Tendencies of the Modern Novel

TENDENCIES OF THE MODERN NOVEL

by

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PREFACE

THE essays which appear in the present volume were originally published as a series in the *Fortnightly Review*. So far at least as the novel in other countries is concerned, they are intended not only to indicate the lines along which the younger writers of fiction have been working since the War, but also to serve as a guide and introduction, for English readers, to their most outstanding work. So far as possible an effort has been made to indicate those works of foreign authors which are available in an English translation.

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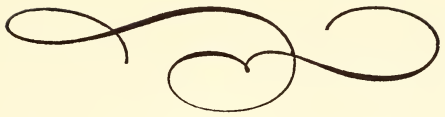
ENGLAND

Hugh Walpole

I. ENGLAND



SOME ten years ago it would have been a comparatively simple thing to write about the contemporary English novel.

In the first place a group of names quite definitely asserted itself, practically without challenge. Those names were: Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, John Galsworthy, George Moore, Arnold Bennett, D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster. These were, in 1920, quite clearly the leaders of the English novel (and throughout this article when I say English I mean British).

Ulysses, James Joyce's vast work, had not yet penetrated the consciousness of the interested reader.

And now—in 1934—what has happened to those names? Hardy, Conrad, Galsworthy, Moore, Bennett, Lawrence—these are dead; Wells is interested now in sociology and not at all in the novel, Kipling writes only an occasional short story, Virginia Woolf is moving more and more

completely into a world that is the poet's rather than the novelist's, Forster has not published a novel for ten years. And to these, what men have been added—added, I mean, in this assured and separate class? James Joyce is writing now in a language that is, to one of his admirers at least, quite unintelligible. Somerset Maugham has published one amusing and witty novel in *Cakes and Ale* and some admirable short stories, but has never approached the dignity and size of *Of Human Bondage*. For the rest, it may be said that there are many, many novelists, that the general standard of accomplishment is quite remarkably high, but that, at the top, now, there are great empty windy spaces, that there is no English novelist alive (save possibly the old Wells and the ancient pre-war Kipling) to be named in the same breath as artist with the German Thomas Mann or the Scandinavian Sigrid Undset. And there is certainly no one in America.

Yet one cannot doubt but that the novel in England has during the last thirteen years shown great liveliness and an almost "kicking" vitality. It has been a period, however, of novels rather than of novelists, and the reasons for this are worth examining. When we look back across the distance novels spring up and confront us—*The Good*

Companions, *Juan in America*, *The Fountain*, *Without My Cloak*, *Broome Stages*, *Magnolia Street*. These, we instruct our inquiring foreigner, he must read if he wants to know what has been happening. But must he, in general, read Priestley, Linklater, Kate O'Brien, Louis Golding? Ah, there we are more ignorant. We scarcely know what to say. It may be that this foreigner visited England last in 1920: he looks at his note-book and rediscovers a few questions that at that time he was asking. The Sitwells—what have they been doing? The author of *Howards End*—surely he has been a great influence. Conrad—has not every one, since then, been Conradian? And we must tell him—no, very oddly, nothing has happened as he might have expected. The Sitwells no longer rouse much interest, save the most brilliant of them, Sacheverell, and he is one of the best poets in England. The author of *Howards End* has published only one novel, and that, indeed, a remarkable one; but now, for a long time past, he has told his inquiring friends: "I have nothing more to say."

And there has been no Conradian influence—no, simply none at all. The foreigner then, naturally, inquires what the influences *have* been and so brings us into the heart of the matter.

We offer him four names—James Joyce, D. H.

Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley. These are the writers who have been supreme influences on the English novel in the last ten years.

Influences in what way? The situation will become the more obscure to the inquiring foreigner when he discovers that James Joyce is interested in language rather than the novel: that Lawrence in his later years was interested in his philosophy and not in the novel at all: that Virginia Woolf does not consider that her works *are* novels in any accepted term; that she would, if she could, find some new word for her art: and that Aldous Huxley does not care whether he is a novelist or no.

It is perfectly clear that this at least has happened in the last ten years—no one in England has known what a novel is except that the Higher Critics are resolved that it is something unintelligible to the Common Man, and the Lower Critics are resolved that it is nothing that the Higher Critics *call* a novel!

Before 1914, in England at least, this was quite definitely not so. In 1910, Hardy, Conrad, James, Moore, May Sinclair, Bennett, Galsworthy, Wells were novelists. There was no question about it. Wells might be interested in sociology, but he wrote *Tono Bungay*, and that was a novel. George Moore

might write a lovely language, but *The Brook Kerith* was a novel. Why were these books novels? Because their authors created characters beyond their own autobiographical experience and engaged in some kind of a narrative. Uncle Ponderevo, the Baynes girls, Nostromo, the wicked butler in *The Turn of the Screw*—these were born of their creators' personalities, but they were at the same time definitely alive beyond the experience and characteristics of Wells, Bennett, Conrad, and James.

As early as 1910, however, there was someone who did not agree that the thing produced by Wells, Bennett, and Conrad *was* a novel at all. This was Henry James, who, in his *Notes on Novelists* and in his quarrel with H. G. Wells, wanted to know *what* these men were after, and why they thought that their simple nursery-like productions merited any serious consideration. "Poor Conrad!" he cried, lifting his hands over *Chance*, one of the most complicated and intricate of all Conrad's novels.

Before the 1870's the English novel received scarcely any general critical attention at all, and it was not until the early 1900's that people began to talk about it in solemn whispers as an Art that only Artists should be allowed to practise. This

attitude of specialist cerebrality has grown and grown, and to-day the whole quarrel about the novel centres round this question—is the novel *only* a special lovely exotic rare fruit produced in Cambridge greenhouses for a small group of intellectual horticulturists, or is it still a rather common wayside flower which almost plants itself so prolific is it, and sometimes plants itself with quite splendid and magnificent results?

That it *was* once a jolly friendly flower, bright for every one's picking, is quite certain: Richardson, Fielding, Scott, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Stevenson, Hardy, have been plucked by almost everybody, and large packets of seedlings of the Dickens flower are at this very moment being sold, very cheaply, at the doors of the newspaper offices.

Henry James disliked these vulgar wayside blooms. A number of ladies, Mrs. Edith Wharton, Miss May Sinclair, Miss Dorothy Richardson, disliked them, too. Then the war made all private passions common and mean; Mr. Joyce, after writing an easily understood masterpiece about an Artist, threw Mr. Bloom on to the world, Mr. Lawrence was banned by the Police, a number of ladies and gentlemen went to live in Bloomsbury, Mrs. Humphry Ward's nephew lashed his aunt's

predilections with scorpions—and confusion has reigned ever since!

For it is a *real* confusion. Were right quite plainly on either side we would know better, whichever our camp, how to abide the issue. But whatever the stalwarts may say there *is* no clear issue!

Mr. Harold Nicolson, about a year ago, gave a series of Wireless Talks about the New Literature, and, in regard to his listeners, he told them that if they did not read Mr. Joyce, Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Aldous Huxley they were lost indeed. He was right to give them fearlessly his own opinion, and, in my opinion, the director of the B.B.C. was in the wrong when he so sternly objected. But Mr. Nicolson, alas, did his own side much damage, for many, many listeners at once sent to their booksellers for copies of *Antic Hay* and *Women in Love*. They read these works, and, in many cases, were so sadly puzzled and affronted by them that henceforth, instead of reading Mr. Priestley and Mr. Brett Young as they had done, they read Mr. Frankau and Mr. Warwick Deeping.

Then a lady, a Mrs. Leavis, of Cambridge, published a work on the contemporary English novel and the general bad taste of the reading public, in which she limited the possible English living novelists to five alone—to Virginia Woolf,

Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, and one of the Mr. Powyses. She even gave George Moore a hasty rap on the knuckles.

"Oh, dear!" moaned the ordinary intelligent reader, wanting to be in the right way. "This confines me, at the most, to five new novels a year—really three, because Mr. Forster has ceased to write and Mrs. Woolf says her novels *aren't* novels!" Then D. H. Lawrence died, and now he has, year in and year out, only Mr. Huxley and Mr. Powys to cheer him—and neither of them are exactly cheerful writers!

Then it happened that something really important occurred in the exactly opposite camp—this was the publication and quite phenomenal success of a novel called *The Good Companions*, by J. B. Priestley. No such general popularity of any novel has been known in England since the days of Hall Caine and Marie Corelli. And the event in this case had elements of very real importance. For it was not, whatever Mr. Harold Nicolson and Mrs. Leavis (who have, in all probability, never read *The Good Companions*) might say, a success of vulgarity. Mr. Priestley had already written the best critical work on George Meredith (with the exception of Mr. Trevelyan's study of Meredith's poetry), some of the best essays of our

time, and a brilliant book of general criticism. *The Good Companions* was the work of a man of letters. It created, as few contemporary novels were able to do, a character, Jess Oakroyd, who could take his place, without shame, in the true gallery of English characters. Moreover, Mr. Priestley showed that he could not only be witty but also funny, a trait that is to-day, alas, almost solely Mr. P. G. Wodehouse's prerogative. Also he could do what very few novelists of to-day *can* do—he could keep it up. He could write a long novel that tires very seldom and never, in spite of its eight hundred pages, dies altogether.

But—and this was the signal for battle—he appealed quite deliberately to the Plain Man. His ideas are the ideas of the Plain Man, his world the Plain Man's world. Secondly—and this was a worse crime than the other—he dares to be unflinchingly cheerful.

This, in the judgment of the very serious artists, condemned him altogether, for how could anyone in these grim days write cheerfully and pretend to paint life as it is? It is true that Mr. Priestley followed *The Good Companions* with *Angel Pavement*, which was a very serious novel indeed, but even here "cheerfulness would keep breaking in." Then that very difficult and very ancient question

as to "What *is* Truth" began to be asked once more, for the Plain Man stood up and said that so far as he could understand them the stories of Mrs. Woolf, Aldous Huxley, and D. H. Lawrence weren't true at all. It could be definitely proved that members of Concert Parties and Yorkshire working-men often had their cheerful moments, but the Plain Man had never known anyone who was alternatively male and female as was Mrs. Woolf's Orlando, nor did his wives and daughters go mad over the "dark urge" as did the heroines of Mr. Lawrence's novels, nor could he see that Mr. Huxley's characters were anything like real life. Here, I think, the Plain Man and the Plain Critic went a great deal too far. Their determination *not* to read what they called by the horrible phrase of the "Highbrow Novelists" deprived them of some of the finest work of their time. It has been, in my opinion, the great crime of the superior critics that they have frightened the ordinary intelligent man from so much that he would otherwise have enjoyed. It is one thing to proclaim loudly that you care only for the very best, but the superior arrogance of that cry has its dangers, and especially in the case of the novel which, as Mr. Wells once said, is intended to do everything and anything except be boring.

The beauties of Virginia Woolf, for instance, are as easily understood as the ironical sentimentalities of Sterne, and when Mrs. Dalloway walks through a London Park on a summer day, when that last voyage is taken to the Lighthouse, when the Elizabethan world blazes on the frozen Thames, beauty is added permanently to English letters. So, too, the brilliance of Aldous Huxley's dialogue is no ordinary matter, and D. H. Lawrence's genius of perception and descriptive prose no repetitive sexual agonies can dim.

The principal danger of this group of writers, however, lay not in themselves, but rather in their influence. Their example was dangerous because it was so easy to follow.

It was tempting, obviously, for the young novelist of 1926 and 1927 to copy those serious writers who were most frequently noticed and praised by the more serious critics. Moreover, these serious novelists were plainly contributing something new to the novel, while novelists like Mr. Priestley, Mr. Brett Young, even Mr. Somerset Maugham were content with the old methods and the old straightforward narrative. It was possible, in fact, to be clever, lazy, and daring all at once. Joyce had shown that all you needed was "to look in yourself and write." Never mind what you found there—how-

ever untidy, however minute, however shocking, out it must all come!

This incoherent autobiography was very much easier *and* very much more modern than the old weary business of inventing a narrative and creating characters *outside* yourself. Moreover, as every novelist knows, it is very much simpler to be gloomy than cheerful, to write about lunatics rather than sane men. We are all, so Freud has told us, sexually mad, hopelessly frustrated, potentially imbecile. The novel, if it is to survive at all, must move forward.

The subjective autobiographical method has, however, one very serious drawback—namely, that it can become very boring unless you happen yourself to be a very exceptional person. Exceptional persons are rare, and I venture to doubt whether, if you omit from them what was almost their whole stock in trade, their creative zest, Fielding and Jane Austen, Thackeray and George Eliot were in themselves very exceptional persons. But creative zest is the very thing that the new subjective autobiographical novel forbade because above all else it must tell the truth, must avoid excess, must fear sentiment like the devil (far more indeed than the devil) and limit itself to minute and unchallengeable detail.

The result of this was that the English novel found itself checkmated. It could not move in any direction with safety. Novel after novel appeared that resolved itself into a clever analysis of frustration and an intensely bitter revelation of nothing.

Every link with ordinary suffering, patient, and often humorously courageous humanity disappeared. Humanity was, of course, in a bad way, but it had been in a bad way before. At one of the most dangerous and despairing moments in English history some of the Elizabethans produced the most courageous and defiant literature in the language, but to read most of the clever novels published in England between 1925 and 1930 you would imagine that this brave Island was inhabited only by waiting gnats and blindly agitated ants.

This attitude of negation could not, of course, endure for long. Rebellion against it was inevitable, but the danger of that rebellion was, and still is, that the benefits to the novel of these post-war experiments might be lost.

One thing at least is certain: that however the Plain Man and the Plain Critic may exclaim and protest, may appeal for a return to "the heartiness and exuberance of the Victorians," the English novel can never be the same as it was before

Joyce, Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf experimented on it. And this is true, especially, of the sexual freedom and frankness that Joyce and Lawrence brought into it. While it is certain that there are other things in life beside sex, it is also certain that both modern psychology and modern life make the old reticences and taboos as absurd as they are old-fashioned. The Victorian novel assumed quite falsely that marriage was the best possible haven for its more virtuous characters. We have changed all that in our lives as well as in our novels.

On the other hand, the assumption of the post-war realists that there is no haven anywhere and that a condition of happiness is an impossible sentimentality is as absurd as unreality. What has happened, therefore, is that the novel in the last three years has begun to expand in a new and more romantic direction. This new romance is very different from the old, which was a very simple manifestation of cloak-and-sword narrative, often full of zest and excitement, but ending as completely in nothing at all as the examples of minor post-war realism.

One characteristic of the new romantic novel was the sudden appearance of long family histories. Just when it had seemed that the novelists were content to write very cleverly about nothing

whatever, they began to write defiantly about everything.

Phyllis Bentley in *Inheritance*, Clemence Dane in *Broome Stages*, Louis Golding in *Magnolia Street*, Francis Brett Young in *The House Under the Water*, Mazo de la Roche in her *Jalna Chronicles*, the vast works of John Cowper Powys, *Wolf Solent* and *A Glastonbury Romance*—these, in spite of the wailings of the reviewers, have been among the prominent successes of the last few years.

All these novels may, in one form or another, be called romantic, but, at the same time, there is no one of them that does not show the influences of *Ulysses*, of *The Rainbow*, of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Whatever may be said about these novels critically, we may at least sigh with relief because we have escaped, when it almost seemed that we were doomed, from sexual trivialities, sexless autobiography.

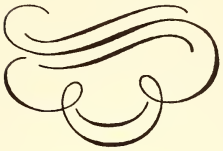
One further element there is in the new English novel that must be mentioned—a fresh interest in the things of the spirit. The leader in this is Charles Morgan, whose *Portrait in a Mirror* and *The Fountain* have had a quite astonishing success. I say "astonishing" because these grave, quiet, very carefully written books would not, one would have supposed, have appealed to a large public.

