

THE LITTLE REVIEW

A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS

MAKING NO COMPROMISE WITH THE PUBLIC TASTE

Margaret Anderson
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To our Readers
Announcement for October

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THE KLICKET

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THE LITTLE REVIEW

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No. 5

Inferior Religions*

Wyndham Lewis

I.

TO introduce my puppets, and the Wild Body, the generic puppet of all, I must look back to a time when the antics and solemn gambols of these wild children filled me with triumph.

The fascinating imbecility of the creaking men-machines, some little restaurant or fishing-boat works, is the subject of these studies. The boat's tackle and dirty little shell keeps their limbs in a monotonous rhythm of activity. A man gets drunk with his boat as he would with a merry-go-round. Only it is the staid, everyday drunkenness of the normal real. We can all see the ascendance a "carrousel" has on men, driving them into a set narrow intoxication. The wheel at CarisBrooke imposes a set of movements on the donkey inside it, in drawing water from the well, that it is easy to grasp. But in the case of a fishing-boat the variety is so great, the scheme so complex, that it passes as open and untrammelled life. This subtle and wider mechanism merges, for the spectator, in the general variety of Nature. Yet we have in most lives a spectacle as complete as a problem of Euclid.

Moran, Bestre and Brobdingnag are essays in a new human mathematic. But they are each simple shapes, little monuments of logic. I should like to compile a book of forty of these propositions, one deriving from and depending on the other.

* [Editor's note: This essay was written as the introduction to a volume of short stories containing "Inn-Keeper and Bestre", "Unlucky for Pringle" and some others which had appeared in *The English Review* under Ford Madox Hueffer's editorship, and in other English periodicals. The book was in process of publication (the author had even been paid an advance on it) when war broke out. The last member of the publishing firm has been killed in France, and the firm disbanded. The essay is complete in itself and need not stand as an "introduction". It is perhaps the most important single document that Wyndham Lewis has written. Such stories as had not been previously published will appear in later numbers of *The Little Review*.—E. P.]

These intricately moving bobbins are all subject to a set of objects or one in particular. Brobdingnag is fascinated by one object, for instance; one at once another vitality. He bangs up against it wildly at regular intervals, blackens it, contemplates it, moves round it and dreams. All such fascination is religious. Moran's damp napkins are the altar-cloths of his rough illusion. Julie's bruises are the markings on an idol.

These studies of rather primitive people are studies in a savage worship and attraction. Moran rolls between his tables ten million times in a realistic rhythm that is as intense and superstitious as the figures of a war-dance. He worships his soup, his damp napkins, the lump of flesh that rolls everywhere with him called Madam Moran.

All religion has the mechanism of the celestial bodies, has a dance. When we wish to renew our idols, or break up the rhythm of our naivety, the effort postulates a respect which is the summit of devoutness.

II

I would present these puppets, then, as carefully selected specimens of religious fanaticism. With their attendant objects or fetishes they live and have a regular food for vitality. They are not creations, but puppets. You can be as exterior to them, and live their life as little, as the showman grasping from beneath and working about a Polichinelle. They are only shadows of energy, and not living beings. Their mechanism is a logical structure and they are nothing but that.

Sam Weller, Jingle, Malvolio, Bouvard, and Pecuchet, the "commissaire" in *Crime and Punishment*, do not live; they are congealed and frozen into logic, and an exuberant, hysterical truth. They transcend life and are complete cyphers, but they are monuments of dead imperfection. Their only reference is to themselves, and their only significance their egoism.

The great intuitive figures of creation live with the universal egoism of the Poet. They are not picturesque and over palpable. They are supple with this rare impersonality; not stiff with a common egotism. The "realists" of the Flaubert, Maupassant, and Tchekoff school are all satirists. "Realism", understood as applied to them, implies either photography or satire.

Satire, the great Heaven of Ideas, where you meet the Titans of red laughter, is just below Intuition, and Life charged with black Illusion.

III

When we say "types of humanity", we mean violent individualities, and nothing stereotyped. But Othello, Falstaff and Pecksniff attract, in our memory, a vivid following. All difference is energy, and a category of humanity a relatively small group, and not the myriads suggested by a generalisation.

A comic type is a failure of a considerable energy, an imitation and standardising of self, suggesting the existence of a uniform humanity,—creating, that is, a little host as like as ninepins; instead of one synthetic and various Ego. It is the laziness of a successful personality. It is often part of our own organism become a fetish.

Saurey Gamp and Falstaff are minute and rich religions. They are illusions hugged and lived in. They are like little dead Totems. Just as all Gods are a repose for humanity, the big religions an immense refuge and rest, so these little grotesque idols are. One reason for this is that, for the spectator or participator, it is a world in a corner of the world, full of rest and security.

Moran, even, advances in life with his rows of bottles and napkins; Julie is Brobdingnag's Goddess, and figures for intercessions, if the occasion arises.

All these are forms of static and traditional art, then. There is a great deal of divine Olympian sleep in English Humour. The most gigantic spasm of laughter is sculptural, isolated and essentially simple.

IV

- 1 Laughter is the Wild Body's song of triumph.
- 2 Laughter is the climax in the tragedy of seeing, hearing and smelling self-consciously.
- 3 Laughter is the bark of delight of a gregarious animal at the proximity of its kind.
- 4 Laughter is an independent, tremendously important, and lurid Emotion.
- 2 Laughter is the representative of Tragedy, when Tragedy is away.
- 6 Laughter is the emotion of tragic delight.
- 7 Laughter is the female of Tragedy.
- 8 Laughter is the strong elastic fish, caught in Styx, springing and flapping about until it dies.
- 9 Laughter is the sudden handshake of mystic violence and the anarchist.

- 10 Laughter is the mind sneezing.
11 Laughter is the one obvious commotion that is not complex, or in expression dynamic.
12 Laughter does not progress. It is primitive, hard and unchangeable.

V

The chemistry of personality (subterranean in a sort of cemetery whose decompositions are our lives) puffs up in frigid balls, soapy Snow-men, arctic Carnival Masks, which we can photograph and fix.

