

NEW VERSE

No 20

6d. every two months

April-May 1936

IN THIS NUMBER

Delusions, by CHARLES MADGE. Quandary, by DERMOT McKAY. Prize for Good Conduct, Quicksilver, by KENNETH ALLOTT. Three Poems, by GEOFFREY GRIGSON. Suburb Factories, A Thousand Killed, The House, by BERNARD SPENCER. The Dream, Fox-Trot from a Play, by W. H. AUDEN. Three Poems, by NORMAN CAMERON. Maternal Grief, by K. J. RAINE. Sympathies with Surrealism, by HUGH SYKES DAVIES. Reviews, by W. H. AUDEN, GEOFFREY GRIGSON, etc.

COLLECTED POEMS 1909-1935

T. S. ELIOT

Mr. Eliot's poems have hitherto been scattered in many small volumes, and some have never appeared in book form. Here at last is the definitive edition to date, with a new long poem which has never appeared before. 7/6

THE FABER BOOK OF MODERN VERSE

Edited by MICHAEL ROBERTS

7/6

THE BURNING CACTUS

STEPHEN SPENDER

7/6

FABER & FABER

24 Russell Square, London, W.C.1

DELUSIONS

I

Where are the dancing girls ? They are not here.
Not here ? Then back into the night again,
The night of images that disappear
And reappear to mock the tired brain.

We have no home. Our bourgeois home is wrecked.
We seek instead the shadowy consolation
Of glimmering alcohol, and still expect
The unexpected of our own creation.

For we create—proud tyrants of a moment—
Bright visions, born between despair and fear,
And, in possessing them, survive our torment.
Where are the dancing girls ? They are not here.

They are not here. They are not in the street.
No corner holds them, and no glass swing door
Admits us to the presence. Still we meet
The blank appearance that we met before :

Glittering spectacle of the lonely bar
And the society which there forgets
Itself, while the routine of things that are
In fantasies that are not, dissipates.

Behind the glasses and the polished board,
Behind the faces as they change and smile,
Promises of delusion seem assured
And homeless wanderers soothe their long exile.

Beyond the printed words that catch their eyes,
And the chance gleam of some suspended sign
May come the blissful moment of surprise
When the dull bourgeois can become divine.

II

To those who sail the salt quotidian sea
The tempting syren sings across the flood,
But once plunged in, they find her out to be
A desert island with a coast of mud.

Lulled by the waves, no mortal heart resists
The gaudy scenery of the noble bay,
That paradisaal image which persists
In all its brightness to the present day.

Each one is Tantalus to what he dreams,
The waters of illusion lap his chin,
Ready to hand the flattering symbol seems
And Tantalus is always taken in.

Each day he starts, he leaps towards the goal,
Driven along by life's impulsive tide.
His wishes are no more in his control
Than the bright objects which his eyes provide.

Boasting each project absolutely new,
His rising sciences, renaissant arts,
All that he frames has one grand aim in view,
One which is not declared but simply starts.

Automaton of fate, led on by time,
He learns no lesson from repeated pain.
Like the old lag, he knows the price of crime
And yet he cannot help but try again.

Till, one fine day, still hoping against hope
In spite of all this once to be exempt
From nature's warrant and the hangman's rope,
The bourgeois perishes in his attempt.

III

Pillage the great unruly crowd invites
To take the bourgeois palaces by storm.
The sheets of glass, the softly shaded lights
Attract, induce the ugly murmuring swarm.

Fingers that grab, and hands that overturn
Obey their prompted nostrils over-wrought
With female scent diffused, and rebels burn
What in their slavery they would once have bought.

Into charred ash high priced silks disappear,
Up blazes all the furniture of class
And frightened lift-girls fill the shafts with fear
Wounded by splinters of the shivering glass.

Basement and Mezzanine with turmoil swell,
But look ! some little Lenin of the mob
Breaks with harsh reprimand the lustful spell
Raising his voice : " Our task is not to rob

" Since not to us but to the workers' state
These folded silks, this glittering trash belong.
For us meanwhile more pregnant works await
Than useless vengeance adding wrong to wrong.

" No doubt in time you too such silks shall wear
When luxury shall crown the common toil
And jewels glitter in the shop girl's hair
And gold and silver round her wrists shall coil

" Symbols of love, relating then no more
To the exploited, suffering, human mass,
Incentive to no vast imperial war
But innocent and valueless as glass.

" Then bide your time. That time has not come yet.
Meantime replace the spoil, put out the flames.
At every entrance let a guard be set."
Thus in his generous anger he exclaims.

The guilty crowd recoils ; passion subsides,
Passion that long had known the secret goad
Of property that on men's shoulders rides :
They glimpsed her, bowed beneath the insulting load.

The moment came. She fell into their power.
Her, disinvested, helpless now they saw,
But felt, as they rushed forward to deflower,
The bayonet of proletarian law.

See, as they stumble out upon the kerb,
The brain still glowing with desire undone,
They turn their backs upon the pile superb
And return home, the last illusion gone.

