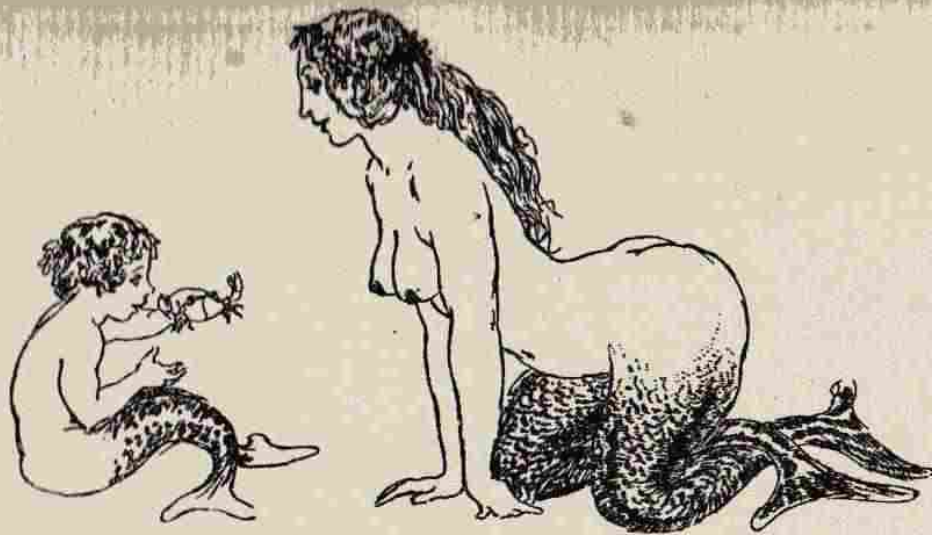




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THE LONDON APHRODITE

edited by Jack Lindsay and P. R. Stephensen.

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THE MODERN CONSCIOUSNESS

AN ESSAY TOWARDS AN INTEGRATION

by JACK LINDSAY

(1) MODERNITY is a smug term, the present vogue of which would seem to imply that we are the first people to be aware that we live in our own portion of Time. This is a pleasant illusion, partly the result of the speeding-up of fashion and aftermath of the Victorian millennium; though it is also obvious that Homer as implicitly as Keats felt the strangeness of Time's contracting bubble:

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm—

and we are no more consciously "tendential" than, say, the Romantic Movements in France and Germany. However, under the warring complacencies of the cliques and the official criticism, I think that this vogue does state a peculiar necessity which is defined by another favourite word: Transition. We are intently in movement; so much so, that an expression must be frankly experimental before it can be admitted to have achieved anything, and if every architectonic device does not stick alarmingly into the air out of a minimum of digested material, the work is considered amorphous, reactionary or romantic—unless of course it is genuinely amorphous under the pretence of psychological experiment.

This tawdry flux, which has neither the steady rush of a river nor the violent concentration of a whirlpool, yet must have its laws—though those half-drowned individuals who have scrambled dripping out on to the banks and proclaimed the need of a synthesis have mostly had little else than the vomit of their own ill-success to contribute to this worthy but difficult task. Here is one more proclamation: I trust not one more vomit.

My method is avowedly personal. If it is authentically individual, it will have universal application, since to penetrate to the core of self is simultaneously to make oneself unique and to include universal humanity. It is only accidental, egoistic, not egocentric, accretions on the construction of Thought which lessen its validity.

But to begin by seeking an abstract universal at work is inevitably to miss it. To seek to evaluate modernity by abstracting from each group or apostle that which is the central pronunciamiento, to tabulate all these odds and ends faithfully, and then to discover what general criteria may be evolved which will glucosely stretch over the mass with least contradiction—that, which is the academic and historical method of making a synthesis, *must* fail to rediscover the human universal behind the whole conflicting muddle. It must fail to find the essences.

These, I claim, can only be found by wading into the mellay and essaying, as partisan, to be true to one's deepest experience of life and art in every passing criticism. That is to judge the material, not as isolated completed things, but as imperfect

aspirations into the whole human future, the eternity of myself. That is to make self-knowledge the ultimate moral and æsthetic judgments, both. For what use can a form, a texture, a harmony be to me except in so far as it relates to my own experience, as it deepens æsthetically or clarifies morally my relation to my own past, present, and future?

I therefore take as my criterion the concrete universal, the human dynamic.

(II) I COME then to what seem to me the primary necessities behind our self-consciousness as being transitional, caught in a time-process which cannot be solidified by the act of faith which is Beauty. One quotation will carry one back to the threshold of this emotion :

Man is a rope connecting animal and beyond-man : a rope over a precipice. Dangerous over, dangerous on the way, dangerous looking backward, dangerous shivering and making a stand. What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal : what can be loved in man is that he is a transition and a destruction. I love the great despisers, for they are the great adorers, they are arrows of longing for the other shore.

That is Nietzsche's voice, the voice of the Forerunner—not that the creatures of our transition are his creators in whom life is a bridge of lightning. They are rather the excreta of inertia upon his energy, the automatic thinning-out of his trumpets. It is of another generation Nietzsche comes as courier. It is the criticism of that generation I seek to find.

Nevertheless the new stress, the new nervous excitation and exasperation, comes into existence with Nietzsche's thought—Wagner's music its chief comrade as jangler of weak nerves and stimulus of heroic emotions.

The Renaissance produced no philosophy of active life, however, it assumed a vital æsthetic in its expression. The nearest it arrived to teleology was in the derisive lyricism of Rabelais ; but strictly, Montaigne was its intellectual enunciator, mocking at man's desire to cripple himself with lies, chains, shackles, manacles and rocks, but opposing only a passive disdain, a gentle Roman dignity. For the rest Bacon might have done much, but aloof in his homosexual scepticism he turned to scientific method the scrutiny he should have given fully to man. Philosophy marched from abstraction to abstraction, the only conclusion of which could be Hume's pertinent use of logic to sever all the knots of divine law, with the Scotch Common-sense Philosophers tying them up again with penny bits of string. Kant, a great destroyer with a disguise of infinitely tortuous terminology, destroyed metaphysics by carrying to a logical precision far ahead of any predecessor the proofs for the existence of God and then calmly annihilating them. Frightened at this vast god-slaughter, he resuscitated the deity with a salve of moral proof ; but even then found himself floundering back into danger in *The Critique of Judgment* (which consequently nobody reads) and gave up the task. However, his work remained, its stimulus, behind the deadening veils of style, vitally destructive.

Hegel carried on this work, supplanting for the first time since the Hellenes the abstract universal with the human complex: his dialectic bored down into the human process as significance. His limitations do not matter here. Enough that he saw human activity as reality.

On to this scene arrived Nietzsche. Absorbing the whole philosophical tradition at one gulp, he intuitively completed the cycle of Plato—Aristotle—Kant—Hegel, and saw in what direction the new cycle must face. He formulated a Dionysian philosophy: a return to the Platonic knowledge of man as the measure of all things, with a new passionate sense of the constructive essences of man himself. Balancing his vision of life as process, flux, will, movement, he introduced (instead of the abstractly incarnated Being of Hegel or the Nirvanic will of Schopenhauer) the symbol of Eternal Recurrence—that is, the liberated essence of man achieving the dynamic judgment. In other words, his Eternity is Plato's Form of Good.