Upwards from the surface of Existence a lurid and dramatic scum oozes and accumulates into the characters we see. The real and tenacious poisons, and sharp forces of vital vitality, do not socially transpire. Within five yards of another man's eyes we are on a little crater, which, if it erupted, would split up as a cocoon of nitrogen would. Some of these bombs are ill-made, or some erratic in their timing. But they are all potential little bombs.

Capriciously, however, the froth-forms of these darkly-contrived machines, twist and puff in the air, in our legitimate and liveried masquerade.

Were you the female of Moran (the first Innkeeper) and beneath the counterpane with him, you would be just below the surface of life, in touch with a nasty and tragic organism. The first indications of the proximity of the real soul would be apparent. You would be for hours beside a filmy crocodile, conscious of it like a bone in an Ex-Ray, and for minutes in the midst of a tragic wallowing. The soul lives in a cadaverous activity; its dramatic corruption thumps us like a racing engine in the body of a car. The finest humour is the great Play-Shapes blown up or given off by the tragic corpse of Life underneath the world of the Camera. This futile, grotesque and sometimes pretty spawn, is what in this book is Kodacked by the Imagination.

Any great humourist is an artist; Dickens as an example. It is just this character of uselessness and impersonality in Laughter, the fibre of anarchy in the comic habit of mind, that makes a man an artist in spite of himself when he begins living on his laughter. Laughter is the arch-luxury that is as simple as bread.

VI

In this objective Play-World, corresponding to our social consciousness as opposed to our solitude, no final issue is decided.

You may blow away a Man-of-bubbles with a Burgundian gust of laughter, but that is not a personality, it is an apparition of no importance. Its awkwardness, or prettiness is accidental. But so much correspondence it has with its original that if the cadaveric travail beneath is vigorous and bitter, the mask and figurehead will be of a more original and intense grotesqueness. The opposing armies in Flanders stick up dummy men on poles for their enemies to pot at, in a spirit of fierce friendliness. It is only a dummy of this sort that is engaged in the sphere of laughter. But the real men are in the trenches underneath all the time, and are there on a more "decisive" affair. In our rather drab Revel there is certain category of spirit that is not quite anaemic, and yet not very funny. It consists of those who take, at the Clarkson's* situated at the opening of their lives, some conventional Pierrot costume, with a minimum of inverted vigour and the assurance of superior insignificance.

The King of Play is not a phantom corresponding to the Sovereign force beneath the surface. The latter must always be accepted as the skeleton at the Feast. That soul or dominant corruption is so real that he cannot rise up and take part in man's festival as a Falstaff of unwieldy spume; if he comes at all it must be as he is, the skeleton or bogey of True Life, stuck over with corruptions and vices. He may have a certain "succès d'hystérie".

VII

A scornful optimism, with its confidant onslaughts on our snobism, will not make material existence a peer for our energy. The gladiator is not a perpetual monument of triumphal health. Napoleon was harried with Elbas. Moments of vision are blurred rapidly and the poet sinks into the rhetoric of the will.

But life is invisible and perfection is not in the waves or houses that the poet sees. Beauty is an icy douche of ease and happiness at something suggesting perfect conditions for an organism. A stormy landscape, and a Pigment consisting of a lake of hard, yet florid waves; delight in each brilliant scoop or ragged burst, was John Constable's beauty. Leonardo's consisted in a red rain on the shadowed side of heads, and heads of massive female aesthetes. Uccello accumulated pale parallels, and delighted in cold architecture of distinct colour. Korin found in the symmet-

* *Editor's foot note:* Clarkson, a London theatrical costumer.

rical gushing of water, in waves like huge vegetable insects, traced and worked faintly, on a golden pâte, his business. Cézanne liked cumbrous, democratic slabs of life, slightly leaning, transfixed in vegetable intensity.

Beauty is an immense predelection, a perfect conviction of the desirability of a certain thing. To a man with long and consumptive fingers a sturdy hand may be heaven. Equilibrium and "perfection" may be a bore to the perfect. The most *universally* pleasing man is something probably a good way from "perfection". Henri Fabre was in every way a superior being to Bernard, and he knew of elegant grubs which he would prefer to the painter's nymphs.

It is obvious, though, that we should live a little more in small communities.

L' Homme Moyen Sensuel *

Ezra Pound

"I hate a dumpy woman"

—George Gordon, Lord Byron

'Tis of my country that I would endite,
 In hope to set some misconceptions right.
 My country? I love it well, and those good fellows
 Who, since their wit's unknown, escape the gallows.
 But you stuffed coats who're neither tepid nor distinctly boreal,
 Pimping, conceited, placid, editorial,
 Could I but speak as 'twere in the "Restoration"
 I would articulate your perdamnation.
 This year perforce I must with circumspection —
 For Mencken states somewhere, in this connection:
 "It is a moral nation we infest".
 Despite such reins and checks I'll do my best,
 An art! You all respect the arts, from that infant tick

Who's now the editor of *The Atlantic*,
From Comstock's self, down to the meanest resident,
Till up again, right up, we reach the president,
Who shows his taste in his ambassadors :
A novelist, a publisher, to pay old scores,
A novelist, a publisher and a preacher,
That's sent to Holland, a most particular feature,
Henry Van Dyke, who thinks to charm the Muse you pack her in
A sort of stinking diliquescent saccharine.
The constitution of our land, O Socrates,
Was made to incubate such mediocrities,
These and a taste in books that's grown perennial
And antedates the Philadelphia centennial.
Still I'd respect you more if you could bury
Mabie, and Lyman Abbot and George Woodberry,
For minds so wholly founded upon quotations
Are not the best of pulse for infant nations.
Dulness herself, that abject spirit, chortles
To see your forty self-baptized immortals,
And holds her sides where swelling laughter cracks 'em
Before the "Ars Poetica" of Hiram Maxim.
All one can say of this refining medium
Is "*Zut! Cinque lettres!*" a banished gallic idiom,

* [Note: It is through no fault of my own that this diversion was not given to the reader two years ago; but the commercial said it would not add to their transcendent popularity, and the vers-libre fanatics pointed out that I had used a form of terminal consonance no longer permitted, and my admirers (*j'en ai*), ever nobly desirous of erecting me into a sort of national institution, declared the work "unworthy" of my mordant and serious genius. So a couple of the old gentlemen are dead in the interim, and, alas, two of the great men mentioned in passing, and the reader will have to accept the opusculus for what it is, some rhymes written in 1915. I would give them now with dedication "To the Anonymous Compatriot Who Produced the Poem 'Fanny', Somewhere About 1820", if this form of centennial homage be permitted me. It was no small thing to have written, in America, at that distant date, a poem of over forty pages which one can still read without labour. E. P.]

