that in their own language, poetry in every country must deteriorate. As for the second, I wish to make this point especially: that every literature must have some sources which are peculiarly its own, deep in its own history; but also, and at least equally important, are the sources which we share in common: that is, the literature of Rome, of Greece and of Israel.

There is a question which ought to be asked at this point, and which ought to be answered. What of the influences from outside Europe, of the great literature of Asia?

In the literature of Asia there is great poetry. There is also profound wisdom and some very difficult metaphysics; but at the moment I am only concerned with poetry. I have no knowledge whatever of the Arabic, Persian, or Chinese languages. Long ago

I studied the ancient Indian languages, and while I was chiefly interested at that time in Philosophy, I read a little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility. But generally, poets are not oriental scholars—I was never a scholar myself, and the influence of oriental literature upon poets is usually through translations. That there has been some influence of poetry of the East in the last century and a half is undeniable: to instance only English poetry, and in our time, the poetical translations from the Chinese, made by Ezra Pound and Arthur Whaley, have probably been read by every poet writing in English. It is obvious that through individual interpreters, specially gifted for appreciating a remote culture, every literature may influence every other; and I emphasise this. For when I speak of the unity of European culture, I do not want to give the impression that I regard European culture as something cut off from every other. The frontiers of culture are not, and should not be, closed. But history makes a difference. Those countries which share the most history, are the most important to each other, with respect to their future literature. We have our common classics, of Greece and Rome; we have a common classic even in our several translations of the Bible.

What I have said of poetry is I think true of the other arts as well. The painter or the composer perhaps enjoys greater freedom, in that he is not limited by a particular language spoken only in one part of Europe: but in the practice of every art I think you find the same three elements: the local tradition, the common European tradition, and the influence of the art of one European country upon another. I only put this as a suggestion. I must limit myself to the art which I know most about. In poetry at least, no one country can be consistently highly creative for an indefinite period. Each country must have its secondary epochs, when no remarkable new development takes place: and so the centre of activity will shift to and fro between one country and another. And in poetry there is no such thing as complete originality, owing nothing to the past. Whenever a Virgil, a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Goethe is born, the whole future of European poetry is altered. When a great poet has lived, certain things have been done once for all, and cannot be achieved again; but, on the other hand, every great poet adds something to the complex material out of which future poetry will be written.

I have been speaking of the unity of European culture as illustrated by the arts and among the arts by the only one on which I am qualified to speak. I want to talk next time about the unity of European culture as illustrated by *ideas*. I mentioned at the beginning that during the period between the wars I had edited a quarterly review. My experience in this capacity, and my reflections upon it, will provide the starting point for my next talk.

Our two next issues will contain the continuation of Mr. T. S. Eliot's "Reflections."

Paul Neuhuys

WALLONIE

WHITE farms, pink shutters
The road rises like our hopes
Sweet dales where the Meuse
Reflects delicate slopes.

Pink shutters, white farms
The threshed hay in neat stacks lain
In the villages, in the barns—
Rossignol, Brevanes, Verlaine.

The cemetery yawns
Above stubble and meadow,
and church with vane of cockatoo.
The quiet tennis lawns

And in the soft orchard redolent
With the taste of fruit and freshness,
the wind like a Fleming hand
fondles an unknown masterpiece.

Translated from the French by Alan Cave

Et avec Shaw, voilà Anatole France balayé. Romain Rolland n'a rien fait de si bien que cette dernière œuvre. Voici enfin, après tant d'échecs, la justification de son long effort. Voici enfin le livre qui sera, pour la postérité, à la fois Romain Rolland et Péguy. Et Romain Rolland a écrit son chef-d'œuvre à soixante-quinze ans!

Denis Saurat

Open letter from J. B. Priestley

THIS open letter* is just what one would expect from an established and successful writer who has identified himself with the progressive youth of his generation. "No doubt it is very hard for you to imagine me as anything but a plump, middle-aged author, sitting in a cosy huddle of books, pictures and pipes in my Albany study, where we last met," Priestley begins. "But I want you to remember that I was once a returning serviceman too." He trounces, among others, the "muddle-headed oldish business man" type, the seemingly progressive individual who "artfully escapes from making any positive move," and even "some brilliant literary acquaintances" who, as expatriate Yogi-men enjoying the amenities of Southern California, can really find no opiates to ease the fevers of the external world. The directives Priestley gives are based on an international outlook, socialisation of industry, faith and love and so on. I think it is Priestley's own fighting spirit that will most impress the serviceman who now enters Civvy Street.