But above all things he made a fresh moral analysis. If it is man's purpose to achieve this self-integration, to know himself vitally and freely, he cries, then we must examine all history, all our own experience, to sever that which is dead or poisoned from the human future. The terrific perception was at once borne in upon him that almost all man's social, moral, religious and æsthetic activities moved towards the abstraction of fear instead of the concretion of love. It was then he made the Dionysian onslaught upon man with which our nerves still tremble.

His statement that though Eternity (the liberated judgment) is the goal, yet if we are to remain true to life we must submit incessantly our Apollonian intellect to the Dionysian tumult of experience, and that therefore, to escape the static abstraction, we must be for ever dynamically transitional—this, I say, comes out (forgotten though the source be) in the wavering nervous disintegrations of our decade.

(III) CONSEQUENTLY the few half-drowned escapees from the flux, looking around for the villain who pushed them from behind into the demented waters, are right when they yield to Nietzsche the homage of their hate. Wyndham Lewis is most typical of these irritated persons, and though his criticisms of Nietzsche are uniformly bathetic and on the moron-level of the newspapers who howled at the Nietzsche-Treitschke conspiracy, yet his instincts at least are right, whatever one thinks of his intellect. It would be as well to take him as representing the dissatisfied element of self-conscious modernity, since, in England, no one has seriously challenged him or constructed a better general attitude. His debt to France I shall discuss later.

Lewis is very vague as to primary causes or definitions, but any thinker in whom he can discover the stigmata of Time-process is proclaimed part of a Camorra to undermine stability and cast it into the sea of hungry sensation. Seeing a decade of fluctuous fools, he decides wisdom must lie in a stony mechanism of intellect. Nietzsche is glimpsed only as a frenzied megaphone in the distance, a Hunnish outlaw announcing Force. Bergson seems the Moses whose wand tapped the stone and set the

cascades of Time frothing around modernity's flippant ankles—though actually Hegel would be seen as that magician if any logic or philosophical culture were employed.

This analysis is carried on so as to involve anyone at all who admits Time as a philosophic symbol, whether he be an academic neo-Hegelian like Bosanquet, or an intelligent one like Croce, who is working, rather abstractly, to evolve an æsthetic and whose work as carried on by Gentile results in at least the most delicate formulation of the act of perception so far made—I am not concerned with his theory of history.* Lumped in with these are the Communists, into whom Lewis pumps a philosophy compounded of the Materialist Conception of History and the Tolstoian cult of the primitive: profound thinkers like Einstein and Freud, because they upset the conventional canons of Lewis's recessive abstractions: mystics of the abdomen like D. H. Lawrence: and, of course, the chief German theorist of the moment on History, Spengler, seeking fictitiously to evolve a rhythm of national life.

One is at a loss to criticise this criticism; it has no end or beginning at which to take it. Yet as it is seriously accepted, one must disentangle it somehow. Partly it is a muddled perception that all the modern cults are an evasion of the real problem of creativeness; but though involving some acute remarks such as the analysis of the unfortunate Gertrude Stein, where the subject being utterly trivial Lewis's mind operates remarkably well, this perception is vitiated by the fact that Lewis himself has no better knowledge of creativeness than the puppets he transfixes.

Behind it, however, remains the attack on the Time cult with Bergson as arch-heretic, and this is worth examining, as we may hope to find the truth (i.e. a vital principle) somewhere between Lewis and Stein—or rather, between the elements they represent.

Bergson attempted to create a vision of the creative surge of life, and, missing the subtle antithetical values behind the most dithyrambic of Nietzsche's utterances, he fell himself into the surge. Seeking to add Spirit to Darwinism, he largely did nothing but give a pseudo-poetical version of Evolution excitedly disappearing down its own vortices of rhythm. Since the antithesis of energy is only abstractly perceived, the rhythm of Time (a fine conception if finely handled) becomes as abstract a process finally as any mathematical computation. For there is an irrational abstraction as well as a rational one. Similarly his effort to define free will (though again made in the right direction) ends in only a flushed inversion of Determinism. Beginning with the effort to show the act of Spirit, he ends by showing act as a hectic mechanization of Spirit.

It is not, however, his actual thought that matters here. It is rather the mystical glamour which he exercised, investing Movement, Act, Time, with strange spiritual fervours; and it

* Lewis' lack of culture is shown by his inability to distinguish Marx (a ruthless effort to determine the factor of the belly in human organization), Spengler (an effort to trace the rhythm of Race), and Croce (an effort to continue the dialectic of history)—three men only to be classed together in so far as each failed to make the Nietzschean relation of history to the Eternal Recurrence of self—just as Lewis himself fails.

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is as this prophet of the inspired Flux that he relates to such cliques as the Futurists, Vorticists, etc.—and with a little lax extension we can correlate his attitude with the abandonment to nervous ecstasies and agonies in most modern music, from Scriabin to Schönberg; with the effort to symbolize emotions in a form disregarding their construction in Time, such as the Expressionists; or—wrongly here, since the analysis is balanced on a knowledge of integration—with the effort of Freud to get to the pure extra-temporal energies of the spirit.

Bergson is of course not responsible for all this. He is merely another of the symptoms. The cause is primarily the dangerous floods of energy loosened by Nietzsche which, if you cannot control, you must allow to disintegrate you. But it is no use to get outside the area of those floods and denounce the wrecks within it. As well refuse to live, because sensitivity implies suffering. In denouncing a force like Nietzsche you are merely crying out against the painful structure of life itself, which can yet be compelled into exaltation.

Nietzsche then liberated powerfully a new concept of the unity of the dynamic judgment, and so as well (since all energy is dual) cast life into an arena of fiercer conflict if the unity of his concept is to be preserved.

Only two thinkers have so far preserved that unity in their sphere of thought: Freud and Einstein.

(IV) FREUD shows the widening-out of Nietzsche's cry that man must face himself and his own Eternity (his completed identity), and that only by a continuous passionate intensification of his consciousness can he escape the nemesis of muddying the crystal springs of self, of energy.

In short, Nietzsche proclaimed that the individual is, in essence, all desire; and Freud has demonstrated this negatively, by showing what happens if he fails the immanent desire of self.

Finally, in *Beyond the Pleasure-Principle*, Freud reaffirms the terrifying third essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, showing that all man's life is a curve towards death: two forces alone defying that curve—one, blind: sex; the other: consciousness.

(V) EINSTEIN defines the physics of Eternal Recurrence: the web of Relativity which sends man on the alarming search for a fixed point in his soul—ruthlessly waves aside all lesser judgments, and forces on him the conviction that only where rhythm and unity are equally balanced has he any stability whatsoever. . . . otherwise he is back in the old universe of absolutely evanescent relations.

By taking away all externalized props of measurement and putting in their place only a subtle series of shifting relations (I speak my own idiom, and the proof of Einstein's profundity is that he is instantly translatable into all terms of experience)—Einstein forces one to transcend them by means of the hypothetical fixed point. This must be, for all experience, the self; and for the judgment of the self to have validity it must at one and the same time arrest the flux by a unified conception and yet keep contact with all its relations.

The result is a unified rhythm: continuity of desire.