Their doddering ignorance is waxed so notable
'Tis time that it was capped with something quotable.

Here Radway grew, the fruit of pantocracy,
The very fairest flower of their gynocracy.
Radway? My hero, for it will be more inspiring
If I set forth a bawdy plot like Byron
Than if I treat the nation as a whole.
Radway grew up. These forces shaped his soul;
These, and yet God, and Dr. Parkhurst's god, the N. Y. Journal
(Which pays him more per week than The Supernal).
These and another godlet of that day, your day
(You feed a hen on grease, perhaps she'll lay
The sterile egg that is still eatable:
"Prolific Noyes" with output undefeatable).
From these he (Radway) learnt, from provosts and from editors
 unyielding
And innocent of Stendhal, Flaubert, Maupassant and Fielding.
They set their mind (it's still in that condition) —
May we repeat; the Centennial Exposition
At Philadelphia, 1876?
What it knew then, it knows, and there it sticks.
And yet another, a "charming man", "sweet nature", but was Gilder,
De mortuis verum, truly the master builder?

From these he learnt. Poe, Whitman, Whistler, men, their
 recognition
Was got abroad, what better luck do you wish 'em,
When writing well has not yet been forgiven
In Boston, to Henry James, the greatest whom we've seen living.
And timorous love of the innocuous
Brought from Gt. Britain and dumped down a'top of us,
Till you may take your choice: to feel the edge of satire or
Read Bennett or some other flaccid flatterer .

Despite it all, despite your Red Bloods, febrile concupiscence

Whose blubbering yowls you take for passion's essence;
Despite it all, your compound predilection
For ignorance, its growth and its protection
(Vide the tariff), I will hang simple facts
Upon a tale, to combat other facts,
"Message to Garcia", Mosher's propagandas
That are the nation's botts, collicks and glanders.
Or from the feats of Sumner cull it? Think,
Could Freud or Jung unfathom such a sink?

My hero, Radway, I have named, in truth,
Some forces among those which "formed" his youth:
These heavy weights, these dodgers and these preachers,
Crusaders, lecturers and secret lechers,
Who wrought about his "soul" their stale infection.
These are the high-brows, add to this collection
The social itch, the almost, all but, not quite, fascinating,
Piquante, delicious, luscious, captivating
(Puffed satin, and silk stockings, where the knee
Clings to the skirt in strict (vide: "*Vogue*") propriety.
Three thousand chorus girls and all unkissed,
O state sans song, sans home-grown wine, sans realist!
"Tell me not in mournful wish-wash
Life's a sort of sugared dish-wash"!
Radway had read the various evening papers
And yearned to imitate the Waldorf capers
As held before him in that unsullied mirror
The daily press, and monthlies nine cents dearer.
They held the very marrow of the ideals
That fed his spirit; were his mental meals.
Also, he'd read of christian virtues in
That canting rag called *Everybody's Magazine*,
And heard a clergy that tries on more wheezes
Than e'er were heard of by Our Lord Ch.... J....
So he "faced life" with rather mixed intentions,

He had attended country Christian Endeavour Conventions,
Where one gets more chances
Than Spanish ladies had in old romances.
(Let him rebuke who ne'er has known the pure Platonic grapple,
Or hugged two girls at once behind a chapel.)
Such practices diluted rural boredom
Though some approved of them, and some deplored 'em.
Such was he when he got his mother's letter
And would not think a thing that could upset her....
Yet saw on "ad." "To-night, THE HUDSON SAIL",
With forty queens, and music to regale
The select company: beauties you all would know
By name, if named". So it was phrased, or rather somewhat so
I have mislaid the "ad.", but note the touch,
Note, reader, note the sentimental touch :
His mother's birthday gift. (How pitiful
That only sentimental stuff will sell!)

Yet Radway went. A circumspectious prig!
And then that woman like a guinea-pig
Accosted, that's the word, accosted him,
Thereon the amorous calor slightly frosted him.
(I burn, I freeze, I sweat, said the fair Greek,
I speak in contradictions, so to speak.)

I've told his training, he was never bashful,
And his pockets by ma's aid, that night with cash full,
The invitation had no need of fine aesthetic,
Nor did disgust prove such a strong emetic
That we, with Masfield's vein, in the next sentence
Record "Odd's blood! Ouch! Ouch!" a prayer, his swift repentence.

No, no, they danced. The music grew much louder
As he inhaled the still fumes of rice-powder.
Then there came other nights, came slow but certain
And were such nights that we should "draw the curtain"

In writing fiction on uncertain chances
Of publication; "Circumstances",
As the editor of *The Century* says in print,
"Compel a certain silence and restraint."
Still we will bring our "fiction as near to fact" as
The Sunday school brings virtues into practice.

Soon our hero could manage once a week,
Not that his pay had risen, and no leak
Was found in his employer's cash. He learned the lay of cheaper
places,
And then Radway began to go the paces:
A rosy path, a sort of vernal ingress,
And Truth should here be careful of her thin dress —
Though males of seventy, who fear truths naked harm us,
Must think Truth looks as they do in wool pyjamas.
(My country, I've said your morals and your thoughts are stale
ones,
But surely the worst of your old-women are the male ones.)

