

# Canadian Nature and its Painters

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE Canadian consciousness must always, to a peculiar degree, be implicated with nature, seeing that Canada is first and foremost an agricultural and raw material nation, and, still more important, is everywhere on the frontiers of the wilderness.

The development of the cultural life of Canada will necessarily be conditioned—or so it seems to me—by these facts, however much present day anti-regionalism there may seek to ignore them. On the other hand its situation on the North American continent also deeply involves it in the Machine Age. The neighbourhood of Chicago and of Detroit is a formidable fact. The culture of this northernmost of the nations of the western hemisphere might develop, consequently, a dual personality. The pull of nature, however, will probably exceed that of the attraction exercised by the blast-furnace and power-house. Further, the Anglo-Saxon genius has always displayed great affinity with primitive nature. The French Canadian would, after his Latin fashion, continue no doubt to take more interest in man than in primitive nature. The latter is really, in practice if not in theory, and in spite of Rousseau and his school, almost an English monopoly.

An Ossianic pantheism pervades the literature and the life of the Briton: a passionate inclination for the virginity of nature and for the most unruly moods of the elements. Evidences of this can be traced as much in the fondness of Shakespeare for thunder and lightning, as in the appetite of a twentieth-century boy scout for getting lost on quite mild little mountains and practising woodcraft in the home-spinney.

These are the things however that have spelled Empire: that 'trading' of the English, as a Frenchman has called it, which even in the North American continent speaking the English tongue: resounds in Hudson Bay, Ellesmere Land, Prince Patrick Island, and other cosy



Above, 'Winter Morning, Charlevoix County' (1933), by A. Y. Jackson, in the Art Gallery of Toronto; left, 'The Jack Pine' (1916), by Tom Thomson, in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

From 'Canadian Painters'

little spots, bearing Anglo-Saxon names, rather than Spanish, French, German, Italian, or Dutch. Such reflections are appropriate in approaching the question of what kind of culture may be produced by the population settled in such close neighbourhood to so overpowering and top-heavy a mass of primitiveness as is to be found in Canada, north of the narrow settled belt—from the Bush up to the muskeg and beyond to the icepack.

The question in fact is whether all this unassimilable mass of 'nature' will in the end be left severely alone (just as we seldom turn our eyes up towards interstellar space, and have long ago lost interest in the moon, except for crooning purposes): or whether this proximity of the wilds will continue to influence the descendants of the contemporary Canadian. Surely the latter. That I think is the answer; just as certainly as a people who inhabit a sea coast are conditioned by the neighbouring ocean and its rude habits—the works of their hands being full of splashing and tossing, of shipwreck and of ships inopportunately becalmed.

Now it seems to me that for a person with these tastes, and with these traditions, Canada, artistically, offers extraordinary opportunities, and that these have on the whole been surprisingly neglected. One would have expected for instance Canada to have produced one outstanding poet, inspired by the scene and by the history



that is there; as native as the folk-song 'Alouette'. This has not occurred.

But pictorially, in a sense, it has. And the Phaidon Press publication, *Canadian Painters*\*, in its massed photographs, gives one an excellent idea of this flowering—though the effect is perhaps cartographical rather than horticultural. This painting is, in fact, the blazing of a trail and a rough charting—a sometimes crude advertisement of a rich aesthetic vein—rather than a finished achievement of authentic beauty.

In 1920 a movement announced itself in Upper Canada (that is English Canada) under the name of 'The Group of Seven'. This Phaidon volume really celebrates the work of that group. A further volume is announced dealing with work reflecting contemporary European and American influences: for Canada on the whole, it could be said, is busy decanadianising itself, and firmly shutting the door upon the doctrinal 'regionalism' represented by the seven pioneers of post-war No. 1.

The key-man in this Canadian regionalist school is Alec Jackson, because without him it is doubtful if it would ever have existed. Tom Thomson, generally regarded as the star-member of the school, died, in mysterious circumstances up in one of his Northland lakes, in 1917. He was a commercial designer—as all of them were at one time or another, except Harris. In 1913-14 Thomson, then a week-end artist of no particular distinction, became acquainted with Jackson, not long returned from Paris, and a spark was struck. They shared a studio, and by the end of 1914 this contact had transformed Thomson into a remarkable colourist, equipped to get on to his canvas some of the cold vivacious beauty of the spring woods in the Algonquin country. For the rest, his ten years of commercial designing at Grip Limited supplied the formal accessories and the organising habit.

It would be idle to pretend that the oils, large and very small (mostly the latter) produced by Thomson during a mere three years—1914 to 1917—which is all that is of interest, would set the Thames or the Seine on fire, because they would not. Most gallantly this little group (for the rigors of the social climate were so formidable that only the toughest could survive) pioneered: when the hostility of the press and public held them up, they retreated into commercial design, but always to emerge again as—for the time and place—militant and iconoclastic. Their work was rude: they chopped out their paintings as if they had been chopping wood. They adopted, often, the brutal methods of the bill-board artist to put their country across big and harsh and plain: with all its emptiness and savagery—its trees that crawl along the surface of the frozen earth because they cannot stand erect in the Arctic wind, its shack-hamlets submerged in snow, its Northern Lights, and all the other things you do not meet with anywhere else. Sometimes they painted a beautiful or an original picture. Most of the time they were blazing the way for others: opening up the Canadian scene—for I am sure Jackson did not expect his school to end with the 'Seven'.

The members of this group are dispersed, have 'gone west', have disappeared or died. Only Jackson is left. He had much to do with starting it all: now he stands there alone in Toronto before his easel, in the Studio-building in the Ravine, painting doggedly, the 'grand old man' of Canadian painting.

Canada will always be so infinitely bigger physically than the small nation that lives in it, even if its population is doubled, that this monstrous, empty, habitat must continue to dominate it psychologically, and so culturally, as I started by saying. The Northland, as they call it, the 'forty miles of white water', the 'beaver ponds', the virgin beauty

of Mississauga, these are what cause us to give Thomson a hearing, for his crude song. It is not generally realised how at a relatively short distance north of the cities strung out across Canada in a wavering line the 'bush', the wilderness, begins, with its multitudes of lakes and streams. But Jackson went much farther afield even than Thomson: to Great Bear Lake and to the Polar Sea, and brought back grisly records of what he had seen.



Portrait of Kee-a-kee-ka-sa-coo-way (dated after 1850), by Paul Kane, in the Royal Ontario Museum

With Alec Jackson I will bring this article to a close, for he interests me the most. He is himself like a bit of nature—and I have explained how it is the nature we see in them, however imperfectly, that gives them their real significance—and the rock is always more important than the man. And with Jackson let me associate Gagnon, as the French and English are conjoined in their native Quebec.

French Canada had in Clarence Gagnon, who died in 1942, a sort of national painter. These two artists are very different, though superficially their canvases have a kind of family look. Both come from the province of Quebec; in the pictures of both there is a lot of snow. There the similarity ends. Whereas Gagnon painted very attractively (mostly in his studio in Paris) an exotic world of brightly-clad peasant-puppets, in their snowbound hamlet, Jackson paints the same little Quebec hamlet for preference deserted, battened down, all but submerged in the white pest of the Canadian winter. Gagnon's is an innocuous snow, almost as if it were a stylistic device of nature (a very good-natured nature!) But Jackson's is like a white lava to smother and blot out. It is not even white! Often it is a depressing spectral grey, or acidly greenish: not at all like the sparkling blue-and-white of the icing

merchants (among whom it would be unfair to count Gagnon).

The village is not where Jackson is most at home. He has painted some excellent villages: but where there are few signs of man is where he really likes to be. Where there is just Jackson and Nature. 'Nature' for Jackson does not mean what it did for Turner, a colossal and sumptuous pipe-dream akin to the Kubla Khan of Coleridge, nor what it was to Van Gogh, a barbaric tapestry, at the heart of which was man and his suffering—his human rhythms branching out, the tormented nervous system of nature responding to man's emotions. In Jackson's case it is nature-the-enemy as known to the explorer.

Yes, it is an affair of Jackson-against-nature, and vice-versa. Jackson being what is called a 'fighter' likes this situation. His painting expeditions are as it were *campaigning seasons*, rather than the breathless rendezvous of a 'nature-lover' with the object of his cult. It is impossible to associate the notion of pleasure with these grim excursions, or at least nothing sensuous. If anything there is too little that is sensuous; he handles nature roughly. Few have tried to paint the snow. These snowscapes of his fill one with the fascinating ennui of a chapter of the log of a polar-explorer: one of those grand monotonous books where one wonders how many more hundreds of pages must be traversed or trudged through (on seal-meat and pemmican) before one reaches that extraordinary over-rated abstraction the Pole.