(VI) FOR Nietzsche (and the specialized versions of Freud and Einstein) do not submit to the flux. These courageous minds desire conflict in order to demonstrate their power. Through all their thought persists the antithetical feeling which can conceive simultaneously the two severed ends of energy, the inner self and the world of experience. This is not so much a question of surface-statement as of the continued approximation of conflicting symbols to the unity of the conception behind them. For instance, the attitude I attribute to Einstein is hardly explicit in his work, but is to be *felt* by his treatment, his organization of the disjointed material of physics. It is this which makes his work affirmative, constructive—while the pictures of the Futurists which are built on what is, from the crude angle of Lewis, a similar attitude to the relativity of objects in time and space, are altogether futile and destructive.

Nietzsche balances the outward flowing energy on the inwardly concentrating form. His attitude is: we do not conquer the problem of Time and Movement by setting up some rigid schemata, a metaphysic which essays to lift intellect out of the flux. No scholastic quibbling can truly deny the petrification at once resulting.*

Neither do we conquer Movement by surrendering ourselves up to it, contented with the Bergsonian act as a kind of hurdles along the continuum: a spasm of homogeneous energy.

We conquer Movement by keeping our minds for ever orientated towards the instinctive core of life, letting this plasmic energy soak us through and through, not perverting it by abstractly moral views of its nature. But side by side with this the valuing self must be for ever active, joyously immersing in the tides of experience the symbol of self-knowledge. When the self finds its own core of energy, which flows out of this intellectual symbol *into* life, stimulated by some sudden harmony between itself and the stream of the instincts, it will be filled with love and therefore with the need to perpetuate its own delighted harmony: to beget an image of itself upon life.

This harmony is the moment of Eternity, the conquest of Time. For it includes both the fluid mass and the abstract construction in a third thing, the dynamic form.

So Nietzsche from a completely different angle returns to Plato's solution.

And this solution obliterates equally the intellectual scholasticism proceeding from Aristotle (Plato's evil) and the sensationalism proceeding from Bergson (Nietzsche's evil).†

* This quibble goes that because an abstraction arrests the shapeless flux, it is then a concentration of the diffused, a crystallization of the vague, a solidification of the fluid. This is true of the intellect as postulated by Nietzsche, true of the dynamic act by which the self identifies itself with and severs itself from its material. But it is altogether untrue of the Thomist position; and Lewis incredibly attaches it to himself, though as defined by his own art and his general criticism he is one of the least concrete men alive. More of this later.

† Not that I condemn Bergson. He really has a diffused sense of the creative contact with life, but he tends to let this sense evaporate in a static psychology. Though he understands that only the self acting as a whole can be free, he does not realise what makes a unity of the psyche. It is his theory of Perception which gives him away, exposing him as only a Determinist with subtler terminology: an automatist of the flux instead of a mechanist of reason. We therefore see in him Nietzsche's philosophy falling away from its own centre.

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(VII) But in order that we may not remain dupes of the contemporary muddle like Lewis, we must go further back and take the various moves to pieces. We must return to the beginning of the second episode of the Renaissance.

The eighteenth century was the negative period between two periods of energy. The full proud bustling force of the Renaissance proper reached its height in the noble forms of Rubens, its poetry found its deepest ecstasy and most intimate questionings in Shakespeare. Music remained trivial, leaving esoteric beauties perhaps, but finding no great synthesis. There was a lull, a recoil even. Michelangelo at the heart of the Renaissance had tried to distort its rhythm with a Gothic dispersal of energy in torment. Milton did the same now to English poetry.

When energy began to flow again, it had to regather the already created consciousness of the Renaissance, relate its contact with antiquity (which the Renaissance itself could gaily assume) and build up a further synthesis. This addition was Music.

Consciousness began magnificently with Blake . . . only some inhibition kept him out of the contemporary action and strangled his poetic development. Still, his moral enunciation of the problem of energy is unsurpassed. He saw that all energy is holy, that all values proceed from the imaginative act, that infinity could only come to pass "by an improvement of sensual enjoyment."

His inhibition cut him off from all action on Keats and Byron to whom he would have been invaluable. These two poets failed to arrive at the synthesis, though both almost penetrated to it from opposite sides. Poetry lapsed. The fine set of *epigoni*, who would have widened the synthesis if Keats and Byron had arrived at a unification of the æsthetic and human activities of poetry, produced scattered work, good and bad, but all scattered—Beddoes (the sincerest, who committed suicide), Browning, Tennyson, Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, Francis Thompson.

The only unity through all these is a diffused effort to develop the colour-image, that peculiar merging of sensual essences which is most deeply the property of music. (It is this concentration I refer to as musical energy—not melody, etc.)

(VIII) PAINTING shows a similar effort and muddle. Turner achieved the knowledge of light's action; he used light as an explosive, mixing it with his landscapes to blast them to pieces, hoping to catch their significance at the moment just as the explosion irradiates the forms. As he went on he came closer to the actual fury of light, impatiently seeking the pure unity of its bomb-like scattering . . . submitting perhaps to the nostalgia for pure beauty which is the artist's greatest danger.

Goya and Delacroix used a somewhat slowed-down version of this in their effort to redefine man while catching at the hem of light's skirts—Goya, most interested in broad contrasts of drama, scraps of emotion preferably bleeding; Delacroix, most interested in tracing new pulses of vibratory life.

Turner's great explosion left the whole plastic sensibility a

trifle tattered. Even Delacroix did not fully unify his new aspect of colour and form; and if Turner more obviously faded out in the disintegration by the spectrum among the Impressionists—Corot a nook of atmospheric lyricism, edges rubbed with the sky—a more important effect of the force he represents and to which Delacroix bows, is to be seen in the movement which begins with Cézanne.

To this, however, also contributes the coarser feeling marked by Courbet: the arrival of the peasant in art. Instead of being satisfied to immolate his meagre personality in some great atelier (Courbet in Rubens' Antwerp would have been some contented Schneiders), the minor artist discovers self-assertion. *Bonjour M. Courbet!* What is the reply? "If Titian or Leonardo could pass through my studio, I'd go for them with my palette-knife." Resentment of force and beauty, that is the primitive.

Out of these two influences: the slightly failing aristocratic sensitivity of Delacroix and the complacent aggression of the peasant in Courbet: arrives Cézanne. He is still tormented by a feeling for the subtle generalization of grand form, carrying around in his pocket photos of the Rubens in the Louvre; but the crude generalizations of the primitive are mingled with this*—whence his pathetic cry, "The contour eludes me."

A sincere artist, he tried hard to make the synthesis of his perceptions, but failed. The result is worth analysing as the basis of all that is also sincerest in modern painting. The forms despairingly fall away from the centre Cézanne felt but could not define; in exasperation he tweaks them about all the more. The aerial complexity of Rubens is broken up into distinct planes, since the fluidity of power is evaporating. Colour, under the influence of the spectrum, becomes local in analysis, yet at the same time distributed in an effort to unify the planes in atmosphere and the forms in volume. Recession is abstracted from the synthesis of form, tone, and rhythm which define it in Titian and Rubens, and becomes a thing-in-itself: wanes of the winnowing fans in the creator's mind.

The next step is to separate the two modes which Cézanne sought to unify. Van Gogh and Gauguin seek to see form in its simplest basis—the former in terms of rhythm, pulsation, enveloping his forms in a rolling configuration like fumes of their own force (anticipated more comprehensively by Delacroix): the latter by taking the isolated form and reducing it to its maximum simplicity of mass. (I omit analysis of painters like Manet, Degas, Renoir, who are a running commentary on these tendencies, plus a greater interest in existence.)