Why paint these days? An insurance inspector
For fires and odd risks, could in this sector
Furnish more date for a compilation
Than I can from this distant land and station,
Unless perhaps I should have recourse to
One of those firm-faced inspecting women, who
Find pretty Irish girls in Chinese laundries,
Up stairs, the third floor up, and have such quandaries
As to how and why and whereby they got in
And for what earthly reason they remain. . . .
Alas, eh, one question that sorely vexes
The serious social folk is "just what sex is".
Though it will, of course, pass off with social science
In which their mentors place such wide reliance.
De Gourmont says that fifty grunts are all that will be prized

Of language, by men wholly socialized,
With signs as many, that shall represent 'em
When thoroughly socialized printers want to print 'em.
"As free of mobs as kings."? I'd have men free of that invidious,
Lurking, serpentine, amphibious and insidious
Power that compels 'em
To be so much alike that every dog that smells 'em,
Thinks one identity is
Smeared o'er the lot in equal quantities.
Still we look toward the day when man, with unction,
Will long only to be a *social function*,
And even Zeus' wild lightning fear to strike
Lest it should fail to treat all men alike.
And I can hear an old man saying: "Oh, the rub!
"I see them sitting in the Harvard Club,
"And rate 'em up at just so much per head,
"Know what they think, and just what books they've read,
"Till I have viewed straw hats and their habitual clothing
"All the same style, same cut, with perfect loathing."

So Radway walked, quite like the other men,
Out into the crepuscular half-light, now and then;
Saw what the city offered, cast an eye
Upon Manhattan's gorgeous panoply,
The flood of limbs upon Eighth Avenue
To beat Prague, Budapesth, Vienna or Moscow,*
Such animal invigorating carriage
As nothing can restrain or much disparage....
Still he was not given up to brute enjoyment,
An anxious sentiment was his employment,
For memory of the first warm night still cast a haze o'er
The mind of Radway, whene'er he found a pair of purple stays or
Some other quaint reminder of the occasion

* Pronounce like respectable Russians: "Mussqu".

That first made him believe in immoral suasion.
A temperate man, a thin potationist, each day
A silent hunter off the Great White Way,
He read *The Century* and thought it nice
To be not too well known in haunts of vice —
The prominent haunts, where one might recognize him,
And in his daily walks duly capsize him.
Thus he eschewed the bright red-walled cafés and
Was never one of whom one speaks as "brazen'd".

Some men will live as prudes in their own village
And make the tour abroad for their wild tillage —
I knew a tourist agent, one whose art is
To run such tours. He calls 'em house parties.
But Radway was a patriot whose venality
Was purer in its love of one locality,
A home-industrious worker to perfection,
A senatorial jobber for protection,
Especially on books, lest knowledge break in
Upon the national brains and set 'em achin'.
('Tis an anomaly in our large land of freedom,
You can not get cheap books, even if you need 'em).
Radway was ignorant as an editor,
And, heavenly, holy gods! I can't say more,
Though I know one, a very base detractor,
Who has the phrase "As ignorant as an actor".

But turn to Radway: the first night on the river,
Running so close to "hell" it sends a shiver
Down Rodyheaver's prophylactic spine,
Let me return to this bold theme of mine,
Of Radway. O clap hand ye moralists!
And meditate upon the Lord's conquests.
When last I met him, he was a pillar in
An organization for the suppression of sin

Not that he'd changed his tastes, nor yet his habits,
(Such changes don't occur in men, or rabbits).
Not that he was a saint, nor was top-loftical
In spiritual aspirations, but he found it profitable,
For as Ben Franklin said, with such urbanity:
"Nothing will pay thee, friend, like Christianity".
And in our day thus saith the Evangelist:
"Tent preachin' is the kind that pays the best."

'Twas as a business asset *pure an' simple*
That Radway joined the Baptist Broadway Temple.

I find no moral for a peroration,
He is the prototype of half the nation.

Eeldrop and Appleplex

T. H. Eliot

II

THE suburban evening was grey and yellow on Sunday; the gardens of the small houses to left and right were rank with ivy and tall grass and liliac bushes; the tropical South London verdure was dusty above and mouldy below; the tepid air swarmed with flies. Eeldrop, at the window, welcomed the smoky smell of lilac, the gramaphones, the choir of the Baptist chapel, and the sight of three small girls playing cards on the steps of the police station.

"On such a night as this", said Eeldrop, "I often think of Scheherazade, and wonder what has become of her".

Appleplex rose without speaking and turned to the files which contained the documents for his "Survey of Contemporary Society". He removed the file marked *London* from between the files *Barcelona* and *Boston* where it had been misplaced, and turned over the papers rapidly. "The lady you mention", he rejoined at last, "whom I have listed not under S. but as Edith, alias Scheherazade,

has left but few evidences in my possession. Here is an old laundry account which she left for you to pay, a cheque drawn by her and marked "R/D", a letter from her mother in Honolulu (on ruled paper), a poem written on a restaurant bill—"To Atthis"—and a letter by herself, on Lady Equistep's best notepaper, containing some damaging but entertaining information about Lady Equistep. Then there are my own few observations on two sheets of foolscap".

"Edith", murmured Eldrop, who had not been attending to this catalogue, "I wonder what has become of her. 'Not pleasure, but fulness of life . . . to burn ever with a hard gem-like flame', those were her words. What curiosity and passion for experience! Perhaps that flame has burnt itself out by now."

"You ought to inform yourself better", said Appleplex severely, "Edith dines sometimes with Mrs Howexden, who tells me that her passion for experience has taken her to a Russian pianist in Bayswater. She is also said to be present often at the Anarchist Tea Rooms, and can usually be found in the evening at the Cafe de l'Orangerie."

"Well", replied Eldrop, "I confess that I prefer to wonder what has become of her. I do not like to think of her future. Scheherazade grown old! I see her grown very plump, full-bosomed, with blond hair, living in a small flat with a maid, walking in the Park with a Pekinese, motoring with a Jewish stock-broker. With a fierce appetite for food and drink, when all other appetite is gone, all other appetite gone except the insatiable increasing appetite of vanity; rolling on two wide legs, rolling in motorcars, rolling toward a diabetic end in a seaside watering place".

"Just now you saw that bright flame burning itself out," said Appleplex, "now you see it guttering thickly, which proves that your vision was founded on imagination, not on feeling. And the passion for experience—have you remained so impregnably Pre-Raphaelite as to believe in that? What real person, with the genuine resources of instinct, has ever believed in the passion for experience? The passion for experience is a criticism of the sincere, a creed only of the histrionic. The passionate person is passionate about this or that, perhaps about the least significant things, but not about experience. But Marius, des Esseintes, Edith . . ."