I don't know what the political sentence of the serviceman of the 1914-18 war was like when Priestley "came out of the army with an ex-officer's grant for Cambridge," but after this war it is, generally speaking, very much like his own. This does not mean that the serviceman of this war is necessarily a brighter type; it means simply that certain events leading up to the present war revealed to those who had to pay for cumulative idiocy that the significance and horror of such things like the Black Dragon Society and of certain gentlemen who figured in the Almanach de Gotha, were created by all those who did nothing to neutralise them. Priestley underestimates this awareness in his serviceman and sounds insufficient when he says things like this: "... Western Man now finds himself linked to his fellows, and can no longer be happy and healthy-minded in a diseased society. . . . It is the time at last when the world must reject the age-old belief that life for most men must necessarily be brief, brutish and sad. . . ." (During the Renaissance people had similar ideas.)

It would be wrong to expect that an epistle like this should deal with the less generalised but nevertheless urgent problems that face former service people. However, the author does speak about the problem of private life. "You feel at the moment that you can only save your soul by bolting your door and then pottering or brooding in the most delicious seclusion," he says. "All right; go and enjoy the secret sweets of our civvy life. . . . But beware." This warning implies that every serviceman is able to fit into the normalities of civilian life almost instantly. That is not so. Care and time are needed to wean the serviceman from the makeshift, substitute life with its pin-up girls, compulsive comradeships and weakening of responsibility in conditions of almost blind obedience. The zestful ideal of life of one like J. B. Priestley can only be kept to the fore if emotional as well as political guidance can be given. Even sturdy types break down in a world of criminal confusion and it does not take much for those in a weakened condition who have little balance between private needs and the external world to succumb to demoralisation and even shouting *Juda verecke!* A civvy suit may not hide cynicism, bitterness and that traumatic state caused by frustration and an interrupted life. This side of the serviceman's problems hardly earns Priestley's exuberant concern, and his little book is a reminder that it needs to be examined thoroughly in the light of present-day psychopathology and social science. Hugo Manning

*Letter to A Returning Serviceman, by J. B. Priestley. *Home & Van Thal*. 3s. 6d.

Two poets

THOMAS has long ago reached a position which, while it is not out of the reach of literary criticism, is beyond the reach of advertisement. His poetic position has been assured since the first poem he published, and the excellence and independence of his work is very largely due to the fact that he has no need of a specific effort. To a writer it is this effortless fluency, and the surprising economy of material that goes with it, which makes a large part of Thomas's unique appeal—although to readers who are not writers his chief asset is his spellbinding power and his wholehearted return to lyricism uncomplicated by barbarian sentiment. I say "economy" advisedly, because there can hardly ever have been a lyricist, with the single exceptions of Pindar and Lorca, who took so literally the conception of loading every rift with ore. In this blizzard of words it is not always possible at first to detect that every flake has a structure, frequently more elaborate than the total structure of the poem. There is little to say in appraisal of his new book* save that Thomas's development has spread and continued, so that with Eliot, Gascoyne, and a few other writers he remains a living poet. It is to my mind both untrue and bad for Thomas personally for his publishers to equate him with Rimbaud. His artistry is conscious as well as innate—he has less in common with Rimbaud than with Donne, and his poetry is radically traditional. A certain number of readers who are confused by the written effect (especially in Sicilian grammata, in which form one poem here is printed) should make a point of hearing this work aloud. The stature of some of these poems, especially *Vision and Prayer*, and *Ceremony after a Fire Raid*, is staggering even in the presence of Thomas's past achievement.

Reed's self-conscious and almost shy book† is at an entirely different level. Reed is not a poet who is capable of spontaneity—read after Thomas, an unfair test, he exhibits a perpetual censorship, an inhibition which springs almost entirely from fear of his readers. Poems of his which have this fault are either imitations of successful seniors like MacNeice, precious in the manner of Hassall, or simply conversational and sagging. But in spite of a great deal of work here which seems to be banal, Reed's original talent is frequently stronger than his desire for success. *The Naming of the Parts* and the two following poems stand very high indeed among war poetry—they have a dryness and balance which is probably Reed's best achievement. *Chrysothemis* and *Philoctetes* are both contemplative poetry of a very high order indeed, where the diction somehow becomes focussed and Reed masters the preciousness which is his worst enemy. There is none of the kitsch-modernism on the level of Hassall and some of the recent "Kulchered" radio plays which defaces his Tristram sequence. *Philoctetes* has a great deal in common with the work of Randall Janell, but is a personal and undervalued contemplative poem in its own right, a form which has a traditional origin in work like Tennyson's *Ulysses*. The whole book is a battle between Reed the poet and the successful quackery of work like "The Dark Tower." McNeice adopted the technique deliberately for a medium in which an element of satirically conscious charlatanism could succeed in its intention, but on the printed page it is as ruinous as it is financially successful. The book ought to be read if only for the poems I have named, and although the conclusion is that Reed requires to be heavily selected, the quality of *Philoctetes* leaves no doubt of his originality.