Complacently continues the effort to elaborate small niches of the creative faculty. The primitive abstraction reaches bedrock in Gauguin. He thereupon becomes the source of a whole tribe of artists, chiefly sculptors, to whom primitivism is particularly pleasant on account of the intractability of their material. (Look at the skinny christs of Mestrovic; the fat lustfully Hindu girls of Eric Gill, his simian christ; the cleverly tubular nudes

* I would define this variation in the generalizing factor as (a) the smoothing out of mere idiosyncratic detail in terms of rhythmic concretion (Titian); (b) the emptying of all content from any accidental form in order to abstract design from it (Gauguin).

of Gaudier-Brezska ; the at times expressive, at times tormented, idiosyncratic forms of Epstein—Maillol alone using the formula as towards beauty.)

On the other side the effort to define movement suddenly kaleidoscoped into the Futurist—glib shallow creatures who knew their handbooks on physics, or at least had heard someone discussing the subject : thinly rebellious souls whose puritanism comes out in the coupling of the nude and adultery : hating everything that represents any value whatsoever. (Listen to Boccioni : "We exalt the clowns ! . . . Beethoven, Michelangelo, Dante revolt the stomach. Tristan and Isolde, Siegfried, Paolo and Francesca, Orpheus, Apollo, Christ, and Joan of Arc, Jupiter and Wotan . . . do you know what they excite in the Futurist ? The vomit !")

These roarers formulated the thesis that as we live amid forces and endure through time we must paint Force and Time.

The masterly union of tone and rhythm in, say, Rubens' Munich *Bacchanal* is not force to them because, having read about force in scientific books, they can only conceive it as graphs or diagrams, angles hitting one another. They do not see that the *Bacchanal* conquers time by catching energy up into a completed rhythm, so that our response to the work does not show us a group of static figures, but sends Silenus staggering into our own experience—the completion of Rubens' experience in the rhythm makes us also feel our whole life (now become drunkenness) moving into the experience of the picture and returning revitalized back into our own self-delighting.

No, to Marinetti, a picture consisting of one ear, an eyebrow, a matchbox, the façade the man looked at five minutes ago, and a beer-bottle label, joined together with spirals, would be a far truer synthesis of Dionysos.

Rubens, then, integrated in Beauty the spiritual significance of energy : the modern seeks to disintegrate its physical constituents.

Having now a static mode of volume and a static mode of flux and force, we advance to Cubism, which applies the method of the latter (cutting-up of forms) to the flat definition of the first.

This done, all that is left is *Blague* : Picasso's hodgepodge of geometry and minutiae. Dada descends its spirals. Nirvana is noisily in sight.

(Commentary on the movement : Matisse, Braque, Derain, etc.—all the various stylistic and calligraphic efforts to define some oddment of the kaleidoscope of criss-crossing design and colour which is actuality : detached lines that seem to curl into the provocation of flesh : detached colour-effects of some concentrated perception : detached planes of some depilated landscape.)

All this movement, it is clear, is a downward current. What is behind it ? An effort to absorb into a unity, firstly, the complex perception of light's properties, secondly, a greater realism of forms and character, thirdly, the simple architectonic constructions of form itself.

The development since Picasso invoked the Philosophy of the

Ridiculous to cover his jejune foolery, has been, not an advance (for no advance was possible), but a fuddled effort to retrace the steps back to Cézanne and then to Delacroix. If plastic art is to become a serious expression again, it must be by adding a new complexity of colour and rhythm, with more idiosyncratic variation of form and greater stress on volume, to the æsthetic of Rubens.

(One man stands outside the movement, influenced lamentably by it, yet unable to control it: Rodin. Possessing profound plastic feeling he could not combine the character and force of his coarser work with the beauty of his lyrical gushes: those bodies flashing through veils of clouding light. Trying to synthesise Michelangelo and Praxiteles he only succeeded in bringing an irritation into the heart of his love.)

As evidence that the effort has begun to make the new synthesis I can only point to the work of one man, Lionel Ellis, a painting by whom is reproduced at the head of this article. This dignified and subtly constructed flesh was painted at the age of twenty-three.

(IX) MUSIC, however, was the great achievement of the Revival. All that I postulated above as the necessary elements for a reborn art has already been made the basis of a musical æsthetic in Beethoven and Wagner.

Mozart infused the dormant forms of music with a complete relation to the human complex, though he did not carry out this relation into any generically definitive Form. That was left to Beethoven. The first full revelation of the intention of spirit on earth was made in his music. These symphonies bear one across the whole experience of an earth, at every point relating the individual experience to the generic symbol. The successive throes of conflict in the 3rd, 5th and 9th *Symphonies* define the three great crises of the will: the domination of the external world of fate, victory in the inner world of destiny, and the culminating unification of the will in Beauty and Joy. Through these twine the freed experiences of emotion—of love in the 4th *Symphony*, of debauch in the 7th and 8th. The 6th states and stabilizes the world of perception.

Side by side with this in the sonatas and quartets is expressed the personal reactions from the necessity defined by these symbols of desire and joy—the suffering, the weariness, the reveries, the bitterness, the self-contempt, and self-renewal . . . anger always resolved on the note of unconquerable delight, which is robbed of any smug shallowness by the omnipresent anguish of scepticism, a self-mockery never permitted to become sterilizing.

The form is so compact that no critical pin can penetrate the decision of its tonal values; but its chief characteristic is the resilient energy of the *melos* which, though constructed of very simple units, gives the effect of infinite length and diversity, stepping from horizon to horizon, utterly free of space. Also the physical genesis and recoil of the image is always perfectly understood: human gesture and intonation are the basis of this *melos*, the Dionysian dance its mode.

Wagner is diametrically opposite in form. He builds always

the Wagnerian colour and method of imagery in *L'Oiseau de Feu* and *Pétrouchka*. Reverting, however, amid the hysteria of the immediately pre-War period, to a more genuinely personal element, he wrote the *Sacre du Printemps*, which is the first large use of the Gauguin-generalization in music. Big forms drained of all vital content and held together only by the automatic pulse of the tom-tom—note the affiliations of primitivism and the “æsthetic” of machinery—both empty, dead, huge with repetitive noise: hell.

(In passing, I wish to emphasise that though it is generally seen how far Wagner's chromaticism has affected modern harmony, it is not seen how closely his adroitness in *Meistersingers* has affected the manipulation of musical imagery.)

The *Sacre* was Stravinsky's apotheosis, his sole reality. Since then he has merely kept on trying to be the musical counterpart of Picasso, etc. (Commentary: the *Sacre*, Prokofiev; dada and realism, Les Six, chiefly Honneger.)

But Scriabin is deeply poisonous, for the reason that he springs from nearer the heart of Wagner's energies. Listen to the *Tristan* prelude and then to the *Poème d'Extase*, and you will see how the tragic exaltation of the first becomes the mewing agony and splintering pretence of power in the second. There is a deep sadistic compulsion about this man's music which is to be compared only to some of Michelangelo's forms. But as sadism is the feeblest possible form of sexual sensitivity, so is Scriabin the limit of musical excited impotence. (Note his early submission to Chopin, the musician of delicate onanism.) His themes are mostly undistinguished till he flogs them over the extended sonata-form to which he clings. He repeats himself pointlessly, uses tricks such as shelving without inner necessity (again parodying Wagner)—the one unity is the sadistic excitation; but its power to excite, by its creation of unrelieved nervous tension, should not be underestimated.