IV

Sometimes at evening travellers have heard
The speaking dunes of ever shifting sand
Utter a note as shrill as any bird,
While the wind creeps across the cooling land.

Sometimes the sight of gently waving green
Invites the weary traveller's footsteps on
Refracted far across the waste between,
But, one step more, the glancing palms are gone.

The secret of the desert is a stone
Because the stone contains once living things.
The fossil breccia has to marble grown,
Which to new life the chiselling sculptor brings.

Thousands who live in ignorance and pain
Build up the giant pyramid of life.
Their dust, the desert, covers all the plain
Except the uncanny sphinx, their hieroglyph.

CHARLES MADGE

QUANDARY

The earth was snow-shod : and the ferns were gnomes in the stubble
Blind in the darkness waiting the emerald eye,
And crucible question of Hamlet, limb for limb struggle.
Hamlet said, ' Conscience turns currents awry.'

In the twin moment the sun discovers the haunches
And tubes of the wood commencing osmosis beneath.
Movement begins in the twined capillary branches
And the sap executes quick course in the sheath.

Samson surrendered in pruning, strength is in growth.
This is the wisdom developing swiftly in channels
Involving the fjord and the landway, coupling both,
And the ice-gutted boats with bearded funnels.

The earth was snow-shod : but suddenly now refraction
Shot in the emerald flash : surge bubbled for motion.
And now in the second she seized the green venture of action
And sped indigo toward the ocean.

Here was the flow of release but I remained leashed :
Where the earth was ice-shod and the corpse of the northern
nation.
And turned to the huddled dwellings where the sailors fished
And hum-drum the sea hob-nobbed the vegetation.

DERMOT MCKAY

PRIZE FOR GOOD CONDUCT

Will you take a seat ?

The War will soon be over.

The state requires

my wedding ring and my apostle spoons
my sons.

There will be a special service in the cathedral
after which the clergy will be disbanded
and the fane profaned and put to immediate service

to manufacture wooden legs for heroes
with a profitable side-line in glass-eyes
and employment found for over two hundred widows.

The feverish wounded in the base hospital
the nurse's coif becomes a phallic symbol
he hears the red cool drop and the cistern filling ;
and the stripped dead buried in ungainly postures
their lucky charms sent back with kindly letters ;
the invalids sent home with eyesight failing
to sit on a waiting list for operations
and never to be put off iron rations ;
and the nervous shipwrecked bodies in lovely grounds
set aside by old ladies with unearned incomes,
crucified nerves which come to life obliquely :
the cows are licking the shadow from the field
the wasps buzz angrily in the stoppered bottle
the devil comes daintily over the stepping stones
they sit in the sunshine, crying no rest for the wicked.

KENNETH ALLOTT

QUICKSILVER

All good people rise for the National Anthem
the hand gripping the razor in the pocket
the hand clenched in the hair, scrubbed in the basin
the knot of curious watchers at five to eight

the future with crossed knees
the kissing of blood relations
the future bed-ridden
expenditure on flowers
the future behind your back
sweet conception of Judas
the future lock, stock and barrel
all the hymns carefully chosen

battered with nostalgia
the icy roof of the world
the gipsy warns you that the birds fly south
they steal away your youth
torn to pieces by sharp teeth
powdered by groined and gritty rocks
the splintered sun among the splintered rocks
the braces the bananas the papers the cotton frocks
and the wind spinning the band at will
the long rollers of the sea now strongly turning in
and the future hidden from us.

KENNETH ALLOTT

THREE POEMS

1. SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS

The hours of the public place :
In the morning hour the old
Man with his nurse meets
The child with her nurse, between

The rosebed and the violas.
At three the students with
Their theodolites and red
And white and black poles

Measure the known heights,
And the scarlet and the green
Footballers pattern their knees
In the wind, by the black wood

Where the caterpillars spin.
And the evening hour, when
The purple mallards are
Saying ach ach on the pond,

When the man dressed in ochre
Spikes the silver paper, and
The sweaty lover squirms
Under the lime tree.

2. THREE EVILS

When the sky has the ominous
Colours of a bruise, even then
Bother less over the spirits from the sky
Than the spirits from the earth :

They are up under your feet
Before the sun goes, they frequent
The urinals, the henbane heap,
The oil patches of the lorry yard.

Be very careful about them,
Be careful about the invalid,
Stubbly, in slack flannel, who
Reclines on the river balcony.

And I warn you last—she is the
Worst evil—against the Sybil,
The rare Marocaine who foresees
Events in a mirror of tar.

3. FOUR OCCUPATIONS

It is winter and the beggar ties
Brown paper round his stumps
Where he sits by the wall,

And in the studio Blessed Prufrock
Talks of the man from Buffalo, who
Burnt his pants by the fire,

And in the wood the gamekeeper
Who lives alone, fattens
His sow in a hollow tree,

And with Blessed Prufrock the son
Of the psychoanalyst talks about
Cements, and Jefferson, and

Oyster shells and edible mushrooms,
And through the thick pool the lean
Salmon slides to the tide.