But they have insisted that man does not live by bread alone, a doctrine that had been absent from the more intellectual English novel for nearly twenty years.

In the work now of all the more interesting younger writers there is a new spirit, very far indeed from the defeatism of ten years ago. Men like L. A. G. Strong, William Plomer, John Collier, Francis Stuart; women like Rosamund Lehmann, Marguerite Steen, E. Arnot Robertson, Kate O'Brien, Helen Simpson—to name only a few—look on life, however perilous it may appear, with humour, courage, and wisdom. We have broken away, it seems, from pessimism and artificiality, and, in this new world of adventure, new genius should be born.

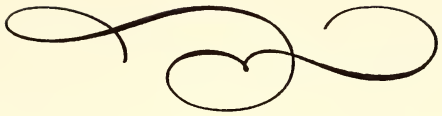
Best of all (and here I return to the interrogation mark at the beginning of this article) the novel is once again beginning to be a novel, it is once again experimenting both in narrative and the creation of character, the two achievements for which this beautiful and exciting art, more than any other of the arts of writing, is especially adapted.

FRANCE



Hamish Miles

II. FRANCE



I

I own to a distrust of the word "tendencies." To the artist, whether he be novelist, poet, or painter, a "tendency," or a "technique," is generally a quite natural attribute or process of which he himself is seldom consciously aware, a descriptive classification provided for him, often very surprisingly, by outsiders. He is apt to be suspicious of it. And not without reason: for a "tendency" is often a pattern arbitrarily imposed on the outward scene by a critic more anxious to find that pattern than truthfully convinced of its existence. As a form of literature, the novel is probably the most tempting to generalize about. Generically regarded, the novel is like one of those insect's eyes which, endowed with (is it?) eight hundred and eighty lenses, duly reflect eight hundred and eighty pictures of the earthly scene. But with the novel the separate lenses, the individual novelists, are all different; and the pictures are no

less diversified. Sorting them out, one might find in the novelists' pictures of life certain resemblances, and group them in classes accordingly. But on the whole the spectacle of the novel, like the spectacle of life, from which it draws its sustenance, is too complex to seize at a glance. As in watching an ant-heap, the eye soon falls back on the individual worker, and by watching that seeks clues to the activity of the whole.

France is the most individualist of Western countries. And it is not surprising that the novel, a highly individualistic form of writing, should in France offer singularly good opportunities of observing through its medium the currents and forces of contemporary French life. Even in its less important forms, the novel of entertainment or distraction has its significance in this aspect. Not long ago, for instance, I was told by a French friend that the type of "forbidden" fiction read *en cachette* by the schoolboy of to-day was of a totally different type from that which he and his contemporaries had smuggled into the *lycée* in pre-war days. Then, it was Octave Mirbeau or Pierre Louÿs, erotica more or less veiled; now, it is the *roman policier* (or such weeklies as *Détective*) which feeds the adolescent craving. And he linked this up with the general shifting of the old pre-

occupation with sexual interest which marks modern French fiction in general, the vanishing of the morbid glamours of adultery in a world where the older standards of sexual morality have become lax.

That is by the way, but it points to one very characteristic feature of the post-war novel in France, which is worth observing, as it explains, I think, how fundamentally uninteresting a great deal of fiction has been during the past decade and a half, or even longer. In general, I mean the absence from most modern novels of that element of *conflict* which gives intensity of significance to most of the great novels of the past. Most novelists can no longer present in the characters of their creation the conflict of the human with the divine law, nor the clash of men and women in ordered love, because, lacking an apprehension of divinity or a sense of clear-cut standards in the conduct of love, the element of conflict no longer arises. The classic figure of Emma Bovary, to go no further back, for all the clarity of Flaubert's drawing, is blurred to the modern eye (in the more limited sense of "modern") by the supposed unreality of her conflict. The anecdote is told of a young woman lately reading *Madame Bovary* and complaining to a friend that, although it was *très beau*, she could not understand what all the fuss was

about. "*Ah, mais vous savez*," replied the friend, "*c'était un péché dans ce temps-là. . . .*" On a less lofty plane of literature, a popular novel like Ohnet's *Maître de Forges* is nowadays of significance only as a record of class distinctions which have, for better or worse, lost their validity. This flattening trend in the novel as a literary form is not, of course, exclusively French; neither *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* nor the dramas of Hall Caine could be written in the nineteen-thirties. But it is conspicuous in the most important contemporary fiction in France—especially, perhaps, because it has moved side by side with a lessening of the artistic sense of *form* which has always characterized French literature—and it shows clearly the interactions of life and letters in the social organism. François Mauriac, a novelist in whom the old sense of conflict has never been atrophied, has pointed out that the absence of these moral or ethical conflicts has not only been a matter of indifference to many writers, but has even become the positive and essential theme of their writing. He cites the characteristic figure of Paul Morand, whose earlier work showed an unvarying series of "men and women, of every race and every class, seeking each other, taking each other, leaving each other, meeting each other again, unaware of any

barriers, slaves of momentary instinct, and made more incapable of pleasure because the sole law known to them is that which forces them to a perpetual process of refining their own sensations." Morand's pitiless skill in the portrayal of these men and women will stand as a ferocious commentary on the years which followed the war of 1914–18—a kind of Goya's *Disasters of War*—but fundamentally it is monotonous and empty; for, as Mauriac remarks, "the story of an amorphous society cannot be endlessly written and re-written, as our predecessors wrote and re-wrote the conflicts of spirit and flesh, of duty and passion."

II

Marcel Proust died without progeny. Nobody has tried to repeat the unique creation of a unique personality and life. But, although *A la recherche du temps perdu* was essentially the culmination of the nineteenth-century novel of analysis rather than the pioneer work of a new age, his perception and presentation of life have had profound influence. He crystallized, if he did not originate, certain habits of thought and vision peculiar to our time. He was one of those novelists who are read because their vision of life provides those who read with a

mode of life. André Gide has been another such; in England, to some extent, D. H. Lawrence was also one. The Proust-taught eye learns to catch a sublimated significance, now dramatic, now poetic, in every hour of everyday life. He looked for reality in the hidden animating forces of men and women, not in their moments of extraordinary experience or crucial decisions. But that is a process which, coupled with the Proustian sense of the mobility and flux of the ego, the deliberate abandonment of any examination of morality, the assumption of a standpoint of knowledge-for-its-own-sake, accorded well with the new temper of the nineteen-twenties. He has been a master, if not a model, to many novelists.

Proust's mode of vision, for all its apparent exactness, was in some ways related to that spirit of vague but profound disquiet which marked most of French fiction between 1918 and 1930. It was the fashionable malady, and its connection with the frustrated romanticism of the War and Wilsonian idealism is easy to trace. In the Dadaistes the sickness took its extreme form, in their apparently silly, but really quite significant, denial of all accepted validities—the social structure, verbal meaning, intelligence, literature. They saw an escape from despair in acclaiming the total

supremacy of spontaneous inspiration, in denying realism and logical intelligence. In the work of the group of "adventure" novelists, of whom Pierre Mac Orlan was the chief, another line of escape was indicated—escape through wild adventuring, or through a world of fantasy which has generally been foreign to the pure French genius. It was followed by Montherlant, by Cocteau, by Morand, by Soupault, by Crevel, and even by Duhamel, in books of very varying character, but having this in common—that their personages are misfits in the life of their time, men to whom actual life is less real than the life of their desires, their invention, or their imagination. The hero of Soupault's *A la dérive*, for instance, was a perfect example of this class, of "*le hamletisme de nos jours*," as it has been styled. "*David ne pouvait s'attacher à rien. . . . Il ignorait volontairement les liens, les attaches, les clairières. Très jeune, il comprenait cette impossibilité impérieuse comme une vocation. . . . Le regard de ces hommes impitoyables qui ne peuvent admettre aucun souvenir est semblable à celui de ces bêtes fauves en cage, regard qui va plus loin que le décor proche et qui cherche là-bas une étendue inconnue et solitaire.*" Is he not a pure example of self-conscious, introverted romanticism? Does not that last sentence ring with the true Baudelairean echo?

III

Turn now to individuals.

It is not easy to choose them. A few have been mentioned in passing, and the novels of many more conspicuous writers have attracted attention and left a mark on the consciousness of the past decade: Gide, with *Les faux monnayeurs* and *Si le grain ne meurt*; Jean Giraudoux, with *Siegfried et le Limousin*, *Simon le Pathétique*, *Bella*, *Adorable Clio*; Pierre Hamp, with his documentary pictures of industrial life; Valéry Larbaud, with his curious studies in the *monologue intérieur*; Drieu la Rochelle, as typical as any of the generation which was plunged into war at the university age; Jean Giono, with his simple, seemingly ingenuous pictures of the primitive peasant life of Provence; André Maurois, who, as a novelist, moved forward from his half-playful performances in the Bramble and O'Grady books to the exquisitely finished *Climats* and *Cercle de Famille*; Léon Daudet, a veteran, the greatest living polemical journalist, who has turned out half a dozen novels still throbbing with the vitality of the *furor politicus*; André Malraux, whose elaborate pictures of revolutionary China (notably *Les Conquérants* and *La Condition humaine*) are surely unrivalled in their vivid

presentation to the Western world of the profound significance of the changes in the contemporary East; Eugène Dabit, whose *Hôtel du Nord*, a study of a back-street hotel, was the rallying-point of the so-called *populiste* school a few years ago; Mauriac, the most important of the Catholic novelists, who can present so vividly (his orthodox critics say so dangerously) the battle of the spirit and the flesh; Georges Bernanos, who likewise writes with stunning prolixity of spiritual agony, and portrayed, in *Le Soleil de Satan*, a modern saint with grandeur and passion.

The catalogue could be expanded. But at the moment I should like to look more closely at the work of two writers: one unknown as a novelist until his first book appeared; the other a dramatist and man of letters with twenty-five years of consistent work behind him, but both characteristic of their time. The first is Louis Ferdinand Céline, and the second, Jules Romains.

Voyage au bout de la nuit,[1] the novel with which Céline abruptly broke into the rather circumscribed field of French literature, is one of those books which cannot be labelled and pigeon-holed. Even if it is opened with the cautious scepticism which the experienced reader tends unconsciously

[1] Published in English by Chatto & Windus.

to emanate when he notices "250e *édition*" on the cover, it takes the breath away. Little is known of its author. He is said to be a doctor in a Paris suburb, so little aware of literary practice that, in submitting his vast mass of manuscript, he offered to pay for its publication. (And in France, be it remembered, writers on the whole form a professional corporation more than they do in England.) But, instinctively one would say, Céline has summed up the moods and experience of the age that followed the war and seems to precede an undefined revolution with more intensity and passion than any comparable writer.

The novel is as hard to describe as to label. It is written in a style and language which to most foreign readers, and to many French readers, will seem difficult, haphazard, and uncouth. It is rambling and, by all the accepted rules, ill-proportioned. It is excessively long; but one feels that Céline, like Pascal, might retort: "*Je n'ai pas eu le temps de la faire plus court.*" But it seizes one's whole attention, imposes itself on one's imagination, with a force that few novels do. It is too soon to say that Céline has written one of the enduring masterpieces; the strength of *Voyage au bout de la nuit* is probably to a considerable extent dependent on the contemporary mood and experience;

it lacks, I suspect, the essentially timeless quality of great fiction.

The story centres round the experiences, during and after the war, of a young man, Bardamu; and the first few pages hint at, and then suddenly clinch, the awful fatality of circumstance which falls upon him, and, by extension, upon his generation. He is caught up in the machinery of war: "*J'allais m'en aller. Mais trop tard! Ils avaient refermé la porte en douce derrière nous les civils. On était faits, comme des rats.*" And from that instant Bardamu was caught in the most tragic currents of our time. His journey into the uttermost places of misery is more than the record of a personal experience; it is symbolic of a disintegrating civilization. From the stricken areas of Flanders he escapes—into a lunatic asylum; from the Paris of the peace he ventures into the interior of Africa, the obscure agent of a trading company, as surely doomed as any front-line infantryman; from Africa he plunges into the America of Ford, and his adventures as a slave, in the new style, become grimly fantastic in chapters which are perhaps the most virulent satire of any on the most specious materialism of our time. Returning to France, he becomes a pitifully ineffective doctor, and his attempts to practise in

a squalid faubourg of the capital, culminating in his complicity in crime, enable Céline to pour his corrosive acid on another cluster of plague-spots. Thereafter the novel tends to concentrate more on the personal drama of Bardamu and his friend Robinson; but if it loses some of its universality of vision, the sense of drama is heightened, and the violent climax of Robinson's death is magnificently treated. As the imaginative anatomy of a stricken, uncertain, unstable civilization, the novel is in its kind unmatched.

Jules Romains, on the other hand, is an experienced writer, who knows exactly, almost too exactly, what he is doing. The development of his work, from *Mort de Quelqu'un* or *Les Puissances de Paris*, forward to the opening volumes of his projected series, *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté*, is disciplined, scientific, deliberate. A few years ago he published a trilogy—*Lucienne*, *Le Dieu des Corps*, and *Quand le Navire* (just published in an English version by John Rodker: *Boriswood*), in which he analysed with extraordinary subtlety the mysticism of the sensual life. And he has now embarked on a greater task, one for which his earlier work as the prophet of *unanimisme* has been, he declares, his apprenticeship. Of this, *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté*, a goodly number of

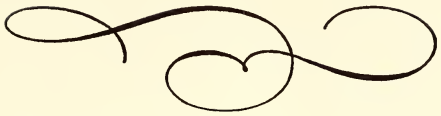
volumes have by now appeared—several have appeared in English (translated as *Men of Good Will* by Warre B. Wells: Lovat Dickson)—and he promises an undetermined, but not indeterminate, number of volumes which will fulfil his purpose of a giant novel with Paris as its background and its hero. Choosing the morning of October 6, 1908, as the centre, he slices a cross-section from the living flesh of the city, and dissects its living nerves, its veins and arteries, the substance of its tissue. Men and women of every class move to and fro across the pages, their paths impinging, meeting, parting again, in an intricate but beautifully controlled pattern. Romains, in the spectacle over which he leans, sees "myriads of human activities scattered in all directions by the indifferent forces of self-interest, of passion, even of crime and madness," and apparently destroying themselves or becoming lost in the void. In this turmoil of life he sees a whole, which looks as if its chosen mode of progress were "a series of clumsy jolts." Yet, after all, in that confusion and clash of wills, there must surely be some "of good will." And to extract these, and by his art to muster them, would seem to be his objective. How far he will, or even can, succeed—who can say? But the opening stages are astonishingly interesting.

And if only because of their ambition, their search for a certain grandeur of conception, the one instinctive, the other willed and almost scientific, these two novels of Céline and Romains have a special significance. For they offer a compensation for what the novel has suffered in vitality by its loss of the element of moral conflict.

AMERICA

Milton Waldman

III. AMERICA



It is, perhaps, easier to discover tendencies in contemporary American than in English or French literature, because so much of it, and that largely of the best, has been clearly tendencious. One has the impression in England and France of widespread confusion in aim, with so much of the best talent in recent fiction devoting itself, out of a mixture of weariness and uncertainty, to experiment in both subject and form that have little apparent relation with the classic novel in either country. This tendency has already been ably analysed by my predecessors in this series, and I mention it here only by way of contrast with the post-war development of the novel in America.

Up to and including the early years of this century the American novel was a branch of English literature; truly a branch in that it sucked its nourishment from the same roots and gave forth a similar foliage. Washington Irving might fashion into narrative the native folk-legends, Hawthorne

the effect of Puritan political hegemony on New England soil, Melville the intercourse of the mariners of the Eastern seaboard with distant oceans, Mark Twain and Bret Harte the comedy and drama of frontier life; yet, though the setting was American, and hence to an Englishman strange, there was nothing essentially unfamiliar either in the matter or the form. The dialect might be strange, but certainly no stranger than is Thomas Hardy's outside Wessex. As for the substance, the writers were in their outlook, their codes of values, their characteristically English preoccupation with conduct indistinguishable from their fellow novelists in the Mother Country.