*Dylan Thomas: DEATHS AND ENTRANCES, Dent, 3/6.
†Henry Reed: A MAP OF VERONA, Cape, 3/6.

Alex Comfort

The mind rampant

WE are the victims of our own ingenuity. We live in an age of catchwords and catch-phrases, and instead of applying to works of art aesthetic standards of appreciation, we label them and then proceed to explain the words on the label. That is the pass to which, in some respects, modern criticism has come.

What, for example, is a "psychological study"? I doubt if Fielding would have understood the term as we understand it. Laurence Sterne might have done. Dickens would, I feel sure, just wink his eye and march off arm in arm with Sam Weller to the nearest hostelry.

Auto-da-fé, a novel by Elias Canetti (*Jonathan Cape*, 15s.) may in accordance with modern usage be described as a "psychological study." Some may prefer, "psychopathic study." It is more than that, however. Here the human mind is placed on trial for its heresies, condemned and burned at the stake. "An act of faith" on the part of the author.

The story concerns Dr. Peter Kien, a sinologist and a bibliophile who becomes a bibliomaniac. (It is interesting to consider at what point a bibliophile turns into a bibliomaniac.) Kien with nothing but the companionship of his books and his scholarship, marries his housekeeper, an unpleasant, scheming, illiterate virago. The relationship between the two people has a vague resemblance to *Riceyman Steps*; but whereas Arnold Bennett makes the Earlforwards pathetically human, Canetti only succeeds in making his characters act and dance like ridiculous puppets, struggling to liberate themselves from the author's obsession.

After Kien's wife has cast him out of his own house as a penalty for refusing to yield up to her his bank-book, we are shown by a very harrowing process how he is slowly driven mad. His insanity is palpable from the outset. He is surrounded by madmen and madwomen, and we watch the delineation through his crumbling, chaotic brain; it is very much like a Grand Guignol. The power of it is tense and sustained. And yet there is nothing but aridity for the disturbed and unrequited imagination.

The human mind is revealed in all its grossness. This protoplasmic mechanism that has ennobled man and created a civilisation beyond the vision of a sibyl, has also been the repository for countless generations of perversity and inhibition. And have we not seen the ugly fruition in the demented mind of Europe?

The author spares nothing nor anyone. He refuses to compromise. Unfortunately, his skill is not equal to his intransigence.

His writing moves at a tremendous pace. It is the mind rampant, with ideas taken at the flood. An ebullition of thought, spouting and gushing and tumbling in one continuous, turgid stream. Here and there through the foam can be seen muddy pools of clichés. I do not doubt that the argument would be that it is the mind soliloquizing and that they are therefore permissible as colloquial *patois*; but too many clichés, especially in a work of this nature, can be a source of irritation.

There are some literary works which, although pretentious and not wholly satisfying in themselves, nevertheless contribute something to a vein of development whose influence will create, within new forms, fresh standards of value. *Auto-da-fé* is such a work.

Victor Haynes

Notes on contributors

ARAGON, born 1897. French poet, novelist and critic. One of the founders and leaders of the Surrealist School, then promoter of the Socialist Realist Movement. Played a considerable role in the Resistance period. Novels available in English: *The Bells of Basel* (1936); *Residential Quarters* (1938); *The Century was Young* (1941).

Hsiao Hung was born in North Eastern China and died in Hong Kong in 1942 at the age of 30. She won recognition with her novels *The place of life and death* and *The story of the river Hulan*. Her husband is the well-known, left-wing writer Hsiao Chun. (*Hung* means *Red*, *Chun* means *Army*.)

ALFONS MASERAS is one of the most prolific, vigorous and renowned of the Catalan writers. Stories of an extremely complex variety are contained in the three volumes—*Fatidical Stories*, *Tales of Chance* and *Sixteen Tales*, representative of their sweeping, creative and investigating intelligence.

Some of the stories display a fine psychological sense, some a nobility of thought, others are chronicles of adventure in miniature and many crudely coloured and picturesque in expression, such as *The Idiots*.

PAUL NEUHUYS, leading figure among the Belgian modernist school poets.

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