(XI) Music then has been enslaved by exactly the same forces as painting. Instead of grand form we find incoherent generalisation; instead of unified detail we find clotted oddments of the splitting nerves. Certainly we see now in men like Bartok an effort to get back to emotional simplicity, but no central integration has yet occurred or is likely to occur. English musicians remain in a kind of post-Wagnerian backwash—Holst, etc.—Deliús alone is original, his work possessing some of the finest qualities of our lyrical poetry; but he is no core of reconstruction.

We see then that all the Lewisites shout as the horrible results of romanticism and sensualism (by which they mean the colour-image of Beauty) is true of music. But the fallacy in their argument lies in muddling a creative expression with its parasites. Of course Wagner's music upsets man's nervous sensibilities with the demands of its insatiable desire. So much the worse for man, not for the Beauty which destroys him. And if man turns on Wagner with hate and essays to build up a “classicism” of terror, so much more the worse for man. The greater the chance offered, the more fateful its Nemesis if you are too weak to take it. Personally, I welcome Scriabin in order that, by

the Wagnerian colour and method of imagery in *L'Oiseau de Feu* and *Pétrouchka*. Reverting, however, amid the hysteria of the immediately pre-War period, to a more genuinely personal element, he wrote the *Sacre du Printemps*, which is the first large use of the Gauguin-generalization in music. Big forms drained of all vital content and held together only by the automatic pulse of the tom-tom—note the affiliations of primitivism and the “æsthetic” of machinery—both empty, dead, huge with repetitive noise: hell.

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overcoming my disgust for his turgid neuroses, I may deepen my love for the disciplined tumult of delighted love in Wagner.

For we see that music *did* achieve its end during this second episode of the Renaissance, and that, in doing so, it conditioned poetry and art so strongly that it swayed them off their feet. All that we can dream of as clarity of rhythmic outline: as joy willing and subduing a universe of inertia: is to be found in Beethoven. (He redefines Rubens and Shakespeare, and adds to them a new width of joy.) All that we can imagine of rich imagic detail is added in Wagner to the embrace of love conceived as grand rhythm. The universe shocked into action by Beethoven is lyrically solidified by love. At once here is exposed the skeletal basis of emotion, and here revealed the concretion of the perfected image.

Therefore instead of fleeing from the musical synthesis, like Lewis, T. S. Eliot, etc., we must endeavour to face it and absorb it: to evaluate the chaos of modern music by a synthesis combining Beethoven's rapid ease of construction and Wagner's rich sincerity of image: and finally to use this synthesis to bring back poetry and art into the dimension of grand form.

(XII) POETRY, after the failure of Keats and Byron to complete their expressions, wandered off into the Spasmodics who hoarsened into Browning, and the Mellifluous who trilled into Tennyson: the pre-Raphélites a half-way house.

The new birth began with Francis Thompson: a recrudescence of Beddoes' imagic splendour, thinned out in human content, but alembicated in form, abstractly Dionysian. At the same time the human cry returned with A. E. Housman, very limited in emotion, but technically purified.

Out of these two trains came the Georgians. From Thompson came Drinkwater, an intellectual enfeebling; Flecker, who gulped down an indigestible mass of colour which he tried in vain to discipline with Parnassian theory, though his instinct was right; Lascelles Abercrombie, by far the most vital, who made a desperate effort to force Thompson's best—a lushy precision—into the action of the human universal. *Emblems of Love* is a very fine failure; but Abercrombie has never since failed so richly. He went partly adrift in an effort to include the peasant consciousness, probably owing to study of Hardy. However, *The End of the World* showed a new coherence which was amply carried out in the delicious comedy *Phanix*. This was loudly attacked by the moral lions like J. C. Squire, and Abercrombie timidly withdrew into silence, exposing what one feels to be the chief deterrent to a far higher achievement: a cautiousness both in poetic and critical statement at the wrong places. He is unsure of himself; even writes nonsense like *Ham and Eggs* in weak efforts to get contact with the *zeitgeist*, instead of doing so by recklessly following his desire.

From Housman leads the Georgian lyrical trail, which achieves a minor perfection in Walter de la Mare and W. H. Davies: a loneliness of wondering fear weeps into bright flowers of mystery in one—a minute felicity of delight informs the pastoral fantasy of the other. Rupert Brooke breaks in

with an adolescent fervour of sentimental disillusion : the first point of the later self-consciousness which suddenly clots into the Sitwells. This self-consciousness comes from the continental art-movements : the dry symbology of Mallarmé, the *vers libristes*, the hypochondriacal humours of Laforgue.

(XIII) But wherever the self-consciousness came from, the imagery of the Sitwells is definitely English : an agitation, disintegration, and development of the lineal colour-image of Keats-Beddoes-Thompson. The disintegrated side appears in the stress on purely nervous sensitivity, the positive side in the new thick fluid sensuousness of imagery. Although a certain amount of nonsense was thrown off in the exasperation of battle, a core of valuable imagery remains, definitely influencing any possible future reintegration. More—in Sacheverell, a field of lyrical nuances, of pastoral-sweet rhythm, is opened.

And gods walked in the harvest, or among the grapes,
To choose a mirror of themselves in men ;
They tired of immortal love and stole into the harvest
Hidden in wind's raiment, or at a tower of stone
Fell in a gold shower like sun with rain ;
Such were the loves of gods who schemed in green barley.

Only two men have made any development on this : W. J. Turner and Roy Campbell. Both have sought to employ the new thickness and quickness of the image to define a belief in life. Both stand outside the silly classical-versus-romantic fight, realising that the spangled senses can claim as clear a shape as any denuded intellectualism, and that the present problem is to discipline the senses, not to obliterate them. The result at its best is a new sharp excitement which uses all the dark storminess of "romanticism" to get at some closer kernel of imagery, and which packs as much colour as possible within the phrase while preserving the integrity of the intellectual statement and the curve of emotion.

The hanging Land
Crowded with Trees upblown,
A darkness sown
In sprouting stone
Whence waves her small white hand !

In Campbell's *Flaming Terrapin*, a swaggering fantasia, this method is used to define the birth of an earth. Let us hope this picture is prophetic of the effort into which poetry is about to build :

Gigantic flowers, exploding from the sand,
Spread fans of blinding colour all around.

Here, I say, stands poetry—with *Phenix*, *The Flaming Terrapin*, and the best lyrics of Sacheverell Sitwell and W. J. Turner.

(XIV) Two older men must not be forgotten : W. B. Yeats and Gordon Bottomley. The first has long since outdistanced his early Celtic twilight. From Ezra Pound he learned economy of statement and has developed a sinewy but melodious form of lyric. Moreover, in his best plays he has invented a feminine

but delicately profound use of symbolism continuously relating itself back to human experience.

Bottomley, developing the stark human intonation which makes Morris's *Defence of Guinevere* so taut with emotional significance, has created a tragic expression which, although evading the larger tangled themes of passion, yet suggests passionate intensification of drama and a force of gesture hidden under clenched surfaces.

(XV) So far so good. But there is another school of verse, almost completely American in origin, which is doing its best to sterilise this effort of English poetry to reknit its thews. The chief exponent is T. S. Eliot, though other Americans such as Gertrude Stein and Laura Riding* exhibit modifications of the attitude, and there are few writers it has not tainted.

