Philosophy: The Science of Signs

XVII Truth (continued)

V How the Theory of the Ego requires us to Construe Death

By D. Marsden

I. A PHILOSOPHY which has presumed to offer a formula meant to express the facts of life as a whole cannot without affectation show timidity in putting forward a corresponding formula to indicate how that philosophy requires us to construe the phenomenon of death. For in giving the comprehensive formula for life we imply that the universe in its sum and in its parts is intelligible, that we hold something like a clue to its arrangement and that it lies within the power of the intellectual means—i.e., signs—to construct a conceptual arrangement not only corresponding with every relationship obtaining among spatial things and events but showing also the latter's trend of development and something of what they promise to become. It takes for granted that one has not failed to take cognisance of the great individual facts of life—of which death is one—and to allow place for them. Otherwise one could not make the formulation of their sum. A logic of life must, in short, be ready with a logic of the other great facts of life not excluding even that of death. Hence this chapter.

2. We are so accustomed to think of death as something which is the contrary of life that to speak of it as a fact of life seems at first sight a basic distortion of the facts. Reflection however soon makes it clear that our choice lies between conceiving death as a fact of life and abandoning all conception of it whatsoever. All that we conceive of death we derive from the facts of our living experience played upon by our living faculties. Perhaps, however, considering how suspect are all pronouncements on this unique matter, it will be best to detail just what kind of material we consider lies at our disposal in seeking for an interpretation. First there are the spatial sensorily-evident facts connected with dying and death itself. (To these we shall return.) Second, there is the intellectual instrument: the power to make and apply signs. The description of the attributes of this last-named power—which is that of mind—we have laboured to give throughout these essays and shall not need to revive it here. Finally, there are those products of the sign-power: those conceptual replicas of spatial facts which come into being in the mind and form the latter's occupants: which spring into being when signs which have been associated with spatial facts are made use of. These then are our materials and our instruments.

3. For our manner of using them we have to refer to our theory of truth and of how truths are born. It will be remembered that we claimed there existed between the individual forms of the mind-world a species of selective affinity more assertive than that obtaining among spatial forms. These affinities, detectable first in the mental world because of their superior assertiveness there, are afterwards found to hold good in the spatial world also. Fundamentally, these bonds of connection are identical in both worlds, but in the mental world they have the overwhelming advantage of being articulate and self-enunciatory, declaring themselves on the surface, given the necessary incubating heat of attention upon the forms involved. The exceptional forms of the mind having been produced by putting into operation the associated signs the mere dwelling upon the forms so created causes certain forms to draw near to others on a selective principle of their own, and lo and behold a new truth is born and the essential part of the work of truth-creation has been done. A hint sufficient for the hands to follow up has been given. The work of the latter is to profit by this "hint" born in the mind by seeing whether a like juxtaposition of spatial things will not make a like connection manifest itself there. Our rich world of reality is the overwhelming testimony to the number of times these conceptual hints have been corroborated spatially. The whole meaning of knowledge, science and truth takes rise in the fact that with the advent of the sign-born concepts is born also a form of affinity more assertive than the spatial one. By this superiority in assertiveness the mind proclaims connections existing not only between its own
forms, but between the dumber spatial ones of substance: connections which in their total are nothing other than the causal nexus.

4. Now what we are bent on emphasising in this connection is that in our common practical life we make unhesitating use of certain potencies of our mind. We use these so constantly that we are almost unconscious that we do use them. Hence emphasis on their employment in ordinary practical connections is made to reassure ourselves as to the rightness for their use in an extraordinary connection: that of the unique phenomenon of death. There is certainly no reason for denying ourselves here help of an intellectual kind which we accept without question in material matters presenting incomparably fewer difficulties. Nor do we intend. We intend to attempt an interpretation of death in a manner exactly parallel to that which we employ in interpreting any spatial fact whatsoever. And as we pointed out in our last essay the meaning of "interpretation" applied to a spatial fact is to effect a transposition of it from the spatial to the causal (otherwise temporal) order, and an outstanding feature of that transposition is to make the spatially-extended substantial forms of things appear as mere incidental aspects of an inhering and animating fluid force. The introduction of the idea of cause among spatial things makes all these last appear as a stream of changing aspects flowing into and out of one another. Mobility is the most immediately striking of the effects produced by the transposing from the spatial to the causal order: that is by the operation we call interpreting. So, for any given spatial form or forms, the fluid forces animating these will be represented as possessing a given momentum and direction which make up their character. The forces will appear to be "going" in a certain way, charged with a certain strength. Hence, after making observations of this nature into the character of a force and its relations it becomes possible to plot out a curve to show not only the ground which the force has actually covered, but also where the force is tending. That is, the curve we make of a force "interprets" it. We generalise on it as a tendency and prophecy. We speak beyond the spatial facts and say: "These being so and so, the character of the causal force which animates them must be so and so; and being so, the 'almost certain' progress and development of the force will be thus and thus."

5. Let it be granted then that this manner of prophesying is not one limited to matters of poetry and the like. It is the normal procedure of the mind in relation to the most common place of our daily affairs and is the natural and inevitable outcome of that higher rank as a power which mind has secured for itself when it is a question of the divination of the character of matter. This almost incomparable superiority of the conceptual contrasted with the spatial, justifies us in saying that in being thus able to spin thoughts we have the power to spin out a sort of raw material of the universe and that realised sensory forms are merely somewhat more highly elaborated products. So thought, by begetting expectations, and thereby giving a lead, is in a position to commandeer our spatialising energies in making real any of its phantom-like forms, provided these have been shaped according to the laws governing the use of signs.

6. Having, let us say, succeeded in our claim that we in proposing to set up an "interpretation" of death are merely following a procedure identical with that employed in ordinary affairs, practical and scientific, we must protect our position by pointing out an important particular in which an interpretation of death differs from ordinary interpretations. Anyone may observe that ordinary intellects, including those of the normal man of science, do not care to trust overmuch to the interpretations of events yielded be the "curves" when prolonged too far as "tendencies." They do not like the long leaps of thought; oftener than not, to be sure, they are quite powerless to make them! But they would assert they do not want to make them. They distrust prophecy.

They prefer to keep the world which is spatial as nearly abreast as possible of the world which is mental. They seek "to realise" thought as it goes along, and apply theories even as they are born to their relations in space for definite corroboration. Thought takes long leaps and "arrives" in a flash, while making thoughts real is arduous and slow. So modern science is distinguished by an attitude of mind which discounts thoughts, which considers thought wholly seemly only when it is bridled sufficiently to keep it in measure with the realising hand-labour we call experiment.

7. Now there was a time—when the modern era of science opened—when there was need to over-emphasise the claims of experiment and of the practical application of thought. At that time theorising had become irresponsible and the vast realising potentialities of the hands lay undiscovered and unused. That time however is not now. The balance has swung over heavily to the other side so that it has become necessary to assert that the activity of making real is not the whole labour of science: not even its most basic labour: certainly not its most fascinating. There is a part of that labour, quite valid in itself, which is worked out in pure thought. Here, effective potentialities find themselves in play, in the begetting of conceptual forms stretching far out beyond the spatial: conceptual forms which, owing to the limitations of our existent powers, we see no near prospect whatever of "making real." The validity of these forms consists solely in their logicality, and is in no way adversely affected because our existent powers are unable to prove the forms "real." Their utility—if we seek for such—lies in their being competent to arouse faith in the sometime advent of this reality now lying beyond our manual sense-endowing powers. But the outstanding distinction of these exclusive thought-forms is that they are penetrating and comprehensive beyond the spatial ones and can scale a height of being more ambitious than anything to which the spatial forms can as yet attain. Hence we need not apologise for making use of logical formulas which carry us to conclusions beyond the point where spatial events can be made to yield us immediate corroborations. Were such obtainable it would—it goes without saying—be supremely valued, but the fact that it is not should not deter us from drawing from the conceptual replicas all that they will yield.

8. We may observe that it is essential in the interests of our interpretation of death to insist that conceptual forms of feeling shall be allowed their full weight, since the entire scaffolding of the interpretation is logical in form. We propose to arrange the spatial facts observable in connection with death in conformity with two logical formulas and to draw from them, thus arranged, what we consider inevitable conclusions. The first formula is the definition we have given of existence. The second is the logical description of the structure of feeling.

9. The definition is that all existence: all being is feeling. (Feeling here includes all forms of feeling, mental equally with any other.) The description of the structure of feeling includes also a definition of the ego. The ego is a closed-in universe comprehensive of experience or feeling of every kind. It is the comprehensive description of the entire structure of feeling. It is created out of a unit force existing in a condition of polarisation so that it shows a complex aspect of two opposed reciprocal poles joined together by a neutral line or field of force. The one pole is the feeling
organism or body; the other is the external-seeming world of spatialised substance apprehended by that body. The neutral field uniting the two is space. These are our logical bases.