SUBURB FACTORIES

White as a drawing on white paper
The architect built the tall
Suburb factories,
Compact as a liner admired from the littered beach,
Gaunt like the ward of a hospital.

And when he sunk their roots among
The places of spare trees
The huts and the wastes,
To stare down the polished arterial road,
And to peer across the chimneys,

Made the big concrete mushrooms grow,
Towers with gland-heads ;
He edged to the cliff
The doomed life of the villas ; fastidious streets,
Men signed with their fathers' manual trades,

Their faces curiously primmed and clenched
If perhaps they can leap above the memory
Of those scorned trades.
Stamping, the concrete brushes down their fences,
It brings drilled crowds, small property.

From the diamonded parks I would wish to delight
At shapes that attack and are new :
But it's hard,
Knowing only for certain ; power is here surrendered
And it changes to the hands of the few.

Changes though ; change is the air ; roofscape
Touches some nerve, and the lost
Sinking scream
Of electric trains touches it, and white masonry
Springs up like a fire, but strikes like frost.

BERNARD SPENCER

A THOUSAND KILLED

I read of a thousand killed.
And am glad because the scrounging imperial paw
Was there so bitten :
As a man at elections is thrilled
When the results pour in, and the North goes with him
And the West breaks in the thaw.

(That fighting was a long way off.)

Forgetting therefore an election
Being fought with votes and lies and catch-cries
And orator's frowns and flowers and posters' noise,
Is paid for with cheques and toys :
Wars the most glorious
Victory-winged and steeple-uproarious
. . . With the lives, burned-off,
Of young men and boys.

BERNARD SPENCER

THE HOUSE

There that terrible house, those corridors
Fluffed with sound-proof material
Where a glove is drawn over feel of good and evil :
And men move whom wages move, but without belief.

Wages and hum-drum made the thin, forbidden,
Mouth of this young girl. She admires a man
Who has not seen her. How she smiles at her hands
In secret, as if sharing a joke with someone.

A simpleton claws at money across my mind.
A speed-king hunches in his cockpit. Lovers
Go spry to the pictures—it is Saturday. Marchers
Sing, furrow the fountained square : Whom fanaticism,

Hunger, hunted ; speed to crumple distance
Or any lust electrified to burst bound
From that terrible house ; them I stand with outside.
That house I know : I live now : therefore love them.

BERNARD SPENCER

THE DREAM

Dear, though the night is gone,
The dream still haunts to-day,
That brought us to a room,
Cavernous, lofty as
A railway terminus ;
And crowded in that gloom
Were beds, and we in one
In a far corner lay.

Our whisper woke no clocks,
We kissed, and I was glad
At everything you did,
Indifferent to those
Who sat with hostile eyes
In pairs on every bed,
Arms round each other's necks,
Inert and vaguely sad.

O but what worm of guilt
Or what malignant doubt
Am I the victim of ?
That you then, unabashed,
Did what I never wished,
Confessed another love,
And I, submissive, felt
Unwanted and went out.

W. H. AUDEN

FOXTROT FROM A PLAY

Man. The soldier loves his rifle
The scholar loves his books
The farmer loves his horses
The film star loves her looks
There's love the whole world over
Wherever you may be
Some lose their rest for gay Mae West
But you're my cup of tea

Woman. Some talk of Alexander
 And some of Fred Astaire
Some like their heroes hairy
 Some like them debonair
Some prefer a curate
 And some an A.D.C.
Some like a tough to treat 'em rough
 But you're my cup of tea

Man. Some are mad on Airedales
 And some on Pekinese
On tabby cats or parrots
 Or guinea pigs or geese
There are patients in asylums
 Who think that they're a tree
I had an aunt who loved a plant
 But you're my cup of tea

Woman. Some have sagging waistlines
 And some a bulbous nose
And some a floating kidney
 And some have hammer toes
Some have tennis elbow
 And some have housemaid's knee
And some I know have got B.O.
 But you're my cup of tea

Together. The blackbird loves the earthworm
 The adder loves the sun
The polar bear an iceberg
 The elephant a bun
The trout enjoys the river
 The whale enjoys the sea
And dogs love most an old lamp-post
 But you're my cup of tea

W. H. AUDEN

THREE POEMS

TO A GREEDY LOVER

What is this recompense you'd have from me ?
Melville asked no compassion of the sea.
Roll to and fro, forgotten in my wrack,
Love as you please—I owe you nothing back.

IN THE QUEEN'S ROOM

In smoky outhouses of the court of love
I chattered, a recalcitrant underling
Living on scraps. "Below stairs or above,"
"All's one," I said. "We valets have our fling."

Now I am come, by a chance beyond reach,
Into your room, my body smoky and soiled
And on my lips the taint of chattering speech,
Tell me, queen, am I irretrievably spoiled ?