This school stands opposed to all lyrical integrations. Convinced that life is futile, it wishes to reduce all beliefs and methods to a common intellectual Nirvana of tin. T. S. Eliot is a well-read man who prides himself on his scholarly sense of values. In fact, he is the most partial of insensitive critics, insensitive to every element of the delighted music of the senses, partial to every element which tends to a barren intellectuality. Typical of his criticism is this: "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates."

What could be more destructive, less sensitive? Eliot of course would assert that thus we discipline our emotions and senses. I have not space here to defend the lyrical basis of all true creativeness; but enough has been said in passing to show how I would make that defence. Not by perfecting an intellectual instrument and then mechanically applying it to the material; but by developing a sensitised instrument through a persistent effort to approximate the intellectual and emotional centres of self—that, I say, is how the creator works.

(XVI) INDEED we see in all these people a lassitude of the will. Life is dull and drab, purpose has fled. Nothing but the Waste Land remains. They thereupon proceed to blame life as if it could bestow upon them some ready-made intention like a tram ticket to Parnassus. Life is muddled, so we must express muddle. Life is nothing but jazz and machinery, so we must produce a pastiche of lurching rhythms and angular forms. Life is a continuous present, so let us seesaw upon the repetition of its inconsequence.

That there is such a thing as the creative will of a Beethoven is apparently not known. Is it modesty? or merely blankness? and, in any case, why should such people meddle with poetry? †

(XVII) ONE man of at least far bulkier stature buttresses this dull synthesis of despair: James Joyce—though an occasional

* Here indeed an attempt is made to reformulate poetry as a humanity! This in the name of an abstract method which cuts it off from any hope of the essential human contacts. As if humanity can exist as a psychological abstraction!—as well be a Robot and have done with the idiotic contradictions of an æsthetic.

† To be fair, I must admit that the general attitude among young American writers, i.e. *transition*, expresses a more vital curiosity, a greater sense of poetry as something to be lived, than is to be found in England. Even the passion with which they submit to the experimentalists shows this.

vividly precise phrase redeems him from the dullness of the pure Intellectualists. A depressed Irishman, a very fine realist of minutiae—in one vast neurotic upheaval he vomited up all the spattering material of an existence on earth. Not that the plentiful lavatory epigraphs thrown up define a condition of frank self-revelation. As has been written elsewhere: "Joyce the Irishman is not an emancipated intellect, repudiating all smug evasions by a rampant indulgence in licentious speech. He is that cramped and fettered thing, the automaton of evasion itself. Centuries of suppression alone can produce these revulsions in asceticism. This modern journalist is only one of the Holy Fathers returned to earth, still bent on vilifying all that is gay and upright in love, still making the human body the symbol of decay and death." (Norman Lindsay.)

He is therefore the utter antithesis to Rabelais, who binds together all the excreta of experience in one tremendous rhythm of overpowering laughter. Joyce, intellectually revolted by the necessities of life, pours out every little contact of horror, pain, and filth, as if he hopes to empty his life that way, to scrape the last touch of flesh from his contaminated mind.

Having thus discarded all the larger unifying factors of experience and delved into the slushy material of his subconscious memory, all that is left for him is pure sport with the formal elements of the word; and he is now playing a ponderous game with the dictionary, laboriously chopping up the language, getting amusement out of tiny interrelations and divisions of the rudderless consciousness.

"And an odd time she'd cook him up blooms of fisk and lay to his heartsfoot her meddery eggs and staynish beacons on toasc and a cupenhave so weeshwashy of Greenland's tay or mokau to order or Si-kiang or his ale of ferns in trueart pewter. . . ."

As part of this game with formal elements, the *reductio ad absurdum* of all abstract use of verbal structure, stands Gertrude Stein. One can only wonder that a person could go on producing her childish patterns of stammering jigsaws without being bored to death. Her work represents the ultimate aphasia of the constructive faculty.

To return: two Americans responsible for much of this are Ezra Pound and E. E. Cummings. Pound is a literary amateur whose general culture and lack of conviction make him a hodge-podge of anything from Kiplingesque ballads to Provençal poetry. He now turns out an indefatigable epic of cantos alternating Imagist "charm" and "modern" irrelevancies. Cummings shows the end of *vers libre* (Whitman-via-Sandberg-and-Imagist-miniatures) dwindling into snatches of zigzag impressionism under the excuse of "psychology":

yellowandbluish cat (perched why
curvingly at this) window, yes
women sturdily meander in my
mind, woven by always upon
sunset,
crickets within me whisper.

These then seem to me to be the enemy if we are to integrate poetry.* As in music and painting, the limit has been reached. It is impossible to continue to abstract the faculty of expression from the concrete humanity it should express. We must therefore pick up the musical concentration of the senses in the Keats-Beddoes-Thompson nexus of imagery and seek to relate it to the generic Shakespearean achievement of the past.

(XVIII) THE attitude defined by Lewis and Eliot is not, however, original. It is dictated from France. There we find, firstly, a schismatic group, the *Surréalistes*, a romantic survival of dada, attempting to make a subjective philosophy out of that expletive Nirvana. Secondly, there is the neo-Catholic group. Tired out with flippancy, these busy people have turned to the Church as the Rock of Ages against which the Bergsonian waves foam in vain. Stability at all costs is the cry, and what more stable than Rome! Moreover, the neo-Thomist movement in philosophy suits our need for sterile rest. Centre of this is Maritain, propounding a theory of pure living and brittle poetry in which the clear tones of young boys' voices play an anomalous part. Cocteau, reclaimed (with a wink), writes *Orphée*, ending with a prayer for wholesome family life; and so on.

The most important part of this morality of Purity (only an expression of disgust for Wagnerian passion) is that it necessitates an aesthetic of pure intellectualised form—i.e. classicism.

(XIX) TYPICAL of the muddled ideology and ratiocination of these people is the following logic of Lewis in the *Paleface*. There he unfolds the usual thesis of the Defence of the West. Properly understood, this is a very much needed defence. Although I do not think Eastern or primitive arts have actually created the lapse into abstraction I have detailed, they have certainly fitted in too well with our declining consciousness not to have been eagerly absorbed.

Here in the *Paleface* attacking D. H. Lawrence, Lewis quotes him applaudingly to the effect that our consciousness and that of the East are death to one another. This is only too true. Let us see how Lewis applies it, remembering his own definition of a sentimentalist as a man who fails to carry his ideas to their logical conclusion:

"With European art *the structure*, the geometric basis of beauty, has always tended to be covered up, hidden away (and so lost very often), more than is the case with the great æsthetic systems of the East. The Hellenic naturalism, the result of the Greek scientific bias, has, as I see it, resulted in Europe in an art which, except in the case of a few individuals of very great genius, been so inferior to the art of China, for instance, that it could almost be said that the European had never understood the secrets of the pure eye at all."

Now what is the indisputably unique achievement of the

* For example, the most promising young lyricist, Robert Graves, instead of purging a tendency to prettiness by persisting till it turned to emotional strength, has succumbed to the temptations of the "Intellect." His fate, however, shows what a present evil the Apostles of Abstract Psychology are.

Western plastic consciousness? Not Byzantine or Gothic art, not Botticelli or the Primitives—those we can pair off elsewhere. But where can we find another Praxiteles, Rubens, Titian, or Turner? Like them or not, they are our peculiar contribution to mind, and to affirm the Western consciousness is to affirm this fluid solidity which, using three-dimensional form, transfigures it with rhythm of light.