Towards the turn of the century, however, a new and definite note was heard in growing strength and volume. Henry James and William Dean Howells, Edith Wharton and Theodore Dreiser, different as they were in most respects, found it increasingly inevitable, every time they took up pen, that they should ponder such questions as, "What is an American? What distinguishes him, *qua* American, from other folk, from an Englishman or a European? What are the peculiar conditions of his life, what has Nature contributed to his corporate being that differentiates him from them?" Howells and Mr. Dreiser tried to answer these questions by putting

their characters against their native background, James and Mrs. Wharton by placing them against the background of European society and culture, but all four were definitely conscious of a difference. Already there was an American problem—almost like a Polish or Irish or Jewish problem—except that it was social instead of political.

Howells and Mr. Dreiser were, as novelists, less accomplished than the other two; yet the ground they ploughed seems to me more fertile than the plots so elegantly cultivated by Henry James and Mrs. Wharton. For how a man lives out his life against his own background is more important, as far as it goes, than how he conducts himself against an alien one, be it ever so rich, subtle, and spiritually satisfying. But the most important thing of all, I take it, is for the novelist to reveal that something in the soul of man which is independent of all background. The social setting of his story may provide a sense of reality, a foil for his characters, a *décor* interesting or beautiful in itself, but it cannot assume a position in a great novel of equal importance to the human beings with whose fate he is concerned. Yet I feel that the novelists descending in a line from Howells and Dreiser have in another way limited their goal and consequently their attainment. They were so largely occupied with background

that they were at least as much critics of men in mass as creators of men as individuals.

This search for and concentration upon a single broad and elusive thing which may be referred to —unsatisfactorily—as Americanism had, however, its good as well as its bad consequences. It provided significant material, organic form, coherence. Mr. Walpole says that the period since the war in England "has been a period of novels rather than of novelists . . ." and he is probably right. But the statement could not be made of the same period in America. Sinclair Lewis, Joseph Hergesheimer, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, and at least as many others are novelists as distinguished from authors of stray novels. No one would take the work of any one of them for that of anybody else; what each has to say in one book is merely an extension of what he says in all his others, and not a different or unrelated thing; nor did any of them remotely exhaust his creative impulse in any single work.

The appearance of Mr. Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*, about a year after the war, was a portent, and quite as much for its extraordinary and instant popularity as for what it had to say. His direct forerunner, Mr. Dreiser, had until then been unknown except to a small public and various meddlesome

bodies of unofficial censors. *Main Street* was a far more direct and vigorous onslaught on America's crudeness and smugness than were *Jennie Gerhardt* or *The Financier* on its conventionality and corruption, yet it found a thousand readers for every one of theirs. The explanation is not to be found primarily in the quality of the novels themselves—if Mr. Lewis writes better prose than Mr. Dreiser (and that is not saying a great deal), there is far more humanity in Jennie than in the heroine of *Main Street*. The reason for the enormous success of the younger author and the neglect of the elder was simply that the former struck the mood of a public arrived at self-consciousness. It was ready, even eager, to hear about itself, to be told, in its own current slang, "where it got off" in the eyes of the author, to learn how the life it had created compared with an ideal or even with that of other societies. Mr. Lewis and those who thought with him (amongst whom Mr. H. L. Mencken, though not a writer of fiction, stood easily first) surveyed America, found her manners, customs, and ideals unworthy of the astounding opportunities with which Nature had blessed her, and said so in an unmistakable voice.

A whole school of literature of this sort sprang up, most of whose members are to-day nearly or

wholly forgotten. They had in common a tremendous earnestness, a passion for political and economic reform—many of them, including Mr. Lewis, had at one time or another been disciples of the formidable Mr. Upton Sinclair—and a distaste for the canons of orthodox English prose.

This last deficiency was not altogether a bad thing, in so far as it rose from their desire to report accurately the raucous, uncouth, monotonous noises of the civilization they were castigating; and to that extent it represented a search for truth. These writers also, in their zest, disdained the timorous craving for that tepid uniform good taste in their houses and personal appurtenance which was so provoking a feature of the lives of the classes that rose to luxury; and there was certainly at least more health in the rude, jerky prose poured out by those prophets from the prairies than in the bloodless decorum of the Fifth Avenue Interior Decorator or the guaranteed impeccability of the Chicago mail-order house. Later, however, this prose was to grow self-conscious in its turn and experiment on itself.

Head and shoulders above the mass of social critics who wrote so large a part of America's fiction in the 'twenties towered Mr. Lewis. With all his irrelevant indignation (irrelevant to fiction, that is)

at the abuse of the poor by the rich, for all his ungainliness of style, he was a true artist capable of rising to great heights when the poet in him was roused. For he penetrated then beneath the ugly surfaces, which as social novelist he was exploring, and discovered human beings, whom he loved even while he chastised them, as every great satirist does.

He was annoyed because Gopher Prairie failed to resemble architecturally an undefiled Georgian village; that was childish, and in his heart he knew it, for he knew as well as any man that those Georgian villages would never thrive again, even amidst their native wealds and moors, except in the picture books. But if the appearance had gone, the reality might be created anew in a different form. For this the novelist yearned; and he knew that unless it were so Gopher Prairie would drive the last trace of those villages out of the world, to the eternal calamity of the conqueror as well as the conquered. He states his case in a passage which contains an astonishing amount of his essence, his vision as well as his *naïveté*, his awkwardness together with his eloquence:

> But a village in a country which is taking pains to become altogether standardized and pure, which aspires to succeed Victorian England as the chief mediocrity of

the world, is no longer merely provincial, no longer down and restful in its leaf-shadowed ignorance. It is a force seeking to dominate the earth, to drain the hills and sea of colour, to set Dante at boosting Gopher Prairie, and to dress the high gods in Klassey Kollege Klothes. Sure of itself, it bullies other civilizations, as a travelling salesman in a brown derby conquers the wisdom of China and tacks advertisements of cigarettes over arches for centuries dedicated to the sayings of Confucius.

Such a society functions admirably in the large production of cheap automobiles, dollar watches, and safety razors. But it is not satisfied until the entire world also admits that the end and joyous purpose of living is to ride in flivvers, to make advertising pictures of dollar watches, and in the twilight to sit talking, not of love and courage, but of the convenience of safety razors.

These critics of America naturally drew their vision of civilization from the past—from Attic Greece, from France and England before industrialization, and by these standards they measured the deficiencies of their own. Yet, paradoxically, what they desired for America was, not that she become less American, but more; they believed that her salvation lay in discovering her essential self through self-examination and a proper appreciation of her past rather than in imitating other societies, whether better by virtue of their age or no. For the United

States did have a past and in many respects a splendid one. Ultimately this school became so fired with its new nationalism that its authors and reviewers began to ask of a new literary product not "Is it good?" but "Is it American?"

This declaration of literary independence was naturally directed against the country from which political independence had originally been achieved. The language in which novels were written, the traditions upon which they were based, the laws and largely the conventions and customs by which their characters moved, were all English; and so for a considerable time it was felt by a large body of writers that the diminution of English influence and English traits was essential to the attainment of a truly American novel.

This liberation was difficult to arrive at, however, for the most experimental, the most revolutionary writing, like experimental and revolutionary government, must have a starting-point even if it does not know where it will in the end arrive. Here, I think, lies the explanation of much that has puzzled the ordinary English reader in recent American fiction; the authors, turning their backs on the recognizable models merely because they were English, dug eagerly for roots that were *not* English. A great many of the younger American novelists passed

their literary apprenticeship in Paris, and it was there that they discovered the alternative influences on their taste and style. France, as in 1778, assisted in the Struggle for Independence. Only this time it was France at one remove, for no writer of fiction in one language can ever really discover a dominant influence in another. Proust, of course, had his effect, as he had on nearly every eager young novelist in the Western world, but the peculiar fascination was exerted by older writers in English who had so long worked and quarrelled with tradition in the French capital that they had evolved types of experiment peculiarly their own—Mr. James Joyce and Miss Gertrude Stein. There was something invigorating and refreshing to young people who had something to say, and were convinced that the traditional significances and associations of the English language were inadequate for saying it, to discover two eminent seniors in letters who were demonstrating that new nuances and combinations were possible with the old words.

The effects of this influence were not only marked in writers who had been directly exposed to it—writers so diverse as Mr. Ernest Hemingway and the usually orthodox Mr. Louis Bromfield, who had long lived in Paris—but spread to others who, like Mr. William Faulkner and Mr. James Cozzens

(*vide* his recent novel, *A Cure of Flesh*), have, so far as I know, passed nearly the whole of their lives in the United States. What that effect is will be recognized only by those familiar with the Proust substance *cum* Joyce or Stein method—that sensation of looking at characters a great way off, whose voices and gestures seem remote, yet who are brought physically close to us by a powerful glass which serves simultaneously as a screen between their and our reality. This method is not conducive to popularity, particularly where the personages and the scene retailed are otherwise unfamiliar; and I am inclined to think that one of the most important of contemporary American novelists, Mr. Faulkner, has failed of wide appreciation in this country because so much of his work produces that particular sensation.

Mr. Faulkner has published five novels, all of which are laid in the Southern states, a setting much less well known to English readers than the Eastern or Middle Western. The first impression that these books convey (apart from their eccentricities of language, to which I shall revert later) is of an intense violence and a close sectionalism. Drunkenness, the most brutish lusts, lunacy, and every conceivable crime of blood make up the action of these novels; and one is never permitted to forget that

all this passes in one small and restricted locality in the lower basin of the Mississippi River.

Yet, out of violence that is at first sight incredible in its horror and variety, and with characters as grotesque as those of Dostoevsky, Mr. Faulkner has contrived to fashion novels that are as genuinely works of literature as they are unmistakably American. Somehow one believes that all the bizarre sequence of idiocy, incest, suicide and greed of *The Sound and the Fury* are natural to a decadent white family like the Compsons, nurtured on the hatreds and the ruin of the Civil War. All the nightmare of rape and murder in *Sanctuary* is conceivable in a community whose rulers descended from the carpet-baggers. The same is true of *Light in August*, the latest and, I think, the best of Mr. Faulkner's books, for in it many of the crudities of style and of factitious melodrama are ironed out, leaving a novel which is notable for the clarity and subtlety of its narrative and for the unsentimental brooding pity that lights it from within. And in *Sartoris* he shows that he is capable of other moods, a feeling for heroic family memories (such as the reminiscences of the gallant cavalry general Stuart and of the glamour of pre-Rebellion days) which Miss Cather herself could not have surpassed, and of the ability to draw a woman of wit, nobility, and

breeding in Miss Jenny, one of those characters whose presence in it justifies any work of fiction.

In sum Mr. Faulkner, with less social consciousness and perhaps less absolute genius than Mr. Lewis, has advanced further toward the pure art of the novel which is to be grown in the soil of America. His sectionalism is a virtue rather than a vice—Dickens and Hardy were none the less English for being so narrowly occupied with their respective small corners of England.

His style exhibits a queer mixture of influences. Much of the dialogue is negro, and that part seems to be excellent, including the effect of negro dialect on the speech of whites, both cultured and ignorant. But apart from dialogue he frequently adulterates his own narrative style with solecisms derived from negro speech. Over and over he uses "like" for "as if" in a way to make one shudder: "He continued that thick movement, like he could neither stop it nor complete it." He invents compounds like a German—"frictionsmooth," "womenvoices." And every now and again he writes a passage which distinctly echoes Miss Stein.

While one school of novelists was subjecting America to a merciless scrutiny and trying to bring her to an understanding of herself, another and equally conspicuous one was withdrawing further

and further from the ugliness and turbulence which so fascinated the first, in order to create worlds of romance all their own. The most famous and talented of this school is Miss Willa Cather. Mr. James Branch Cabell and Mr. Joseph Hergesheimer were pursuing similar ends, the one in fable, the other in history, but both had reached their maturity earlier. Miss Cather enjoys in her own country a reputation and affection equalled by few novelists in their own lifetime. Her earlier works, *My Antonia* and *One of Ours*, though laid in the Middle West where she was born, showed little of that impulse toward social analysis which was to characterize the novels of that section a few years later, but did already display the acute delicacy of understanding and the exquisite prose which was to distinguish every line she wrote. Perhaps she herself felt that her powers were unsuited to the immediate world about her; at any rate she dedicated them henceforth to the past, and from *The Lost Lady* onward—that little classic of the building of the West—she produced a series of small masterpieces, now laid in the period of the missionaries in the South-West, now in the period of the French domination of Canada, now in the New York of what Miss Wharton calls the Age of Innocence. No American writer of this generation

has been more, or more justly, esteemed in England; none is more likely to live.

Yet one cannot help being disturbed by certain symptoms in her latest work. The artistry is still intact, the content becomes ever more ethereal. In these studies of those enchanting men and women that are gone, of beloved causes that are dead, these recreated fragrances of forgotten sentiments and societies, there is a feeling as of the silver waning of the twilight. The texture is growing thin as an old brocade, though the colours on it remain bright as ever.

If this were true of Miss Cather alone, one might say that it is the natural relaxation of the artist who has passed her prime. But when one recalls the teeming vitality of Mr. Thornton Wilder's *The Cabala* and *The Bridge of San Luiz Rey* and compares them with *The Woman of Andros*, which was equally lovely in language but appreciably lighter in substance, or remembers the inability of Mr. Oliver La Farge to repeat the success of *Laughing Boy* or the gradual decrease in the specific gravity of Mr. Robert Nathan's delightful fantasies, one begins to wonder. . . . May it not be a law of literary being in America that the novelist, if his strength is to flourish, must seep himself in the whirling, raucous life about him and go hunting in all possible

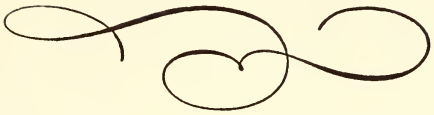
directions for a means of saying what he feels, no matter how bizarre or ungainly the forms which call him?

Yet, there must always be room in any civilization for the pure artist whose imagination is tempted by the remote in time and space, and whose style is the heir of the best traditions of his mother tongue; and though it would appear that the tough excogitator of the here and now will have the greater influence on the American novel of the future, yet those lovers of the past have already left that future a precious legacy.

GERMANY

Jacob Wassermann

IV. GERMANY



In giving some account of the contemporary German novel I feel unexpectedly hampered by the circumstance that I belong myself to this category of German writers, as may be seen by a mass of work ranging over thirty-five years. It is not for me to judge whether or to what extent my own work has contributed to the development of narrative literature in Germany. And there is another difficulty related to the first: how shall I, living and working in our time—and as one who cannot and will not deny active participation—attain to that unprejudiced judgment which is requisite in any such review and survey? For obvious reasons I must, throughout, put myself out of court and consider my contemporaries, and those who started writing after me, not, like a literary historian or professional critic, ranging them under certain headings and in so many schools or groups (for which task indeed I have neither the courage nor the Olympian calm), but seeing in them living persons like myself,

visualizing each one of them in his spiritual climate following his destiny; striving sometimes with and sometimes against me, forging ahead or hanging back, maybe accompanied by success or maybe unheeded by the public, just in the way things do happen in this world of ours, and particularly in the sphere of art.

I see no other way of avoiding this dilemma than by restricting the mention of any names to the indispensable minimum and, instead, by devoting myself rather to a consideration of general tendencies; to explore intellectual roads rather than describe personal deeds. Such a course, anyhow, must commend itself, since a real synthesis of the achievements in novel-writing would otherwise be impossible without going into a maze of detail.