SHEPHERDESS

All day my sheep have mingled with yours. They strayed
Into your valley seeking a change of ground.
Held and bemused with what they and I have found,
Pastures and wonders, heedlessly I delayed.

Now it is late. The tracks leading home are steep,
The stars and landmarks in your country are strange.
How can I take my sheep back over the range ?
Shepherdess, show me now where I can sleep.

NORMAN CAMERON

MATERNAL GRIEF

I am not human,
I am not human,
Nor am I divine.

To whom,
To whom can I cry
“ I am thine ” ?

I have picked my grandsire's corpse to the bone,
I have found no ghost in brisket or chine.

I shed the blood of my female kin,
But they never return to speak again.

I am not human,
I am not human,
How shall I feed my hungry children ?

I make the porridge of meal and wine
And pour it out in the troughs for swine.

The ghosts are hungry, the ghosts are divine,
But the pigs eat the meal, the priests drink the wine.

K. J. RAINE

SYMPATHIES WITH SURREALISM

There is going to be a surrealist exhibition in London in June. Of course it will be necessary to continue explaining what surrealism is ; and of course this explanation will be given by the official leaders of the movement in Paris or by their accredited agents. This is very right. The leaders of the official movement have worked for many years with great industry, ability, and success ; they are the only proper judges of what is surrealism, and who is surrealist.

But apart from the official body and the official definitions, there are certain “ sympathisers ” in England and elsewhere, whose position increasingly needs clarification, if it is possible to clarify it :—one might as well try.

I. There appear to be two ways of becoming a sympathiser, distinct in theory, and generally distinct in practice. First there is the way of simple souls, of practising artists who see or read official surrealist work, and respond to it strongly. Their own products are affected, and show "surrealist influence":—in painting or in sculpture certain fairly specific shapes are employed, in poetry recognisable tricks of imagery and structure:—some young poets have attempted to transfer into English words the material of surrealist visual art. This influence can, of course, be less or more obvious, less or more successful, and it can be accompanied by a certain degree of theorising about the special nature of this kind of art. But since this theorising begins not from any stated theoretical problem:—since, further, this type of person is generally without great capacity or training for theoretical work:—and since the stimulus to theorising is not objectively observed phenomena, but a subjective experience, recorded by introspection:—in these conditions, the theory is of a poor quality. It consists in most cases of personal and verbal variations of traditional conceptions of "imagination," "inspiration," "direct intuition," and so on:—a sort of alluvial deposit from the main streams of European thought and religion of the last six centuries. The H.C.F of these semi-intellectual constructions is the view that a work of art is produced, wholly or in part, by the operation of some segment of the human personality which is not under the control of the will, and is not open to inspection or supervision by the intellect, either introspectively or in any other way. Of course this segment may be called "the unconscious." But unless the use of this word is accompanied by a fair understanding of the extended problems which lead up to, and which derive from, the hypothesis of the unconscious, its use must be dismissed as nothing more than a deceptive modernisation of vocabulary, concealing ancient ideas:—in all probability this "unconscious" could not be distinguished from, for example, late Romantic "imagination," and it would be very much less confusing if it were still called imagination:—then we should at least know at once, without unnecessary expenditure of critical energy, that the whole construction could be dismissed out of hand.

But this theoretical weakness need not prevent such people from producing good work:—even work is which hardly distinguishable from official surrealism, and which might be admitted officially as

surrealist :—as the officials may decide. However, it is quite clear that, whatever the merits of their work, artists of this kind remain simple souls of the traditional type, working by “instinct,” with a ramshackle codification of vague introspective data which may be of use to themselves, as scaffolding, and which is nothing but a nuisance to anyone else. And it must be admitted that if they are surrealists, in the full sense of the word, then surrealism is nothing new, and may be regarded as a development of late Romanticism.

II. The second way of becoming a sympathiser is not that of the simple souls.

It is perfectly possible, in these days of universal education, for a creative artist to find himself confronted by certain theoretical problems at a very early stage in his development. He may well find that he has to solve some such problems, and arrive at some intellectual formulation, before he can create anything :—in direct contrast to the simple souls, who first create something, and then make a formula about it. For example, he may well ask himself such questions as these : “This activity will bring in little money, if any ; it will contribute nothing to the solution of my most direct problems ; why, then, does the impulse to this activity persist ?” “Granting that in me this impulse exists, why does it apparently confine itself to so few people ; are we who suffer from it abnormal ? If so, what has caused our abnormality ? How can it best be overcome, by yielding to the impulse, or by resisting it ? If by yielding, what kind of creative activity will give it the most complete and economical satisfaction ?” All these questions might very reasonably occur, in one form or another, to any educated person, and the kind of answer given to them would influence very deeply the kind of creative work which might be produced.