10. The first application we shall make of them is to use the definition of being to destroy the validity of any absolute conception of non-being. If all which exists, does so in virtue of its being felt, if non-being is a state at all, it must be some form of feeling. That is, non-being is not a true negative of being; that is, a negative applied to existence as a whole does not continue to function as a true negative. So applied, it produces a sham effect: a bogus conception which is without any right of acceptance as an idea. However, it is so applied, and in response for making such logical conduits connected with being. The factor which is most directly responsible for this state of affairs is a mistake relative to the legitimate uses of the idea of negation. It is mistakenly assumed that logic will permit the application of "Is not" as all-comprehensively as it permits that of "Is." Whereas this is not so. The idea of negation is a valid and extremely useful one, but its absolute employ is made impossible by the positive basis of feeling. It can only be applied within the limits of that positive base. The idea of negation is in fact nothing greater than an instrument of differentiation as between one positive state of feeling and another. It modifies the features of such positive states but it cannot negate the entire state. It can be used to abstract some given feature from any given complex of feeling. This complex may indeed be widened in extent until it is co-terminus with the whole universe of feeling and from the whole the negative idea may abstract everything save the power to feel. Upon the framework of feelings: upon the condition which combinations present by making the organism's substantial world. We tend to think that it is just the organic part of life which has its characteristic organic manner—i.e., our own external world. The organic body so ceases to act in an organic manner and therefore ends its career as an organism. The spectacular feature in this extremely-viewed process is just this of a body left derelict in as much as it has been deserted by that force which built it up and made it move in a characteristically organic manner—i.e., as maintaining that relationship we call feeling with a related external world and itself.

11. Having dwelt at great length upon these logical considerations, let us now turn to the spatial facts connected with death and dying as we are acquainted with them in our living experience. Everything which lies at the base of what we know concerning death presents itself to us while we are still alive. In making our observations, obviously there will be open to us two sources. The first and rather misleading one is that provided in a second-hand, objectivist way when the dying-process sets in in some one of those organised items which inhabit our individual universe. In this event, we see the process operating at a mere point of our feeling-complex, and even so, we tend to concern ourselves only with the more striking of the externals of the process. The chief of these latter is the increasing paralysis of the motor-processes in the dying organism, so that they appear gradually to cease to take up or react to impressions which in a normal way would have made up the body's external world. The organic body so ceases to act in an organic manner and therefore ends its career as an organism. The spectacular feature in this extremely-viewed process is just this of a body left derelict in as much as it has been deserted by that force which built it up and made it move in a characteristically organic manner—i.e., as maintaining that relationship we call feeling with a related external world and itself.

12. The danger of misconception in concentrating observations upon this externalised spectacle of dying becomes apparent when we regard death from the alternative, subjective, point of view. This is the view presented when death sets in at a mere point of our universe, but when it attacks the entire feeling-structure: the very foundation and walls of our universe as well as its contents. That is, when we die ourselves: when death appears to set itself to do what we argued was a logical impossibility to conceive being done in speaking of the idea of negation. Obviously our powers of observation in this regard will be limited by the fact that such a drastic occurrence can take place in full only once; and when this unique happening does actually have place it is too late to tell the tale of its features. Observation in these circumstances would be indeed hopeless were it not that we have what we may regard as minor essays in dying, in which the process does not quite arrive at its drastic climax. We have, for instance, the commonplace experience of falling into sleep: a state whose features put one so strongly in mind of death. And there are the lapses into the unconsciousness of swoons. There is also the artificially-induced limiting of the power to feel following the application of an anaesthetic. There are experiences of severe illnesses when the dying process has strongly set in and is arrested only just before it has worked itself to a climax. Then there is the slow and almost imperceptible dying involved in merely ageing with its manifestations of diminishing power to put the organism in motion either in the way of taking up impressions (as in declining powers of hearing, seeing, and the like) or of responding to them. From these subjective experiences we are driven to conclude that dying is a progress in the direction of annulling the power to feel; and since feeling is one with being, of annulling the power to exist. Dying thus seems the progressive elimination of existence or feeling, including not only the feelings which are ordinarily identified with the organic body, but also those bodily-conditioned feelings which constitute our outer world. The danger of the objective view of death is to see in it the annihilation of the organic body only as though it were a self-contained unit in itself—while we remain blind to the parallel dissolution of the feelings which make the organism's substantial world. We tend to think that it is just the organic part of life which has "gone out" when dying reaches its climax, leaving intact and unmodified save by its own withdrawal the rest of the external world. We are encouraged to persist in this misconception of death by the fact that our own external world continues to exist just as—and because—our own organic body continues to exist, and this world of ours we naively substitute for that of the world of the person who is "dead", comprising our estimate of the wreck and ruin of feeling within the limits of a mere body's desertion and dissolution. This error the subjective experience corrects by making clear that the death of a body carries with it the death of that body's spatial world: the dissolution of an entire universe no less.
effects produced when some basic unit force was acted upon by a polarising influence which flung to one end of the unitary scheme a positive pole which moulded itself, simple or complex, as the bodily organism; and to the other extreme, a negative pole which again, simple or complex, worked itself out as the forms of the substantial external world. Organism and outer world are thus the opposite, reciprocal poles of a force, of which the field connecting the two is the neutral medium we call space. The entire polarised scheme as a whole. Hence, if dying is a progress in the direction of annihilating the power to feel it is a progress in the direction of annihilating this characteristic play of the ego. Presumably, then, death will mean a depolarisation of the egoistic unit, and this must entail a closing-in of the spatial field: a drawing together of the polarised extremes so that in the moment of climax which is death, there is a unification of the two, organism and outer world; hence a cessation of the circuits of movement between the two. And since it is these what make feeling, death presumably is the annihilation of feeling; the annihilation of existence. Death is total non-existence therefore. But we concluded earlier, when speaking of the idea of negation, that non-existence even as an idea was impossible: an absurdity. Still more impossible and absurd then as a substantial spatial fact.

14. This then is our problem. Our logic forbids us to speak of any state of total non-existence (otherwise egoistic depolarisation), yet the living facts of dying show us a depolarising process setting in in every form of organic life, the process appearing ultimately to work itself to a climax which presumably is one with the point of depolarisation and total non-being. Can we get out of that tangle in which logic is at war with observed facts? Certainly we do not feel we can forego our intuitions for these have been drawn from an unassailable experience too great in volume to be dislodged by this isolated yet disturbing conundrum posed by death. On the other hand, there appears to be no gainsaying the subjective experiences of dying which to us seem to admit of no interpretation other than that the whole universe is contracting itself to a mere point at the act of refertilisation of the universe of feeling as a whole? May not the extremes touch only to recoil, and this with an even stronger impulsion of life—i.e., of polarisation—than ever owing to the growth in strength of the elements concerned created through their exercising of themselves in an expenditure of feeling while in life? In such case, the point of depolarisation would also be the point of repolarisation. Therefore, while there would be a definite and absolute phenomenon of depolarisation, there would be no state of depolarisation: no state of absolute non-existence. The ego would continue to manifest perpetually the attribute of polar differentiation. Hence the individual universe of feeling could never actually cease, the point of death being merely the point of transition from one scheme of polarisation to another. The whole round scheme of things would therefore include only life and living activities. Of these last, dying would be the most vital recuperative even as it was the most drastic.

15. By such a theory we are brought to a conception of the ego as the sum of individual consciousness, which latter we can then conceive as the underlying permanent stuff of our universe. While the body dissolves, and with it the world, the power of consciousness survives as a potentiality from which not even the smallest fragment of consciousness as a force may escape. We are led to recognise that the characterising feature of this indestructible unit is a tendency to differentiate itself into polar extremes. Because the ego's nature is what it is, it is compelled to breed from itself a succession of polarising influences. Unlike the parent force out of which they spring, these differentiating influences are successive, transient, impermanent. They suffer change. They have their stages of inception, growth, culmination, decline and dissolution, the conditions existent in this last stage of one scheme of influence being identical with the conditions of inception of another.

16. The fact that the dissolution of one polarising influence entails the conception of another does not however save the forms which have moulded themselves as the polar extremes of the old force from the effects of unification. The contracting of the force into an undifferentiated unit necessarily brings about the collapse of both as forms. This is the spectacular side of death which impresses us even when we take note of it as affecting a point of our universe only and on its external side; while the thought of our entire felt world been so overtaken leaves us thoroughly aghast. Yet, according to the interpretation of the event, this casting of forms is little more than an accident of the non-existence even as an idea was impossible: an absurdity. Still more impossible and absurd then as a substantial spatial fact.

17. Let it be allowed for the sake of argument that life does mean this maintaining apart of the poles of a unitary egoistic force at the extremes of a neutral field of force called space; also, that dying is the drawing in and contracting to a mere point of the spatial zone so that the opposing poles tend to unite in a common point; that death is therefore the depolarisation of the egoistic force. Having gone thus far let us change the complexion of our thought, and instead of regarding death as a collapse of life let us regard it as its fruition. In this way: Just as all organic germs find themselves under the compulsion, to the end of maintaining their life, to perform certain elementary acts such as of obtaining food and propagating their kind, so may the egoistic life as a whole find itself, reluctantly enough, under compulsion of winding itself up in the living act of dying so as to secure permanence and growth in the egoistic experience as a whole. May not dying constitute life's innate compulsion to put into employ the sole means capable of enabling it, when it has spent itself beyond a point, to renew its youth and vigour in perpetuity? If dying is the coming together of the opposing extremes of a line of force, is it not possible to conceive this very making of polar contact the act of refertilisation of the universe of feeling as a whole? May not the extremes touch only to recoil, and this with an even stronger impulsion of life—i.e., of polarisation—than ever owing to the growth in strength of the elements concerned created through their exercising of themselves in an expenditure of feeling while in life? In such case, the point of depolarisation would also be the point of repolarisation. Therefore, while there would be a definite and absolute phenomenon of depolarisation, there would be no state of depolarisation: no state of absolute non-existence. The ego would continue to manifest perpetually the attribute of polar differentiation. Hence the individual universe of feeling could never actually cease, the point of death being merely the point of transition from one scheme of polarisation to another. The whole round scheme of things would therefore include only life and living activities. Of these last, dying would be the most vital recuperative even as it was the most drastic.