At the time when I began to make my bow to the public, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that literary *genre* which is described in England and America as "fiction" was quite unknown in Germany. Neither convention nor tradition recognized it. We had "high" literature (*belles-lettres*), the classical or would-be classical drama, also the classical lyric with all it derivatives and offshoots. Even the epic poem was still in vogue, making up in pretentiousness what it lost by diffusiveness, and, boring though it was, always appeared as the

obbligato birthday and Christmas gift. But the so-call "serious" man would have considered it *infra dig.* to bother himself with such productions. (As a matter of fact, I doubt very much whether the "serious" man would ever have read a poem by Hölderlin, or would know anything else out of *Faust* except certain trite quotations; a genuinely artistic culture was a rarity in such circles, indeed anywhere, for among the *élite* art was only a kind of superstition.) Then from these respected and sometimes shyly admired literary works, both genuine and spurious, one was reduced, without any transition, to reading the trash of the publisher's market, rose-tinted love stories, the romantic historical novel, trivial comedies, grim studies of social manners cut to a pattern with characters like lay figures. That was the position only a decade or two after the death of Dickens, Flaubert, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky, and at the very time when Zola and Maupassant in France, and in Russia Tolstoy and Chekhov, were creating their masterpieces of narrative.

The differences between the English and German story-telling of the nineteenth century is extraordinarily characteristic and significant. You had in England a high average and a number of individual outstanding figures; within this average a secure and

continuous tradition; a sure grasp of the appropriate and fitting, social life mirrored in all strata of society; an inexhaustible wealth of types; and finally breadth and ease of manner (to me, Thackeray appears the high-water mark with his peculiarly Victorian humour). Whereas with us in Germany there were only a few achievements by individuals such as the incomparable composition *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, a treasure like Achim von Arnim's *Kronenwächter*; a monumental work like Immermann's *Overhof*; a profound epic writer like Adalbert Stifter or the attractive and original Gottfried Keller; a creature of genius like E. T. A. Hoffmann, the wonderful Eichendorff, the portentous Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. None of these, however, had any real following, they left no visible traces on the spiritual life of the nation; each of them created a world but not one of them a tradition; great individuals they were but without any of that strength that inspires the common touch, each was as it were ruler in his own satrapy (with the exception of Goethe, whose novels, after all, have never penetrated to the people).

There you have the explanation of the steep decline from those heights, and the absence of any surface affinities; besides the fact that there never was in Germany a "society" as there is in England

and France. The novel needs, however, a surface, a certain agreed basis of forms, of social custom, and of living racial tradition. When, as a young man, I opened a book of Balzac's and read the word Paris, that was not for me just any city you like, it was a definite symbol, the vital centre of a nation prefigured already in countless images. With us in Germany it was never so. There was nothing like that. For this reason those who, thirty years ago, set about creating the German novel came up against wellnigh insurmountable difficulties, difficulties which were much greater than those that creative writers of other nations have had to face. The *Buddenbrooks* of Thomas Mann was a piece of good fortune, an exceptional case; as the scion of a Hansa city with century-old ties here was one author who had, so to speak, a century-old social background. All the same, he had to forge for himself the form of his novel and that *could* only be a personal accomplishment. (Incidentally he may be said to have succeeded by spicing it with irony, and irony, to my mind, is tantamount to an evasion of artistic form.)

As for the rest of us, what did we find? I am not speaking of the political, economic, or social situation, I am not referring to the fact that at that time the man of letters in Germany, if he were not actually

receiving Court patronage or in some way had been officially sponsored, was looked upon as a person of dubious character—he still incurred something of the odium of the lewd fellow, such as a century previously was the lot of the actor. And here I am referring to the general intellectual position round about the year 1890, when the first swingings of the naturalistic movement foreshadowed a kind of renaissance. I am thinking of books which were widely read at that time, such as those of Friedrich Spielhagen, of Paul Heyse's *Kinder der Welt*, the refurbishings of antiquity of a Georg Ebers, all these great ones renowned in their time but belonging to an epoch which is manifestly of the past; indeed, to-day you cannot even get access to the mausoleum where they lie at rest. True, it should not be forgotten that such a notable descriptive artist and narrator as Theodor Fontane and such a quaint artificer as Wilhelm Raabe, both men of sixty, had already produced their own most important work. These were, however, very little heeded by *le grand public*, indeed they were appreciated much less than they really deserved; it was only when the literary revival set in that they were borne along with it and their names became generally known.

The renewed animation of which I am speaking —to some extent it may be termed a spiritual

revolution—was based first and foremost on the influence of the great Nordic and Russian writers; the quiet poetry of a Jens Peter Jacobsen had paved the way, then came the great rebels and prophets, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Strindberg, Björnson, Zola, and their fiery breath was a powerful inspiration to us. The world took on a new complexion. I can still well remember the excitement provoked by Tolstoy's *Kreuzer Sonata*, a book that sent the blood rushing to the head, a straightforward prose narrative reflecting in immediate and model form a violence of life which bore the stamp of truth, yet treating of the inmost affairs of Everyman. Here was no philosophy, here were no scientific discoveries, no public scandals, but the record of human souls, nay, the spiritual pilgrimage of ordinary individual men, who, though but creatures of the author's mind, inflamed one's spirit and tugged at one's heart-strings.

It was something unprecedented, something that unquestionably had revolutionary effect. We seemed like people rudely awakened from our slumber, first with only a dull sense of all the noises that make up the daily round and unable to distinguish individual sounds. And among the voices then to be heard there was one speaking to us in the accents of our own language, one which though belonging, at the

turn of the century, to no living person, possessed, nevertheless, the most insistent appeal, and compared with which the sound of all the other voices seemed to be merely a faint chorus. Yes, the truth is that Friedrich Nietzsche was the real awakener of the young generations of Germans round about 1900. But that is philosophy over again, it will be said. I reply, Yes and No; for his mission measured in terms of time and spiritual importance was more that of a critic and educator than of a thinker; he induced agitation and not contemplation.

If in the Bismarckian era there was a general disposition to look down upon the novel, an attitude which goes back to Schiller's lofty dictum that the novel-writer was the half-brother of the poet, within a decade a remarkable change had set in—though indeed the reading public at that time was surfeited with a flood of inferior products of the *genre* trashy novels with a purpose, chitter-chatter of every conceivable kind, or manifestations of erotic love of a frankly exhibitionist and sensation-mongering character. These were, however, only the luxuriant overgrowth of the exuberantly thriving plants. Simultaneously you had the *Buddenbrooks*, already famous; you had Knut Hamsun, fêted almost as if he were a native poet; Gerhardt Hauptmann's *Emanuel Quint;* while Hermann Hesse, Arthur

Schnitzler, Henrich Mann, Eduard Keyserling, and the writer of this article also came on to the scene.

I regard the decisive intellectual event in the narrative literature of those days to be the breakthrough to reality. When I say reality I mean the fusion of character elements with the sensuous truth of an experience, and consequently a definite turning away from pedestrian portrayal of types no less than from vague creatures of idealism; avoidance of the indefinite subjective creation, as of the self-centred, lyrical effusion, clear delineation and grasp of the artist's sphere, simplicity and sobriety of presentation and, as goal, a distinctive, i.e. inimitable, word-picture. Such art requires strict discipline, a profound spiritual intentness, an intellectual determination to avoid every romantic diversion and to derive all the possibilities of self-development from simple human experience.

With the field ploughed and fertilized this way, the younger writers who came after had an easier task. Reality in the artist's sense is always something created, it does not exist *a priori.* And what I term intellectual tradition is the sum of the realities thus created. The very same process, a conquest of reality, is observable during the last decade in American literature. Whether the result in this case will be a solid achievement of tradition it is too

early to say; in any case it would be a unique occurrence. For us in Germany there always develops in time a fateful vacuum which, in its turn, has to be overcome, and at every attempt of this kind all our resources are needed. The building up and the destruction of a tradition frequently follow one another immediately. That is patently a waste of strength and likewise a continual using up of capital, and as such it is plainly shown in the various phases of our literary evolution. The same is true of the individual work. No one likes to feel that he owes anything to anyone else, each one of us obstinately goes his own way, and then, so as to delude himself about it, adheres to some watchword or slogan which may, so to speak, cover him and give him an inward assurance against the reproach of a lack of tradition. Thus the generation after the war hoisted the verbal flag "Expressionism"; ten years later it was *neue Sachlichkeit*. In either case it was really a flight from the essential.

Fortunately, however, single achievements are not determined by the stream of tendency in which they float. In those years just after the war we do perceive an abundance of young talent at work. A great number of the finest characters among our youth, it is true, fell on the battlefields; while those who came back, wearied of action, longed for

the contemplative life, and the *élite* of them yearned to mould into form their experiences and their impressions. Their life-material in itself had all of a sudden grown to immense proportions. There was an inexhaustible supply of material stored up in each one of them. It required no particular artistic bent to awaken the desire to testify to what one had seen and felt, and in so doing to relieve the pressure of mental distress. Society, State, family, economic life, presented a completely changed appearance; where the old still prevailed it seemed to challenge destruction. That was the time when innumerable war-novels appeared; works glorifying war were still rare, actual truth which had been lived through was stronger than the atavistic impulse to romantic soldiering. Call it humanitarian conscience or anxiety as to the survival of civilization, or even merely reaction against murder and horrors, there was sincerity and passion in books like Ludwig Renn's *War* or Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. And that was why they exerted such an effect on people's minds, though their artistic and literary importance certainly failed to come up to their importance as polemical writings. The real epic of the world war is still unwritten, and I do not believe it can be written within the next twenty years. Combustible material cannot be wrought into

shape. Artistically important experiments like Hans Carossa's *Rumanian Diary* (Secker), or portrayal of the struggles for a more extensive national area like Hans Grimm's *A People without Space* are no more than the prelude to a mighty drama.

Before that drama can come into being this polemical tendency must be overcome, for under its inspiration artistic products of a higher nature have been already nipped in the bud. The incursion of political life, of the party-epithet, and particularly that of Marxist ideology has wrought havoc. Perhaps we should once and for all recognize that our age is no time for the pure work of art. But is the novel in this sense to be regarded as a pure work of art? Do we not rather expect from it a picture of conditions at a given time, a spiritual narrative of that time, internal and external developments, the conditions of existence, the conflicts of ideas, the pattern of fate in all its warp and woof as affecting the characters, either raised to the plane of types or presented as symbolic? If there are any laws to which life and art have to conform this is one of them.

And if I do not conceal my doubts as to the likelihood of a new efflorescence of the novel, those doubts are directed above all to the intellectual radicalism of the younger generation, which not

only stifles all tradition, not only exposes the artist's trade as such to any casual intromission, but also veils the horizon, distorts our picture of the world and switches moral responsibilities on to the wrong lines. Such a state of affairs leads to paradoxes and convulsions, of which the general onslaught on "psychology," the abuse which has been hurled at all the established and recognized authors, is one of the most devastating. All at once the idea was that "psychology" was taboo. To the extent that this revulsion applied to the atomization of the soul which had been carried to a pitch of virtuosity there was nothing wrong in it, it was high time to do away with disclosure of the most secret intimacies which was a sheer outrage of decency and the ruthless post-mortem examination, as it were, of the figures portrayed, instead of creation and synthesis.

The general public was weary of this dismal perfection, the more cultivated turned away and sought something new. They thought to find it in the works of James Joyce, in the volumes of Marcel Proust. About the year 1924, the year when Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (Secker) appeared, a work which was not so far removed from this trend, the influence of these two writers was notable. Novels such as Döblin's *Alexanderplatz* or Hermann Broch's *Sleep-Walkers* (Secker)

are inconceivable without them. In general, however, the confusion they spread was greater than any beneficial influence which they may have exerted. By transferring into the sphere of art the scientific knowledge of Freud and Jung, very often with the fanaticism of the disciple, we have, as regards the much-maligned psychology, fallen from the frying-pan into the fire; things were fashioned in accordance with the most up-to-date principles, but they betrayed their essence and their origin all the same.

The essence of all narrative, of any description of facts, of any portrayal of life at all, is found in the movements of the soul, and without communication of the spark from soul to soul there can be no visible record, no tangible happening, no figure in which you or I can be mirrored, no fate that really stirs our emotion. There is, it is true, something rather mysterious about the revulsion against "psychology"; a certain joylessness in a pattern which had presented itself too often and too slickly to have any further power of attraction; mistrust, too, of feeling, but no less mistrust of intellect. Just as the tendency was in music to abandon melody, and in painting to give up representing the objective, so in the novel the idea was to have no more finished actions. In its repudiation of reason and

experience this tendency was a mystical one, in its deliberate aversion from the traditional technique and the suppression of conventions it was, on the other hand, a product of rationalism. There is one author of genius in whom all these characteristics are united, Franz Kafka. His work is extraordinarily German in the widest sense.

This German was, as it happens, a Jew. The fact cannot be passed over in silence here that a strikingly large number of modern novelists are Jews. The names of many of them have been carried beyond the frontiers of Germany, men such as Alfred Döblin, Stefan and Arnold Zweig, Franz Werfel, Max Brod, Lion Feuchtwanger, Hermann Kesten, and Josef Roth, whose *Job* and *Radetzky March* (Heinemann) are works of genuine poetic quality and who, I think, has a great future as an author. Jews have always been intellectual pioneers, the protagonists of every new art and new doctrine. They were the first people in Germany to do homage to Richard Wagner, the first to spread the fame of Nietzsche, and their passionate interest in literature has had in the last fifty years the effect of a driving force. A thousand years of oppression had stored up in them powers and cravings which were now surging up with elemental force; an intoxication it was, indeed, and the results necessarily of a hybrid character.

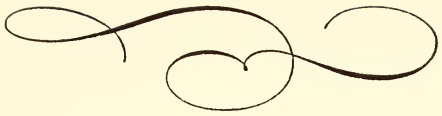
That the sons and grandsons of a section of the nation which had been so long and so insistently restrained from active participation—whose allegiance to their chosen home had, notwithstanding this repression, become a feeling of love—should now throng into the field of artistic creation, for which they were entitled to feel qualified by virtue of their fresh, unused energies and their peculiar and manifold original gifts, is too natural a process for me to try and explain it. I do not wish to say any more about it.

If I were compelled to make a tally of the contemporary and the up-to-date authors I should be very much embarrassed. With the super-abundance of production it is scarcely possible. It suffices that I have indicated the direction of the various tendencies. For the time being no great achievements are in sight, but on the other hand there is a certain collective striving which may, perhaps, lead to intellectual and social clarification. It is perhaps also preparing the soil for a new communal tradition, which is, nevertheless, as opposed to the spirit and essence of art and free characterization as that barren individualism which has brought the form and civilization of Europe to the edge of destruction. Who will save us from it?

SPAIN

V. S. Pritchett

V. SPAIN



THE similarities in the relation of Spain, Ireland, and Russia to the rest of Europe make a fascinating and tempting material for misleading generalization. Each is outside the main current of European culture, each is an isolated and "backward" country, and each has passed through violent political upheaval since the war and this upheaval was the conscious aim of the writers of the generation which preceded it. But, stripping away all dubious resemblances, the main fact which emerges is that there are two kinds of society in Europe: the modern, mechanized and irreligious, possessing an international economic homogeneity; and the less powerful, non-mechanized society which is only at the beginning of the struggle of its values and traditions against the machine, and is still nationalist in tendency and essence.

And as there are two societies in Europe, so there are two literatures, one in the main European current and the other outside it; and the latter, like a secure and hidden mountain lake, is visited

by pilgrims from the former in those frequent times of spiritual drought which afflict the people of the mechanized plains. Soon, we suppose, the pipe-lines will be laid and the lake will be brought into organized unity with the modern world.