What right has Lewis then to talk of the West? None. No more has Massis or Maritain. They are all merely defenders of a barren metaphysical system of the Catholic Church, and of the intellectual abstraction which is just as Chinese as European—which is, in fact, a negative condition present wherever mind exists at all and which only appears vital when shocked into strenuousness by the opposing principle of human integration. That is why the Egyptian or Chinese artist can go on repeating himself indefinitely for centuries with only slight formal variations. For it is some such intellectual inertia which must result from the application of pure intellectuality to the creative act (*cf.* Eliot, Sect. XV).

Lewis tries awkwardly to escape this logic by pleading that you can imitate the forms of an insect without becoming an insect. But art is consciousness not an insect; and to hand yourself over to Chinese art in these terms is to become Chinese.

What was Lewis's definition of a sentimentalist?

(XX) ANOTHER propagandist, though opposed to the puritans of the intellect, is D. H. Lawrence. He is of the brood of Scriabin, and states clearly enough the case for torment: the itch to get back to the night of the unconscious, the primal plasm of instinct, the dark pit of the blood. Lewis roars loudly over Lawrence, though actually they are twins.

We have seen everywhere that as the strain becomes too great the spirit breaks up into its component parts—one part perishing. On the one hand the chaos of the senses, on the other the dead geometry of the intellect. Therefore to seek to build one's cosmos on either of these foundations is equally to define the division of the spirit.

All that we must carefully perceive is that this dark yearning back into the bubbling swamp of the flesh is *not* the Wagnerian deification of desire. Lawrence hates desire of that kind—just as Lewis or Eliot does. He wants the loss of identity, not its hellenised godhead. He wants to ooze back into the mud, masochistically surrendering to the brutal embrace of death, not to shape Praxitelean statues from his poised delight.

The lyrical embraces of *Tristan*, which burn always upon a consciousness of sculptural beauty, are the antithesis of Lawrence's blundering primitive contacts, efforts to smudge self out in the blind jungle of matted bodies. The literary ancestry of his analysis is Whitman's narcissism and Russian masochism (*cf.* Dostoievsky and Bunin); but to the latter Lawrence adds a thick obstruction of perverted poetic imagery—the result of absorbing the Western musical energies—the image of beauty flowing *down* out of the blood into cavernous loins.

(There is no doubt that Bergson's Intuitionism has helped to

give a good conscience to the effort to establish these primitive contacts. Cf. *Les Unanistes* for the social definition.)

(XXI) LAWRENCE's praise of the lust for the maternal womb of the unconscious has naturally been related to Freud's clinical analysis of that lust; but, except that both relate to the clinic, there is little real resemblance. I am not speaking of the imbeciles collected under the title of psycho-analysts, but of Freud himself, whose human balance is marvellously kept despite the madhouse of his material.

Certainly Freud has exposed the mechanism of repression, the point at which certain emotional contacts are established between actuality and the secret self, but that does not mean that he claims to expose the whole of that secrecy.

The fallacy here, which is repeated so often by modernists, is to think that to register dispersed attention is to penetrate to the mysterious depths of self—(cf. *Ulysses*, etc.). Where in the mind, for instance, is the constructive faculty shown in the Beethoven *melos*? Will any clinical æsthetic produce *that* by grubbing among the submerged rubbish-heaps of memory?

The creative mind can only know itself creatively. That simplicity is the truth evaded by T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence equally. One seeks a neat escape into the parlours of "intellect," the other riotously burrows into the mud of the "unconscious"—but both seek a ready-made approach to creativeness: a formula for life and art, an escape.

Certainly, from Freud the creator will get a new awareness of his own impulses, but not a new spiritual instrument; and Freud would be the last person to countenance such misunderstandings of his analysis.

We have seen the same impasse occur over Physics. Instead of being content to absorb scientific or philosophical hypotheses into the mind's unity so that they will effect a subtle reorientation of that unity, the modern way is to seek at once to apply the hypotheses abstractly as an æsthetic method.

(XXII) I HAVE left little space for the novel or social thought; but that does not matter much, as the centres of consciousness are not those which make the most noise, but those which achieve the most concentrated form.

The Flaubertian era, quenching the Balzacian lyricism of sex, spread out from France to England where it further quenched the Dickensian poetic fantasy of character. Realism settled down, self-consciously in George Moore (since reborn as a Balzacian), grimly in Gissing, portentously in Thomas Hardy (who possesses, outside the movements, a popular niche for his minutely careful pictures of England in prose and verse); but all this contributed very little to the future.

Conrad, on the other hand, introduced a new world of action and thought. In this lies his greatness, rather than in the belauded "atmosphere" or the tediously frittered talent of *Chance*. What right had such a master of the nervous complexities of tightening drama to accept fame for such a work? For at his best he creates the rambling tension of the Russians (Dostoevsky) plus a dramatic resolution which allies the work

to the heroic tragedies. His achievement will yet bear much fruit, both in prose and drama.*

The worst obstructive mind of the decade is Bernard Shaw. He has attached himself to all the most lively expressions about him and managed to devitalize and vulgarize them all, even Nietzsche. *The Perfect Wagnerite*, for instance, is not merely an impertinence, it is the falsest book ever written about a great æsthetic integration. Shaw has no sense of character or drama, but a vast virtuosity in picking up themes of contemporary interest and setting them out with a pert staginess. Primarily, as cause of his own complacency and that of his readers, we may note his sexual negativity: the preposterous innocence with which he tries to apply the abstract biological law of women-chasing-man to the facts of existence. For all his pretence to the sceptical dignity of ideas, he is only an entrepreneur of talent. His baseness is manifest in his hatred of Shakespeare and Byron, his praise of Bunyan. Although he assumes the innocence of a pose here also, the genuine puritanical malignancy comes out in such remarks as that Antonys and Cleopatras can be found in any ginshop. If he had remained in the aldermanic area of mind (making fun of doctors and the Salvation Army) he would have been valuable.

Butler, whom Shaw plundered, wrote one great work of irony, *The Way of all Flesh*; and though the relentless attack on the family, and so on all social repression, has no profoundly affirmative background, it does point the way out of the maze of realistic depression in the novel. The hint was not taken, however, till Norman Douglas wrote *South Wind*, a great achievement, possessing the completion of a carefully ratiocinated metaphysic and yet human with a ruthless amiability.

Since then little has been done. It seemed for a while that Aldous Huxley would pick up the trail, amalgamating the satirical pinpricking of writers like Stella Benson with Douglas's hardy intellect. For the rest, there is the horde of females with appallingly efficient transcript of this and that social side-section, and a few experimentalists still pegging away with stuttering atmospherics.

(In America, Dreiser still carries on "realism," though redeemed by a naïve force, and Hergesheimer at times gets a suaver version of the Conradian tense tangles of will. The others are still wrestling with Lawrence and *Ulysses*.)

(XXIII) No one has had the power to proclaim an æsthetic, save of the cliques. Croce is too aloof and academic. Clive Bell invented the phrase Significant Form as vindication of the Cézanne-generalisation—a phrase since used indiscriminately. Roger Fry has worked out a pretty scheme of the static formal elements of art, which he appears to imagine constitute the reality of the creative act. Caught in the returning tide he now adds

* Proust, with his glancing and impalpably self-disorganising contacts, shows the expiring edge of this method. Cf. him with a writer like Paul Morand, at his best swiftly constructive.—Proust, introducing *Tendres Stocks*, objects to an image attached to a boiling kettle, saying that it is only heat at such a degree, etc.—thus exposing the feebleness of his mind to which reality is an interminable chemical formula.