18. Our theory of truth being what it is, we have to allow that speculation in connection with the new life which death creates in the stead of the old is logically legitimate and should not be fruitless. We shall not, however, follow any speculations of this nature here and now. We shall use the closing paragraphs of the chapter to show how this conception of the structure of the ego gives relief to the intellect by converting into helpful form certain notions which hitherto have served rather to
These notions usually form pairs, each member presenting bludgeon the intellect into a condition of helplessness. Both are equally unable to live and let live. Each seeks to annihilate the other, and as neither succeeds they breed in the mind a sense of intellectual inequilibrium which paralyses its action. Of this nature are the philosophic ideas of permanence and of change; of unity and duality. The philosophies which rise to support any one of these find themselves at variance with those which support the rest. None can accommodate all in a comprehensive whole.

19. The chief logical value of the theory of the ego, therefore, is that it does accommodate all, rendering each coherent indeed by the very relationship in which it stands towards the rest. It is able, for instance, to give definition and a name to the entity which is permanent, and yet to frame the conditions which will admit change. The difficulty has lain in saying just what is permanent on the one hand and in setting limits to the scope of change on the other. Something, it has always been felt, must be permanent, but what, faced with cycles of unending change, that something might be, it has seemed hopeless to try to say. A philosophy has even been able to rise which elevates change itself into the underlying, permanent, material of the universe: a desperate attempt to dispel confusion at the cost of affirming the identity of logical contraries. But the theory of the ego is able to differentiate the concept of change as a series of transmuting processes from the concept of a permanent ego which is the material those processes play upon. This permanent unit itself creates change, occasions change, profits by it, sees one scheme of change born even while another dies, itself not diminished, but, on the contrary, achieving the fuller expression of what itself actually is as a force by this procession of its own endlessly changing schemes of change.

20. And in a way equally accommodating the theory makes room for the actions of unity and duality. In fact, the theory's adequate expression demands both: a unity as the universe-making power to feel whose manifested forms form the sum of all that is; and a duality as the effect of the unit-force's mode of behaviour. This unity or ego is not only the personal point of view of all that is, but also the virtual substance of what is viewed. Its nature being to express itself only in a state of polarisation, the effect of duality is necessarily produced, inasmuch as forms characteristic of both polar extremes are inevitably involved in every item of feeling. Thus while the ego is the universal atom, irreducible and indestructible, the dualistic effects of a feeling organism and a felt external world are the transmuting bodies be­otten by the distinctive mechanism of its play. We might thus say that unity functions as duality. The aspects embodying the latter represent what the ego does, and our particular theory of the ego conceives the "how" of its procedure.

21. These logical considerations obviously will have direct bearing upon questions more generally recognised as important. Interest in the question of the survival of our individual personality in the collapse of death is common to mankind. It is curious that a peculiarly contradi­ctory attitude of mind is equally common in regard to the subject. It is to be observed, for instance, that the survival of one's own personal relationships with the universe: of one's personality: is the only type of permanence which really bites into men's interest. This is the only form of survival which seems to matter; yet, ordinarily, men hold that the personal element in their world is an affair so hopelessly small that it cannot possibly matter in the big scheme of things; therefore, that its annihilation will leave that scheme little or none disturbed. That which they feel cannot possibly matter, they feel is the only thing which does and can matter. The untenable conceptual forces responsible for this mental condition we analyse as follows: (1) The conception which regards the organism as a unit in itself, existing independently of the world which it apprehends. Viewed so, the organic body is such a speck in the universe—albeit a nucleitic one—that it seems feasible for dissolution to overtake it without causing anything approaching devastation in the larger-seeming structure. (2) The conception which identifies the personality with the organism. Necessarily, if personality and the individual body are identical, the dissolution which we witness overtaking the one will dissolve the others also, so that the survival of our own personal way of apprehending things seems a physical impossibility, the very notion of it being an indigent fiction made to flatter and soothe our vanity. These we take to be the responsible elements.

22. However, if our logic can prove the personalness of the whole world as part of the unity of feeling, it thereby prohibits any identification of personality with the organic body merely. The universe of feeling is always and inevitably personal. It is inconceivable that anything can ever be save as it exists as the personal point of view of things. So everything—the world of external things equally with the emotions of our inner world—has to be reckoned as forming the mass of our personality. In short, the latter has to be identified with the ego as a whole, not with that impermanent transmuting "limb" of the ego, the organic body. Thus identified, the whole matter of the survival as a force of the individualised personality rests upon a different footing. The old paraphrasing sense of personal insignificance is brought to an end. Personality, weighted with the whole outer world, obviously involves, even for the most materially-minded, treasure too great to be reckoned lost without making a determined speculative effort of the mind to conceive a scheme of sal­vage. It is just such an effort which, supported by our theory of truth, we make in advancing our conceptional model of the mechanism of the ego.

(This series will be concluded with our next chapter.)

The French Idea

Several periodicals which were in abeyance during the war are being re-floated. One of the most welcome is La Nouvelle Revue Française with M. Jacques Rivière for editor and M. André Gide writing for it the equivalent of those comments we miss so much from Remy de Gourmont in the Mercure. The editorial announcement pleads that "il faut à tout prix, le plus tôt possible, qu'un endroit se retrouve où l'on puisse créer et penser librement. Notre génie français, si dégagé, si indépendant, si indomptable, a subi pendant la guerre une des plus violentes contraintes qu'il se soit jamais vu imposer. On l'a forcé, les événements eux-mêmes l'ont obligé, à parler un langage dur, et souvent faux et déformé. Il aspire maintenant de toutes ses forces à reprendre son libre discours; il réclame le droit de ne plus rien dire que l'on puisse créer et penser librement. Notre génie français, si dégagé, si indépendant, si indomptable, a subi pendant la guerre une des plus violentes contraintes qu'il se soit jamais vu imposer. On l'a forcé, les événements eux-mêmes l'ont obligé, à parler un langage dur, et souvent faux et déformé. Il aspire maintenant de toutes ses forces à reprendre son libre discours; il réclame le droit de ne plus rien dire que l'on puisse créer et penser librement. Notre génie français, si dégagé, si indépendant, si indomptable, a subi pendant la guerre une des plus violentes contraintes qu'il se soit jamais vu imposer. On l'a forcé, les événements eux-mêmes l'ont obligé, à parler un langage dur, et souvent faux et déformé. Il aspire maintenant de toutes ses forces à reprendre son libre discours; il réclame le droit de ne plus rien dire que l'on puisse créer et penser librement. Notre génie français, si dégagé, si indépendant, si indomptable, a subi pendant la guerre une des plus violentes contraintes qu'il se soit jamais vu imposer. On l'a forcé, les événements eux-mêmes l'ont obligé, à parler un langage dur, et souvent faux et déformé. Il aspire maintenant de toutes ses forces à reprendre son libre discours; il réclame le droit de ne plus rien dire que l'on puisse créer et penser librement. Notre génie français, si dégagé, si indépendant, si indomptable, a subi pendant la guerre une des plus violentes contraintes qu'il se soit jamais vu imposer. On l'a forcé, les événements eux-mêmes l'ont obligé, à parler un langage dur, et souvent faux et déformé. Il aspire maintenant de toutes ses forces à reprendre son libre discours; il réclame le droit de ne plus rien dire que l'on puisse créer et penser librement. Notre génie français, si dégagé, si indépendant, si indomptable, a subi pendant la guerre une des plus violentes contraintes qu'il se soit jamais vu imposer. On l'a forcé, les événements eux-mêmes l'ont obligé, à parler un langage dur, et souvent faux et déformé. Il aspire maintenant de toutes ses forces à reprendre son libre discours; il réclame le droit de ne plus rien dire que l'on puisse créer et penser librement. Notre génie français, si dégagé, si indépendant, si indomptable, a subi pendant la guerre une des plus violentes contraintes qu'il se soit jamais vu
with the Le Cardonnels, and Charles Le Goffic, and La Revue Intelectualité (monographs of contemporaries) are new enterprises.

M. Roger-Allard has founded a miniature review: Le Nouveau Spéculateur. La Rose Rouge (which ought to use some discernment in its advertisements — I would suggest that its editors consider what is being done in that line in certain foreign countries) has a sound staff with Maurice Magre, André Suarès, Charles-Henry Hirsch, De Max, Carco and André Salmon. Henri Barbusse contributes to Nos Foix.

French thought is captured even outside France. At Geneva L’Evénit fulcords certain of its most recent phases in graceful if somewhat fragmentary form. L’Arbitraire is being inaugurated with verse by Guy-Charles Cros, whose return to freedom — after near upon five years — was celebrated in a recent Mercure with verse brought back from Germany. Another captive, Mario Meunier, has re-assumed his literary life with the publication of a tragedy: Un Camp de Représailles, Fr. K. (Berger-Levrault), dedicated to the memory of the scholarly poet’s father who died from sorrow at the knowledge of his son’s sufferings. In this line M. Dufour’s previous self-illustrated record (Hachette) should be signalled.