There is gaiety sometimes in Jackson, but it is rationed. His vision is as austere as his subject-matter, which is precisely the hard puritanic land in which he always has lived: with no frills, with all its dismal solitary grandeur and bleak beauty, its bad side deliberately selected rather than its chilly relentings. This is a matter of temperament: Jackson is no man to go gathering nuts in May. He has no wish to be seduced every Spring when the sap rises—neither he nor nature are often shown in these compromising moods. There is something of Ahab in him; the long white contours of the Laurentian Mountains in mid-winter are his elusive leviathan.

\* *Canadian Painters*. Edited by D. W. Buchanan. Phaidon Press. 25s.



## The Art of Gwen John

The first of two articles by WYNDHAM LEWIS, reviewing current exhibitions

THE Memorial Exhibition of the works of Gwen John (sister of Augustus) at the Matthiesen Gallery, Bond Street, is an unusual event. Hers was a kind of art which is unlikely to recur. There was still enough left on earth of the atmosphere breathed by Mabuse or Vermeer in the early days of the century for it to be just possible to feel like that. From what James Joyce called 'the only human city that remains' it had not quite departed: it clung about those streets and alleys dear to Utrillo. The horse had not yet been superseded by the internal combustion engine: the leaves of the trees that lined the streets were as green as those in a pre-Raphaelite picture.

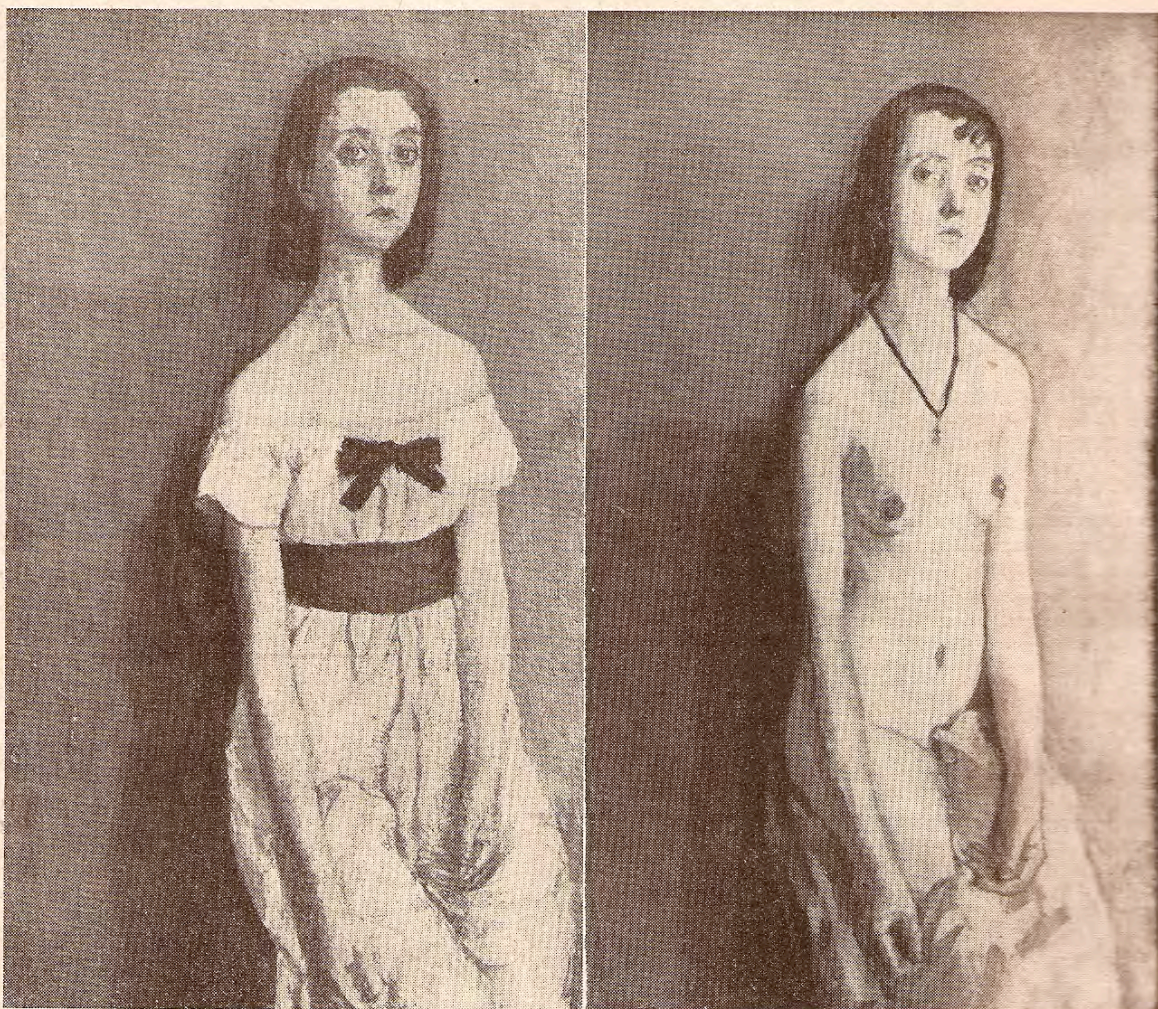
So it is partly a matter of Time. But the personal world of this departed woman was chaste and bare and sad. These little fragments of her experience testify to its beauty, realised by means of that 'science' acquired by her in the 'Atelier Whistler'.

The images of the 'brute male force of the wicked world which marries and is given in marriage' are noticeably absent. Hardly a male is depicted here, only a handful of women: herself, Fanella, Dorelia, orphans, more children, and then the nuns, headed by the Mother Superior, the only one departing from the unsmiling rule.

How can this woman have isolated herself from the influences of her age so successfully?—for we learn from Mr. John's foreword that she went to Cézanne exhibitions, and no doubt saw the cubists as well. I have started by explaining how this could *just* be managed. Part of the answer is, however, that one of her great friends was Jacques Maritain: that she belonged to the Catholic Revival in France (where she principally lived—in the suburbs of Paris). She shared the life for a time of those original intellectuals, who slipped out of the Bergsonian tide—in which they had been deeply immersed—and constructed for themselves in its midst a kind of island of the saints (of still somewhat Bergsonian saints).

Physically, Gwen John was a painting by Modigliani, evidently. In a drawing—the catalogue number is fifty-seven—we see what is in effect an egg-shaped Modigliani head—only instead of the virginity being caricatured and its ellipsoidal nature stylised into a drooping puppet (slipping a little sideways usually), here the virginity is retained, and although the shoulders melt away, nature is not departed from in favour of a conceptual excitement, as would be the case with a Modigliani.

The paintings of her earlier period—all too few—show the figure of a woman strained up, as it were, in a painful religious rigor (see the photographs which accompany this article). We are astonished by the



A young woman seated, and duplicate figure nude (the latter lent by the Tate Gallery); both paintings by Gwen John

anguished rigidity of the pose, as if this poor woman were proudly aspiring, painfully galvanised by something underneath which we are not shown—or drawing herself up into the air from some pestiferous base.

In the duplicate figure, nude, it is the same story. Indeed, these two pictures, like the *Maja vestida*, and the *Maja desnuda*, are the Woman clothed and unclothed. But with the one here it is a revulsion from her nakedness—an Eve after the Fall: whereas the Duchess of Alba—in Goya's famous identical portraits of a recumbent figure, clothed and unclothed—is well content with her little square body.

It is worthy of note how variously this exhibition has been received. For the American magazine *Time*, for instance, these works seemed 'as limited and dim as reflections in a cup of tea. . . . Many of the paintings look as though they had faded in the sun'. Uncle Sam was puzzled at the rapt attention these 'dim' images elicited. But a review in *The Times* showed that John Bull was more perceptive. 'With an almost penitential care', it noted, 'she avoids anything that might draw attention, in a crowded exhibition, to her work. The colours are faint . . . etc. There are none of the qualities to be found here that attract strong men to the prize-ring. Those who expect painting to provide a knock-out blow will be disappointed'.

Returning to the Machine Age, as it were, let me note as a fact of marked interest that the Mayor Gallery exists again, at 14 Brook Street, and a small mixed show containing many excellent pictures—Klees, Sickerts, Rouaults—is to be seen there.