"But consider", said Eldrop, attentive only to the facts of Edith's history, and perhaps missing the point of Appleplex's remarks, "her unusual career. The daughter of a piano tuner in

Honolulu, she secured a scholarship at the University of California, where she graduated with Honours in Social Ethics. She then married a celebrated billiard professional in San Francisco, after an acquaintance of twelve hours, lived with him for two days, joined a musical comedy chorus, and was divorced in Nevada. She turned up several years later in Paris and was known to all the Americans and English at the Cafe du Dome as Mrs Short. She reappeared in London as Mrs Griffiths, published a small volume of verse, and was accepted in several circles known to us. And now, as I still insist, she has disappeared from society altogether."

"The memory of Scheherazade", said Appleplex, "is to me that of Bird's custard and prunes in a Bloomsbury boarding house. It is not my intention to represent Edith as merely disreputable. Neither is she a tragic figure. I want to know why she misses. I cannot altogether analyse her 'into a combination of known elements' but I fail to touch anything definitely unanalysable.

"Is Edith, in spite of her romantic past, pursuing steadily some hidden purpose of her own? Are her migrations and eccentricities the sign of some unguessed consistency? I find in her a quantity of shrewd observation, an excellent fund of criticism, but I cannot connect them into any peculiar vision. Her sarcasm at the expense of her friends is delightful, but I doubt whether it is more than an attempt to mould herself from outside, by the impact of hostilities, to emphasise her isolation. Everyone says of her, 'How perfectly impenetrable!' I suspect that within there is only the confusion of a dusty garret".

"I test people", said Eeldrop, "by the way in which I imagine them as waking up in the morning. I am not drawing upon memory when I imagine Edith waking to a room strewn with clothes, papers, cosmetics, letters and a few books, the smell of Violettes de Parme and stale tobacco. The sunlight beating in through broken blinds, and broken blinds keeping out the sun until Edith can compel herself to attend to another day. Yet the vision does not give me much pain. I think of her as an artist without the slightest artistic power".

"The artistic temperament—" began Appleplex.

"No, not that". Eeldrop snatched away the opportunity. "I mean that what holds the artist together is the work which he does; separate him from his work and he either disintegrates or solidifies. There is no interest in the artist apart from his work. And there are, as you said, those people who provide material for

the artist. Now Edith's poem 'To Atthis' proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that she is not an artist. On the other hand I have often thought of her, as I thought this evening, as presenting possibilities for poetic purposes. But the people who can be material for art must have in them something unconscious, something which they do not fully realise or understand. Edith, in spite of what is called her impenetrable mask, presents herself too well. I cannot use her; she uses herself too fully. Partly for the same reason I think, she fails to be an artist: she does not live at all upon instinct. The artist is part of him a drifter, at the mercy of impressions, and another part of him allows this to happen for the sake of making use of the unhappy creature. But in Edith the division is merely the rational, the cold and detached part of the artist, itself divided. Her material, her experience that is, is already a mental product, already digested by reason. Hence Edith (I only at this moment arrive at understanding) is really the most orderly person in existence, and the most rational. Nothing ever happens to her; everything that happens is her own doing."

"And hence also", continued Appleplex, catching up the thread, "Edith is the least detached of all persons, since to be detached is to be detached from one's self, to stand by and criticise coldly one's own passions and vicissitudes. But in Edith the critic is coaching the combatant."

"Edith is not unhappy".

"She is dissatisfied, perhaps".

"But again I say, she is not tragic: she is too rational. And in her career there is no progression, no decline or degeneration. Her condition is once and for always. There is and will be no catastrophe".

"But I am tired. I still wonder what Edith and Mrs Howexden have in common. This invites the consideration (you may not perceive the connection) of Sets and Society, a subject which we can pursue tomorrow night".

Appleplex looked a little embarrassed. "I am dining with Mrs Howexden", he said. "But I will reflect upon the topic before I see you again".

Imaginary Letters

IV

(Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn)

Ezra Pound

MY DEAR LYDIA:

Your rather irascible husband asks for "Aunt Sallys"*; with the Pyrenees before me and at this late date, it is difficult to provide them. I agree with at least half he says. I am, with qualifications, Malthusian. I should consent to breed under pressure, if I were convinced in any way of the reasonableness of reproducing the species. But my nerves and the nerves of any woman I could live with three months, would produce only a victim—beautiful perhaps, but a victim: expiring of aromatic pain from the jasmine, lacking in impulse, a mere bundle of discriminations. If I were wealthy I might subsidize a stud of young peasants, or a tribal group in Tahiti. At present "*valga mas estar soltero*", I will not take Miss J., nor her income, nor the female disciple of John.

There is no truce between art and the public. The public celebrates its eucharists with dead bodies. Its writers aspire to equal the oyster: to get themselves swallowed alive. They encompass it.

Art that sells on production is bad art, essentially. It is art that is made to demand. It suits the public. The taste of the public is bad. The taste of the public is always bad. It is bad because it is not an individual expression, but merely a mania for assent, a mania to be "in on it".

Even the botches of a good artist have some quality, some distinction, which prevents their pleasing mass-palates.

Good art weathers the ages because once in so often a man of intelligence commands the mass to adore it. His contemporaries call him a nuisance, their children follow his instructions, include him in the curricula. I am not lifting my voice in protest; I am

* "Imaginary Letters", by Wyndham Lewis. *The Little Review* for May.

merely defining a process. I do not protest against the leaves falling in autumn.

The arts are kept up by a very few people; they always have been kept up, when kept up at all, by a very few people. A great art patron is a man who keeps up great artists. A good art patron is a man who keeps up good artists. His reputation is coterminous with the work he has patronized. He can not be an imbecile.

There are a few more people capable of knowing good art when they see it. Half of them are indifferent, three fourths of them are inactive, the exceeding few side with the artist; about all they can do is to feed him. Others, hating his art, may from family or humanitarian motives, feed and clothe him in spite of his art . . . and attempt to divorce him from it.

These statements are simple, dull. One should write them in electric lights and hang them above Coney Island, and beside the Sarsaparilla sign on Broadway! The Biblical Text Society should embellish them upon busses.

Unfortunately the turmoil of yids, letts, finns, esthonians, cravats, niberians, nubians, algerians, sweeping along Eighth Avenue in the splendour of their vigorous unwashed animality will not help us. They are the America of tomorrow . . .