"psychological volume" to the ingredients. The bastard scientific nature of that phrase gives away the whole artificial precision of this type of criticism.

Needless to say, most of the jargon comes from France. Cocteau was prolific in producing comfortingly false aphorisms such as that a "masterpiece finishes, not begins, an epoch"—or criticism as peculiarly inept as his statement that Bach goes straight ahead with what he has to say, but Beethoven merely keeps on repeating himself. Now we have classical purity and Paul Valéry, who deserves a better fate.

W. B. Yeats' *A Vision*, the only truly profound contribution to thought since Nietzsche, has passed almost unnoticed. It defines the complex interrelation of spiritual symbols in the human act.

In England, W. J. Turner alone has defined an intelligent æsthetic, realising the structural centres of life which the creative ecstasy sets spinning. It is unfortunate he shares the vulgar depreciation of Wagner (though every now and then yielding him extorted tribute), since he is one of the few who, in work, can face the Wagnerian cosmos.

The drama flounders in Expressionistic devices, which are only disrupted realism jarred into what is hoped to be significance by some intellectual symbology. But the real problem here, as in other modes, is to submerge the symbol in the material, not *vice versa*. Rhythmic concentration alone can redeem work truly from the thinness of mere realistic representation.

Ibsen, Wedekind and Strindberg were the forerunners here; and though they avoided the worst faults of the pure propagandist (Brieux), of mere abstract staginess (Shaw), or constructional disintegration (Expressionists)—yet they did not arrive at the poetic balance of idea and character; they missed it by alternating from too trivially realistic to too obviously intellectual an angle.

(XXIV) WE stand then at the gates with Nietzsche, Beethoven and Wagner as the signposts of our future . . . themselves our future, if we are to have one.

These three minds have, since the revival of consciousness with Blake, alone mastered the concrete universal. They alone have not crippled themselves by attention to side-issues, by casual modes of a limited creativeness. Their spirits blaze a clear trail of self-sufficient energy, sucking amorously at life, yet always saving intact the integral flame of desire.

Around their achievement fluctuate all the others. We see first of all the various Romantic Movements: that is, efforts by weak spirits to grapple with the reality of music. Failing, they flee into some corner of magical escape. Stronger minds, like Delacroix, Balzac, Goya, Rodin, get face to face with life, but fail to achieve in their lives the full continuity of delighted energy.

Beethoven marches straight over the corpses of all Romantic escapes and Classical purities, into the heart of his own self. Does he dream of an impossible beauty, a quivering and tender sweetness, a heaven of the blossoming senses—then he dreams, and he damns to all definitions of Romanticism which think to snare his dream.

Does his will demand to wrestle with the sharpest of actualized conflicts, to meditate gravely among his scepticisms—then he wrestles or meditates, and be damned to all theories of intellectual dichotomy.

In Beethoven and Wagner is defined a complete submission to the sensual essences, *plus* a clear strength which never slackens a sinew as it bears the dual symbols of energy upon its back.

This Dionysian courage is analytically proclaimed by Nietzsche. He ends the reign of Music and opens the stage for an absorption of the musical energies into poetry and plastic art. That is our task and our reward.

All the uproar, the schisms, the trivial *cul-de-sacs*, were, first of all, the effect of the unleashed musical energies upon the intellectual consciousness of man; secondly, the spasm as life draws back upon its haunches after the attack of the great trinity.

All these schisms were necessary that we should have laid bare before us all the hidden chambers of mind—that in this morgue of art we might see exposed the anatomy of the æsthetic faculty. These trivial vortices of self-consciousness were needed first to aid us to spread the Dionysian consciousness over all our activities and create the new synthesis.

Thus, out of this new encounter of energy with primitivism arises the new dramatic tension I spoke of with regard to Conrad. A fresh conflict is posited—not the Shakespearean wrecking of self on an insufficiency or blindness of the will, but the tragic division of self (hinted at by Ibsen, etc.)—the effort to arrive at consciousness of oneself, to attain an intellectual awareness of one's impulses.

(XXV) YEATS, drawing on I know not what astrological mysteries, prophesied some years back that the turning-point, the arrival of the third kingdom of the spirit, was to occur in 1928.

The signs of the Third Kingdom are a liberation of irrational Dionysian force and, simultaneously, a strengthening of the antithetical symbols of the intellect.

We have seen, under the stress of Music's conquest of Time, all expressions wearing through their old garments till, growing more and more skeletal, they became inert. That was in order that we might have as clear a sense as possible of our tools.

We have seen, side by side with this, the storm of nervous sensibility tear minds to rags or send them seeking refuge in the hot primitive mud. That was to make clear for us the dramatic potentialities of the struggle into self-consciousness.

It now remains for us to make this effort, legionaries of the new Roman determination to stabilize spirit—defining a new faith in life and the eternality of self, and at the same time washing our hands, Pilate-fashion, in the coolest of ironical despairs.

It remains for the Third Kingdom—ignoring the efforts to return to the primitive slime or to make life a psychological abstraction—to define this freedom of self-motive energy, deepening from consciousness to consciousness, and, with the imageries of all the modes whereby the human spirit redeems itself from death, constructing the fluid concretions of its love.

I proclaim the Third Kingdom.

We therefore must retrieve
the symbol *Consciousness* from its vague space
and stuff it concrete as the width of love
narrowing down into a little Kiss:
a gloss of beauty carving out the Face
into a limpid mass thought into sight
and back again to sight with sudden eyes
and into tilted wings of opening skies.

For consciousness is not a dim-lit Orb
wavering round us which we vaguely absorb:
suffusion of the universal power
curbed to our crooked needs for but an hour:
half instinct and half thought yet never clean
one or the other: not the rapid sheen
and the immediate antennæ of the act,
nor reason chipping foursquare at the fact:
merely a store of floating energies
beyond us, which in turn exploits both these:
a nexus made up of our animal past
and the abstract universal mingling thus
in twined sporadic intuitions cast
out of a rhythm personal to us
until the rhythm loses us at last.
Too wandering a definition, this.
Let us get back, concretely, to the Kiss;
for Form remains our symbol. It alone
redeems the spirit from the chaos blown
upon it at each spurt of blood we tease
along the traffic of the arteries.

I said that spirit was a wind: but one
moving with sculptural hands. It leaves behind
cells of quick Imagery stolen from the Sun.
For Form impregnates everywhere this wind
and so the wind in turn curls everything
into the shape which leans towards Desire.
Form as the symbol of the wind I take,

that no dead matrix may deceive our hands
stamping out dyes of death in beauty's name.
Consciousness as far greater than the mind,
and greater than the senses, I proclaim—
but consciousness as Form.

Who understands?

You must be one whose love can never tire.
You must be one who does not fear the wind
but plaited in its manes can ride the Seas
and scoop the foam to crystal ecstasies,
dragging up Venus from eternal death
to sob with kisses underneath her breath
and so ascend to heaven on a shell
patient as your cupped palm: up out of hell.
You must not fear the curls of the mad wind
but stand for ever at its curling core
where in the balance of terrific force,
bending on all sides from the pressure, you
serenely mould the beauty you adore,
knitting the thews that others would divorce,
and passionately prove that this is true:
Consciousness is the Form of your Desire.