## Art

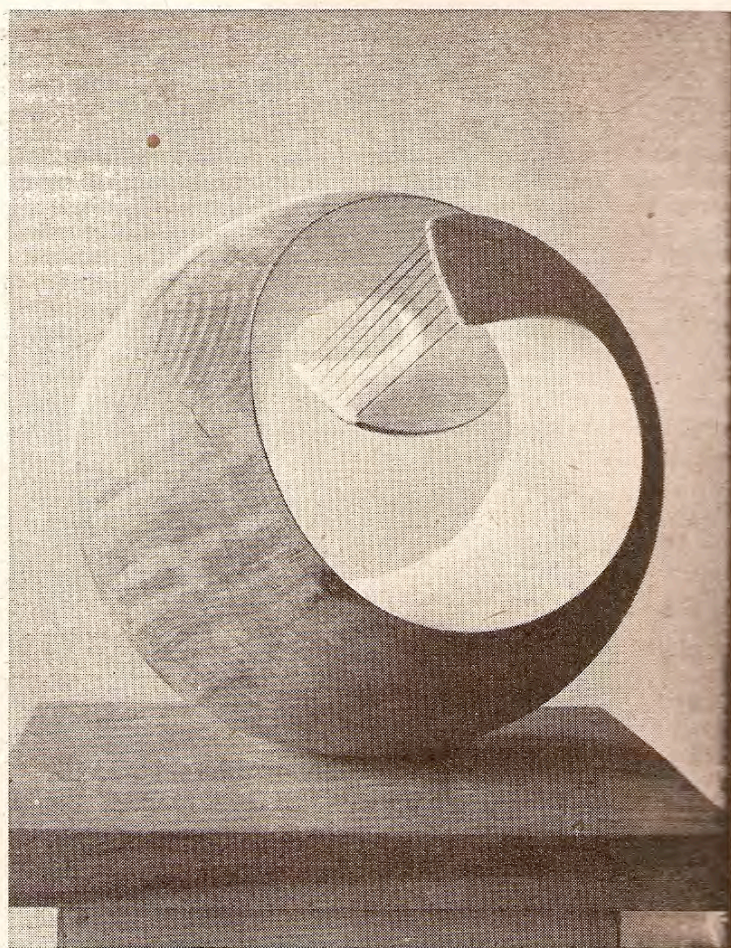
# Moore and Hepworth

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

IN his new exhibition at the Leicester Galleries Mr. Henry Moore is showing two large pieces of sculpture, seven small and less important pieces, and a number of drawings. In one of the two large pieces (destined for the grounds at Dartington Hall, and reproduced here) and in many of the drawings, there is renewed evidence of Mr. Moore's tendency to return to a pre-Picassoan phase of his work, and so to a less romantic impulse. The figure for Dartington Hall is one of his finest. A female figure, as always: for what might be described as this artist's type is a small-headed, weighty, female figure—accompanied sometimes, though not in this instance, by a stone—or a wooden—baby. This woman of his lives in a primitive world—which his pre-war drawings represented with great power, a kind of druidic wilderness. With a puritanic energy—which is not affection—she will clutch this satellite body, or stone baby, to her body. In the company of other women she is bleak and aloof. Such is the natural subject-matter of Henry Moore.

But there are trios and pairs of these women now, as revealed by his drawings: mollified by the medium, perhaps—the chalks, and inks, and washes—they, without becoming urbane, show us they can inhabit rooms, even with very primitive curtains at the window; and one we actually find installed upon a very exquisitely drawn, and not unupholstered, sofa. Whether it is Penelope surprising the Suitors, or some massive trio seated upon a cube, biscuit tin, or some vaguer elemental form, they are now, although they never speak to each other, social beings.

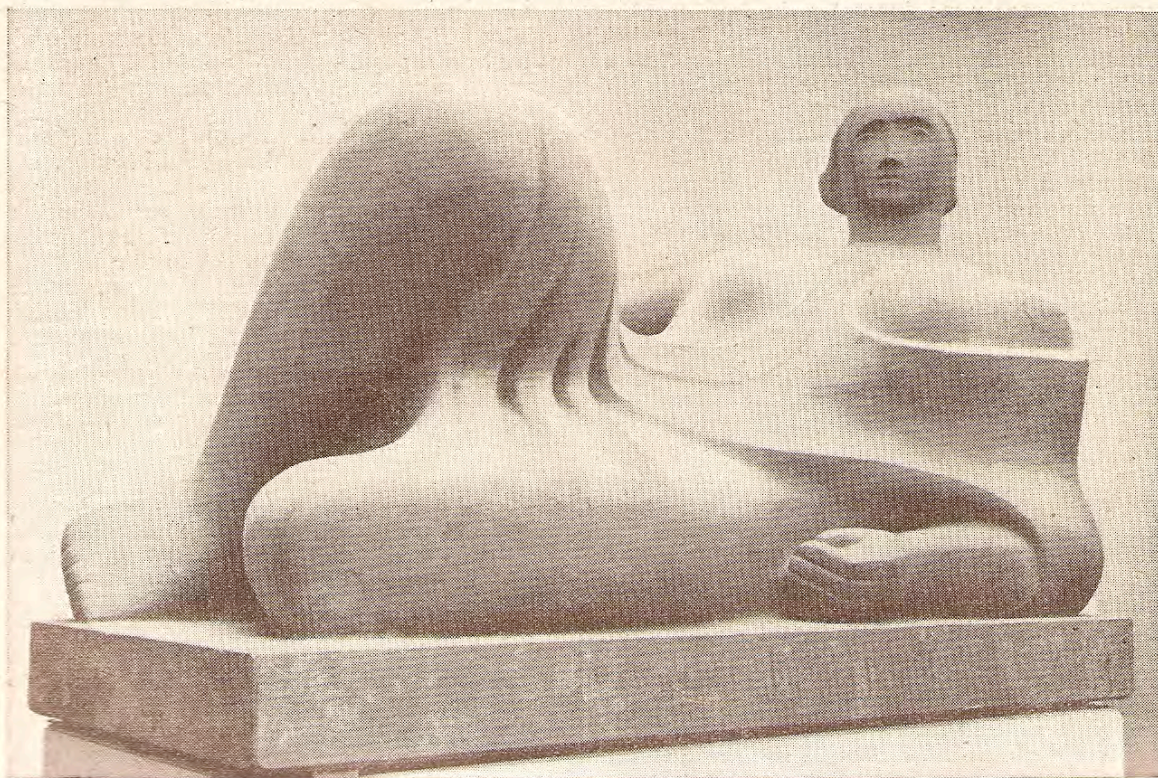
Some of the groups in the Shelter drawings were most beautiful, after an Hellenic fashion: and some of the drawings in this exhibition recall antiquity—the barbarous overtures to the stream-lined perfection. The root of what we term the classic is, in literature, the *mythos* as laid down by Aristotle, and, in the fine arts, design. Design is second nature to Moore: in that his is a classic mind: especially as a repose of sorts dwells in all these ponderous figures, and something of the decorum of the greatest art. It is a terrible thing for a great monumental



'Pelagos'; wood, with colour and strings; by Barbara Hepworth

artist to come at a time when even the most modest building goes up with difficulty: and as to the large-scale communal palaces that might be expected at such a time, no one even dreams of such expressions of communal enthusiasm. Only the state can cope with gifts of a monumental order. To have a number of these things lying about in our squares would be better than nothing, although the domestic architecture of Bloomsbury or Kensington would combine too surrealistically with Moore's recumbent sub-goddess.

In Nos. 20 and 52 there is an effect of parcels tied up with string, and a new use, I think, of the tartan—these are drawings of course: and Nos. 46 and 63 are particularly fine drawings, which I should like to have. Should his women emerge any further from the chrysalis stage—and the faces already, in the drawings, develop character here and there—Mr. Moore will be wise to give much thought to his type. The heaviness of the body should not invade the face: and the temptation to elongate the nose must be



'Reclining Figure', in hornton stone, by Henry Moore



resisted. In this exhibition there is a drawing (No. 37) called 'Pointed Forms', which is, in a way, a kind of bric-a-brac foretaste of what you will see, if you later visit the Lefèvre Galleries, where Barbara Hepworth is showing a collection of her sculpture, closely related, in its genre, to Henry Moore's.

These two artists weigh in at a very different figure: the former is limited in comparison, but what she does she does admirably. It is rather like the work of a maker of musical instruments. If anyone would know how to make a beautiful belly to a mandolin or a lute it is she. If she were a potter, she would be a potter of distinction and resource. But she comes at a time—as does Mr. Moore—when artists are working in a vacuum. No one wants anything especially beautiful in the way of a musical instrument; no one really *wants* anything new at all. They prefer imitations of old models, in furniture or ceramics or anything else. So Miss Hepworth begins creating arabesques in the void. The possession of one of these 'involutés', 'convolutés', or 'conoids' would improve the scene in any living room or study. The one reproduced on the previous page, looking like a titanic shell which had

been converted into a musical instrument, would be a very nice thing to have. The string, by the way, of which she makes frequent use, is not a novelty. This rather questionable device was first employed, I think, by Calder. We learn from Miss Hepworth's interview with herself in the current number of *The Studio* that 'ovoid shapes as a basis for sculpture' has always been her idea. The oval form of the human head, or the body of a bird, are the ellipsoidal objects she especially mentions. There is also the egg itself, however, which is a sufficient prototype of these objects. Where Brancusi used the egg to make a human head with, the egg involves itself, with her, hatching out an ovoid extension of itself in space. A majority of these shapes have the appearance of the shell of something that has been emptied of its contents; its inside lining usually being whitish. If there is, for me, a fault in Miss Hepworth's work, it is to be found in its resemblance to commercial objects, turned out with an industrial sleekness and slickness.