Spain and Ireland still belong spiritually to the old peasant and feudal cultures; or, rather, we should say that they have not yet shown what the effect of social upheaval upon their life will be. In Ireland where nationalism is synonymous with religion and the land, the impulse at the moment is to isolation; in Spain, on the other hand, the movement is towards Europe.

This break with the long isolationist tradition of the Spanish decadence is a matter of great interest, for the Reformation and the French Revolution had been rejected. The conflict vaguely known as the struggle between Africa and Europe in the Spanish mind has entered a new phase. After spending two-thirds of the last century in civil disorganization and strife the Spaniard had seen liberalism—which meant Europe to him—eclipsed in the fall of the first Republic; and later he had seen the exuberant Bourbon restoration punctured first by the Colonial disasters of the war with the United States in 1898, and latterly by the Moroccan failure of the 'twenties of this century. Both catas-

trophes were decisive; the first provided the inspiration which was to break into action after the latter. Students of Spanish literature are familiar with that much overworked caption: "the generation of '98." It would be more accurate to put down the Spanish intellectual renaissance to the pervasive educational movement of which Don Francisco Giner de los Rios was the leading figure. But it is true that in '98 a mood of pessimism, introspection, and realistic self-scrutiny engrossed the best minds of the country, a desire to prick the bubbles of patriotic rhetoric and to discover what Spanish facts really were. Regeneration, Europe, and realism became the intellectual watchwords of the day.

There is no need to discuss the "generation" in detail, for we are concerned only with the novel; it is enough that every writer of mark was influenced by its ideas. Then Spanish individualism asserted itself and each writer took his own course. But the irony of it is that the only writer to attain an assured European reputation is the one who has most eloquently declaimed his antagonism to the European idea. When Miguel de Unamuno cries in his Basque voice from the wilderness of Salamanca, "I feel within myself a mediaeval soul," that part of Europe which is weary of European

culture—middle-class culture and Unamuno's "false god"—reads his *Tragic Sense of Life* with applause. It is indeed a great book. When, however, we turn to Unamuno's novels, such as *Niebla* (translated as *Mist* in an American edition, a novel highly regarded in Spain), for some sight of the life from which the mystic has sprung, there is disappointment. Unprophetic, Unamuno sinks to the garrulous, the Chestertonian, and the merely ingenious.

His only contemporary to win an English audience was, inevitably, Blasco Ibañez. There is no doubt about the vigour, the narrative power, competence, and panache of Blasco Ibañez, but his reputation abroad lies not in his early studies of Valencian peasant life, but in his gaudier cosmopolitan melodramas. We need not linger over him; except to note that the more vulgar side of Parisian influence has a fatal fascination for those Spaniards who throw off tradition and restraints entirely, in order to cut a figure. The mass of quasi-pornographic Spanish novels published during the past thirty years, which have been the reading of the small, non-intellectual middle-class, show clear traces of the non-inoculated intellect with the worst of France.

We are left with two or three excellent novelists

who, though translated in the United States, have been little heard of in England. Gabriel Miró and Valle-Inclán both stand apart from the modern world. Miró has died recently, and his death has removed the most fastidious and individual writer of prose in this generation. He has portrayed the pagan Catholic peasant of Alicante. Valle-Inclán is a man of the Renaissance who has survived into modern times. He also is admired for the sumptuous music of his prose style and the utmost refinements of poetic artifice. It is not far-fetched to compare him in this respect to George Moore—Galicia has many resemblances of scene and race with Ireland—and, except that his sensuality is suave and exotic dreaming, with the more fiery d'Annunzio. But both Miró and Valle-Inclán are delicate wines which do not travel well. Miró, particularly, is essentially of the peasant twilight.

The intense regional nature of the various Spanish genius has not diminished in spite of the move towards Europe. It is the source of the Spanish novelists' vitality and, for want of a better word, his sweetness. It is also the characteristic which frequently gives him a difficult provinciality from the point of view of the foreign reader, unless he knows the Spanish environment well and can identify himself with the native temper. How

is it, the English reader finds himself asking again and again, that an author who has entranced him in the Spanish disappoints him in translation? Once the sound of the "lordly language of Castile" has been poured away there is so little left. Was his pleasure merely a form of self-flattery at his ability to read the language? Was it that in Spanish sound and sense are more peculiarly entwined than in English? Was it that a nostalgia for the past worked like a transforming and insidious wine in the veins or that the revolutionary sounded more revolutionary in a foreign language, the devotional more devout? Was it that, absorbed by the nostalgia in Azorin's evocations of the decaying Castilian towns, we did not notice his debt to certain French stylists since out-moded? In short, once the thing is in plain English before us, do the wheels of that movement to Europeanization creak, and, although we may find comparable dissatisfactions with our own Aldous Huxleys, are they not easier to gloss over because they are also ours? Furthermore, remarkable as the contribution of the "generation of '98" is, it received its spiritual death-blow at the hands of the Great War, and having begun in almost puritan nationalism at the beginning of the century there remained for it only to gather the bouquets of revolutionary triumph with the

establishment of the republic. Since the war politics have become an increasing preoccupation, and as novelists the older generation have had little new to say and the young no time or wish to say it.

Putting aside Pío Baroja and Ramón Pérez de Ayala, the two outstanding novelists of the last thirty years, perhaps adding the name of Benjamin Jarnés, there are none of like stature among the young as far as a foreigner may judge. They are absorbed in politics, and neither stability nor disillusion has yet released them. When it does we may expect a number of political novels of the kind our English Communists pray for but do not get. One such novel is worth noticing, more because of its subject matter than because of its writing, which is very unequal and rather commonplace. It is an agglomeration of material inadequately differentiated. *Siete Domingos Rojos* (Seven Red Sundays), by Ramón Sender, is contemporary political history intelligently reported. It describes the men of the Syndicalist, Anarchist, Communist, and Socialist movements, their meetings, intrigues, secret organizations, their processions, their acts of sabotage, and their clashes with the police, with a heavy bias against the "bourgeois" republic. It contains some good descriptive writing, and it gives an interesting, if long-winded, account of

working-class ferment. The book is worth reading, and certainly surpasses in interest most of those German novels on civil strife which have been recently translated into English. Behind the laconic and caustic realism of Pío Baroja's work, behind the intellectual brilliance of Ramón Pérez de Ayala there could always be detected an atmosphere of idyllic innocence and sweetness. The kind of literature which may be deduced from *Siete Domingos Rojos* has replaced this by a naïve, Soviet poster-fed lyricism of physical fitness and the novelties of exercise. This apparently is the only refreshment the revolutionary puritan is to allow himself.

Until the political spate begins Pío Baroja must stand as the only notable revolutionary novelist, and he began writing thirty years ago. In fact, although with apparent perversity he early transferred his interest to the past in the innumerable novels called *Memoirs of a Man of Action*, which deal with the intrigues of the Carlist wars, he seems to me to be the revolutionary novelist *par excellence*. Firstly, because he is the novelist of the streets; secondly, because his central preoccupation is the young man of anarchic, wandering disposition, at odds with society, moving from job to job and from town to town.

He is unable to fit into the stupid and barbaric life which surrounds him and his end is a stoical despair. He is petulant, melancholy, hopeless, a man foiled by the stupidity of the world until the spark of a new adventure catches him. Such a character, given his head, is ruinous to the construction of a novel, and since, as he has confessed, Pío Baroja finds difficulty in invention, his novels tend to become a string of episodes. This is the picaresque tradition in liaison with the Naturalists.

Open any of Pío Baroja's novels and you are looking at once at a street down which every kind of street-haunting character drifts, stops to talk for a while, and then passes. Now it is an aged beggar and his daughter, now a doctor—Pío Baroja began life as a country doctor, ran a bakery later, writing his novels in the account books—a prostitute, a penniless political hanger-on, an agitator, a youth living by his wits, a priest. The stream is endless, and the grey inertia of the streets is upon every one. As in the life of the streets these people also suddenly break into sporadic activity. Often the author follows the passer-by to his home—some crumbling place in a provincial town, a room in a boarding house, a Ministry, or a slum, and in a few words he can sketch the essence of a man or woman's life with unforgettable

vividness. Pío Baroja's knowledge of the way the poor and struggling genteel classes live in Spain is unsurpassed among his contemporaries. He is a bitter anti-clerical, abrupt and perfunctory in his contempt. His temper is epitomized by the title of one of his novels on the rag-pickers of the Madrid slums—*La Busca* (The Search). And he answers our tacit inquiry with the Selah which runs through *Paradox Rey*, a kind of Peer Gynt fantasy: "Parece que busco algo pero no busco nada" ("I seem to be looking for something, but I am not"). He is not. He has this perverse humour. He moves on from scene to scene, an intellectual and spiritual anarchist sharp-tongued with the pessimism of '98.

Whatever his defects as a novelist, Baroja has drawn the life of his country with a variety and acuteness of observation equalled only by Galdós among the moderns. He is like a traveller of sad eye passing from town to town and province to province, putting down the chance words of the journey and the main notes of the landscape.

He is a prolific novelist. His early trilogies of Basque life—*El Mayorazgo de Labraz* must be read—of the sea, the cities, and the struggle for life, are more attractive to foreign readers than the *Memoirs of a Man of Action.* In these he seems

to have been inspired by the *Episodios Nacionales* of Galdós. The intrigues of the Carlists and Liberals in Bayonne, the secret traffic of the frontier, and the character of Aviraneta, a soldier of fortune, Liberal spy, and Baroja's kinsman, are the kind of material to which he can escape from the boredom of modern life. In England there is a preponderant middle-class who are comfortable enough to put themselves at one remove from the more urgent facts of the struggle for life, and they may therefore refine upon their sentiments and discuss on a full stomach the finer issues of psychology and sociology. In Spain this security is less secure—I doubt, for example, whether, in spite of his fame, Pío Baroja has ever been able to earn enough to live by his writing—and his novels are steeped in this atmosphere of the fight for security and subsistence which is written on the faces of the people.

As a Basque Baroja has the frigidity of his race. His lack of geniality (though not of humour), his deficiencies in the racy and robust, leave him with the superficial traits but not the warmth one expects in a picaresque writer. For this genial quality one turns to the work of a younger man, an apostate from the teachings of the Jesuits, a more polished and more intellect-ridden anti-

clerical than Baroja—Ramón Pérez de Ayala. He is the most brilliant of contemporary novelists, a complete European but rooted in the Asturias, his native province, where the scene of most of his novels is laid. Some of his books have appeared in American translations, and last year *Tiger Juan* (Jonathan Cape), his latest novel, was published in England.

Ayala first made a reputation as a poet, and in his love of fantasy and the fantastic metaphor the poetic tension is on every page he writes. The Spanish have frequently been reproached for an excess of originality, for an ability to strike bizarre attitudes and to perform astonishing isolated feats, a failure to sustain their effort, and a lack of discipline. They are the enemies of organic form, and, as in government so in literature, they prefer the grandeurs of individualism, being quite willing to resign themselves to its monologues and longueurs. As in their life, they drift along to the blank interior monody of their self-isolation, limp, and apparently without will. One sits in the café listening to an interminable conversation about everything, and one is the only person listening. Each of the others is conducting not a conversation (which implies criticism, discipline, and suppressions) but a monologue. Suddenly an

incident occurs, an idea is thrown out, and every one has gone up like a rocket and a passionate brilliance is in the air. The minds flash, and then, as suddenly as it all occurred, they go; and instead of rockets in the air one is aware of the ring of empty sticks.

Applying the test of this experience to the work of Ayala one finds a writer on the contrary who is brilliant all the time. Ayala is the chameleon of Spanish novelists. Opening his novel with perhaps a description of the huddled houses of the Asturian town of Pilares, he moves from the sardonic humours of his picturesque manner, which delights in the fantastic and grotesque, to a swifter and robust picaresque realism, thence to the novel of discussion in which intellectual Aunt Sallies are put up and knocked down, and on to idyllic scenes of innocent love. His humour is broad and lively. Restless, excitable and witty, he cannot resist a fantastic theory, a strange metaphor, an exaggeration of character or a passage of dialect, so that one might be meeting Synge, Fielding, and Aldous Huxley, and on the same page. His novels are fairy tales which have lost their innocence and have gone to the university, the fantasies of a mind electric with ideas, rascally, and malign, but which is capable of a pure and limpid sentiment. In modern English literature pure sentiment has

become not only unfashionable but impossible. The techniques of psychology have acted like an acid on sentiment and have split it into its component parts. Psychology has moved the stress in feeling from the passive to the dynamic, and we now have characters which leap into passion and then have to worry their way out of it. Sincere sentiment, in our preoccupation with mechanism, has gone. It survives only in degenerate state in mediocre fiction. It has become a sham antique. In the Spanish novel and theatre—one recalls the plays of Sierra and the Quinteros—this decline of sentiment has not yet taken place. The Spanish mind has not yet been mechanized. It dwells in a world in which the machine is still the servant and not the master, and is treated with that lack of respect with which a Spaniard treats his animals. The master is still the mediaeval Catholic childhood, and the current of sentiment flows through even the most tortured or most emphatic Spanish agnostic writer and refreshes the divided paganism (which is a common result of the Jesuit education) of such a writer as Ayala, like the springs and green streams of his Asturian mountains. This sentiment has not the pantheistic associations which it has had in England; we must turn indeed to Irish literature to find anything like it. Its existence in

garrulous intellectual fantasy is puzzling to the modern English reader.

Tiger Juan is the most ambitious of Ayala's books, the most conscious, the most subtle and elaborate piece of writing; and, while it is not in my opinion his most successful, it is a rich book. As writing, it has the monotony of its own brilliance. It is a theory put into fiction, and its theme, the purgation by fire and suffering of a typical Spaniard from the evils of the seventeenth-century doctrines of honour and his transformation into a modern man with a sane understanding of the relations of the sexes, is of less interest to English than to Spaniard readers. The story moves slowly, and the character of Tiger Juan, quack, market vendor, public letter-writer, fuming about his honour at his stall, seems too grotesque and archaic a figure to bear the brunt of the argument. But the people who move about him step with the grace and life of truly imagined creatures—the soldier, type of the romantic lover; the commercial traveller, who is Don Juan brought up to date; the women. These lovely beings are allowed to appear when the author has thrown off the load of intellectual conflict, and then he is the superb poet of a picaresque ballet. Again and again in the more limpid pages of *Tiger Juan* one thinks of

Alarcón's *Three Cornered Hat*, but with a northern pathos and tenderness added to the intrigue.

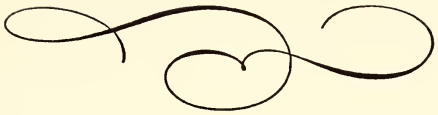
Realism and mysticism, mutually responsive poles, are the great Spanish contributions to literature, the one perfectly balancing the other. The Jesuits have effectively destroyed mysticism in Ayala; at least, a mingling of sophisticated rationalism and a Celtic nostalgia has replaced it. In *Belarmino y Apolonio*—his best and least translatable book—he has soared into an air where these elements have attained a delightful equilibrium; and again in the short stories *Luz de Domingo*, *Prometeo*, and *La Caida de los Limones*. Ayala has experimented more than any other Spanish novelist, and *Tiger Juan* contains a great deal of technical interest to the foreign novelist. The climax of this book, a Midsummer Night's Dream of transfiguration, is one of the best things he has done.

But, like most of his contemporaries, Ayala is now deep in politics; he believes that the revolution of establishing the republic is enough to go on with, and that it must be firmly established. Literature in the meantime waits, and at the moment his position as the most European of Spanish novelists is unchallenged.

RUSSIA

D. S. Mirsky

VI. RUSSIA



THE Russian Soviet novel has passed through three stages which correspond in the main to the stages passed by the country since the end of the civil war. In the first stage, Soviet literature was chiefly dominated by writers who did not belong to the proletariat or to the Communist party.