(The good Burn belives in America; the naive English, mad over apiculture, horticulture arboriculture, herbiculture, agriculture, asparagiculture etc., always believe in America . . . until they have seen it.)

The turmoil of Yids, Letts, etc., is "full of promise", full of vitality. They are the sap of the nation, our heritors, the heritors of our ancient acquisitions. But our job is to turn out good art, that is to produce it, to make a tradition.

"My field must be ploughed up, but the country has need of quiet" (La Famille Cardinal). "I admire Epicurus. He was not the dupe of analogies". Need I give references for all my quotations?

This nonsense about art for the many, for the majority. J'en ai soupe. It may be fitting that men should enjoy equal "civic and political rights", these things are a matter of man's exterior acts, of exterior contacts. (Macchiavelli believed in democracy:: it lay beyond his experience). The arts have nothing to do with this. They are man's life within himself. The king's writ does not run there. The voice of the majority is powerless to make me enjoy, or disenjoy, the lines of Catullus. I dispense with a vote

without inconvenience; Villon I would not dispense with.

Bales are written on the false assumption that you can treat the arts as if they were governed by civic analogies. The two things are not alike, and there is an end to the matter.

It is rubbish to say "art for the people lies behind us". The populace was paid to attend greek drama. It would have gone to cinemas instead, had cinemas then existed. Art begins with the artist. It goes first to the very few; and, next, to the few very idle. Even journalism and advertising can not reverse this law. I have scribbled a very long letter, and not answered half the good William's diatribe. My regards to Mrs Amelia.

Yours,

WALTER VILLERANT.

The Children and Judas

Robert Alden Sanborn

It was dawn upon the fields of Heaven,
The dew upon the fence-rail twinkled,
And there were seven
Stars upon the sky that beamed;
And in the grass the cow-bells tinkled,
And daisies dreamed,
And sweet smells streamed
Over the tasselled corn.

God lay dimmed in slumber,
And Jesus' warm hair was pillowed on His Father's breast;
Seven disciples like seven points of a star
Were rayed about the sleeping Majesties,
And Judas was brighter than the rest,
Because his spirit had a fiercer sin to burn.
His ruddy hair was rimmed with dew,
And what he was to me he is to you.

There was no sound
But the lyric murmur of a Mary, singing
Low upon the ground,
Where a brook ran upon a secret errand
Like a silver hound
Slipping beneath the unbound hair of trees;
Mary was singing to the least of these,
Some Children.

All listened,
For the breath of her caressed the silence
With curves of melody;
And hence the very corn awoke to hear,
And to inhale the healing psalmody.
So because the grass, the daisies, stirred
Pleasantly, and light wings whirled
As birds arose from nests,
And quests of dew and honey went upon,
The Children, one by one, moved about,
And some would run up the hill,
And back again; another seemed to pout,
But changed and blew a glad shrill whistle out
That pleased the sailing stars.

Then Mary ceased her song,
And silence fell like shadow on them all.

Now amongst the ones who slept
Judas raised his head;
Sleep never touched his eyes with cool forgetfulness,
Instead his soul was fed with sin
That never flickered out within.

He yawned and bent his knees,
And the tongue of a silver bell

Shivered above the sleeping Majesties
Within the ring of seven,
Because there were but six
When Judas vaulted the fence-rail
Out of the fields of Heaven.

And now you could hear Jesus breathe,
And God murmur peace upon the wakeful corn.

"God!"
A spire of frail sound rose from a boyish will,
"See God, He's walking down the hill,
See, Mary!"

And Mary looked up
And saw Judas coming toward them,
The sweet hand of a Child in the cup of either hand.

"Shall I tell them the truth, Judas,
That you are far from God," said she,
"Or will you burn them with your sin,
You who are no kin to such as these,
And drive them back to me,
Crying bitterly?"

A smile struggled with his twisted face,
But could not give it grace,
And the two Children, wary
Of the lurid tumult in his breast,
Wrested their twined fingers from the gnarled hold of him,
And their eyes dim with tears,
Ran back to Mary.

Judas, the silent shadow of a man,
His will as heavy as a fallen tree in a wood,
Stood upon the hill,

And watched the Children as they ran,
Saw them nestle into Mary's arms,
Seeking in the cloudy charms
Of her loosened hair,
The peace they knew was there.

Words crowded in his throat,
And he sat upon the hillside
With his face between his knees.

Now when his face was hidden
From the least of these,
One, bidden by the helplessness
Of the man on the side of the hill,
Came from the shelter of Mary's hair,
And minding not her warning touch,
Nor her sounding of his name,
Knowing he was not chidden much,
Went winding an idle way
Up the hill, and around and away
From the still bowed man.

And first he picked a flower
Which he threw higher toward the fence-rail.

God smiled in His sleep,
And Jesus opened His eyes,
Put forth a hand for the plucked flower,
And hid it in His breast,
Yet did not rise nor cease His rest.

The Child,
Keeping a moody soft eye upon the grey humped figure,
Betrayed his mischief in a smile
That waxed bigger, bubble-like, and broke into a laugh,

And like a thief in the night
Crept up the hill to the fence-rail,
And peeked.

The fence-rail creaked
As Jesus turned His face to him:
"Poor man, dear boy," he whispered silverly,
"Until he learns to play,
To dress his dusty head
With ribbons of the rosy day,
Never can he share
Your early morning passion,
Flecked with foamy curls of hair.
Would you give him back again
To my bosom, cleansed of pain,
Spill your living ways of laughing
In his muffled ears;
At him, and beset him! Splash him, little dears,
In your fun," Jesus bade the boy.
"Run!"

And the Child winked, Yes,
Turned about and ran,
Put his flying hands upon the shoulders of the man,
And while a star blinked
At what he saw,
The Child broke the law of sin
As he leaped over Judas in the old, old game;
Ran screaming down to Mary's covering hair,
But did not linger there;
Sped back and bounded over once again,
And others captured by the first one's joy
Were startled into rapture
And followed, girl and boy,
In the glamour of the game,
Until the sunken man became

Bathed and spattered,
Shaken, shattered and half-hidden,
In the breaking foam of Children.