But this is all I have to say as *criticism*. For the rest, this is a laboratory of aesthetics, where formal possibilities are investigated. And many people prefer aesthetics at this stage. In most cases I do myself.

## Sean O'Casey: Realist or Romantic?

By DENIS JOHNSTON

SEAN O'CASEY, as a writer, is not merely alive. He's kicking. His work, as one contemplates it, has all the static consistency of a volcano—the same smoke and violence, the same sense of a magnificent piece of natural self-expression that should be put to some useful purpose. And at the same time one feels a certain apprehension in approaching close enough to make this survey.

Yet it all began in such a bright and amusing way. About 1923, as far as I remember, the Abbey Theatre in Dublin billed a new play by a new author, called 'The Shadow of a Gunman'. It all takes place in a back room in a tenement house in Hilljoy Square, where a young poet is living—not a very good poet, I'm afraid—and his principal interest to the other residents lies in the fact that they all suspect him of being a member of the Irish Republican Army on the run.

This play is not so well known as either 'Juno and the Paycock' or 'The Plough and the Stars' that followed it. But in it you will find most of the things that made O'Casey's name famous at the start—his apparently sardonic sense of humour, his use of repeated phrases to give a comic effect and an illusion of character, his Dublinese vocabulary that you find in words like 'cleverality'. This play, followed by 'Juno and the Paycock', provided O'Casey with his first set of labels. We are always putting critical labels on to people, and O'Casey was a humorist (even though he called both his plays 'tragedies'). This we thought was probably his most subtle joke of all. But even more certain, he was a great realist, writing with photographic accuracy about the Dublin slums, in much the same way as an earlier school of dramatists had drawn the life of the Irish countryside.

Then came 'The Plough and the Stars' which looked (superficially) as if it was intended to be a realistic play too. There was the same broad comedy, the same slum vocabulary, the same catch-phrase: 'Oh that's a very derogatory thing'. It was eloquent all right, but by no manner of means could it ever be described as realism. So promptly O'Casey had to be clothed with a slightly different garment—the mantle of J. M. Synge was the nearest thing. Like Synge he was supposed to be a poet writing prose—an Olympian observer, looking down with a certain detached amusement on the struggles of the people he was writing about—taking no sides, grinding no axes. He was also a pacifist and a debunker of nationalism and all that sort of thing; and in this guise he was delivered by his native city to London, where he came under the attention of an even Higher Criticism, and the confusion in due course became even worse confounded.

Because—mark this well—from 1927 onwards O'Casey started writing plays that fitted in with no preconceived notion of the kind of chap we have decided him to be. They were partisan, they were bitter, they were full of imagery and verse and symbolism that were the last things that you would expect from a slum realist. Many people adored them. Let's not make any mistake about that. Indeed T. E. Lawrence and the Shaws went so far as to say that the second act of

'The Silver Tassie'—the war act—was the finest thing that had been written for the stage in the English language. You may remember, for example, the prayer of the soldiers to the big gun:

Hail cool-hardened tower of steel emboss'd  
With the fever'd figment thoughts of man;  
Guardian of our love and hate and fear,  
Speak for us to the inner ear of God!

We believe in God and we believe in thee.

Jail'd in thy steel are hours of merriment  
Cadg'd from the pageant-dream of children's play;  
Too soon of the motley stripped that they may sweat  
With them that toil for the glory of thy kingdom.

We believe in God and we believe in thee.

But this high opinion of 'The Silver Tassie' was not everybody's view. This was not the kind of play that was expected of O'Casey, and to begin with it was turned down by the Abbey Theatre—an act of considerable courage on Yeats's part, if I may say so. It took O'Casey a long time to get over this treatment of his play, because he is not the kind of man to take dictation from anybody on the kind of play he ought to write. And ever since then he has gone on writing plays in the same style, and I have no doubt whatever that he will continue to do so, in spite of all the wringing of Irish hands over the lost author of 'Juno'. Indeed, I scarcely like to think what Dublin must be saying about his last play—'Oak Leaves and Lavender'. Have you read it? For the pacifist and anti-nationalist who wrote 'The Silver Tassie', Mr. O'Casey goes considerably further than most Englishmen would dare, in stating for what we fight.

DRISHOGUE: For all of them in the greatness of England's mighty human soul set forth in what Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, and Milton sang; in the mighty compass of Darwin's mind, sweeping back to the beginning and stretching forward to the end; for what your Faraday did in taming the lightning to stream quietly about in the service of man; and, if these be indifferent things to you, then fight and die, if need be, in the halo of healing from the tiny light carried in the lovely, delicate hands of Florence Nightingale. Go forth to fight, perchance to die, for the great human soul of England. Go forth to fight and to destroy, not the enemies of this or that belief, but the enemies of mankind. In this fight, Edgar, righteousness and war have kissed each other: Christ, Mahomet, Confucius and Buddha are one.

How is that for the ex-Secretary of the Irish Citizen Army? At this point, I think, we may safely throw overboard the last of our preconceived notions about Sean O'Casey, and reconcile ourselves to the fact that there must be something wrong with the data. It is obvious that he is not just being contrary—he is not just being cussed



# Round the Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

IT is impossible to speak of the new Epstein exhibition at the Leicester Galleries without referring to the recent refusal by the Tate to accept his winged Lucifer. If there is a building in London that would be the better for a little fire and brimstone it is the Tate Gallery. Nothing short of this diabolical human bird will ever take the chill from those marble halls. Is there no means of persuading the Tate committee to reconsider its decision?

For me, personally, a visit to a new collection of work by this great vitalist sculptor, where, among other things, there are heads of the poet Ronald Duncan, of Winston Churchill, and of Pandit Nehru, modelled as only Epstein is able to, brings something else to my mind. When in this country there is a monumental portraitist of so rare a kind, why was not the Roosevelt memorial statue entrusted to him?

Nothing, of course, can be done about this—except to note that once again it has been demonstrated that statues of eminent men destined for our public parks and squares, must conform to some ineluctable law of mediocrity. But those standards ought not surely to be allowed to invade the interior of those of our public buildings set aside for the display of works of art. Of new pieces by Epstein I like best a fragment of a larger composition, which he projects, to commemorate the struggles of the coloured peoples to attain a true, and not a sham, emancipation. There are chains upon the arms of the male figure. My only criticism is that the chains are too light. They should be ten times as heavy.

I have referred to the admirable portraiture, but there are many small figures too—a new feature—and among them, alive and kicking, miniature females which, fully grown, would be redoubtable geni, but in these more modest proportions, would fit quite comfortably into domestic surroundings—or even into the sanctified atmosphere of our public galleries!

## A Less Austere Strachey

From Leicester Square I hastened to the Adams' Galleries. For there I hoped to find that the Food Minister had committed himself to canvas and paper. The John Strachey involved, however, is, it appears, a nephew of Lytton's: not the man who denies me bananas because I am over fifteen. Much talent is displayed in this extensive exhibition—which is thoroughly worth a visit—but most of it has been devoted to a lighthearted discipleship of ultra-Parisian models. In Mr. Strachey's hands—and this I found extremely interesting—these models assume a rather revealing form. The Picassoan grimace blossoms into the painted countenance of a circus clown. In No. 10, entitled 'Three', this can be best studied, perhaps. It is the first time I have seen *this* happen. Most of those following such a leader do so with a hieratic solemnity—quite alien to the Catalan original. There is in Picasso's inventive practice a great deal more of the spirit of Goya's 'Caprichos' than is generally understood. Indeed, a great deal of the stuff that is treated by the average critic—and of course the dealer who is selling it—with such owlish profundity, is just witty nonsense. It is, quite literally, nonsense—and of course none the worse for that. When we read

Down the slippery slopes of Myrtle  
Fled that Yongi Bongi Bo

we know it is a 'nonsense rhyme': but when we read

Thou still unravished bride of Quietness

that is not nonsense. We are apt today, however, to value as highly the Yongi Bongi Bo as the 'still unravished bride'. There is consequently nothing derogatory in saying that a Picasso of a woman with her eye in the middle of her cheek, a cigarbox under her motor-tyre of an arm, is a sort of joke: is comedy. Mr. Robert Barr, ex-director of the Modern Museum, displeased the dealers and critics greatly by cataloguing much of Picasso's work as 'comic'. Yet this was accurate—and shows how seriously he went about his task as historian. So Mr. John Strachey is an artist of understanding: only *his* comedy is of the knockabout order—at least in the type of thing that provided me with the occasion for this dissertation.