The book throwing a shadow furthest ahead, recently published, is Duhamel’s La Possession du Monde (read: The Mastery of Self) (Mercure). It is experience gained from experiences. In Clarte (Flammarion) Henri Barbusse echoes, while emphasising, Le Feu. Both books are prophetic, the latter more confusedly though more literally so, despite its fiction-form. Nothing vague or chaotic about Duhamel in his Emersontian mood, and he builds more solidly and more daringly than Maeterlinck. Barbusse does some fine drama and description.

An allusion, at the very least, is due to the graphic historians of the war. Those men who may be said to have created a style and founded a school: F. Léger, Taquoy, Marchand, lhote, Segonzac, Vallotton, André Mare, Frayé, etc., will convey its features to coming generations. They have uttered its spirit and form with a minimum of subjective comment and have proved that new conditions (the mechanical side of modern warfare, for example) call for, and find in these artists, adequate interpretation.

There have been other pictorial chroniclers, of course, but their vision has been more of the nature of the car­toonist’s (Forain, Iribe) or more subjective and romantic phetic, the latter more confusedly though more literally so, of his life and manner of work. A straightforward portrait it is, as honest and unadorned as Cézanne himself would have desired it to be. M. Vollard has had the truly admirable self-command to put on one side what there is in him (and that is not small) of the art-critic and the adulator while his well-known sense of humour finds several ex­quisite opportunities (in ridicule of Emile Zola, for instance). Those aspects of Cézanne which approached mania he has handled so tactfully that even the painter’s son has found no cause for disapproving their relation.

M. Vollard is at present writing the life of Renoir. Francis de Miomandre’s last book, Les Voyages d’un Sédentaire (Emile Paul), is a collection of essays, something more unusual in French than in English and American literature, though often designated in the latter under the Gallic heading: “belles lettres,” a qualification doubly fitting in this case. M. Miomandre does not achieve the clean wastlessness of Lamb and his purest continuators like Lucas (though he has moods much like Lucas, an author he has never read, for he is ignorant of English), but he obtains our patience for those parts where we could do with less from gratitude for those where we could do with more.

Muriel Ciolkowska

Tradition and the Individual Talent

In English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to “the tradition” or to “a tradition”; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-So is “traditional” or even “too traditional.” Seldom, perhaps, does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archaeological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archaeology. Certainly the word is not likely to appear in our appreciations of living or dead writers. Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind; and is even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius. We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are “more critical” than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticising our own minds in their work of criticism. One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon its absence. We cannot refer to “the tradition” or its rejection, as if the French were the less spontaneous.
the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not intend the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity.

Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, "tradition" should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the new work arrives, for order to persist after the new work arrives, the existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the new.

There remains to define this process of depersonalisation and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalisation that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I shall, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filleted platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide.

T. S. ELIOT

(To be concluded.)
He followed his companions. Mr Kernan and Ned Lambert followed, Hynes walking after them. Corny Kelleher stood by the opened hearse and took out the two wreaths. He handed one to the boy.

Where is that child's funeral disappeared to? Coffin now. Got here before us, dead as he is. Horse looking round at it with his plume skewways. Dull eye: collar tight on his neck, pressing on a bloodvessel or something. Do they know what they cart out here every day. Must be twenty or thirty funerals every day. Then Mount Jerome for the protestants. Funerals all over the world every where every minute. Shovelling them under by the thousand double quick. Too many in the world.

Mourners came out through the gates: woman and a girl. Leanjawed harpy, hard woman at a bargain, her bonnet awry. Girl's face stained with dirt and tears, holding the woman's arm looking up at her for a sign to cry. Fish's face, bloodless and livid.

The mutes shouldered the coffin and bore it in through the gates. First the stiff: then the friends of the stiff. Corny Kelleher and the boy followed with their wreaths. Who is that beside them? Ah, the brother-in-law. All walked after.

Martin Cunningham whispered:
— You made it damned awkward talking of suicide before Bloom.
— Did I? Mr Power whispered; How so?
— His father poisoned himself, Martin Cunningham said. Had the Queen's hotel in Ennis.
— O God! Mr Power said. First I heard of it. Poisoned himself 1 He glanced behind him to where a face with dark thinking eyes followed. Speaking.
— How many children did he leave?,
— Five. Ned Lambert says he'll try to get one of the girls into Todd's.
— A sad case, Mr Bloom said gently. Five young children.
— A great blow to the poor wife, Mr Kernan added.
— Indeed yes, Mr Bloom agreed. Has the laugh at him now.

He looked down at the boots he had blacked and polished. She had outlived him. One must outlive the other. She would marry another. Him? No. Yet who knows after? One must go first: alone, under the ground: and lie no more in her warm bed.
Bosses the show. Woe betide anyone that looks crooked at him: priest. Burst sideways like a sheep in clover Dedalus says he will. Most amusing expressions that man finds. Hhhn: burst sideways.

— Non intres in judicium cum servo tuo, Domine.

Makes them feel more important to be prayed over in Latin. Chilly place this. Want to feed well, sitting in there all the morning in the gloom kicking his heels waiting for the next one. Eyes of a toad. What swells him up that way? Molly gets swelled after cabbage. Air of the place maybe. Looks full up of bad gas. Must be a lot of bad gas round the place. Butchers for instance: they get like raw beefsteaks. Who was telling me? Mervyn Brown. Down in the vaults of saint Werburgh’s lovely old organ hundred and fifty they have to bore a hole in the coffins sometimes to let out the bad gas and burn it. Out it rushes: blue. One whiff of that and you’re a doner.

My kneecap is hurting me. Ow. That’s better.

The priest took a stick with a knob at the end of it out of the boy’s bucket and shook it over the coffin. Then he walked to the other end and shook it again. Then he came back and put it back in the bucket. As you were before you rested. It’s all written down: he has to do it.

— Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

The server piped the answers in the treble. I often thought it would be better to have boy servants. Up to fifteen or so. After that of course...

Holy water that was, I expect. Shaking sleep out of it. He must be fed up with that job, shaking that thing over all the corpses they trot up. What harm if he could see what he was shaking it over. Every mortal day a fresh batch: middle-aged men, old women, children, women dead in childbirth, men with beards, bald-headed business men, consumptive girls with little sparrows’ breasts. All the year round he prayed the same thing over them all and shook water on top of them: sleep. On Dignam now.

— In paradisum.

Said he was going to paradise or is in paradise. Says that over everybody. Tiresome kind of a job. But he has to say something.

The priest closed his book and went off, followed by the server. Corny Kelleher opened the side-doors and the gravediggers came in, hoisted the coffin again, carried it out and shoved it on their cart. Corny Kelleher gave one wreath to the boy and to the brother-in-law. All followed them out of the side-door into the mild grey air. Corny Kelleher stepped aside from his rank and allowed the mourners to plod by.

— Sad occasions, Mr Kernan began politely.

— They are, indeed, Mr Bloom said.

— The others are putting on their hats, Mr Kernan said. I suppose we can do so too. We are the last. This cemetery is a treacherous place.

They covered their heads.

— The reverend gentleman read the service too quickly, don’t you think? Mr Kernan said with reproof.

Mr Bloom nodded gravely, looking in the quick bloodshot eyes. Secret eyes, secret searching eyes. Mason, I think: not sure. Beside him again. We are the last. In the same boat. Hope he’ll say something else.

Mr Kernan added:

— The service of the Irish church, used in Mount Jerome, is simple, more impressive, I must say.

Mr Bloom gave prudent assent. The language of course was different.

Mr Kernan said with solemnity:

— I am the resurrection and the life. That touches a man’s inmost heart.

— It does, Mr Bloom said.

Your heart perhaps, but what price the fellow in the six feet by two? No touching that. A pump after all, pumping thousands of gallons of blood every day. One fine day it gets bunged up and there you are. Lots of them lying around here: lungs, hearts, livers. Old rusty pumps: damn the thing else. The resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are dead. That last day idea. Knocking them all up out of their graves. Get up! Last day! Then every fellow mousing around for his liver and his lights and the rest of his traps. Find damn all of himself that morning. Pennyweight of powder in a skull. Twelve grammes one pennyweight.

Corny Kelleher fell into step at their side.

— Everything went off all right, he said. What? He looked on them from his drawing eye. Policeman’s shoulders.

— As it should be, Mr Kernan said.


Mr Kernan assured him.

— Who is that chap behind with Tom Kernan?