In the civil war novel, to which their work is devoted, the writer is either a passive onlooker thrilled by the grandeur of the spectacle and intent on expressing his personal attitude to it in as individual and original a way as possible; or else he is a blind atom that has lost all sense of will and personality in the impersonal (and equally blind) revolutionary force; or, again, a helpless but fascinated victim, both dreading and worshipping the Juggernaut of the revolution. Hence the dominant features of the novels of those years—the absence of individual characters, the dominant rôle of masses, crowds, communities, armies—a fatalism in the presentation of the oscillations of victory and defeat, as of the individual fates of

that helpless atom, individual man—and, on the other hand, a fierce insistency on the author's originality, a desperate desire to write as personally and as originally as possible.

These features will all be found in various proportions in the works of the most representative non-Communist novelists of those years: in *The Bare Year*, by Boris Pilnyak, the earliest success of the Soviet novel; in the Siberian stories of Vsevolod Ivanov; in the early work of Leonid Leonov; in the consummately condensed stories of *Red Cavalry*, by Isaac Babel; and in Artem Vesely's epic, *Russia Washed in Blood.*

The last named may be taken as the summing-up of all this phase of the Soviet novel. It appeared in its full and final form only in 1932, long after the phase had passed, but all the main parts were written in 1923–27. The impersonal, mass story is given pure and simple. The novel consists of two disconnected parts which deal with two distant parts of the country, the North Caucasus and the Middle Volga, and have no link except a unity of atmosphere, and the one impression left is that of a seething maelstrom of struggle, horror, and heroism.

The second stage of the Soviet novel is the early proletarian novel, which is almost the exact oppo-

site of the novel just described. The term "proletarian" does not so much imply the individual origin of the author in a working-class family, as his general political and ethical attitude. The proletarian novel took form chiefly in the end of the nineteen-twenties, but its first steps were made at the same time as those of the non-Communist writers, and its earliest productions may be regarded as, in a sense, an answer to the works of writers like Pilnyak and Vesely. The individual novels sometimes actually preceded in time the works to which they are an answer. Thus, nothing is more illuminating than a comparison of Vesely's *Russia Washed in Blood* with the first great achievement of the proletarian novel, *The Iron Stream*, by Serafimovitch. Serafimovitch is seventy, and Vesely not thirty-five. *The Iron Stream* appeared in 1922, and *Russia Washed in Blood* in 1932, and still *The Iron Stream* is a step further than Vesely's novel, and an answer to it, in about the same sense as *Joseph Andrews* was an answer to *Pamela.*

Serafimovitch's novel is a story of leadership, of effort of revolution, a story of how the Bolshevik leaders of the Taman Red Army saved it from demoralization and disintegration, and led it to victory. In style and manner *The Iron Stream* is reminiscent of much pre-revolutionary literature,

and lacks many of the features of the mature proletarian novel. But the main feature of the latter is present: the approach to the story, as to a problem of leadership, education, and victory. For the main subject of the proletarian novel is the political education of the rank-and-file by the conscious revolutionary, and the education of the revolutionary himself on practical work with the masses.

The masterpiece of the proletarian novel was *The Nineteen*, by Alexander Fadeyev. It is also a story of the civil war, the story of a commander of Red Guerrillas in the Far East. The story is written in a manner strongly influenced by Tolstoy. This Communist novelist is primarily interested in understanding the human material by which Socialism is being fought for, to appraise the real value of every individual fighter, to know what to expect of him, and how to get the best out of him. Two characters of Fadeyev's novel are particularly memorable—the commander of the fighting group, Levinson, and the young intellectual, Meychik. Levinson is the first adequate character of the Communist in imaginative literature; steady, unspectacular, utterly reliable, unassuming, brave and patient, capable of gauging the value of every man under his command, and with his quiet, persevering energy keeping up their

energy and resolution, even after a seemingly hopeless defeat (the Russian title of the novel actually is *The Defeat*). Meychik, the individualist, the young man brought up on "human values," dreaming of abstract heroism, but afraid of blood and incapable even of keeping himself tidy in bush warfare, or properly looking after his horse —an ineffectual individualist, who from sheer discouragement and offence becomes a traitor.

Novels like these changed the face of Soviet literature in the later nineteen-twenties, and must be regarded as the fountain-head of the Soviet novel of to-day. But in the interval developments took place which changed the face of the country and affected literature most profoundly, making of Soviet literature something fundamentally new and different from other literatures both past and present.

Here is not the place to give an account of these changes, which began in 1929–30, and which amounted to the advent of Socialism, that Socialism which had been a distant goal for so many generations, and the foundations of which the Soviet Government had been steadily and unostentatiously laying ever since the moment of the October revolution. Outside the Communist party, this coming of Socialism was almost unex-

pected, and the mind of the intellectual was strongly impressed by the new developments.

The intellectual always imagined that Socialism was a noble dream, a distant and delusive ideal. He suddenly realized that it was a more efficient practical proposition than capitalism.

An important effect of all this on Soviet literature was to do away with the existing distinction between proletarian and non-proletarian writers, and to merge all in one army of Soviet writers equally concerned in the great work of Socialist construction, and to give Soviet literature a unity it had not hitherto possessed. This political background has to be brought out before we can understand the new tendencies in the Soviet novel. They are entirely conditioned by the social upheaval of those years. The key to the Russian novel and to all the Soviet literature of to-day is the will to help in building Socialism. Literature has become a conscious part of a common effort; a function of the social organism closely and consciously co-ordinated with its other functions, which all converge towards one common purpose.

The two new characteristics of the new Soviet literature are its conscious purposefulness and its conscious co-ordination with a collective existence. This has to be grasped before anything can be

understood in the novels that are being written in Russia. To understand what it is the Soviet novelists are doing, the non-Soviet reader must make at least some step towards understanding the new Socialist civilization that is growing in the Soviet Union.

First of all he must get rid of the individualistic aesthetic ideas that are dominant in England and other capitalist countries about literature being the "expression" of an individuality, and about its producing an independent world of "value." A "willing suspension" of all acceptance of the ideas of Benedetto Croce, Bertrand Russell, and Middleton Murry is an act of goodwill required of the person who intends to understand Soviet literature. If he approaches it as just another "national" literature, comparable to German, American, or French literature, he will find himself in the ridiculous position of a biologist who would study a bird from the point of view of its adaptiveness to the life of a fish.

It may be useful in this connection to say a few words of the attitude of Soviet literature to the literature of the past. It would be wrong to regard the former as *solely* a growth of the new social conditions, with no roots in literary tradition. The recognition of the great importance of the cultural

heritage left to Socialist civilization by the civilization of the past is an essential point in the Communist outlook. A great interest in the classics of the literatures of the world is a striking and essential feature of literary life in the Soviet Union. Translations and books about them are numerous and widely read. My last work before sitting down to write the present article was an extensive essay on Smollett, to serve as an introduction to a new translation of *Peregrine Pickle*, which is shortly to appear simultaneously with *Tom Jones*.

Of all the writers of the past, the two that are to-day most on the lips and under the eyes of the Soviet man of letters are Shakespeare[1] and Balzac. In the present connection it is the latter with which I am most concerned. We recognize him as uniting in a supreme degree all those features which in the novel of the past are most actual and instructive for the Soviet novelist. Balzac, you will say, was neither a particularly purposeful writer, nor had he any sense of being part of a great army working at a common task; but these qualities are precisely what the Soviet novelist has no need to learn from the past. He gets them direct from the time and place he is living in. What he can and does learn

[1] Two Shakespeare plays, *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*, have been running recently in Moscow.

from Balzac is the art of seeing society, of seeing and showing history in its uninterrupted flow, of giving historical forces, classes, and social entities individual life in characters of unsurpassed convincingness and reality. Balzac was a greater historian of his age than any professional historian. His art was knowledge, and the Soviet novelist regards his art as an instrument of knowledge.

Balzac's knowledge, however, was not applied, it was not placed at the service of a great common cause. In this respect the Soviet novelist has nothing to learn from Balzac, and everything to learn from the scientific Communism of Marx and Lenin.

The Soviet novel of to-day wants to be an instrument of knowledge applied to the great tasks of the time. It wants to be a picture of its vast collective effort and a study of the men and women engaged in it, of the changes operated in them by the new conditions created by themselves, and of the further possibilities contained in them. Purposefulness, co-ordination with the social whole, and an approach to imaginative work as a form of knowledge—these are the three main characteristics of the new Soviet novel. Their combination is defined by Soviet criticism as Socialist realism.

The reality which the Soviet novel of to-day

reflects is the Socialist reconstruction of a vast country, according to plan and directed by one conscious collective will. The vast scale of this reconstruction gives the literature that reflects it a scope that may be called epic. The Soviet novel is an epic of purposeful effort. As a rule it has no definite plot in the traditional sense of the term. It is the story of a series of successive engagements in one and the same campaign, every hard-gained victory raising new tasks and demanding fresh victories. "The fight goes on" is the refrain that ends every novel. It was the refrain of Fadeyev's *Nineteen*, which ends with the defeated irregulars, who has been dispersed in their last encounter with the Japanese, gathering together and rallying for fresh battles. The new Soviet novel usually ends on a victory, but a victory which demands new exertions in order to gain new victories.

These words of "fight" and "battle" and "victory," and these analogies with the war novel of Fadeyev, must not be interpreted too literally. The fight is not necessarily a fight with lethal weapons. It is, on the one hand, of course, a political and economic fight against the last of the propertied classes, the village bourgeoisie, but it is also a productive struggle with the reluctant forces of nature, and a fight with the servile and

indolent mentality bred in the people by generations of subjection to bosses, an educational fight to bring up a Socialist mankind.

The most characteristic novels of these last two or three years are all connected with one of the two main problems that had to be (and were) solved by the political leadership of the country: the problem of turning the rural districts from a world of isolated petty properties into a system of collective Socialist farms, and the problem of turning a backward agricultural country into a country of advanced industrialism. The examination of these two problems in their respective fields is the subject matter of what we may call the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) novel and the industrial novel.

We may take as specimens of these two types of novels two which were probably the outstanding successes of the winter of 1932–33: the first volume of *Broken Earth* by Michael Sholokhov, and *Forward, Oh Time!* by Valentin Kataev.

Sholokhov is a Don Cossack. His first novel, *And Quiet Flows the Don*,[1] is a vast chronicle, constructed somewhat along the lines of *War and Peace*, relating the stories of several Cossack families from the period preceding the war to after the civil war. This vast scale is typical

[1] Published by Putnam.

of the modern Soviet novel: it tries to take in as much as possible of life and to follow the unfolding of history in all its varied detail. But if *And Quiet Flows the Don* is a story of the recent past, *Broken Earth* is a story of the present. It is typical of the Soviet novel to come out in parts, without even the author sometimes knowing what will be in the next part, because the events that he will have to relate have not yet happened. The *kolkhoz* novel which shares the first place with Sholokhov's is Fyodor Panfyorov's *Bruski* (of which the third and by far the most interesting volume appeared a few months ago), another instance of such a chronicle. It is the history of a whole rural district, from the end of the civil war onwards, which can be continued until the final victory of Communism.

Sholokhov's book is the history of a village of Don Cossacks during the crucial period of the campaign for collectivization, the early months of 1930. It is the story of the fight between the Communists and the rural bourgeoisie, led by ex-officers of the Tsarist Cossack forces, as to who shall win the main masses of the working Cossacks. The plot is unfolded simultaneously in the two hostile camps. Davydov, a Communist workman of the Putilov works in Leningrad, arrives in the

village to direct the work of collectivization. He acts with the support of a very small number of local Communists and of the village poor, and soon succeeds in winning over the "middle" Cossack, and in establishing a *kolkhoz*. But the inexperience of the Communists in this entirely new field of work leads to exaggerations and excesses: they insist, for instance, on socializing even the poultry. These exaggerations give fuel to the reactionary propaganda of the officers. A Cossack officer lives concealed in the house of his former sergeant-major, and succeeds in winning over a considerable number of "middle" Cossacks. They get ready for an armed insurrection. Davydov loses ground—he narrowly escapes being lynched by a mob of women, but his steadiness and resoluteness win through. By degrees he acquires the experience he lacked at first. Then arrives the news of Stalin's famous article (March 1930) condemning and cancelling the exaggerations of the local Communists. The middle Cossacks swing back to the Soviet side. The officers' plan collapses. Davydov is brought to trial before the district party committee, but succeeds in vindicating himself, and shows himself an admirable organizer during the first "sowing campaign" of the new-born *kolkhoz*.

This bare outline will give an idea of the extraordinary richness of Sholokhov's book, of the wealth and variety of characters, and of the wonderful colour and vividness of every scene. Least of all is the story a mere strategical account of the moves and turns in the struggle. Davydov acts in a complicated atmosphere of political and personal relations; and his love affair with a Cossack woman plays a prominent, though not dominating, part in the latter part of the novel.

For wealth and truth of detail, for variety of characterization, Sholokhov has nothing to fear from a comparison with Fielding. The principal thing in his novel is the characters, characters which are the best instance of the Soviet novelist's ability to unite the general with the particular. Davydov; the Cossack officer; Polovtsev, the ex-N.C.O.; Ostrovnov, who is the officers' agent in the *kolkhoz*; the Cossack Communist and civil-war veteran, Nagulnov, who has never been outside the Don Territory, but whose fondest dream is to see England a Soviet republic; the absurd and naïvely selfish old pauper Shchukar, are figures that hold their own by the side of the greatest in the portrait gallery of Russian literature. They are, at the same time, searching studies of the social forces at work in the Soviet Union, and an

invaluable contribution to the practical work of understanding and directing them.

Forward, Oh Time![1] is a very different performance. If Sholokhov's novel is a chronicle like *War and Peace*, Kataev's, like *Ulysses*, is the story of twenty-four hours in one town. The town is Magnitogorsk, or rather the site which has since become Magnitogorsk—for at the time described by Kataev not one of the plants was ready, and the whole place was doing nothing but building. Kataev is a brilliant and sparkling writer, who conveys his characters with a marvellous lightness of touch through their gestures, through the accent of their voices, so that, as in real life, one sees them as sensuous images before one perceives them as natural agents.

The story turns on the rivalry of the three relays of workmen engaged in a particular part of construction; which of them will work better and hold the red flag. The issue is, how many mixtures of concrete can be made in an hour. The story is told with extraordinary *brio*, and reads like the most exciting novel of adventure, or rather perhaps like a sparkling comedy.

Kataev is a less central figure in Soviet literature than Sholokhov. He approaches his subject from

[1] Published by Gollancz.

the outside, and not without a certain levity, but he succeeds in conveying the atmosphere of Soviet industry with extraordinary vividness.

I have not room to analyse in any detail any other novels. Their variety is great. Nothing, for instance, can be less like *Forward, Oh Time!* than the industrial novel of Marietta Shaginyan, *Hydro-electric Central*—a thoughtful and searching study of the main motives of the Socialist worker and engineer, and of the spirit of collective work. Again, a very different variety is presented in *A Man Changes his Skin*, by Bruno Jasienski—the story of the building of a great irrigation system in Central Asia near the Afghan frontier, where the characters of Socialist realism are paradoxically, but successfully, blended with the technique of the detective novel—the story turning round the discovery of a plot to wreck the enterprise.

An entirely different type again is the book which was the most successful first novel for several years—*I Love*, by Alexander Avdeyenko. As a literary production it is not typical of the Soviet novel, but of all books it is perhaps the one of which one may most confidently say that nothing like it could have been written outside the Soviet Union, and before 1930. It is unlike the

typical Soviet novel, for it is what usually that is not—the expression of a personality. But what a distance from anything in those literatures where the expression of personality is the one accepted object of literary work. The novel is autobiographical. The hero is born in a miner's family about 1905; the family, exposed to all the miseries of a proletarian existence, falls to pieces and dissolves. The boy becomes a waif, and develops into a thief. After many years of anti-social existence he is taken into an educational settlement. There he learns to work, and learns the pride of work. From there he goes to Magnitogorsk as an engine-driver. Avdeyenko's Magnitogorsk is very different from Kataev's, but both are permeated with the same spirit—the pride of work, the pride of the Socialist working for no bosses but for his own class. Avdeyenko is young, and his education was casual. His work is distinctly immature, but no one has yet expressed this new pride which is bred by Socialism with the same force.