The Lefevre Gallery was my next place of call. Here there is a long line of Mr. Tunnard's pictures which are extremely monotonous. We are not given anything that are quite recognisable natural objects, though the general effect is that of nature—an unsympathetic variety. These things, unattractive in colour, arbitrary but insensitive in form, produce the feeling of some machine, which throws things about and mixes them in a new pattern, but always the same things. This is a sweeping condemnation: I can only say how these pictures strike me.

Robert Colquhoun is generally recognised as one of the best—perhaps the best—of the young artists. That opinion I cordially endorse. Perhaps I should have said Colquhoun and MacBryde, for they work together, their work is almost identical, and they can be regarded almost as one artistic organism. Usually we say 'Colquhoun' when we speak of it. The latest monotypes of Colquhoun are very fine. The influence of Rouault is apparent. They are flat black, white, and grey slabs of people: or heads set on elongated slabs, which may be aprons or whatever else very simple women wear. The fact that they are all women dispenses the artist from indicating nether limbs, and assists him in achieving a maximum simplicity of statement.

With this simplification of statement *below* the face, the face should probably conform—as is the case with Rouault—to two or three marked types. Colquhoun uses a kind of Assyrian head which seems to qualify as one of these. But in the case of the Irish peasants the face becomes more varied, and even anecdotal. It is unlikely, however, that Colquhoun will continue for sixty years doing the same thing, as Rouault has: so it is unnecessary to work out details of that sort, as otherwise would be the case.

In *Sandro Botticelli: The Nativity* (Lund Humphries: Gallery Book No. 15, 4s. 6d.) Mr. Pope-Hennessy has done half his job of introducing the famous National Gallery picture brilliantly: the other half he has tackled half-heartedly. What he has to say about the picture as a product of the peculiar conditions under which it was painted, the influence of Savonarola's ascetic mysticism superimposed on Florentine neo-platonism is admirable. The 'Nativity' is a very strange picture indeed and the more one looks at it the more its strangeness needs precisely the kind of explanation that Mr. Pope-Hennessy supplies in considerable detail. But the 'Nativity', regarded as an expression of a unique moment in the religious history of Florence and of a peculiarly troubled moment in the life of Botticelli, is one thing: regarded as an aesthetic entity, as an example of the final phase in the style of an artist whose style was always oddly personal, the picture needs a different kind of treatment.

Mr. Pope-Hennessy is well aware of this. He must have deliberately avoided an analysis of Botticelli's stylistic development either because of lack of space or because other writers have so often attempted it. One can appreciate both motives, but the little space he has devoted to the picture as a thing-in-itself has not been well used. Botticelli's medieval use of variations of scale and his disregard of conventional perspective are justly noted, but they are hardly the most powerful stylistic devices that Botticelli uses here. And the suggestion that Botticelli, in his later pictures, becomes more linear is surely not true. Compared with the 'Primavera', the 'Nativity' is painterly. Line was always his chief mode of expression but the difference between his use of it in his middle and in his last period is a difference of quality. It began to take on a more liquid, swirling character and by its means Botticelli was able to introduce a new note of swooning ecstasy in the place of his earlier wistfulness. In the 'Nativity' the angelic *corps de ballet* in the sky has a rhythmic loveliness new in the art of the time and never attained since.

All this was surely worth a little painstaking analysis if, as the introductory note to the series says, one of the objects of the Gallery Books is 'to encourage the general public . . . to find new and more rewarding beauties' in paintings. It goes without saying that the detailed illustrations are excellent. No picture ever lent itself more than this one to being split up into sections. Each little group gains added significance from being isolated from its context, and Mr. Pope-Hennessy might well reply to these complaints by urging that the illustrations speak for themselves. One other complaint—a small one. To say that Savonarola was 'hanged' may be technically correct, but it is surely an inadequate description of the manner in which he was put to death.



# 'Puritans of the Steppes'

WYNDHAM LEWIS on his youthful response to Russian literature

WITH no disrespect to literature, I should never have applied such a term as 'crisis' or 'turning-point' to the result of contact with a book, or even a body of literature. I thought those things usually came about differently. For instance, Gustave Flaubert, the great pessimistic novelist, described how, as a young man, he was one day walking along a street in Rouen, and from a scullery window came the sickly odour of stale greens. Thereupon, in a flash, he understood the meaning of life. A crisis as a rule materialises in some such way as that.

For a long time there will have been gathering in the remote recesses of our consciousness an emotional residue of bitter (or joyous, or ecstatic) experience. Then something occurs to cause it to crystallise and to take an unexpected shape—perhaps with a terrible distinctness and definition. Things are smouldering a long time, usually, before they burst into flame. If there is something rotten in the state of Denmark, it does not immediately assail the nostrils. In Flaubert's case he must already have had a very low opinion of life. He did not, however, know that it stank. The disagreeable odour abruptly apprised him of the fact.

Why should not a book, however, bring sudden enlightenment, as much as anything else? And certainly I cannot recall any smell, either fragrant or offensive, which affected me so much as reading Shakespeare's tragedies, or listening to Bach's music. Generally it is when one is young that 'crises' occur (though not, I think, when one is in knee-pants). Today, for instance, I feel sure that many young Frenchmen are deriving from the existentialist books of Jean-Paul Sartre much the same type of pessimistic enlightenment that Flaubert received from the displeasing whiff—and those young men will have seen much in the past few years to prepare them for such a revelation.

## Revolution in the Approach to Experience

At all events, reflecting along these lines, I went on a search backwards into my young life, to identify some really decisive experience. And at last I came up against a solid mass of books—not one book, as I had thought I might—which supplied the answer. This was something that revolutionised my technique of approach to experience, that did not merely give me a great kick at the moment, and then quickly faded, as most things do. The mass of books to which I have referred is the creative literature of Russia. And when I took down some of these half-forgotten volumes—went again with *Pierre* in his incongruous white hat and green coat on to the field of Borodino, and with Raskolnikov lifted the axe to strike down the aged usurer—I very nearly had another crisis, hardened as I am now to such influences.

In England it is rather fashionable at present to dismiss many of these books as unreadable. All I can say is that if another time and country is the obstacle, then the Socratic Dialogues, Cervantes, or Voltaire would fall under the same ban; but, on the other hand, if Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol, Soloviev, Chekhov are not considered of that rare perennial quality, then, fresh from my re-reading, I politely disagree. Dostoevsky on the European continent continues to exert a magical influence, as an instance of which I may cite the Swiss theologian Barth, who acknowledges two main sources of inspiration, namely, Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard. I have noted several instances, by the way, in which these two names have been bracketed in this manner.

Perhaps this decline in sympathy in England with such writers may be attributable either to the turning away from reality, in an ostrich-like romanticism, or else to the growth of an inordinate appetite for intellectual 'smartness', of which there certainly is very little in the Russians. And they should not be looked upon either as a sort of rival of the contemporary Russian: a careful reading of the great Russian novelists assists, on the contrary, to an understanding of the Russians of today. Stalin dancing upon the table at a victory banquet is a page from Gogol. The unexpectedly able Russian generals, beating off the

'Panzer' at Smolensk, or before the capital itself, one recognises as one reads of Kutusov at Borodino, more than a match for Bonaparte.

\* \* \*

As a student in Paris, in French translations, I first read all these Russian books, and I lived for some time wholly in that Russian world of 'Poor Folk': in the tragic family circle of the Karamazovs; with Verkhovensky, Shigalyov and the Nihilists; with Rudin, losing interest and departing when he saw the spell he had cast had collapsed; listening to the Kreutzer Sonata and noticing the big hips of the lady's man; or submissively assisting at all the exclamatory archness of those Varvaras and Natalies. So my 'crisis' was even more than a collection of books: it was a world. As I have described myself as doing, tracing my steps back, I was not suddenly stopped by a wall of books. Rather I passed imperceptibly into a warmer, richer atmosphere—as crossing the Atlantic one enters the area of the Gulf Stream; I heard again the raucous voice of La Baboulenska crying: 'You do not know *what*? By heavens, are you *never* going to drop that roulette of yours? Are you going to whistle all your property away?' And I saw the ruined general wilt before the glare of his aged mother borne aloft like a carnival figure in an armchair. Paris was full of Russian students (this of course was before the Russian Revolution), who walked about in pairs in tight black semi-military jackets. They conversed with no one; they were contemptuous of western levity, stern and self-absorbed. It has been said that when Dostoevsky wrote *The Possessed* there were in Russia no Stavrogins or Verkhovensky's, that they came much later and this was a divination of the future. In that case these characters, now become flesh and blood, were met by me every day on the boulevards, and they decidedly looked the part. These were the new puritans, who were to dominate Europe: a generation with many points of resemblance to the black-coated sectaries who began to swarm in England in the first days of the seventeenth century, and who subsequently transmitted their passionate disciplines to, and became the genius of, the North American continent, the 'New World'.