There came a pause
When the Little Ones, breathing
Hard about Judas, saw him raise his head,
Saw a smile like theirs, wreathing
His face, washed with sleep,
As though he waked in his bed
From the keep of angels.

In his eyes remembrance shone
Of when he was a boy
And looked upon the face of God everywhere;
Of when he was himself a toy,
A plaything of a God who dreamed
Everywhere and everything.

And when the Children saw
Upon his face the broken law
Of sin dissolve like shadows
In a ruined wood;
When they saw the sun come up
Within him, fill his face as the cup
Of the world is filled,
They spilled their bubbling laughter on the air,
And cuddled to his knees
As though he, too, were of the least of these.

His greedy arms inarticulately stuffed
With bloomy charms,
His roughed voice sweet
With honey of his joy, he began:

"Now when I was a boy
I had as little as you to give me joy,
And made as much of it,
Made a world of many mansions
Each great enough for God to dwell in;
Yes, mansions of my little joy,
Even as do you."

"Do we?" asked one thoughtfully,
And, "What is mansion?" said another.
"And who put the shadows in your face?"
"And who took them away again?"

"A great light put the shadows in my face."
Said he;
"Because I hoarded it within,
And boarded it up with sin
Of my importance;
Because I would not dance with joy of it
Like a brook prancing to the sea,
But in a deep dark well
Sealed the living spirit up;
What grace of it I could not keep
I would not give away
In play, like you."

"Do we?" asked one closer than the rest.
"And who is Grace?" from another troubled breast.
"And what is sin?"

"Sin is a stone,"
Dreamed Judas, his chin on a silky head,
"Which when a seed is blown
Upon it, harbors not
The desire of a flower in the seed,

But must be broken by the shower,
And a deal of shining,
And the bold clutch of cold;
Grace is the flower
Of desire in the seed,
And sin is the stone that will not feed the flower."

"Here is a flower,"
Said a Child with a daffodil.
"And here is a stone,
Will you show us how
The stone won't feed the flower?"
"Yes, will you *now*?" chattered all.

Judas took the stone in one hand,
And in the other raised a black leather bag
That sagged from the girdle at his waist.
"There is little grace in either,
As much in one as in the other,"
Murmured Judas, helfting the leather bag.

"Oh, I hear something jingle," said a little blond brother.
"Are they sins?" said his sister.

"NO!" spoke a voice like the beat of a great wing
On the air behind Judas.

Then a white light shone upon him,
Through him spread the light
So that no shadow of him fell
Like night around the Children.
And Judas looked up,
And saw Jesus standing there.

"See, Children!" cried Jesus, with many smiles,

"What the good Judas has brought you all these years;
See, my dears, what he has saved all the stony hilly miles,
For you!"

And Jesus opened the black leather bag,
And brought forth hands full of sweet bread
Which he fed to the Children.

Then Judas, his hands sticky
With crumby kisses of the Little Ones,
Went up the hill with the great Lover,
Under the cover of His arm,
All harm gone from him.

THE READER CRITIC

Yeats's "Upon a Dying Lady"

J., New York:

I wonder how many of your readers know that the Seven Poems by William Butler Yeats in the August number of *The Little Review* were inspired by and written about Miss Mabel Beardsley, the sister of Aubrey Beardsley? I remember when Yeats was writing them. She was dying of a lingering illness. She was a Catholic, and it is of course well known that Aubrey Beardsley became a Catholic before he died. Artists, poets and writers like Charles Shannon and Charles Ricketts, W. B. Yeats, and other old friends of her brother and herself, used to take turns in visiting her. Some of them made points of collecting their best and in some cases most improper stories for her. I hope that she kept a diary and entered some of the stories in it. W. B. Yeats was tremendously moved by her fine spirit and gaiety. The Seven Poems were the result.

The story is one that Meredith would have loved. And she was a joyous creature that Meredith would have loved had he known her. There was no wearing of black there, no making a luxury of her grief, no flaunting it in the faces of others, even though they might sympathize with or share her feelings. It was all quite French, what a spirited French woman would do. She would have enjoyed the story published in the Letters of Meredith that an old Cornish woman told him:

"A hunting Squire in her neighborhood had a very handsome wife, whom he valued less than the fox's tail. One of the Vivians eyed her, admired, condoled, desired and carried her off. Some days after, she was taken with compunction or compassion, and about midnight the forsaken squire, sitting in his library, heard three knocks at the window. 'That's Bess,' he said, and let her in. She was for weeping and protesting repentance, but he kissed her, taking the blame on himself, rightly, and the house was quiet. Old Lady Vivian, like many old ladies, had outgrown her notions of masculine sentiment in these matters; she said to my friend: 'What are the man's family making such a fuss about! My son only had her a fortnight!'"

Gargoyles

An Old Reader:

I have never been a real subscriber. The only copy of *The Little Review* I ever bought was the memorable March issue with Galsworthy's letter in it. For a long time after that *The Little Review* was my religion; it converted me to a faith in New America, it inspired me to dreams and creative work. It was my first American sweetheart, and as long as it remained such it aroused in me the whole gamut of love emotions, from passionate admiration to passionate hatred. It would pain me to become just a subscriber, to manifest my attitude through a dollar and a half. Better leave the ashes undisturbed by profane poking.

Of late I have thought a good deal about the magazine. I have been camping near the ocean, and have spent some time in your various haunts of last summer where the natives still gossip about the *Little Review* crowd. Plunging at night into the phosphorous surf and other delightful sins, mingled with communion with some *Little Review* worshippers, has disturbed my academic calm and provoked my reveries. One night I was awakened and perceived an apparition moving from the roaring sea toward my gigantic fire. I heard a voice, a wail: "Help! Margaret Anderson is murdering me!" Was it the spirit of *The Little Review*?

For surely the spirit of the old *Little Review* is dead. You seem to be proud of your evolution, of the graves of your old gods that loom in your eyes like stepping-stones to those heights where you bask in the wisdom of the Ezras. I hope your new faith is as sleeve-deep as your former acquired creeds. For the beauty of the old *Little Review*, the secret of its magnetism and appeal to Young America, lay in its youthfulness, its spontaneity, in its puerility, if you wish. For puerility mates with originality. The Ezras know too much. Their minds are black, scarcely smouldering logs. They are yogis; you remember how Galsworthy hoped that you would escape the danger of becoming yogis?