Now anyone occupied with such questions at any time and in almost any place during the last two decades has been compelled to consider, at least, the claims of psychoanalysis to furnish a general theoretical background for the solution of his problems. And those who have considered psychoanalysis most fully have generally found it more apt than any other system for their purpose. This has been the case with the official surrealists, and it has been

the case with a number of independent artists.* What is the relation between the group who have worked with this theoretical basis, and scattered individuals who have used the same basis? How different are their conclusions? How similar is their work? These seem to me to be the real questions about surrealist sympathisers. Obviously they can only be settled—if they are ever settled—by discussion and negotiation. But as a preliminary to such discussion, it would be wise to define the orthodox psychoanalytic theories about art, as far as they go, so that it would be possible to see who departs from them, and how. The following notes are intended to indicate some of the main aspects of this orthodox doctrine.

III. *a.* The whole position is based on the acceptance of the hypothesis of causation, on the assumption that any observed phenomenon has a cause: that this cause is of a material kind (i.e. not an act of God in any sense): and that it is theoretically possible to ascertain this cause or causes, with varying degrees of probability.

This hypothesis rules out at once all ideas of “inspiration,” “aesthetic intuition,” since they imply the notion of free-will:—the artist, by a special dispensation, creates something out of nothing, something which cannot be “explained away” in terms of its causes.

Like any other phenomenon, the work of art has causes, and these can be ascertained theoretically. It may happen, of course, that it is at the moment impossible, through defects in experimental technique etc., to ascertain these causes with any degree of certainty. But that is no reason at all for supposing that they cannot be ascertained at any time.

b. The difficulties of discovering the causation of artistic activity have already been roughly indicated in the questions put into the

* I have omitted from the main line of my argument any consideration of the other main theoretical basis of surrealism—Marxism and the philosophic system of Dialectical Materialism. This has been done—perhaps very wrongly—partly for simple reasons of space, but chiefly because no independent worker who started from this point of view alone would ever approximate to the surrealist position, because he would almost inevitably remain within the official Communist limits, and would therefore bitterly oppose surrealism. The starting point must be psychoanalysis alone; this can develop into, and derive great assistance from, Dialectical Materialism. But with the present official Communist attitudes, the process is not reversible—unhappily.

mouth of the educated artist. It appears that art as an activity contributes nothing to the upkeep of the individual; it rarely obtains for him a sufficiency of money for rent and food, and does nothing to gratify sexual requirements.

Now it should be noticed that these difficulties are created by regarding man from a purely biological point of view, as an organism in an environment, with the usual implications of such a picture. And as long as this point of view is maintained, it is hard to see how the difficulties can be solved. A poor solution is suggested without much conviction by biologists and physiologists, who point to the existence of "play-activity" in animals:—a kind of activity apparently without aim such as food or sexual satisfaction. Art might be the human equivalent of such play-activity, but there are obvious differences which make the parallel almost worthless:—for example, the play of animals involves muscular activity, perhaps in itself pleasurable, or serving as a motor discharge of internal stimulation (e.g. glandular), but most forms of artistic creation involve only a negligible amount of muscular movement.

c. Psychoanalysis suggests solutions, in the first place by replacing the biological conception of man by a conception of man by a conception of its own—a new picture, in which the "organism" of biology becomes only one part of the human individual, his conscious mind, while the environment is a double one, the outside world, and the inside world—the instinctual forces within the individual. The task of this organism* is not a simple one of direct war with the environment, as in the biological picture, but the much more complicated one of mediation between the two environments, whose demands always conflict in some way.

This picture of the human situation is more useful than the biological one in any consideration of cultural factors, since culture is peculiar to man, and is obviously related with the characteristic which differentiates him from other animals—the great development of consciousness. Biology, in neglecting this characteristic—in having no technique for dealing with it—must necessarily fail to see the peculiar nature of the problems of man. Psychoanalysis may not be the only way of approaching these problems, but at the moment it is the clearest.

* This use of the word organism to describe only a part of the inside of an animal skin will only disturb those who have never tried to define exactly "organism."

The peculiar difficulty of satisfying human instincts appears to result from the fact that impossible conditions are attached to their satisfaction. For example, in the typical case, the infant is stimulated in a number of ways by its mother, and associates pleasure closely with her (e.g. in suckling, washing, and frank caresses). In the terms of Pavlov, the presence of the mother conditions the reflexes of pleasure. But it may happen that in later life, the individual fails to abolish this state of affairs, or to establish new conditions for his pleasures. He may continue to require the presence of the mother quite literally, and is then debarred from direct discharge of his feelings by those incest-taboos which seem to be so fundamental in human society. Or it may happen that at the infantile stage, some portion of the body other than the normal erotogenic zones is very much over-stimulated, and behaves as if it were erotogenic; obviously if this condition continues into adult life it can produce a serious situation, again by attaching impossible conditions to instinctual satisfaction.