John Henry Menton asked. I know his face.
Ned Lambert glanced back.
— Bloom he said, Madam Marion Tweedy that was, the soprano. She's his wife.
— O, to be sure, John Henry Menton said. I haven't seen her for some time. She was a fine-looking woman. I danced with her—wait—fifteen seventeen golden years ago at Mat Dillon's in Roundtown. And a good armful she was. He looked behind through the others.
— What is he? he asked. What does he do? Wasn't he in the stationery line? I fell foul of him one evening, I remember, at bowls.
Ned Lambert smiled.
— Yes, he was, he said, in Wisdom Hely's. A traveller for blotting paper.
— In God's name, John Henry Menton said, what did she marry a coon like that for? She had plenty of game in her then.
— Has still, Ned Lambert said. He does some canvassing for ads.
John Henry Menton's large eyes stared ahead. The barrow turned into a side lane. A portly man ambushed among the grasses, raised his hat in homage. The gravediggers touched their caps.
— John O'Connell, Mr Power said, pleased. He never forgets a friend.
Mr O'Connell shook all their hands in silence.
Mr Dedalus said:
— I am come to pay you another visit.
— My dear Simon, the caretaker answered in a low voice. I don't want your custom at all.
Saluting Ned Lambert and John Henry Menton he walked on at Martin Cunningham's side, puzzling two long keys at his back.
— Did you hear that one, he asked them, about Mulcahy from the Coombe?
— I did not, Martin Cunningham said.
They bent their silk hats in concert and Hynes inclined his ear. The caretaker hung his thumbs in the loops of his gold watchchain and spoke in a discreet tone to their vacant smiles.
— They tell the story, he said, that two drunks came out here one foggy evening to look for the grave of a friend of theirs. They asked for Mulcahy from the Coombe and were told where he was buried. After traipsing about in the fog they found the grave sure enough. One of the drunks spelt out the name: Terence Mulcahy. The other drunk was blinking up at a statue of our Saviour. He resumed:
— And after blinking up at it. Not a bloody bit like the man, says he. That's not Mulcahy, says he, whoever done it.
Rewarded by smiles he fell back and spoke with Corny Kelleher, accepting the dockets given him, turning them over and scanning them as he walked.
— That's all done with a purpose, Martin Cunningham explained to Hynes.
— I know, Hynes said, I know that.
— To cheer a fellow up, Martin Cunningham said. It's pure good-heartedness: nothing else.
Mr Bloom admired the caretaker's prosperous bulk. Keys: like Keyes's ad: no fear of anyone getting out, I must see about that ad after the funeral. Be the better of a shave. Grey sprouting beard. That's the first sign when the hairs come out grey. Fancy being his wife. Wonder how he had the gumption to propose to any girl. Come out and live in the graveyard. Night here with all the dead stretched about. The shadows of the tombs and Daniel O'Connell must be a descendant I suppose who is this used to say he was a queer breedy man great catholic all the same like a big giant in the dark. Want to keep her mind off it to conceive at all. Women especially are so touchy.
He has seen a fair share go under in his time, lying around him field after field. Holy fields. All honeycombed the ground must be: oblong cells. And very neat he keeps it too, trim grass and edgings. His garden Major Gamble calls Mount Jerome. Well so it is. Ought to be flowers of sleep. Chinese cemeteries with giant poppies growing produce the best opium Mastiansky told me.
I daresay the soil would be quite fat with corpse manure bones, flesh, nails. Dreadful. Turning green and pink, decomposing. Then a kind of a tailorly kind of a cheesy. Then begin to get black treacle oozing out of them. Then dried up. Of course the cells or whatever they are go on living. Changing about. Live for ever practically.
But they must breed a devil of a lot of maggots. Soil must be simply swirling with them. Your head it simply swirls. Your head it simply swells. He looks cheerful enough over it. Gives him a sense of power seeing all the others go under first. Wonder how he looks at life. Cracking his jokes too: warms the cockles of his heart. Keep out the damp. Hard to imagine his funeral. Seems a sort of a joke.
— How many have you for to-morrow? the caretaker asked.
— Two, Corny Kelleher said. Half ten and eleven.
The caretaker put the papers in his pocket. The barrow had ceased to trundle. The mourners split and moved to each side of the hole, stepping with care round the graves. The gravediggers bore the coffin and set its nose on the brink, looping the bands round it. Burying him. We come to bury Caesar. He doesn't know who is here. After he died. Say Robinson Crusoe was true to life. Someone turns up you never dreamt of. A fellow in the mackintosh? Now who is he I'd like to know? Now who is here?
Poor Dignam! His last lie on the earth in his box. When you think of them all it does seem a waste of wood. All gnawed through. They could
invent a handsome bier with a kind of panel sliding let it down that way. Ay but they might object to be buried out of another fellow's. I see what it means. I see. To protect him as long as possible even in the earth.

Mr Bloom stood far back, his hat in his hand, counting the bared heads. Twelve. I'm thirteen. No. The chap in the mackintosh is thirteen. Where the deuce did he pop out of? He wasn't in the chapel, that I'll swear. Silly superstition that about thirteen.

Nice soft tweed Ned Lambert has in that suit. Tinge of purple. I had one like that when we lived in Lombard street west. Dressy fellow he was once. Used to change three suits in the day. Hello. It's dyed. His wife I forgot he's not married or his landlady ought to have picked out those threads for him.

The coffin dived out of sight, eased down by the men straddled on the grave trestles. They struggled up and out: and all uncovered. Twenty. Pause. If we were all suddenly somebody else.

Gentle sweet air blew round the bared heads in a whisper. Whisper. The boy by the gravewhead held his wreath with both hands staring quietly in the black open space. Mr Bloom moved behind the portly kindly caretaker. Well cut frockcoat. His wife I forgot he's not married or his brother-in-law, turning away, placed something in the gravehead another coiled the coffin band. The caretaker moved away a few paces and put on his hat. The mourners took up their spades and carried their earthy spades towards the barrow. Then knocked the blades lightly on the turf; clean. One bent to pick from the heft a long tuft of grass. Silently at the gravehead another coiled the coffin band. The mourners moved away slowly, without aim, by devious paths, staying awhile to read a name on a tomb. The flowers are more poetical. The other gets by with bronzefoil. Better value that for the money. The other gets by with bronzefoil. Better value that for the money.

He stepped aside nimbly. Clay, brown, damp, began to be seen in the hole. It rose. Nearly over. A mound of damp clods rose more, rose, and the grave-diggers rested their spades. All uncovered again for a few instants. The boy propped his wreath against a corner; the brother-in-law his on a lump. The grave-diggers put on their caps and carried their spades towards the barrow. Then knocked the blades lightly on the turf: clean. One bent to pluck from the heft a long tuft of grass. Silently at the gravehead another coiled the coffin band. The brother-in-law, turning away, placed something in his free hand. Thanks, sir: trouble. Headshake. I know that. For yourselves just.

The mourners moved away slowly, without aim, by devious paths, staying awhile to read a name on a tomb. Some say he is not in that grave at all. That one day he will come again.

— Let us go round by the chief's grave, Hynes said. We have time.
— Let us, Mr Power said.

— Parnell will never come again, he said. Hynes shook his head.
— Let us, Mr Power said. They turned to the right, following their slow thoughts. With awe Mr Power's blank voice spoke:
— Some say he is not in that grave at all. That the coffin was filled with stones. That one day he will come again.

Hynes shook his head. — Parnell will never come again, he said. Mr Bloom walked unheeded along his grove. Who passed away. Who departed this life. As if they did it of their own accord. Got the shove, all of them. Rusty wreaths hung on knobs, garlands of bronzefoil. Better value that for the money. Still, the flowers are more poetical. The other gets rather tiresome, never withering. Expresses nothing.
A bird sat tamely perched on a poplar branch. Like stuffed. Like the wedding present alderman Hooper gave us. Hu! Not a budge out of him. Knows there are no catapults to let fly at him.

The sacred Heart that is: showing it. Red it should be painted like a real heart. Would birds come then and peck like the boy with the basket of fruit but he said no because they ought to have been afraid of the boy. Apollo that was.

How many. All these here once walked round Dublin.

Besides how could you remember everybody? Eyes, walk, voice. Well, the voice, yes: gramophone. Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house. Remind you of the voice like the photograph reminds you of the face. Otherwise you couldn’t remember the face after fifteen years, say. For instance who? For instance some fellow that died when I was in Wisdom Hely’s.

He looked down intently into a stone crypt. Some animal. Wait. There he goes.
An obese grey rat toddled along the side of the crypt, moving the pebbles. An old stager: grandfather: he knows the ropes. The grey alive crushed itself in under the plinth, wriggled itself in under it.


The gates gimmered in front: still open. Back to the world again. Enough of this place. A little goes a long way. Brings you a bit nearer every time. Last time I was here was Mrs Sinicos’ funeral. Give you the creeps after a bit. Plenty to see and hear and feel yet. Feel live warm beings near you. Let them sleep in their maggoty beds. Warm beds: warm fullblooded life.

Martin Cunningham emerged from a sideway, talking gravely.

Solicitor, I think. I know his face. Menton. Dignam used to be in his office. Mat Dillon’s long ago. Got his rag out that evening on the bowling green because I sailed inside him. Pure fluke of mine: the bias. Molly and Floey Dillon linked under the lilactree, laughing. Fellow always like that if women are by.

Got a dinge in the side of his hat. Carriage probably.

— Excuse me, sir, Mr Bloom said beside them. They stopped.

— Your hat is a little crushed, Mr Bloom said, pointing.

John Henry Menton stared at him for an instant without moving.

— There, Martin Cunningham helped, pointing also.

John Henry Menton took off his hat, bulged out the dinge and smoothed the nap with care on his coat-sleeve. He clapped the hat on his head again.

— It’s all right now, Martin Cunningham said.

John Henry Menton jerked his head down in acknowledgement.

— Thank you, he said shortly.

They walked on towards the gates. Browbeaten Mr Bloom fell behind a few paces so as not to overhear. Martin laying down the law. Martin could wind a fathead like that round his little finger without his seeing it.

Oyster eyes. Never mind. Be sorry after perhaps when it dawns on him. Get the pull over him that way.

Thank you. How grand we are this morning!