An Ezraized *Little Review* will have no appeal to Young America. Shall I tell you that in my summer class I had students from various western states to the University of California because they saw my name in the catalogue, and they associated my name with the old *Little Review*? These worshippers are cold to the recent issues. And I sympathize with them. The new *Little Review* is gargoylitic, monotonously so. We can still enjoy a passage in Wyndham Lewis, although Remy de Gourmont has said the same things more beautifully and less flippantly. We are still grateful for such a jewel as Maxwiel Bodenheim's "Poet's Heart"; Bodenheim is the greatest of all the Others, for he does not suffer from self-consciousness, from too-much-knowing. But it is Ezra who sprawls all over *The Little Review* and bedecks it with gargoyles. Mr. Pound is digestible only in the early miniatures:

"Oh fan of white silk, clear as frost on the grass-blade". . . .

I hope that you will soon tire of your over-sophisticated associates and drive them out of the sanctuary. After all you are a rock . . . you are still persisting at the impossible and the miraculous. I am looking forward to the next stage in your evolution. And I send you my hearty greeting, over the gargoylitic heads of your miseacres, for the next fresh, spontaneous *Little Review*.

[This letter I think will find an echo in the minds of many of our first subscribers. I have several faults to find with its point of view, but one especially: I cannot see why personal qualities such as freshness, spontaneity, enthusiasm, etc., are in any way a guarantee for an interesting or important magazine. Being temperamentally spontaneous, my actions will always be characterized by impulsiveness, etc. But I know that spontaneity will never help me to write an immortal poem. You must keep things in their proper correspondences.]

I very spontaneously accept the cooperation of a group of writers who can really write. Literature is their medium. Playing the piano is mine. When I play the piano very beautifully to the original *Little Review* "worshippers" they will know it is not because I am young and fresh and enthusiastic but because I know a great deal about how the piano should be played. I can't do such things to words. Wyndham Lewis does it in this issue in a passage—"Leonardo's beauty consisted in a red rain on the shadowed side of heads".... That is a matter of great prose. And the only reason for a magazine of the Arts to be published is that it shall produce great prose, great poetry, great reproductions of sculpture, painting, and music. We are going to have the latter as soon as possible. —M. C. A.]

Phases of Crazes

H. L. C., Chicago:

I have just read your circular letter in which you state your aims and set forth your plans for the future. It is the best-written letter of the kind I have ever read.

But I don't like your promises, so I am going to risk your Reader Critic (that at least is always interesting; no one ever seems to be safe from you) and tell you why.

I wish you didn't have such a craze for foreigners and self-exiled Americans. I think you have missed your chance right here in your own country. I am sure there are writers if you would go after them who, if they couldn't write so well, would on the other hand be writing in a familiar manner about subjects known to us and in so doing be creating a literary tradition of our own.

I am tired of these floods of Russian, French, Scandinavian, Irish and Hindoo stuff that have swept the country. The war will probably reduce the importation of foreign books, and I for one think this will be a good thing....

[I should think there might be room in America for one magazine which will print work just because it is good, no matter where it is produced. All we ask in this is to be allowed a choice of crazes.

To us it seems that there is an indiscriminate craze in the theatre, in books, in magazines, and even in exhibition rooms, for the American product with all its sins upon it. Let your fears for the contamination or stifling from abroad of American letters be at rest. Congress and the established publisher have attended to all

that. Ignorance is protected from invasion far better than the country itself.

Each generation in this country is spared the shock of contemporary foreign masterpieces. When a masterpiece reaches America, a generation late, Time has tempered it to the shorn. I happen to know something of Tagore's experience with this protection. When Tagore was first "discovered" in America—(he had been published in London and had with him only a few personal copies of his work)—he sent to his London publishers for extra copies to meet the requests of his friends. Aside from a terrific tariff, the red tape and the questioning as to the integrity of his purpose in importing his own books proved too wearing an experience: the idea was abandoned. On his recent trip he brought with him a small collection of very gentle Indian water colours, with no other motive than to create if possible an understanding of Indian art in this country. His pictures were held up at the port of Seattle, he was called again and again before inspectors, made to swear all kinds of oaths, and to deposit a fabulous sum (some forty thousand dollars, as I remember) to assure the government that his intentions were all right.

As he was leaving the country some one asked him if he ever intended making another visit,—(there had been some agitation before this about including the Hindoo in the Oriental Immigration laws)—and Tagore replied "I do not know. You will make a law against the Hindoo coming to your country. You have now a law against books. It may be you will make a law against poets coming too?"

When the western nations have finished making the world safe for democracy, if it wouldn't be too satirical the Orient might wage a world war to make the world safe for Art.—*jh.*]

Bury bloody Bodenheim

Bury bloody Bodênheim

Bury bloody Bodenheim

And Johnny Rodker too.

—E. J.

To
Our
Readers

Do you know anything more annoying or more ageing than to have your friends discover for you those cherished things in Art which you should have discovered for yourself?

The Little Review is giving its readers an opportunity to make their own discoveries. There is no magazine in America which has on its staff such an important line-up of known genius and the "yet unknowns".

If you have any friends who are not entrenched in mediocrity, definitely protecting themselves against good literature, tell them to subscribe to *The Little Review*. Or send us their names and we will mail them sample copies.

The Little Review is doing some intensive growing this autumn. We have great plans for enlarging our format and giving you the best creative work that is being produced here and in Europe, written without an eye on the established publisher, and not garbled in editorial rooms to meet the taste of the average mind.

Send us the names of any people you think will be interested. We will appreciate it.

THE LITTLE REVIEW

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EZRA POUND, *London Editor*

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PO-CHÜ-I, versions by ARTHUR D. WALEY

CANTLEMAN, by WYNDHAM LEWIS

IMAGINARY LETTERS, V., by EZRA POUND

BARBARA ROSCORLA'S CHILD, by ARTHUR
SYMONS

AN EDITORIAL ON SOLICITOUS DOUBT

For November:

HANRAHAN'S OATH: A PLAY, by LADY GREGORY

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