To some extent, even normal human beings suffer from these difficulties. Fortunately, however, there is a way out of the difficulty. The instinctual forces do not seem to care very much if the conditions for their fulfilment are provided in actuality, or in phantasy. That is to say, they will generally be satisfied if the situation to which they are accustomed is presented in the form of vivid memory-traces, worked up into a fairly coherent and life-like imitation of reality. Dreams provide the most universal example of this process. In them, instincts find fulfilment in phantasy-situations. In the waking life of primitive peoples, magic of all kinds does the same thing. And in the waking life of more civilised peoples, art, the lineal descendant of magic and religion, takes over the same function. Psychoanalysis has described a large number of parallels between dreams, primitive myths and rituals, and civilised art; it is unnecessary to repeat these in detail, but it must be understood that they form the basis of the theory of art based on psychoanalysis.

d. There is one major difficulty in developing this theory more fully. I have begged the question by saying above "even normal human beings suffer from these difficulties." What are normal human beings? There seems to be good reason for believing that the general situation is common to all men—the difficulties face everyone. But it is also clear that some people surmount them

much more successfully than others, and that some reactions to the situation are much better than others. Yet the criteria of success, and of the value of the reactions, are very obscure. For example, there are many striking similarities between art and hysteria. In hysteria, parts of the body are made to represent dramatically the situations of unconscious phantasies :—the intestine plays complicated games with its contents, instead of digesting and excreting them, the skin, instead of recording stimuli in the ordinary way for the guidance of the organism, develops anæsthesias and paræsthesias which interfere with its ordinary function, and serve the ends, apparently, not of utility, but of pleasure, and the muscles exhaust themselves in taking up positions which have no useful purpose. In fact the instinctual forces treat the body as a piece of plastic material, and shape it into forms which have a definite meaning. The plastic artist appears to do very much the same thing, except that he employs material from the external world instead of his own body. But is this an essential and important difference between the hysteric and the artist ?

Similarly the world created by a poet or a painter may approximate very closely to the worlds created by people confined in asylums. What is the difference between the two ? Is there a real difference ?

IV. I have said that these are only rough notes, and no complete conclusion is to be expected from them. On the whole, however, to return to the original subject—that of sympathy with surrealism—it seems probable that the surrealists and their sympathisers should be able to find a considerable body of common doctrine of a very useful and important kind in psychoanalytic theory of art. It will, however, consist mainly of parallels drawn between various expressions of the unconscious instinctual forces, and the problem of distinguishing between normal and abnormal, social and asocial expressions remains almost untouched, both by psychoanalytic theory and by surrealism. It is here that the difficulties and differences of opinion will occur :—and it is here, probably, that Dialectical Materialism will perform its most useful work.

HUGH SYKES DAVIES

PSYCHOLOGY AND CRITICISM

In Defence of Shelley. By Herbert Read. (Heinemann. 10s. 6d.)

It is probable that the only method of attacking or defending a poet is to quote him. Other kinds of criticism whether strictly literary, or psychological or social, serve only to sharpen our appreciation or our abhorrence by making us intellectually conscious of what was previously but vaguely felt; it cannot change one into the other.

In his title essay Mr. Read takes his stand upon what he calls ontogenetic criticism.

. . . Mr. Eliot's objection to Shelley's poetry is irrelevant prejudice; . . . and such I would suggest is the kind of poetic approach of all who believe, with Mr. Eliot, that literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint. I do not deny that such criticism may have its interest; but the only kind of criticism which is basic, and therefore complementary not only to literary but also to ethical, theological and every other kind of ideological criticism, is ontogenetic criticism, by which I mean criticism which traces the origins of the work of art in the psychology of the individual and in the economic structure of society (p. 71).

He dissects lucidly though perhaps not fully enough,—in a psychological analysis one expects to hear something about the parents—certain traits in Shelley's character, his liability to hallucinations, his interest in incest, and his lack of objectivity in his modes of self-expression, and demonstrates their emergence in his poetry. This is interesting but does not explain why Mr. Read admires Shelley, and Mr. Eliot does not.

He continues, with the help of Dr. Burrow's *Social Basis of Consciousness*, by showing that Shelley, like every neurotic, had a just grievance, and that his very neurosis was the source of his insight.

'It is the distinction of the neurotic personality that he is at least consciously and confessedly nervous, so the special value of Shelley is that he was conscious of his direction; he had, in the modern sense, but without expressing himself in modern terminology, analysed his own neurosis. He did not define his autosexuality; but he allowed the reaction full scope. That is to say, he allowed his feelings and ideas to develop integrally with his neurotic personality; and the élan of that evolution inevitably led to the formulation of a 'clearer, more conscious social order' (p. 60).

New Poetry :

W. J. TURNER

Songs and Incantations

A new collection of poems which express with gaiety and fearlessness a rare philosophy of life. 2/6

HEBERT E. PALMER

The Vampire

'He comes by the very force of his self-abandonment into the rhythm of the high places, where the humble are exalted and power is peace.'

—*Times Literary Supplement.*

2/6

RICHARD CHURCH

Twelve Noon

'He is certainly one of the finest lyric writers living, and this book contains, among many others, short poems as lovely as anything to be found in his early books.'—*Sunday Times.*

2/6

THE PUBLISHERS ARE DENTS

This is extremely interesting but still I am no clearer why I cannot read Shelley with pleasure.