CARL SPITTELER

II

A

VOLUME of satirical verse, *Literarische Gleichnisse*, preceded Spitteler’s next, and most important, essay in contemporary prose fiction, *Konrad der Leutnant*. In this book the author undertook to meet his enemies, the Realists, on their own ground. We have seen how he suffered from the possession of a talent utterly opposed to the literary fashion of his time. While all his Swiss stories approximate to the demands of realism, they nevertheless failed to satisfy the critics, owing to their inherently poetic and idealistic qualities. Finally, Spitteler decided to surprise his literary opponents by providing them with a new formula, which he illustrated in *Konrad der Leutnant*. "Before writing another epic I wanted to prove to myself that I could employ even the naturalistic style, if I so desired. I chose the difficult form of the 'description' (Darstellung), in order to make my prose writing less easy." The sub-title of *Konrad der Leutnant* is *Eine Darstellung*, which term is defined by the author as follows: "By a description I understand a special form of prose narrative, with a peculiar purpose, and a particular style which serves as a means to that end. The object is to obtain the highest possible intensity of action; the means are: unity of person, unity of perspective, consecutive unity of time." In other words, the principal character is introduced immediately the story opens, and remains throughout the central figure, only those events being related of which he is conscious, and as he becomes aware of them. The action develops uninterruptedly, hour by hour, no interval being passed over as unimportant or unessential. Naturally, such a narrative can cover only a comparatively short period of time. The story of Lieutenant Conrad is told in the space of twelve hours.

In its bare outline *Konrad der Leutnant* offers no unusual interest, although the picture of rural manners is drawn with Spitteler’s customary insight, and gives a value to the story which admirers of Keller will appreciate. The main interest of the book is, of course, technical. The mechanism
of the Darstellung itself will suffice to hold the reader, apart from the intrinsic worth of the narrative. Spitteler has certainly given an ingenious demonstration of the logical development of literary naturalism. The disadvantages of the method need hardly be emphasised, for we have long since seen the fallacy of the theory which gave birth to the school. Not every detail in Konrad der Leutnant is interesting, since no life can possibly be composed of uniformly valuable elements. The author, like all realists, labours under the obligation of completeness, which imposes a vast fund of unprofitable material. Spitteler, however, is here frankly experimentalist, and is entitled to some concessions to the success of his experiment. It is not improbable that he wished to effect a reducito ad absurdum of the naturalistic doctrine, while incidentally proving his capacity as a realist. The temptation to translate this book was obvious, its appeal being more popular than that of the other Swiss stories. Yet, while welcoming this effort to make Spitteler more widely known, one cannot but regret the choice of an interesting, but unrepresentative, volume.

The year 1898, which saw the publication of Konrad der Leutnant, was marked by the appearance of a work which came as near to finding immediate recognition as is possible for Spitteler. Lachende Wahrheiten, a collection of critical essays, was, strange to say, the occasion of this unusual experience. Most of these had appeared in the German Kunstwart, and in the Berner Bund, whose literary editor, the late J. V. Widmann, had been Spitteler's earliest friend and critic. All his life Widmann stood forward as a champion of Swiss culture, and he died with the reputation of being one of the foremost critics in the world of German letters, his fame having passed beyond the confines of his own country. His appreciation and encouragement of Spitteler must be remembered amongst his chief claims upon the gratitude of his countrymen. But he was not alone in his estimate of Spitteler's merits as an essayist. Nietzsche had pushed admiration to the point of inviting the Swiss writer to collaborate with him in The Case of Wagner. These "laughing truths" revealed Spitteler as a critic who knew how to combine a gentle freedom of manner with considerable aesthetic originality and a graceful style. The essays are causures, rather than formal expositions of literary doctrine, although the remarkable discussion of the ballad leaves nothing to be desired from the point of view of exact knowledge. Stimulating as his theories appear, their translation into practice was more helpful, as when Spitteler's next book, Balladen, was published—after a long silence—in 1905.

The following year Spitteler made public a work which undoubtedly belongs to the same period as Prometheus und Epimetheus. In spite of the twenty-five years interval, Imago stands in evident relationship to the author's first volume, with whose second edition its appearance coincided. The book is thinly disguised autobiography, and within the limits imposed by the fiction, it may be regarded as a fairly reliable account of the events which attended the creation of Prometheus und Epimetheus. "An acute crisis of the soul" was the reason alleged by Spitteler for his decision to publish Prometheus und Epimetheus after 13 years brooding over it. The choice of "Felix Tandem" as a pseudonym indicated the nature of his emotion at having emerged from a spiritual conflict which had given him the power to affirm his artistic personality. The points of resemblance between that early work and Imago extend beyond the identity of mood out of which they were written. There is a similarity of rhythm in the prose of both which is not found elsewhere in Spitteler, and a like tendency to clothe emotional impulses in a personal form. But the book has an interest quite distinct from its relation to the poet's entry into literature. As a novel of contemporary manners in provincial Germany, Imago deserves to be read by all who can share Spitteler's almost savage delight in candid analysis. The long chapter entitled, "In the hell of Gemutlichkeit," is an exposure of essentially German conditions. Even that virtue of Gemutlichkeit, which Germany's worst enemies and best friends agree in conceding to her, does not soften the heart of Spitteler. He has many things to say of the pseudo-culture of such typical institutions as the "Idea Verein," and his comments upon the social distractions of the middle classes are as unfriendly as his reflections upon "the dogma of the mystery of German womanhood." At bottom Spitteler's strictures are directed against the provincial Philistine as he universally exists, but the German setting of Imago lends a special piquancy to his satire at the present time. Once again the ideas of Nietzsche and Spitteler coincide, in this commentary on German society, which has inexplicably escaped the attention of translators. The creators of Zarathustra and Prometheus are at one in their estimate of the most characteristic traits of the Kulturvolk.

Spitteler's masterpiece, the great epic, Olympischer Frühling, appeared in four volumes between 1900 and 1905, and, after ceaseless revision, received its final form in 1910. In what may be accepted as the definite version, the poem consists of five parts, divided into 33 cantos, in rhymed iambic couplets. From the wealth of epic material which had haunted Spitteler from his youth Olympischer Frühling alone achieved adequate expression. His first conception, Jhanna, "a romantic epic," has neither been published nor altogether abandoned by the author: unlike Atlantis and Die Hochzeit des Theseus, which were both adapted to ballad form, and included in Balladen. It is a remarkable testimony to the intellectual quality of the man and the writer, that Spitteler should have devoted practically a lifetime to the creation of such a work. Olympischer Frühling is not a lifeless reconstruction of antiquity, but an original mythology, into which the poet has breathed the life of his own spirit. The classical nomenclature is preserved; we read of Zeus, Hera, Apollo and Dionysos, but they are human gods and very close to our age. In fact, a dissociation of ideas is necessary before we can comprehend these figures who, in spite of their names, are moderns, living in a world familiar with the cinematograph, the steam engine and the airship! The classical student must rid himself of his preconceptions, if he would avoid mistaking for anarchism these elements in Spitteler's mythology.

No summary, however detailed, can do justice to this beautiful work, whose place is with, but above, Wieland's Oberon and Klopstock's Messiah. Carl Spitteler has effectively disposed of the theory that epic poetry is possible only to a young people. Olympischer Frühling is a demonstration of arguments advanced in Lachende Wahrheiten, when in the essay, Das verbotene Epos, the poet combated the judgement which excluded the epic from modern literature. With wonderful skill and imagination Spitteler has combined the elements of humour and thought, of action and song, so that, for all its length, the poem is as diversified and as interesting as the epopes of the classical age. A deep note of pessimism runs through this, as through all his works, but it is not the bitter despair of mere personal disillusion, and just suffices to give Olympischer Frühling the mark of contemporary philosophy. Moreover, in the second version, the key of resolution in the face of experience is made more perceptible by the re-writing of the last canto, which describes the lofty faith of Herakles in his task of regeneration. The despondent nihilism of the earlier edition has been abandoned.

Spitteler's style is absolutely his own, being an expression in the German language of the spirit most remote from
that which we know as Teuton. His idiom is national in its affection for the strong accents of that older tongue which survives on the lips of German-speaking Swiss, for Spitteler affection for the strong accents of that older tongue which we know as Teuton. His idiom is national in its country. Here, indeed, we have a clue to the fundamental difference between the author of Olympischer Frühling and his German contemporaries. Carl Spitteler is Swiss, and as such he shares the privilege of Switzerland to serve as the point of fusion between Germanic and Latin culture. The Swiss spirit has been moulded by these two dissimilar linguistic and intellectual traditions, and the literature of Switzerland has always expressed this compromise. Often the result has been to render somewhat colourless the writings of men who were neither wholly French nor wholly German, but in Spitteler this compromise has found its happiest illustration. Superficially the form of his work is German, but its content is essentially Latin, and this has reacted upon the manner of its expression, giving the latter a suppleness and plasticity not characteristic of the Teutonic genius. An adequate translation of Spitteler’s epic in verse is hardly conceivable, so intimate is the relation between the style and language of Olympischer Frühling. The poet’s masterpiece must, for many reasons other than linguistic, remain the possession of a few, but not so the epic prose of Prometheus und Epimetheus. This remarkable work only demands a sympathetic interpreter in order that a wider audience may learn to admire, in its earliest and most original manifestation, the great genius of Carl Spitteler.