The world of the imagination I inhabited at that time, however, was anything but puritan, taken as a whole. For this great volume of creation produced in the nineteenth century by a group of men over a space of fifty or sixty years there is no parallel since the Renaissance—to which the Tudor stage of course was the greatest English contribution. The impression conveyed is of a release on the grand scale of prodigal energies. All the writers, it seems to me, responsible for this new world of the spirit are of the same half-western, half-eastern, ethos, which, among other things, gives them a peculiar value—like everything about Russia. They must, in consequence, for the western European, remain a great universalising influence. And all the Russians, Tolstoy almost as much as Dostoevsky, were conscious of their curious relationship to the west—of it, and yet not of it: conscious also of something like a mission with regard to it, namely as the purveyors of sincerity to the over-institutionalised European.

## Cultural See-Saw

A cultural see-saw, of westernising and anti-westernising, proceeded among the intellectual leaders: but to hold themselves apart from the west—a little contemptuously apart—was by far the more popular attitude. From *The Gambler* and elsewhere in the pages of Dostoevsky a very shrewd analysis of the western European could be compiled. There is for instance the Junker: 'He had legs which seemed to begin almost at his chest—or rather, at his chin. Yet, for all his air of peacock-like conceit . . . his face wore a sheepish air'. Then there is the Frenchman: 'He was a true Frenchman in so far as that, though he could be lively and engaging when it suited him, he became insufferably dull and wearisome as soon as ever the need for being lively and engaging had passed. Seldom is a Frenchman *naturally* civil: he is civil only as to order and of set purpose. Also, if he thinks it incumbent upon him to be fanciful, original, and out of the way, his fancy always assumes a foolish, unnatural vein, for the reason that it is compounded of trite, hackneyed forms. In short, the natural Frenchman is a conglomeration of common-



place, petty, everyday positiveness'. No more today than yesterday, I think, do we appreciate how genuine sincerity can take even a self-righteous form, and how insincere and untrustworthy, in many respects, the west must seem to those puritans of the steppes, whose lineaments already are visible in the *dramatis personae* of the nineteenth-century Russian classics.

A great deal of what I read as a student I either did not understand or took no interest in. I knew, for instance, what I was witnessing everywhere in Dostoevsky: namely the almost muscular struggle of the human will to repulse evil and cleave to the good—or to embrace evil with a convulsive violence, and then to repent, with more convulsions. It was the unrelievedly gloomy epic of spiritual freedom—which the further you went, got to look more and more like predestination. But in the first place I was not myself of a gloomy temperament: also since I was not interested in problems of good and evil, I did not read these books so much as sinister homilies as monstrous character patterns often of miraculous insight.

I am inclined, I find, to attribute to myself less understanding, when I first read all these books, than I in fact had. But what is quite certain is that the politics in Dostoevsky—almost as distinctive a feature of his work as the mysticism, and, I now am of opinion, far too much influenced by it—these very unusual politics were entirely lost upon me at that time. Three years ago I read again *The Possessed*. There were all the names and scenes, just as in the past, when first I read it. But it was a very different book. Evidently as a student I had read it somewhat as a child reads *Through the Looking Glass*. That is the only possible explanation.

Dostoevsky was an arch counter-revolutionary, and it is not only in *The Possessed*—which is the high-water mark, almost counter-revolutionary tract—that this passionate reaction is to be found. But when in his letters one reads that he thought of postponing a journey owing to the news, which had greatly upset him, of the death of the Tsar's aunt, that makes one feel that when he refers to himself in his diary as a 'conservative', in this one particular he was right. Yet what an extraordinary work *The Possessed* is! Stavrogin, Tikhon, Verkhovensky, Shatov—what a prodigious company! Allowing for a great deal that was unintelligible, the impact of such books was due to much more than

their vitality. Perhaps Ivan Karamazov supplies the correct answer, where he is speaking of the young men who sat in the corners of the Russian taverns. 'They've never met before, and when they go out of here they won't see each other again for the next forty years. But what do they talk about for the moment that they're here? Nothing but universal problems: Is there a God? Does the immortal soul exist? Those who don't believe in God discuss socialism, and anarchism, and the reorganisation of mankind on a new pattern; which are the same questions, only tackled from the other way up'.

That was what 'Russian boys' had their minds filled with apparently, and what these books showed them ardently discussing in taverns as they drank, as if the fate of the universe hung upon their words. What do young Englishmen discuss under similar circumstances? Probably 'the dogs', or football. What do young Frenchmen discuss? Undoubtedly women, and their smartness in handling same. So it was in everything. Here was a more serious world altogether, thought I. Then what consummate realists these people were—with their slovenly old gentlemen with a great reputation for sanctity—the 'saintly fools' of the monasteries, with their embarrassed 'bashful' smiles, smelling slightly of vodka; the polite commissioners who behaved like a Marx Brother; Napoleon Bonaparte persuaded that he was directing a battle, while in fact everyone had forgotten his existence and fought it in their own way; the Chagall-like figures skimming along the surface of water in pursuit of the river steamer; or the overcoat of Gogol, or his walking Nose.

I too 'came out of the overcoat of Gogol': many things have happened to me since, but there was a time when I did not follow my own nose, but his. Paris for me is partly the creation of these books. I now realise that if I had not had Chekhov in my pocket I should not have enjoyed my aperitif at the 'Lilas' so much or the beautiful dusty trees. It was really as a character in Tolstoy—I remember now—that I visited the *bal musette*. And the hero of the first novel I wrote reminded a very perceptive critic of Stavrogin. In view of all this I think we may really say that the first time, moving down the Rue des Ecoles, I arrived at my particular bookshop opposite the 'Montagne' to find a book by Faguet, and took away *Letters from the Underworld* as well, crisis was at hand.—*Third Programme*

## Samuel Butler and Miss Savage

By BRIAN HILL

SAMUEL BUTLER, the Victorian satirist, was not a particularly easy man to know. As Bernard Shaw has said of him, he was more than an oddity; he was odd even among oddities. He wrote a book to prove that the author of *The Odyssey* was a woman. He thought Handel was the greatest composer the world had seen or was likely to see. He disagreed profoundly with conventional views on religion and science, and got himself involved in a personal quarrel with Charles Darwin.

Moreover Butler was bad-mannered in controversy and quick to take offence or see a slight where perhaps none was intended. It is hardly surprising that he never became popular in his lifetime either as an author or as an individual. I do not think Butler cared much about personal popularity. By nature he was somewhat of a recluse. When he returned to England from New Zealand in 1864 he settled down in bachelor chambers in Clifford's Inn and lived there alone, a man of few friends, until his death in 1902. Most of his friends were men. In fact, Butler had only one close woman friend, and she is so interesting a character that I should like to tell you something about her.

Before he turned to writing, Butler's ambition was to become a painter. He studied at Heatherley's Art School which was in Newman Street, off Oxford Street. Although his pictures were hung in the Royal Academy exhibitions, and one of them is now in the Tate, he was never in the top flight of painters. Indeed, if it were not for his writings, he and his work might well be forgotten by now. And if it were not for Butler, we should certainly know nothing about this odd, unsociable bachelor's woman friend, Eliza Mary Ann Savage. But Miss Savage, as her published correspondence with Butler shows, does not deserve to be forgotten. She is interesting of course because of the

influence she exercised on Butler's books, but she is equally interesting on her own account.

Butler met her in 1867 at the art school, and at first they did not take to each other. Miss Savage indeed took every opportunity she could of snubbing her bearded young fellow-student whom she considered no doubt much too sure of himself. Then one hot summer day when Miss Savage was on her way up Berners Street she met Butler. He was strolling along eating cherries out of a basket he was carrying. As they passed he silently held out the basket to Miss Savage. Also without saying a word she pulled out a handful of cherries and went on her way. That little incident, trivial as it was, made her see Butler in a new light. She felt for the first time that he was different from the other students. And she was right.

It was the beginning of their friendship. Before long Butler was sending her the manuscript of his first novel, *Erewhon*, and asking for her criticism. And from this time onward Miss Savage was allowed to see all his work in manuscript and he remodelled it in accordance with her suggestions. For a writer of Butler's strong individuality to depend so much on another's opinions shows his respect for her judgment and intelligence. He gave her the first copy issued of all his books that were published in her lifetime, each suitably inscribed. And on one occasion he even suggested that they should collaborate in writing a novel.

Who was Eliza Mary Ann Savage on whose literary opinion Butler relied so much? She was the daughter of an architect and was born in 1836, so she was a year junior to Butler. She had been a governess, but at the time Butler met her she was living with her parents at 22, Beaumont Street, just off Marylebone High Street. For some years



## Art

# The Brotherhood

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

ONE hundred years ago, in 1848, by way of middle-class recognition of the persistently altruistic mood of the Zeitgeist, the Pre-Raphaelites called their new movement a 'Brotherhood'. Just looking at the highly symbolic date, 1848, and nothing more, that is how one would perhaps sum it up. But there was Ruskin—he was their patron as well as public relations man. He liked the word 'Brotherhood'. Other fraternal bandings together of artists, too, such as the 'Nazarenes', seemed to impose it. Brotherhood had been in the air for a long time.