Is it then a difference of moral opinion? I would disagree with Mr. Read when he implies that ontogenetic criticism makes no moral judgements. Every psychology, certainly Dr. Burrow's, every economic analysis contains therapeutic intentions, i.e. they presuppose an idea of what the individual or society could and should become, and Mr. Read himself comes down heavily in favour of 'sympathy and infinitude'; but still we are no nearer the nature of our difference. I find, and I imagine Mr. Read does too, the *Weltanschauung* of Prometheus more to my taste than that of Coriolanus, but I would rather read the latter. It is not a question of expressed belief.

No, the crucial difference between us is reached, I think, in Section VII.

There are always these two types of originality: originality that responds like the Æolian harp to every gust of contemporary feeling, pleasing by its anticipation of what is half formed in the public consciousness; and *originality that is not influenced by anything outside the poet's own consciousness, but is the direct product of his individual mind and individual feeling* (p. 80).

What does Mr. Read mean by not influenced by *anything*? Consciousness is filled by outside impressions and could not exist without them. If he means other men's intellectual ideas, it certainly does not apply to Shelley. Rilke in a fine passage which Mr. Read has himself quoted in *Form in Modern Poetry* enumerates the human mass of sensory experiences that should go to the making of a single poem. That is precisely my objection to Shelley. Reading him, I feel that he never looked at or listened to anything, except ideas. There are some poets, Housman for example, whose poetic world contains very few properties, but the few are objectively presented; others again, like Edward Lear, construe them according to laws other than those of socialised life, but the owl and the pussy cat are real.

I cannot believe—and this incidentally is why I cannot sympathise with Mr. Read in his admiration for abstract art (symbolic art is another matter)—that any artist can be good who is not more than a bit of a reporting journalist.

To the journalist the first thing of importance is subject and, just as I would look at a painting of the Crucifixion before a painting of a still life, and cannot admit that "the pattern may have some more or less remote relation to objects, but such a relation is not necessary" (p. 218), so in literature I expect plenty of news.

Admittedly the journalistic side of the artist can easily and frequently does kill his sensibility; there must always be a tension between them (allied perhaps to the tension Mr. Read describes in the essay on Hopkins, the conflict between 'sensibility and belief') but a lack of interest in objects in the outside world, the complete triumph of the wish to be 'a man without passions—party passions, national passions, religious passions' (p. 181) is equally destructive.

Abstractions which are not the latest flowers of a richly experienced and mature mind are empty and their expression devoid of poetic value. The very nature of Shelley's intellectual interests demanded a far wider range of experiences than most poets require (the more 'autosexual' a poet, the more necessary it is for him to be engaged in material action), and his inability to have or to record them makes, for me, the bulk of his work, with the exception of a few short pieces, empty and unsympathetic.

W. H. AUDEN

REMINISCENT POETRY

The Natural Need. By James Reeves. (Seizin Press and Constable. 5s.)

We want to hear more about ourselves, not about the poet. In writing autobiographical or reminiscent poetry, he therefore has to re-assess the incidents not according to the remembered strength of their emotions but according to standards true for everyone. From the point of view of the poet, autobiography ought to be a putting of his own life in order, a clearing up of communications before advancing.

I consider Mr. Reeves, most of whose poems have the theme of reminiscence, has not re-assessed the incidents he writes about. The true process which I have suggested is a very active one. The mood of most of the poems in this book is relaxed, the mood in which a person who is just going to sleep remembers how someone or something was once beautiful and desirable ; how he was snubbed once and how he would get his own back (the mood of *Burial*) ; and yields to the flood of memories without criticising.

The verse, to suit the Symbolist, personal, point of view, borrows some imagery (dusty documents, ruined houses, etc.) and often a framework of rhythms from Eliot. In the longer poems it falls into monotony. The language is spoilt by a number of best-seller-novelist-tags ; mouths, voices, throats, tongues, 'sob,' 'shudder,' 'falter,' 'quiver,' are 'tense,' 'tremulous,' sing, sing, sing, and cry, cry, cry.

This review is not meant to crab Mr. Reeves. The valuable things in his work are some images (e.g. a hungry wolf-pack 'skirting the wind), experiments in alliteration and internal rhyme (in the poem, *Saw Any Man Dead Sea*), in incantation (in *Birds and Books*), a way of using homely words to render the 'stream of consciousness,' and a readiness and courage to write long poems.

C. B. S.

DEFINITE

" Roger Fry's death is a definite loss to civilization."

E. M. FORSTER in "*Abinger Harvest.*"

ANTHOLOGY-MAKING

The Faber Book of Modern Verse. Edited by Michael Roberts. (Faber. 7s. 6d.)

The Progress of Poetry. Edited by Ian Parsons. (Chatto and Windus. 5s.)