Avdeyenko is very representative of the mentality that is growing up in the new generation of Soviet workers, but as a writer he can hardly be regarded as typical, for he lacks what is, after all, the dominant feature of our literature, the attitude towards imaginative work as a form of knowledge.

Among other things, this attitude finds expression in a tendency to break down the boundaries separating imaginative literature from other forms of knowledge, especially from social science and history. In this connection a highly symptomatic development is the *History of the Factories*, a tremendous enterprise inaugurated by Gorki and directed by L. Averbakh, for which the active support of thousands of factory workers and engineers and hundreds of professional authors has been mobilized. The *History of the Factories*, of which two volumes have already appeared, aims at being a scientific history of the individual plants which together form the vast army of Soviet industry. Without surrendering a tittle of scientific rigour, it aspires at producing at the same time genuine art, "the great epic of the Soviet proletariat," as Averbakh puts it, and thus bringing together these two essentially cognate forms of knowledge.

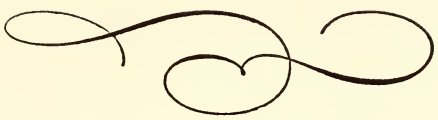
The very nature of the *History of the Factories* makes it a collective work. A still more novel experiment in collective literary work has been attempted in the book, just out, on the White Sea Canal. The book was written by a group of over thirty writers (also presided over by Gorki) and welded into one in such a way as to form a single

seamless whole. The group describes itself as the first literary *kolkhoz*. Being myself one of the group, I will venture no opinion on the result, all the more as the book is not, in any strict sense of the word, fiction.

ITALY

Luigi Pirandello

VII. ITALY



Francesco de Sanctis, the illustrious historian[1] and critic of Italian literature, who was exiled for his opinions by the Bourbons of Naples, considered Manzoni's *Promessi sposi* (The Betrothed) to be the basic work of Italian narrative literature. In the *Promessi sposi* the humanitarian idea is completely freed from the Biblical, Christian, religious idea, and is made more humanly dramatic by the fact that the vast plot has its centre in two peasants. In these lowly peasants is embodied the sense of human dignity that had emerged only recently, and was to form the foundations of the history of to-day.

This Manzonian idea, of love and consideration towards the humblest, with all the concepts, spiritual, moral, and social, that sprang from it, and all the warnings and feelings it implied, has given our literature a fundamental quality that has found development more or less near to it, and

[1] *The History of Italian Literature.* Oxford University Press.

artistic results more or less appreciable, in works such as Ippolito Nievo's *Confessioni d'un ottuogenario* (Confessions of an Octogenarian), in Emilio de Marchi's *Demetrio Pianelli*, in Fogazzaro's *Piccolo mondo antico* (The Little World of Yesterday),[1] and in the novels of Edmondo de Amicis. All subsequent writers, in one way or another, are linked to this group.

In almost direct descent from it is Marino Moretti, a cautious writer, of delicate and savoured intimacies, with a pervading tone of humility, yet combining sudden outbreaks of caustic wit. Among his numerous novels must be mentioned *Il sole del Sabato* (Saturday's Sun), *La voce di Dio* (The Voice of God), *L'isola dell'amore* (The Isle of Love), and *L'Andreana.*

Giovanni Verga, in the mighty works of his maturity, is also linked with it—but in another sense. On one side he is specifically artistic, on the other ideological, in direct contrast to his contemporary Fogazzaro. Verga is not romantic, nor psychological, nor yet idealistic, though his work is in the stream of literature that flowed from Manzoni. His world is humble and human, of lowly people who are instinctively religious. But

[1] Published by Hodder and Stoughton under the title of *The Patriot.*

religion, instead of consoling them, leaves them disconsolate. And the art of Verga is denuded of every ornament, of every grace of literature or allurement of humour—his art, as it were, is anti-artistic; it is stark and bare, the mere representation of things.

This starkness, this system of pure representation, this reducing of things nearly to their origins, gives Verga's work a true epic quality, more especially in *I malavoglia* (The Slothful) and *Mastro-Don Gesualdo*,[1] which are his masterpieces.

These works appeared during a violent literary reaction, which had started with Carducci against the Manzonian idea. And, partly perhaps through lack of understanding, this new and great art of Verga was treated with abuse and contempt, or ignored. But Verga's values were of course to reappear, and not merely as a fashion or affectation, as was the case with his first disciples, de Roberto and Capuana, but as the beacon and guide of the new generation. Not all of these followers, of course, had the purity of Verga, who strove unceasingly for art with devotion and sensibility. But the more the years pass, the greater becomes Verga's influence on the new writers; his art is an authentic stream running through the whole

[1] Published by Jonathan Cape under the same title.

of our narrative literature. It is found (with the differences, of course, that come from difference of stature and variety of quality) in the works of the famous Grazia Deledda, the woman novelist who won the Nobel Prize, and in those of Bruno Cicognani, Federigo Tozzi, Rosso di S. Secondo, Mario Puccini, Corrado Alvaro, and Alberto Moravia.

Carducci, properly speaking, does not belong to this article, for he was not a novelist. But besides being a poet he was a great critic and prose-writer, and was occupied, in his way, with the problems of our prose. His reaction was a natural evolution in our literature, and arose especially from the rejection of two great streams in literature, of Giacomo Leopardi in poetry, and of Manzoni in prose. With Leopardi and Manzoni both poetry and prose had been purged, and at the right time, of the excess of scholasticism, the academic stiffness, of the rhetoric and formality that had arisen from the exterior cult of antiquity. The reaction of Carducci was not only in forms, but also of the spirit. In place of the Manzonian idea—religious, Christian, Catholic, of love for the lowly, of meek resignation—it put forward an idea that was pagan and heroic. This new humanism was founded on culture. Carducci had a hot

temperament, so his outbreaks of anger in his writings were genuine, and for that reason found true and lively expression.

The fruits of his reaction, in ideas and forms, were extremely varied. Writers seized on it from different sides, developed one aspect to the exclusion of others, each taking what suited him individually, so that the consequences deduced from it might seem contradictory without being so in reality.

The vital works, the historical, political, and social works, of Alfredo Oriani, were on the lines of this reaction. His non-fictional works are alive and breathing. But as a novelist he was linked, unfortunately, with a determinism that his spirit never wholly accepted—hence the weakness of his fiction. And other writers, often extremely gifted, remained in their novels artificial and unformed. The fermentations in the reaction, both in spirit and in form, were too many and varied; its followers took and attempted to develop more than they could assimilate.

But the fruits of greatest splendour, by far the most important of the whole reaction, are unquestionably the works of d'Annunzio. He took the reaction from its formal side; he never allowed its spiritual complications, or its moral values, to quench for a moment his living sensibility, the

most rich, refined, and acute that can possibly be imagined. His works, more particularly his novels, mark the highest point of the reaction. While linked always with Carducci in forms and in spirit, he maintained a position of free independence. A great part of our fiction to-day derives in some way or another from d'Annunzio.

While the work of d'Annunzio was developing with a splendour and opulence truly amazing, and a prestigious skill that made many of his followers, and himself too, pronounce it to be bordering on æstheticism, his free attitude of independence made him wander from the straight line that together with humanist culture was the basis of Carducci's reaction. Among his disciples and the younger writers came cleavages. We will mention but two of them—Guido da Verona and F. T. Marinetti—as complete a contrast as could well be imagined: Guido da Verona with his rich colouring, his rampant sensuality; and Marinetti with his clear self-confidence, his boldness and impetuosity. Marinetti is the leader of the Futurist movement, which, however, has not taken root as an intellectual formula.

A writer of vast output who has never sacrificed clearness in thought or in style, but gives an exquisite grace to both by his modesty as artist

and man, is Alfredo Panzini. In a period of confusion in society and in politics he saw the ill and proclaimed it, and at the right moment. This he did in his novel *Il padrone sono me* (I am Boss), a work of high originality. And in his *Viaggio d'un povero letterato* (The Journey of a Poor Scholar) he had the quickness of spirit and self-confidence to prophesy the Great War before anyone had thought of it. His works without exception have harmony and style, but these qualities are found most abundantly in his novel *Santippe*, written with a clean brevity, and with profound and rich sentiment.

Contemporary with Panzini, but influenced on different sides by d'Annunzio and Oriani, as also by the Russians—more especially Gorki—is the novelist Antonio Beltramelli, who in his *Cavalier Mostardo* foresaw the confusion and ferment of to-day.

Corrective of the wanderings from Carducci is Riccardo Bacchelli, the author of *Il diavolo al Pontelungo* (The Devil at the Long Bridge);[1] corrective, but not arid. On the contrary, he is rich and copious, full of warmth and savour. Corrective, too, in their separate ways, are two writers who died young—Fausto Maria Martini

[1] Published by Longmans, Green.

and Umberto Fracchia. Martini is intimate and delicate, with passages of lyricism. Fracchia is romantic and pathetic. The vast panorama of his canvases, as, for instance, in his *Angela* and *La stella del sud* (Star of the South), give him, perhaps, a sort of likeness to Dickens. Corrective, also, in his fashion, is Aldo Palazzeschi (a highly original poet if ever there was one). His recent novels, carefully written, are clear and lucid. Yet he managed to leave his mark on the Futurist movement with his famous novel *Il codice di Perelà* (Perelà's Code). Among this group there is also Giulio Caprin, a refined, delicate writer, whose novel, *Quirina e Floriana*, has been put into English.[1]

But far more important, complex, and significant is the position of three writers, all of them in the first rank—Giovanni Papini, G. A. Borgese, and Massimo Bontempelli. Borgese, besides being a novelist, is renowned as a critic of contemporary literature, not only of Italy. His masterpiece of fiction is *Rubè*, a work of torrential force, almost like a rushing fire, that puts in dramatic relief an obscure spiritual complex amid the turbid passions that marked the period of the war and armistice.

Giovanni Papini is the author of the *Storia di*

[1] Published by Jarrolds under the title, *Bohemian House.*

Cristo[1] (The Story of Christ), which marked his conversion to Catholicism. But his conversion has not checked his output, nor devitalized his art, which continued as before in the stream of Carducci. His greatest novel is *Un uomo finito* (A Man—Finished), one of the fundamental works of the modern fiction in Italy. Papini's influence has been immense. His proud spiritual impulses, his restless ardour, his wealth of new and provocative ideas, and his crashing judgments, have been a strong stimulus to the younger generation, and have drawn to his side, if only temporarily, even writers of real independence.

So the reaction of Carducci, in spite of its errors, did, in fact, enrich our literature. It plunged it into a long travail of forms to be renewed, of problems to be solved, of needs to be satisfied, of styles to be applied and imprinted, not merely on art, but also on life. The results of this travail, more especially in regard to forms, can be seen in the works, clear, capricious and witty, of such writers as Ugo Ojetti in his *Cose viste* (Things I have Seen),[2] of Emilio Cecchi, Guelfo Civinini, Vincenzo Cardarelli, and Bruno Barilli—writers with a kind

[1] Published by Hodder and Stoughton.

[2] A selection from these essays has been published by Methuen under the title of *As They Seem to Me.*

of humour and whimsicality that had already been an element of some parts of our literature.

Among the younger generation of to-day there is a group of writers, not novelists, nor indeed preoccupied with fiction at all, but who are intent on man's duty to the State, his spiritual wholeness, who meditate on political facts as moral pledges. They, too, are a result of the Carducci reaction, and. for that reason I will mention them briefly. Of this group there are two writers very much to the fore —Nino Savarese and Enrico Pea. The first started in the stream of Verga, but later became occupied with style. The second is fantastic and extravagant, flitting between heights and depths as in a dream. Both live in a world of fantasy that they treat with extreme seriousness, arriving at poetry through a dry nudity of facts.

In the recent works of Bontempelli we get the highest degree of life and actuality. He has renewed the values of Carducci in a way not thought of; he has dug them, as it were, from their dry river-bed and, with limpid clearness and an intelligence that is truly prodigious, set them on a new and flowing stream. His works are most personal—impossible to conceive him as influenced by anyone, or of taking the ideas of any school whatsoever. He is free and independent, living in a world of his own

creation, which he describes as "verismo magico," in the sense that truth creates itself in the poetic imagination of the writer. And he does it with incomparable style. It is difficult to say what we admire most—his logical daring, his rapidity, lightness, and complexity of sensations, his luminous clearness in rendering the most imponderable things, almost in their musical essence, his transforming of the probable into the absurd and the absurd into the probable, making everything so real that we accept it unquestioningly. He is one of the most original of writers, not only of Italy, but of the world. In fiction his masterpieces are *Eva ultima* (A Latter-day Eve), *Il figlio di due madri* (The Son of Two Mothers), *Vita e morte di Adria e dei suoi due figli* (The Life and Death of Adria and her Two Sons), and *La famiglia del fabbro* (The Blacksmith's Family). Of non-fiction his best is *Verismo magico* (Magic Reality), absolutely inimitable, which has attracted to his orbit a group of very young writers, "The Twentieth Century," so-called in the hope of enriching their own works. But Bontempelli is privileged and unique. He has reached maturity through long experiments, and has attained not only to a conquest of style, but also, and above all, to an organic and individual conception of life.

To conclude, there are novelists of various tendencies, some belonging to groups, and some isolated. There is Italo Svevo, famous for his *Conscienza di Zeno*;[1] and the poetess Ada Negri, who in fiction is the author of *La stella mattutina* (The Morning Star). And there is a group of writers, still young, who will certainly give us larger works, more complex and important than hitherto, such as Giovanni Comisso, G. B. Angiolotti, G. B. Titta Rosa, and Bonaventura Tecchi. An authoress of standing is Sibilla Aleramo, who began as a naturalist, but is now becoming an aesthete. And there is Achille Campanile, very popular for his fantastic, buffoonish plots, who all the same is a sensitive writer. Others of merit are Arturo Loria, Giacomo Stuparich, and Quarantotto Gambini. Of the romantic novelists with a large following the best are Guido Milanese, Salvator Gotta, Virgilio Brocchi, Lucio d'Ambra, and Alessandro Veraldo.

In the rich vein to which the new generation is returning, as to something secure and solid, we have Bruno Cicognani, whose first novel, *La Velia*, is a work that deserves to be remembered in the history of our literature. It has an admirable

[1] Published by Putnams under the title of *The Confessions of Zeno*.

style, very sure and direct, and a well-handled plot of close texture. The events are described with implacable reality, the passions developed with inexorable truth, and the whole is so convincing as to be almost irrefutable.

A writer not entirely in the tradition of Verga because of a certain exuberance both in spirit and forms, yet substantially and intimately true, is Rosso di S. Secondo. Closer to Verga in style and material, describing as he does the lower and middle classes minutely and with stark simplicity, is Mario Puccini, a writer who by now has a considerable output. But the novelist of by far the most importance in this connection is Federigo Tozzi, who died very young about ten years ago, in the first maturity of his creative genius. His *Tre croci* (Three Crosses) is a real masterpiece; others not far behind it are *Il podere* (The Vineyard) and *Con gli occhi chiusi* (With Shut Eyes). In *Tre croci* the influence of Verga is unmistakable, but his sobriety and starkness are so intimately transformed by Tozzi's creative powers as a writer that they seem instinctive, so natural they are and spontaneous. In him there is an astonishing richness, an absolute novelty of sensation, as well as an exalted spirituality. In his life Tozzi was neglected, his books were abused, or ignored;

but immediately he was dead he was proclaimed universally as a great writer. And certainly his *Tre croci* is one of the best of our contemporary novels.