In the early days of the nineteenth century the 'Brotherhood of St. Luke' was formed in Vienna by a few young artists. These were later known as the 'Nazarenes', a group of Germans established at Rome, where both Madox Brown and Dyce fell under their influence—as Mr. J. A. Gere informs us, in a serviceable introduction to the catalogue of the Centenary Exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite Art at the Whitechapel Gallery. As painters, German and Italian Primitives were—to the exclusion, in their first years, of all else—the models of the 'Nazarenes'. More generally, the values of the Middle Ages, religious and social (as interpreted by them) were substituted for contemporary values.

This was a cult of the Past, the feudal Past. And this German Brotherhood exhibited the same impulses as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, except that in the case of the 'Nazarenes' the emphasis was on religion. Had the 'Brotherhood of St. Luke' never existed, whether the other Brotherhood would then not have existed either, I am unable to say. It is certain that, in the present century, the juicy, earthy school of Middle West landscapists of the 'thirties would never have existed had not an American succumbed while in Europe, to 'Neuschlichkeit', a movement of violent regionalism in the visual field. But there was no cause and effect of that clear-cut sort as between the Pincio and Chelsea.

The Pre-Raphaelites produce a gay effect, like a bonnet-shop (for their subject-matter, compared with their pseudo-models, the Primitives, is trivial). Even Holman Hunt's large 'Scapegoat' is on the gay side. No tragedy is visible, to the naked eye—just an overlarge, somehow disagreeably bright, picture of a goat. But Hunt was the only confirmed painter of religious subjects in the movement. And he was (1) an inferior painter, the least talented of any: (2) no advertisement, it is to be feared, on the religious side, for either the refinement or seriousness of his countrymen. I am thinking of 'The Light of the World'.

As to Burne-Jones, so dazzlingly successful a pioneer of surrealism, he, again, failed completely in his religious subjects. For instance 'The Star of Bethlehem' (not part of this exhibition) has even to be apologised for as a picture. Whereas I would far rather possess one of his Perseus series than a Botticelli. That series—or rather the full-size studies—is alone worth visiting Whitechapel to see. In 'The Escape of Perseus from the Immortal Sisters' there are none of the tawdry poetic accessories impairing some of his work, only the faces and limbs, moving to the rhythms imposed by imperious immortality, in a dream where

all is sadly predestined, even escape from predestination. The scaffolding is still visible near the half-finished foot of a Sister where the canvas has been squared.

It would be pleasant to hang four or five of the Perseus studies in the same gallery with an equal number of pictures by Delvaux. Salvador Dali has expressed much admiration for this latecomer among the Pre-Raphaelites, and it is easy to see why.

Burne-Jones did not steal the show for me in Whitechapel, but whereas the rest of the Brotherhood disappointed me in a way for which I was unprepared, with him I found myself duly entranced, as much as I am by M. Delvaux or by the music of 'Pelléas et Mélisande'.

Pre-Raphaelite pictures generally are cheerful in colour because Primitives used pure bright pigment. Then nothing must be left out either—for the Masters left nothing out. No hair on the back of the sitter's hand, no leaf on the tree, no brick in the wall of the house, must be omitted. At the same time, laws of perspective and anatomy remained surprisingly intact: nor was the drawing in any sense primitive. The drawing in the portrait of Ruskin (46), 'The Blind Girl' (48), 'The Last of England' (4), or 'Mother and Child' (117) is as orthodox and modern as in a portrait by John or

Sargent. Nor did they employ colours brilliant and unmixed. As 'Primitives', in short, the Pre-Raphaelites were not serious. Madox Brown's 'Work' actually is less primitive (though in the same way) than Stanley Spencer.

My disappointment was due to an impression, in which more seriousness was attributed to this school than they in fact reveal, upon a second and more critical encounter. Nothing of course of the marvellous ordering of nature of Samuel Palmer was to be looked for in an imitative naturalism such as theirs. It was not that. But it was all so pretty. Only the masterly solidity of Madox Brown relieved the prettiness (but with his inane composition called 'Work'). The method of depicting objects one by one (the portrait of a leaf, or of a pebble) of the master craftsmen called 'primitive', was, for the Pre-Raphaelite, the *external* model. But he took no interest, apparently, in the *internal* model: so the Pre-Raphaelite Movement proved, in the end, a rebellious, picturesque, but shallow interlude in Victorian philistinism.

The student of course will visit this show: and, as I observed, the general public should not fail to make the journey to Aldgate East if only to see the studies for the Perseus series. I am sure that Burne-Jones ultimately will be valued more than any of these painters. At least there was something he had an overmastering desire to paint, and possessed to a remarkable degree the necessary powers.

At Galerie Apollinaire, the South African sculptor, Lippy Lipshitz, is more gently 'modern' than his older namesake. This is almost a museum of African woods and stone—stinkwood, yellowwood, wonderstone, colmaristone. Lipshitz put them to excellent uses, as in 'End and Beginning'. Ivory, too, in 'Eye' (25). There is an important drawing show, with a surprising geranium, by Bernard Meninsky at Zwemmer's.



'Mother and Child', by F. G. Stephens (1828-1907)



## The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

Sir,—As a commentator on plastic art Mr. Wyndham Lewis is not lightly to be contradicted. I would not venture to argue with him about the relative quality of Holman Hunt, Madox Brown and Burne-Jones after reading his discussion in *THE LISTENER* (22 April) on 'the Pre-Raphaelites (who) called their new movement a "Brotherhood"', especially as he was primarily concerned with the selection of works exhibited at the Whitechapel Art Gallery.

But I do think it a pity that this distinguished artist should help to spread the current mythology about the 'P.R.B.'. Nearly all the generalisations about the 'Pre-Raphaelite Movement' derive from the specially concocted theories of Ruskin, afterwards further falsified by Oscar Wilde. Only Hunt, of the painters who receive most of Mr. Lewis's attention, belonged to the 'Brotherhood'. Madox Brown (the only one who did, in his early phase, submit to the influence of the German Primitives) refused to have anything to do with it. Burne-Jones was still an undergraduate when the P.R.B. finally ended. He and William Morris a little later came under the stimulating influence of Rossetti. Rossetti (who is not mentioned in Mr. Lewis's comments printed in *THE LISTENER*), the greatest personality and genius of the bunch, started to break up the Brotherhood in its second year.—Yours, etc.,

Seaford

R. L. MEGROZ



# Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles or talks printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

## The Early Fabians

Sir,—Mr. Herbert Olivier has made an odd mistake about the sketch by the late Bertha Newcombe. He declares that the figure on the right in that sketch is his brother Lord Olivier and not, as labelled, Graham Wallas. He is mistaken. The figure is a very fair sketch of Wallas in a characteristic attitude, and does not bear the faintest resemblance to Sydney Olivier, who was never with us on Milford Common where the sketch was made.

There are several extant photographs of the two Fabians at the period in question. They establish beyond all doubt that Herbert has forgotten what Sydney looked like, and must have contemplated him with the careless eye of a younger brother rather than with the vision of an eminent portrait painter.—Yours, etc.,  
Ayot St. Lawrence. G. BERNARD SHAW.

## Dr. Summerskill's Broadcast

Sir,—If Lord Cherwell's estimate of the under-nourished portion of the population were correct, the effect would be shown in a rising death-rate and a general fall in the health of the people. Statistics and observation alike testify to the opposite. Both the present Government and its predecessor are to be congratulated on the improvement of public health in the face of world food-shortage and other economic difficulties.