Mr. Michael Roberts, an unremarkable stodge, a Pecuchet who has taken up mathematics, poetry (modern), and mountaineering, has put *himself* between the *Faber Book of Modern Verse* and those who may want to read it. There are some thirty-five pages of introduction by Mr. R.—“the younger men,” “significant development,” “realities implicit in the language,” “the problem,” “influence of the birth trauma,” “the poet’s purpose,” “adumbration,” “aspect of the work,” “response,” “‘the poet,’ Johnson said, . . .,” “poetry as the final residue of significance in language,” “T. S. Eliot has been influenced by Baudelaire, Laforgue, Rimbaud,” “Thus Owen in the second stanza of *Futility*,” and so on and on, completing a pocket *sottisier* of ‘modernism.’ This dullness and dumbness do not matter, but in the flow and among the scraps of half-cooked Richards, Eliot, Riding-and-Graves, and Auden and Empson, one does distinguish once more that nauseating concern for *poetry*. Poetry (if you like, these are overstatements for the point) is of no interest except for poets. Anthologies are of no interest except to readers. Readers should be interested in *poems* only, not in the category or in developments; and Mr. R. has only included “poems which seem . . . to add to the resources of poetry, to be likely to influence the future development of poetry and language,” which is like giving you food which is only of interest to the future of food. His anthology “is not intended to be a comprehensive anthology of the best poems of our age.” But what else should an anthology of this kind do, except present the best poems to readers who do not know them? Presenting *development* compels Mr. R. to present the poemlets of T. E. Hulme and bits of H. D. and to venture prematurely into the Born 1914 Class, etc., etc.

Beyond that, Mr. R. could not choose well. Where he is right (also where he is wrong very often) his choosing has been done for him by the published preferences e.g. of Mr. Eliot. Still, even the wrong poems of Ransom, for example, are better than no poems by Ransom. And I would agree that there is not a better anthology

of modern verse on the same scale. But then Michael the Mountaineer is not the biggest blockhead in the anthology trade.

Mr. Parsons is more to be respected. He is not free of the preferences of Mr. Leavis, who was not free of the preferences of Dr. Richards (see Richards on Hardy in *Science and Poetry*), but he has made a neater anthology even if it does not deserve much praise, or as much condemnation. He also wants "to illustrate the growth and development of English poetry," but this is more to be pardoned in such a short exclusive anthology, which tries to track a spirit rather than follow the threads of technique. I cannot see the necessity for the de la Mare, Edward Thomas, Rosenberg, Sassoon, H. D., Marianne Moore, Blunden, Miss Bowes Lyons, etc., or for omitting Housman (as Mr. R. did), Vachel Lindsay, Ransom, Riding, Graves. I do not trust Mr. Parsons' judgement always (why ever put in such a feeble Hardy poem as *Drummer Hodge* and then be so serious about it?), but his conventional, narrow, and not very well informed simplicity is not so misleading as Mr. R.'s conventional (in a different convention) and pretentious confusion. Touching Mr. R. again, we have only one good publisher of verse, and it is a pity that he should have fathered lately so many such miseries, who so reasonably delight Mr. Sparrow and Mr. F. L. Lucas, and the other old men's darlings of reaction.

G. E. G.

All communications to 4A KEATS GROVE, LONDON, N.W. 3. Manuscripts, for loss of which no responsibility can be taken, cannot be returned unless they are accompanied by an addressed envelope, stamped or with an international reply coupon.

The annual subscription to NEW VERSE is 3s. 6d. (or for Canada and America 1 dollar). Single numbers will be sent for 7d. to any part of the world.

Payment is made for all contributions in verse.

TUITION IN GERMAN

- Beginners can start by reading selected poems by RILKE without any previous knowledge of the language. The Editor of *New Verse* is ready to recommend this method from personal experience. Advanced students could read HÖLDERLIN, GEORG TRAKL, DER BRENNER (SÖREN KIERKEGAARD, THEODOR HAECKER; JOSEF LEITGEB), KARL KRAUS, THEODOR DÄUBLER, STEFAN GEORGE.
- Apply for interview by letter only. DR. HERMANN WALDE, 43 GLOUCESTER TERRACE, LANCASTER GATE, W.2.

CONTEMPORARY POETRY AND PROSE

New Sixpenny Monthly

First Number appearing in May, will contain poems by

WILLIAM EMPSON
E. E. CUMMINGS
DYLAN THOMAS
DAVID GASCOYNE

an eighteenth-century Tennessee ballad,
a translation of Hafiz by Basil Bunting,
and a short story by Dylan Thomas.

The second number will be devoted chiefly to surrealism and will contain translations of André Breton, Paul Eluard, Gisele Prassinos, Benjamin Peret.

Later numbers will include work by W. H. Auden, Marianne Moore, Cecil Day Lewis, Wallace Stevens, George Barker, Stephen Spender, etc.

Edited by Roger Roughton
at 1. Parton Street
London, W.C. 1