E.R.N.E.S.T A. B.O.Y.D

LIKE crystal columns,
When they bend, they crack;
Brittle souls,
Conforming, yet not conforming—
Mirrors.

Masculine souls
Pass across the mirrors:
Whirling, sliding ecstasies.

But the mirrors remain ever
Stark and brilliant in the sunshine,
Blank as the desert,
Blank as the sphinx,
Winking golden eyes in the twinkles of light,
Silent, immutable, vacuous infinity,
Illimitable capacity for absorption,
Absorbing nothing.

Have the shapes and the shadows
Been swallowed up in your recesses without depth,
You drinkers of life,
Twinkling maliciously
Your golden yellow eyes,
Mirrors winking in the sunshine?

Evelyn Scott

Towards a Peace Theatre

IV What is it?

The simplest way to explain what I mean by a Peace Theatre would be to contrast the latter with a War Theatre. But this present space does not allow. I may however say that the conventional theatre is more or less a War Theatre. It exists to express conflict. Conflict as the essence of dramatic expression is a very early convention. The playwrights who initiated and continued it were Greeks and Romans, many of them blood-bespattered warriors. So great, tyrannical and persistent has been their influence that ever since their time it has been considered the thing to go to Athens for a play convention, with the result that playwrights have filled the playhouse stockpot with goods having a common characteristic of violent conflict.

It might reasonably be said that these plays arose naturally out of a long-continued period of warfare and were no doubt necessary for the preparation of soldiers. I do not know whether the vast variety of plays artfully designed to work unsuspecting playgoers into a violence of blood-thirsty passion belongs to dramatic form, but I am inclined to doubt it. At any rate, I am sure there is a peaceful form of drama and technic. And if my definition of Drama is a true one—it has yet to be proved to be false—then Drama itself is essentially, in purpose and performance, a peaceful thing. I am convinced that its spirit and manifestation are as peaceful as those of a true religious observance in which all who take part are re-united unresistingly with reality or the divine world. In short I would say that actual life touched by divine creation becomes at once essentially dramatic. I use divine creation in the sense of reality. There may be a lower order of creation. For the sake of clearness however I think we ought to distinguish very sharply between creation and invention. They are totally different things. One I think is spiritual, the other, material. They are continually confused by slip-shod minds.

It will be seen that the attainment of my peace play, technic, and playhouse invites three problems. (1) A subject saturated with dramatic issues. (2) An effective method of extracting the essence. (3) An appropriate environment. I cannot explain my solutions to (2) and (3) without the help of suitable diagrams and sketches for which The Egoist has no space at present. As to (1) I may say this. The most promising subject is what I would call a reality human being, that is a human being who is sufficiently important to be placed under the dramatic X-Rays of Truth, and may be trusted to yield glimpses of reality. Few human beings have this importance, and for this reason the majority are utterly useless for dramatic purposes. But I fancy the lives of representative men and women would yield dramatic gold. I mean, in particular, those moderns who, in the old days, would have been called giants and heroes, but who nowadays in the light of a new standard of values are giant and heroes to no one except themselves. In short, what we might have and could have if we liked is a dramatic expression of lives as they are nowadays planned on earth to be completed in heaven by a Truth, if it happens to touch them. How to set these Lives unfolding so as to give the maximum of dramatic effect is the next question. I think they might be resolved into their real elements, changed from lies to truths from ugliness to beauty of form by pantomime dance. I rest this idea on the assumption that when individuals are intensely moved, when they have anything to say, they get up and translate themselves in dance that obliterates everything else for the time being. But if they are not intensely moved, have nothing to say, they sit still and say it in the Chrifti-minstrl way made familiar to us by the discussion playhouse. It is through the spirit moving them that men and women become dramatic; it is through the spirit failing to move them that they remain gramaphones.

When I speak of dance I do not mean the heel-and-toe capers of the music-hall star, or the Greek-potted movements favoured by Isadore Duncan, or the fascinating pirouettages of the Russian Ballet. I mean a rhythm expressing a creative unfolding during which the dancer passes from movement to movement till the initiation is complete. I can only suggest the sequence of dances that a character would require for the passage from the material to the spiritual climax. (1) The Hero movement; the modern Hero as Crousus clothed in gold and glorifying in the
evil he can do with it. (2) The Morality movement; the Hero suddenly touched by Truth. (3) The Mystery movement; the Hero initiated into the mysteries of Truth by which he is touched. (4) The conversional movement; the Hero undergoing a process of change. (5) The Transformation movement; the Hero, or what is left of him, seen in soul substance. Examine this and it will be found to be the structure of the same plays that deserve the title of great.

To give proper effect to the series of dance movements that I roughly suggest, a specially-designed circular disappearing platform is necessary. There would be no scenery, except that obtained by a system of lighting for producing refining effects. Then the auditorium would be so planned as completely to separate, as oil and water separate, the spectators from the players as such, yet as completely to unite them, as water combines with water, as a fluid part of the real experience. I think that if the present form of civilisation could be admitted into the sphere of Truth in the way suggested, its grossness removed and the spirituality underlying it illuminated, the general conclusion would be that there is precious little worth fighting for as mankind now stands, and a great deal that might nobly and greatly be transformed by the help of a creative or peace spirit. This at any rate is my conception of the true function of a Peace Theatre.

HUNTY CARTER

BLACKWELLIANA

M R. BLACKWELL is an excellent bully for the muse of present-day Oxford poetry. Not a too scrupulous lady—a little vague as to her person, hardly distinguished and relying mainly on the adage that all cats are grey in the dark of reviewing minds. Only so can the laudatory notices from The Bookman, The Times, The Literary World be explained. The modus operandi is that, no doubt, of a certain daily which told a friend that its reviews sought to say all possible good of whatever book. Mr. Blackwell is, I believe, not a too exigent bully. I am told he merely mulcts the lady of a fiver for every new client, and will even permit the lady to embark two at a time, or more, as with the “Four Writers” who together send out their venture The Galleys Laden.

Whatever the cause, however, the lady is by now somewhat exhausted. The repetition of her labours no longer calls for the same spontaneity of excitement and affection. She may even be bored a little with the apparently unending series of poets who approach her with the same gifts, notably neo-catholic Christs and Marys, love, stars, water in moonlight, &c, the jetsam of a tide which has circumscribed the world for the past five hundred years.

The Galleys Laden contains nothing significant. Wine and Gall relies on cheap antitheses rather mellifluous. Verses, Wise and Otherwise, are neither. The author uses words like croon, lure of the calling tide, The Dead Workmanship and a sense of conventionally poetical material to which she has given a new coat of paint. “The New Ghost” is a good poem, with a taste of its own and original use of rhythm. Her limpidity is sometimes too limpid, and her attempts at epigrams in the style of Blake have no pungency. She is a steady poet, one who will delight that class of reader known to the book trade and advertising world as poetry-lovers.

Napoo has unimpeachable sentiments. The Herald and the Cambridge Magazine provide all its inspiration. She does not call her works poems, and as prose they are pointless.

**Tales of the Sawai** are as witty as a club smoking-room or after-dinner bore. The author wavers between Kipling and W. S. Gilbert. He ruins interesting verses from the Sanskrit by their rendering.

“Initiates: A Series of Poetry by Tried Hands” are, however, very pleasant examples of good printing on good paper. Mr. Huxley is represented with The Defeat of Youth and Other Poems. I do not like the sonnet sequence. It seems to me intellectual and without conviction—exercises made by every poet in youth to be scrapped later. The book is less satisfactory than the author’s privately printed Christmas booklet Jonah, which had a compactness and savour of its own, and which made it one of the books of the year. Certain things in this are as good, however: *The Reef* —derivations mixed but well imaged—*Crepalapse Impression*, *Complaint of a Poet Manqué*, “Till they come close—then just escape!” The translations are particularly good, when Mr. Huxley is being what is called modern—i.e., using his own senses and not conventionally poetical stuff, he has a definite gift and is to be reckoned with—but rhyme invariably involves him in cliché, inversion, extravagance and redundancy. Nevertheless Huxley, thank God! is not of university poetry.

**Clown’s Houses**, by Edith Sitwell, belongs to the same category. If anything, she is too original and extravagant. Her work nullifies itself by a plethora of mutually exclusive adjectives. It bears, however, the marks of careful working and extreme conscientiousness. She has the same faults as Mr. Huxley, but her virtues are different, and are present: her work has as much finality as the poems of Wilde which they greatly resemble—namely, nil. An unpleasant habit she has is to use a rather silly anthropomorphic measure for the reduction of the cosmos:

- Eternity and time commence
- To merge amid the somnolence
- Of winding circles bend on bend,
  With no beginning and no end
- Down which they chase queer tunes that gape
  Till they come close—then just escape!
- But though Time’s barriers are defied
  They never are quite satisfied.

“What the Dean Said” is good in a scholastic, E. M. Forster, way. “Myself on the Merry-go-round” is rather an achievement compact (more or less) brilliant too—but doesn’t mean much, though an admirable exercise. “Weather Clocks” is charming. At present I find no emotional quality whatever in her work.

**Songs for Sale** is an anthology drawn from the Adventurers All. I gather that most of those included have at one time or another sat at the feet of Dr. Bridges, but the influence has been dire. W. Blair and E. B. C. Jones seem the only ones in an odd thirty with definite vision, and in Mr. Blair’s work it is treatment rather than emotion or subject-matter; while Mr. Jones scores once in three with “Jerked Heartstrings in Town.” The fault may, however, be the anthologist’s, who appears to have chosen particularly badly if the choice was not determined by previous publications of the Adventurers All.