We have now arrived at the most recent tendencies of the novel in Italy. On one side we have "magic realism," on the other an artistic consciousness that goes deeper and deeper into life, into its very roots, growing always richer and more complex. Among the best of this school is Corrado Alvaro, a very serious and solid personality. His short stories are admirable, but his short novel, *Gente in Aspromonte* (People of Aspromonte), is undoubtedly, up till now, his masterpiece. But Alvaro will go far. Impossible to set limits to his achievement, for he is never satisfied, is always moving forward, searching, experimenting, with a creative gift that seems inexhaustible. Though his narrative is held close to reality, minute, verifiable, exact, there yet arises from it a breath of authentic poetry. He explores the new culture, the new relations between society and the individual, the origins of our life to-day and the presentiments of the new reality that is maturing.

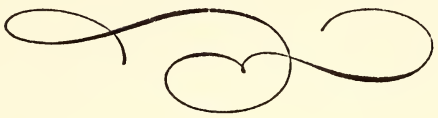
A young writer from whom much is expected is Alberto Moravia. Very young in years, he is fully mature artistically, as is proved by his first

novel, *Gli indifferenti* (The Trimmers), a work that was deservedly acclaimed from the beginning. It dissects with cruel impartiality a sadly corrupt and vitiated element in society to-day. His *Mariagrazia* is unforgettable. She is shown, as it were, in the round, with a truth and consistency that make her almost symbolical. Moravia, in the handling of his characters, shows the gifts of an acute psychologist.

SCANDINAVIA

Erik Mesterton

VIII. SCANDINAVIA



Among the few recent periods that can be regarded with any confidence as having importance in creative literature is surely the nineteen-twenties. In the Scandinavian novel a number of interrelated tendencies come to clearer expression in these years; but running through them all has been some attitude towards the temptation to escape from the problems of an industrial civilization. The means of evasion was offered in the convention of regionalist literature, which has bulked so large in modern Scandinavian fiction. What the more living writers have tended to react against is decadent regionalism, implying devotion to the *idyllic*; the cultivation of those secluded moods and interests which give relief from the less welcome aspects of life; as well as the exploitation of the picturesque. The idyllic peasant novel may have a slender justification as a store of anthropological facts; as a picture of life it is false, since it presents as peacefully existing an order of things which in reality is already destroyed or disintegrating. The

fact of this disintegration is evident in Sigrid Undset's work, although she fails to come to grips with the process. She alternates between two planes: her early studies in urban realism, to which she has lately returned, and her mediaeval novels —two planes which are unrelated except in their common insistence on traditional values in individual and family life. The spirit of the Swedish 'nineties in its reliance on a great national past and its themes of heroic effort and sacrifice finds its belated Norwegian counterpart in her mediaeval family sagas. She, however, in contrast to the 'nineties stands firm on her Catholic feet: she has the pride of the past and the sense of the historical picturesque, but not of historical process and decline. A Danish example of the historical novel is J. V. Jensen's *The Fall of the King*, treating a period from the great past of Danish hegemony. But Jensen focuses upon the idea of a fatal crisis of national history, whereas Sigrid Undset sees only the stability of a past order. The theme of decline is the undoing of a free peasantry by autocratic government.

A recurrent theme of the peasant novel is that of the prodigal son: the man who leaves his birthplace in the country and returns again after sojourning in the industrial wilderness. This study

of the *déraciné*, homesick for his land of childhood, even if not explicitly avowed, is the underlying motive of regionalist fiction. In Sweden, with its more advanced industrialization, it is more interestingly revealed in the later vogue of provincial town novels than in the devitalized rustic tradition. Two themes may be distinguished: the contrast between the emigrant's idea of industrial America and the idyllic Stockholm of pre-war days, and the opposition between urban mechanization and the idealized small town. Superficially realistic, the tone betrays the falsity of attitude; the provincial idyll is of the past, and these writers can afford to be charmed because they are safely out of it. In France, for instance, the old order is still very much alive, and the atmosphere of tension, conflict, and acute dissatisfaction infects the French novel of family life (*vide* Mauriac). The title of one of these Swedish novels, *Home from Babylon*, with its obvious reference to the prodigal's return, testifies to the endemic mood of nostalgia.

In Norway, too, the peasant novel is a major form, and has shown greater possibilities, especially in its psychological insight. An interesting development has been the school of dialect writers; one of its most prominent exponents being O. Duun, who, in a many-volumed saga, uses the common

material of "change in the village"—the struggle between tradition and the encroachment of urban mentality. In opposition to the usual family chronicle of decline and degeneration, his theme is progress. This, however, he can only achieve by concentrating on the dramatic values of one character who sums up in himself the qualities and aspirations of generations.

The pursuit of the idyllic—in the sense of a dream world of placid contentment—is a tendency worth mentioning, not only because it has exercised a considerable *influence par réaction*, in André Gide's phrase, but as evidence of a state of mind from which it vainly attempts to divert attention. Ultimately, it is an indirect expression of a complex attitude which is the essence of post-war mentality and which has its direct and complementary expression in the experience of desolation. In Sweden and Denmark, the open expression of desolation is the mark of the generation for which the Great War came as the crucial experience of maturity. The incarnation of "post-war" sensibility is the Swede Pär Lagerkvist. The initiator of Expressionism in poetry and the drama, he was also the first to rebel against the traditional novel. With *The Eternal Smile* he evolves a new form related to, though not derived from, the "subjec-

tive" or "poetic" method which appears elsewhere in the European novel: a rhapsodic narrative, built up with short episodes, sometimes superficially unrelated in mood, round a number of controlling themes: among others the isolation of individual experience; and the protest against a meaningless existence together with the recognition of the value of the mystery. *The Guest of Reality* comes nearer to the straightforward story, but the characters, instead of being three-dimensional, are rather units of feeling, symbols of significant experience. Confusion and disorder, which in his early work were projected on to the external world of post-war chaos, are now realized as being subjective, a state of soul. But the essential experience of adolescence is for Lagerkvist that of *violence*. This theme comes to its fullest expression in his latest work, *The Hangman*. The method employed here shows affinities with the mythical method of Joyce and Eliot in the juxtaposition of past and present, linked by the symbolical figure of the hangman, who is both the expression and the victim of the eternal human lust for violence. As in *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, the nostalgic intention of historical contrast has been transcended in Lagerkvist's identification of mediaeval and contemporary reality. The old order of stable

relations has now lost all value as a refuge of security: it is presented for the sole purpose of enforcing the identity of *l'immortel péché* in the permanent make-up of the human being.

In the Danish Expressionist movement the double theme of the idyllic and the desolate is also pervasive. The shock of realizing one's desolation lies behind the attitude taken up here towards the bankruptcy of bourgeois ideals: that of the bohemian *enfant terrible* whose revolutionary zeal is appeased by exasperating the philistine with modernistic pranks and calling the universal bluff by exercises in sardonic satire. Escape to the idyllic is found in romantic travelling to the far away, presented in a hot-house vocabulary whose exotic colouring has proved extremely fugitive. All that remains of the period is Kristensen's *The Arabesque of Life*, an exhaustive stocktaking of social corruption which is saved from futility by a genuine note of desperation.

A tendency not yet prominent in England is marked by the proletarian novel, which in Scandinavia has an importance probably unequalled anywhere outside Russia. As a critical term proletarian literature in the accepted sense has a wide connotation. First referring to writers of

proletarian origin who in their work more or less relied on their experience of proletarian life, it has also been made to cover the social document novel when applied to the conditions of the working classes, as well as the propagandist novel of class war—three occasionally overlapping but distinct types.

In Sweden, the most influential proletarian novelists are Martin Koch and Dan Andersson. The first named gave the prototype of the novel of social (and Socialist) indignation, deriving from, but far surpassing, his American models of the "muck-raking" school. His subject is the Stockholm underworld, his intention is to lay bare the functioning of the lower organs of metropolitan civilization. The *milieu* of the other master, Dan Andersson, is that of the rural proletariat, and this accounts for his susceptibility to the romantic free-life-of-nature element in Hamsun, his nomadic love of the wilds and backwoods of the North; a preference for the primitive, which implies the rejection of the settled community of the old order as much as of urban civilization. For him there is no idyll, either past, present, or future; what replaces it is an agony of desire for a complete change, a miracle that can hardly be conceived except in terms of a New Dispensation.

The novel of class war found its finest expression in Denmark with Nexø's saga of modern Labour. The book is too well known to justify discussion here: it is enough to point out an obvious comparison. *Pelle the Conqueror* is the antithesis of Andersson's homeless proletarian Individual, so deep is Pelle's sense of an historical mission. Equally striking is the contrast to Duun. Nexø is able to develop his history of a human progress without suppressing any essential aspect of the process of contemporary reality: for him the progress of the individual is indistinguishable from that of the social movement with which his hero's destiny merges.

Only one other Scandinavian has treated a fundamental movement in the modern world as a theme of progress, the Swede, L. Nordström, He has gradually evolved from the pre-capitalistic to a post-capitalistic idyll, that of an imagined World Town in which the whole planet is integgrated as an urban unit. In his aggressive acceptance of mechanization and its implications he had a predecessor in Jensen who first came out as the prophet of the machine age. These writers, though both affected by the post-war awakening of the national spirit, have reacted very differently as an inevitable result of differences in their social back-

ground. The progressive theme of Nordström's saga of the expansion of Sweden into the growing world town has the support of a real industrial future, whereas Jensen, in responding to the revived sense of national values, is thrown back on the regressive theme of the Danish countryside as a secluded idyll. Nordström is further significant because he illustrates the difficulties of the contemporary writer in attempting to fuse his sensibility as an artist with his concern for ideas. His concrete experience and his sociological theory exist side by side, unrelated except in the form of abstraction. In Nexø we find a fusion between the two: we can trace the growth of both interests—in theory and in emotional life—since he has a living personal relation to the movement embodying the idea, whereas in Nordström the relation is the purely impersonal one of the spectator.

Nordström stands isolated in a generation which established the novel of realistic narrative in Sweden, devoted to the reporting of topicalities, and excited by the latest ideas. For this type of novel even at its best, when presenting accurate knowledge of a social background, international importance can hardly be claimed. Its pre-war originators have now the position of the grandfather generation to *les jeunes*, and it is interesting

to observe a certain similarity between them on points which differentiate them both from the post-war generation. Both have the desire to achieve an "acceptance of life." Eyvind Johnson's *Farewell to Hamlet* makes the representative gesture of "liquidating" the maladjusted post-war hero, the young man of literary ambition with shattered nerves and a distaste for regular hours. Where the older generation was preoccupied with the problems of will and energy, the young find no adequate satisfaction in the idea of individual striving, and offer instead the ideal of open receptivity and an almost religious insistence on the value of the impulsive human being. Instead of the would-be energetic grandfather and the sincerely desperate father, we have the son dreaming of a new superman, not intellectual and sophisticated, but the "young god" of primitive instinct. This primitivist school, an offshoot of the proletarian movement, has for its central doctrine the recognition of sexual love, not as possessive, but as a state of spiritual plenitude and a condition of any real contact with life. Of the group Eyvind Johnson is the most interesting figure, endowed as he is with a brilliant destructive gift unequalled since Strindberg. In his work the need for positive values is felt almost as a craving, but it is clear that for him

none is to be found in actuality. In his most ambitious achievement, *Bobinack*, he attempts for the first time to create an ambiguous character representing both the anarchic principle, destroying a corrupt and impotent civilization, and the heretical divinity of fertility and spontaneous vigour, in one complex symbol.

The novel of adolescence had been one of the chief literary forms of the 'twenties, when not only the theme but often also the implicit standards of evaluation are those of adolescence. In Sweden the wave of autobiographical fiction includes Andersson and Lagerkvist. Less obviously adolescent in feeling, but nevertheless having affinities with this movement is an autobiography of G. Hellström, informed by the tragic recognition of the limitations of an adolescent temperament which, one feels, the author can realize but not transcend. The most disturbing contribution made by a younger generation in this genre is Agnes von Krusenstjerna's *Tony* trilogy, which marks an advance in the treatment of early development, not in profundity, perhaps, but in range of experience, notably sexual experience. The attitude is neither that of revolt nor acceptance, but rather a wondering submissiveness before the awakening of sex, set

off against the onset of hereditary insanity, with which it is intimately bound up. The more recent novels of adolescence have tended to become media of self-exploration and revision of experience rather than expressions of immediate feeling. Examples are to be found in the novels of the Dane, J. Paludan, and in Norway in Sigurd Hoel's latest work.

The psychoanalytic novel has been a late growth in Scandinavia, though vague glimpses of the new psychology have furnished commercial fiction with attractive novelties. A genuine impact of Adler's psychology is to be found in Hellström's autobiography. A more detached use of psychoanalysis is seen in the work of Hoel, whose *A Day in October* is the most finished product of the type. It confirms the rejection of post-war metaphysical pessimism; the pessimism that remains is conditional, and one is allowed to entertain the possibility of psychological and social control. Technically, the book breaks away from the traditional approach to "character." Instead of the three-dimensional figure, Hoel introduces a new interpretation of character as a sequence of responses conditioned by circumstances. A similar conception of character also marks Aksel Sandemose (a young author of

Danish origin now writing in Norwegian), and is evident in his first Norwegian book, *A Sailor Goes Ashore*. In his later work, however, he returns to a more subjective expression of emotion in the form of phantasmagoria.

The abandonment of the post-war mood proceeds very differently in Denmark. Here a number of writers have taken up active attitudes in face of the collapse of standards—partly following the lead given by Paludan. The most noteworthy of these is M. Lauesen, whose chief work so far, *Waiting for a Ship*, gives no complete evidence of his sincere and troubled search for positive values. It is a variation of the family chronicle, recording decline, and in its traditional preoccupation with the details of everyday existence it has nothing to contribute to the development of contemporary sensibility, except in so far as it succeeds in suggesting an atmosphere of impending change and its necessity.

To complete what is necessarily a brief sketch of the modern Scandinavian novel a word is needed to emphasize the position of the writer who, in isolated superiority, represents the real greatness of his age in literature—Hjalmar Bergman. In illuminating contrast to that of most of his contemporaries, Bergman's work is untouched by

the malady which has vitiated so many of their most ambitious undertakings: the dissociation of thought and feeling referred to in discussing its most notable Swedish victim of the same generation, Nordström. In manipulating both regional and urban materials, Bergman shows full awareness of the break up of the idyllic order and the disintegration of industrial civilization. For him, however, the process of human decline is never the nominal theme, it is suggested wholly within the psychological texture of personal sensibility. He is as free from parasitic explanatory theory as from nostalgic sentiment. His positive values are only present by implication, as intimations of possibilities of living of the same order of intensity as the suffering and frustration which are the overt and dominating themes of his best work. In his masterpiece, *Grandmother and The Lord*, Bergman shows us the destruction from within of the family idyll, by laying bare the working of the possessive instinct —as conditioned by the demands of an acquisitive society—preying on love and affection and distorting them, until they defeat their conscious aim, finally making both communication and self-knowledge an illusion. Bergman, however, sustains the tone of serenity: his attitude is not that of "pessimism," but the acceptance of the knowledge

of life, of the conditions imposed on the "Naked Man," the unchanging human being.

In Bergman we find the terrifying honesty of the pure creator as defined by T. S. Eliot in his essay on Blake. He alone was able in his greatest works to "exhibit the essential sickness or strength of the human soul." He belongs to the small company of writers who, like Joyce and Eliot in England, offer justification for the belief that the nineteen-twenties will eventually take their place as one of the great creative periods of art.

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