Certainly T. W. Earp, who has done some good work, is badly represented, as is W. K. Childie.

Osbert Sitwell’s “Lament of the Mole Catcher” is an anthology drawn from the Adventurers All. I gather that most of those included have at one time or another sat at the feet of Dr. Bridges, but the influence has been dire. W. Blair and E. B. C. Jones seem the only ones in an odd thirty with definite vision, and in Mr. Blair’s work it is treatment rather than emotion or subject-matter; while Mr. Jones scores once in three with “Jerked Heartstrings in Town.” The fault may, however, be the anthologist’s, who appears to have chosen particularly badly if the choice was not determined by previous publications of the Adventurers All.

Certainly T. W. Earp, who has done some good work, is badly represented, as is W. K. Childie.

Osbert Sitwell’s “Lament of the Mole Catcher” is surprisingly good. It has genuine emotion, and might easily be Wordsworth. It has a very real quality and is quite the best thing I have so far seen by him.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.**


 Correspondence
UNITED STATES POETRY
To the Editor of The Egoist

MADAM: Returning to Chicago after a few weeks' absence, I find the February Egoist, and note with due congratulation that Mr. Jepson feels abused because I didn't appreciate his "appreciation" of Recent United States Poetry enough to print it in Poetry; and that Mr. Harrison feels that Mr. Jepson was abashed in the anxiety wherein he attempted to win us to the contributive pages of the English Review.

I can only regret certain differences of definition which seem to separate us more than the Atlantic Ocean. What Mr. Jepson proposed was an "appreciation": what he sent was a depreciation; to put it mildly, of four of Poetry's fourteen American prize-winners (from one of whom he had read four lines), leading up dramatically to magniloquent praise of Mr. Eliot. My "appreciation" was not the sort of Mr. Jepson's essay: 'Mme. de Spondey's' opinion of Lindsay—surely a critic of some authority, and in presenting certain arguments of my own in favour of Messrs. Masters and Froth, who hardly need any defence in England, and of Mr. Head, who appears to me to fit that line of a mild wonder that the anachronistic author of Happy Pollywogs, if confining himself to his own prize-winners, should have omitted Carl Sandburg, John Gould Fletcher, "H.D.", Wallace Stevens and others. I hope it was not in any certain measure a serious aption to blast his critical eye to suppose—always accepting Mr. Eliot —among our hundreds of poets outside the golden circle.

In spite of the English Review's editor, I did take up this critical point in that suppressed article, including his owl-like insinuation that Chicago should think to her matrons and buns; but, since Mr. Harrison discreetly consigned me to oblivion, why should I intrude further on you? As for the abuse, if Mr. Harrison probably accurate measure, but not quite measure point itself, I should make haste to apologize, even though everybody's feelings were spared the odium of print. Meanwhile, a few apologies from the "outraged" Mr. Jepson and his editor may be in order—less to me than to the distinguished authors of General Booth Enters into Heaven, The Spoon River Anthology, North of Boston, and Grotesques: especially to Mr. Lindsay, whose "inspiration" was declared to be The Ingoldsby Legends, a classic which this poet had never heard of. And meantime also—I may be permitted to remember in passing—Poetry in the English Review in having accepted (in 1916) those masterpieces by Mr. Eliot after the discriminating Mr. Harrison had refused them.

HARRIET BROWNE.

Chicago, April 7, 1919.

To the Editor of The Egoist

MADAM: May I add a postscript to the Jepson affair? It would be a pity to leave Mr. Jepson with the impression that he has utterly confounded American critics and poets, for I think it is no exaggeration to say that very few of us—Miss Monroe excepted—take him at all seriously. It is too deliciously apparent that Mr. Jepson knows nothing whatever about American poetry. He has, obviously some personal acquaintance with Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot—and he has read one or two poems by Frost, Masters, and Lindsay; but, beyond that, I imagine, his adventures have not gone. He refers familiarly for example, to Mr. "Edgar" (sic) Frost—a pleasant bit of heterophemy. And if he is angry at being abused by Miss Monroe and Mr. Ruscoe (not Ruscoe) he might be tactfully reminded that his original remarks on Frost, Masters, et al., in the English Review were themselves little else... Witness that delightful phrase of his—the "plop-eyed bungaroo.

What I wish to remark, however, is simply that since Mr. Jepson is so clearly not an intelligent or well-informed critic, it is unfortunate that his remarks should have been given such publicity. Heaven knows you English seldom enough bother to acquaint yourselves with what American artists are doing, and you seldom consider it a subject for literary discussion—and it is in consequence all the more saddening to see what little discussion there is left to your Jepsons... With all apologies to Mr. Jepson I do not think Frost and Masters are so lightly to be dismissed. They have both, I grant, done poor work—they have both, I believe, also done work which compares very favourably with anything done by contemporary English poets. And what of the poets whose Mr. Jepson does not mention? What of John Guild Fletcher, Amy Lowell, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Alfred Kreymborg, Wallace Stevens, Maxwell Bodenheim, Carl Sandburg? Let Mr. Jepson read these books before he goes further: Cobains and Pagodas; Men, Women, and Chaps; The Man against the Sky; Plays for Poem Mimes; Mimsa and Myself; North of Boston; The Great Valley; Chicago Poems; and the two Others Anthropologies for the Krays poems of Stevens. And among them, I finally, suggest that if your literati took one half the interest in our literary affairs that we do in yours, with one half the sympathy, they might speak of the subject with a little less haughtiness.

Cambridge, U.S.A.

CONRAD ATKEN.

[Correspondence on this subject must now close.—Editor.]

"LA VRAIE ITALIE"

We are asked by Mme. Ciolkowska to print the following—a copy of a letter sent by her to M. Giovanni Papini, editor of La Vraie Italie (Florence):—

MONSIEUR,—Vous me faites l'honneur d'envoyer La Vraie Italie. Le premier numéro me parut si plein de promesses que je me suis fait un plaisir et un devoir de signer votre initiative dans une revue anglaise qui se recommande pour son indépendance: The Egoist. Depuis je lisais votre journal de façon suivie dans le désir de me renseigner sur votre pays dont le sort que vous déplorez, c'est à dire d'être mal connu, ne lui est nullement pénible. Je prends comme preuve un article de votre dernier numéro qui vous voudrait, en moins de deux colonnes, faire un portrait de l'Angleterre moderne. Certaines opinions peuvent, à la rigueur, s'y discuter mais l'assertion que, dans le monde des idées et des harmonies, l'Angleterre n'a plus rien à dire est tellement fausse (non seulement on compare sa production actuelle à celle du passé, mais si on la compare à celle d'autres pays) qu'elle ne peut que vous naître aux yeux de ceux qui connaissent l'Angleterre et qui s'adressent à vous pour "apprendre" l'Angleterre. Il est évident qu'on ne saurait en chercher des indices sur l'Angleterre mais si on s'aperçoit que vos appréciations sur l'étranger sont inspirées par l'ignorance et la colère on sera excusé de mettre en doute l'impartialité de vos investigations sur ces pays-là.

Avec l'Angleterre il n'y a que la France qui puisse aligner une âme aussi importante, par son nombre et sa valeur, de poètes et de prosateurs contemporains. Et quand je dis "contemporains" nous n'expliquons pas, je suppose, ceux qui sont morts hier et qui pourraient être de nôtres aujourd'hui... puis Wilde, ni Syngue (qui fut contemporain de Yeats), ni Lawrence Hope, ni même Meredith ou Swinburne, car qui peut délimiter précisément où "hier" finit et "aujourd'hui" commence? Et Hardly, nous le comptions, heureusement, encore parmi nous ainsi que Joseph Conrad (anglais d'élection comme l'était feu Henry James, ce qui est plus qu'anglais).

Mais force ne nous est pas de tourner la tête pour réunir nos légions. Nous les avons sous la main: les Barrie, les Wells, les Wyndham Lewis et James Joyce de la prose; les Aldington, les Siegfried Sassoon, les Rupert Brooke (quoi que mort lui aussi "hier") dans la jeunesse glorieuse) de la poésie—mieux vaut, cependant, mettre fin à cette énumération qui remplirait une colonne de votre journal tout en reflant dans les limites de la consécration universelle, française surtout. Un autre passage dans cet article mériterait d'être relevé—celui où il dit l'Anglais organique et froid—mais par une personne de votre pays et qui aurait pu écrire le même égoïsme à l'œuvre, par exemple avec la Croix Rouge britannique sur le front italien.

Une discussion sur la nullité anglaise en science (comparée avec d'autres nations) nous entraînerait trop loin, mais j'ai entendu soutenir par des lettrés français de votre article, que le seul nom de Sir Oliver Lodge vous apporte un dimanche suffisant.

Pour finir je vous envoie ci-joint le compte-rendu d'un ouvrage par un officier anglais qui a pris part à la campagne en Italie. L'esprit dans le quel il est écrit paraît faire assez confiance en un futur collaborateur. Croyez, je vous prie, Monsieur, à mon éffort pour votre journal et à mon admiration pour votre pays.

M. MOISEL CIOLKOWSKA.

Belleau (Seine et Oise), France, ce 31 juillet, 1919.

* With British Guns in Italy, by Hugh Dalton.

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