The fallacy in Lord Cherwell's estimate is his assumption that all persons without access to supplementary food-supplies are under-nourished. Most persons live in families and share their rations. If, in a family of six, four obtain school or canteen means, the remaining two benefit indirectly by a larger share of rations. Even in the case of elderly persons living alone and unable to get outside meals, rations, points, and various foods sold outside the rations and without points should in most cases supply adequate nourishment. Lord Cherwell's estimate seems fantastic.—Yours, etc.,  
Amersham

A. MORLEY DAVIES

## The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

Sir,—In his letter Mr. Mégroz should surely have gone on to enquire why people persist in assembling these large exhibitions of what they call 'Pre-Raphaelites'. Since the latter are practically non-existent—it being a purely mythical movement, except for one or two authentic P.R.B.s—and the aforesaid exhibitions made up of all sorts and conditions of painters, according to fancy (the 'Nazarener' Dyce, for instance), is it not high time that they were discontinued? To this view we are irresistibly led, seeing that the most obvious symptom of what Mr. Mégroz describes as 'the current mythology about the P.R.B.' is precisely these repeated exhibitions (unless, of course, we

repudiate peremptorily the term 'myth'). Meanwhile, however, between Stephen's 'Mother and Child', Ford Madox Brown's 'The Last of England', and Millais' 'Blind Girl', there is a very close family identity of style and spirit. Though I know as well as Mr. Mégroz that Madox Brown declined to put P.R.B. after his name, I do not take that refusal so seriously. No doubt he had his reasons. But since the whole business of this non-existent Fraternity—if it can be established that it is a modern fiction—interests Mr. Mégroz so much, let him agitate as I have indicated: he might even—who knows?—succeed in busting the centenary that threatens.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

## Artists in the U.S.S.R.

Sir,—Professor Levy is confident that in the Soviet Union freedom of artists is in safe hands. On February 10 the Central Committee of the Communist Party (U.S.S.R.) issued a long statement with decrees condemning certain Soviet musical trends. It also noted 'the absolutely intolerable condition of Soviet musical criticism. The leading places . . . are occupied by enemies of Russian realist music'; and that '... this unhappy situation . . . is the result of that erroneous line of action . . . laid down by the Arts Committee (attached to the Council of U.S.S.R. ministers) and also the Organising Committee of



# Augustus John and the Royal Academy

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE most distinguished Royal Academician exhibits not in the R.A. but where (to go no farther) he has more elbow-room, namely in the Leicester Galleries. Augustus John has got together this one-man show with more than usual care. A good proportion of its thirty-six paintings, with a wall full of drawings, are of recent date. These are not the least interesting—as witness the portrait head and shoulders of Dylan Thomas, a diminutive masterpiece: or the equally fine (big scale) 'Canadian Girl'.

Of the earlier portraits, we have Henry, most romantic of John's sons, in one canvas as an Arab, and then (inset) neither as Arab nor seminarian, but just his handsome self. The Governor Fuller portrait is here too. One can see exactly the kind of man upon whose decision the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti hung: which proves, once again, what a superb portraitist John is. The Governor gives the spectator a cool, stolid, quiet, quizzical look, which is made slightly funny by a large white daisy (or marguerite). He seems to know that it is up there, as it were sticking to the back of his head. Of course it is part of the background. But he looks so *knowing*, and self-conscious, that he draws the eye to the flower, which is so big and white.

The *pièce de résistance* is as fine an example of Augustus John's large-scale decorative work as I have ever seen, including the cartoon in the Institute at Detroit. In his youth John acquired, with fanatical concentration, great mastery over the visual techniques, great power as it were for power's sake as another man furiously amasses wealth. But subsequently the consciousness of this technical plenitude often has urged him towards something physically commensurate. Such a great groping is to be seen in this exhibition, in a very large composition, with figures, 'The Little Concert' (a cartoon in grisaille). It is to that I was referring above, when I said that if anything John had surpassed himself. Some large public building should be found to house it.

A critic would have to be inordinately fond of paradox to speak of John as a 'classicist'. His legend leads away into the wilds of romanticism. He is a model of 'Faustian Man'. That is the superficial view: but I believe it needs correcting. In fact, of the two departments into which Nietzsche divided the creative spirit, the work of Augustus John is Olympian. In his 'Little Concert', for instance, reigns an Augustan peace. Not a trace of the frantic, the Dionysian, disturbs the immortal crooning of the aged vagrant plucking perfunctorily at a guitar, nor the plump and vacant nymphs darkly observed by the dames of the steeple-hatted Welsh variety. These are stylistic creatures of a world forever sheltered from the intrusions of passion.

This year the critics have been kinder than is their custom to the Royal Academy. A symptom, of course, of the falling back everywhere in England, upon the 'safe line'. Actually, the exhibition is the same as usual. A new feature (but not of a kind to account for the conversion of the fastidious critic) is a sort of inner sanctuary of philistinism—an unholy of unholies—established in a small room beyond the watercolours. There is to be found the controversial triptych—an all-

time low in pictorial vulgarity. Having uttered my annual curse upon this unspeakable institution, let me acclaim in Gallery No. III (same show!) a portrait of surpassing excellence. I refer to A. R. Thomson's portrait of Wenda Rogerson. In colour exquisite, sensitively drawn, it is—rarest of all—most wonderfully well composed. No picture in the exhibition approaches it in excellence; no picture being shown in

London at present (except John's) can match it in beauty and power: and in design it stands quite alone.

Conscientiously examining the exhibits, a pious hope took shape within me. The old ruffians are by far the worst: that is obvious. They will—according to all the portents—be succeeded by a generation of bores, but far less atrociously vulgar and much milder than they are. If I were obliged to give this future a name I should say 'Euston Road', or of that type; innocuous, competent; as to *taste*, there would be no triptyches, the advances in that respect would be tremendous.

A sort of 'Pre-Post-Impressionist Brotherhood' wave sternly back to the sources of Royal Academic art. Nothing truly *academic* is to be found at the R.A., only a tired and diluted impressionism. So the Eustonroader recalls them to their primitive faith. Far more interesting currents exist in this vast and muddy stream, however, having in them the seeds of a true academicism. Algernon Newton's beautifully formalised scenes are known: 'A Wedding at Twickenham', by George Caine, is an agreeable novelty. Or there is 'No. 27 Davis Street, Berkeley Square', by John Cole: and two pre-Raphaelitish pictures in Gallery III, Nos. 135 and 139.

At the back of the monster building in which this huge unsatisfactory exhibition is occurring is Cork Street. There at Roland, Browse and Delbanco's William Nicholson shows a number of small things of great delicacy. Down-

stairs heavily blurred red scenes, in an infernal light, and pairs of black toilers, done by Josef Herman who works among Welsh miners, impressed me.

German Primitives at the Arcade Gallery should be seen: but keeping with the art of the living, Portugal, or the essence of it, is round the corner at Tooth's. The empty brilliance of this land of ornamented facades chills. For here, in a sense, we are as much with the past as at the Arcade Gallery. Tristram Hillier's vision is a cross between that of Chirico and that of the camera, with the latter in the ascendant. But it is not at all without beauty, for all its devastating accuracy, the camera in the end is utterly routed or maybe humanised. Hillier has found his way into the camera's eye. A quite respectably large collection of work by S. J. Peploe, who died in 1935 and is the most distinguished member of the XX century Scottish Modernism, is on view at the Lefevre Galley. Peploe seems to me to have been an artist who was often big and raw and bright, square and blatant, when he was not intended by nature to be that. His colour instincts were delicate and curious, as in 'Young Man' (52) and discreet. But there are many admirable things here—such as 'The Bowler Hat' (5)—and this opportunity should be taken of seeing pictures usually not so far south as this.



'Governor Alvan T. Fuller', by Augustus John



# Round the London Art Galleries

The first of two articles by WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE Courtauld Memorial Exhibition at the Tate Gallery is naturally enough a parade of masterpieces—records of a great collector's triumphs. The number of important, even famous, pictures is surprising. All are of the French Nineteenth-Century School, technically from Corot to Picasso, though these artists are represented by token works only.

Cézanne's 'Card Players' is the trump card, the ace, of the middle gallery. With what sublime absence of enthusiasm they address themselves to this sad pastime! One would expect the acquisition of specimens of his cubist progeny to follow from the possession of major Cézannes—for there is also his 'Man Smoking a Pipe', a picture full of cubistic suggestions. Again, as far as Rouault is concerned, there is only one very small water-colour: but there is the regulation Modigliani—a large red nude, almost a mass-produced article. In the company of all these intently studied masterpieces it looks like what it is—not more than a journeyman cartoonist's outline drawing for *Pêle-Mêle* or something, hurriedly filled in with an opaque red flesh pigment.

If the School of Cézanne is not there, Cézanne himself is represented by a superb little group of canvases. The 'Oakleaves and Apples' is the most classically beautiful still-life he ever painted, I believe. But to return to the first gallery into which the visitor passes, and to the enormous picture which will be the first thing he will see as he enters. Its name is 'Une Baignade': it is by Seurat.

'Une Baignade' was painted while Seurat was still in his (relatively) dark and earthen stage, before he had purified his palette, but that is not important. What a picture! Nothing could bring to life this dull monotonous expanse. The cylindrical tailored dummies of 'La Grande Jatte' or, in the present exhibition, 'Woman Powdering Herself' (who was the artist's mistress, we are told in the catalogue—a Mlle. Knoblock—presumably in an attempt to stimulate interest) are empty pretexts for the trying-out of optical notions, and attempts at a new form of pictorial illusionism. In fact, had his figures remained as photographic in quality as in 'Une Baignade', we should with this method have been presented with a novel example of the 'trompe l'oeil'. As it is, no one can mistake the 'Woman Powdering Herself' for a real woman.

In one respect this exhibition may be of use to the student. Where the authentic break with the past occurred should be clear. Corot or Delacroix was not where it came. 'Le déjeuner sur l'herbe', composed after a group by Raphael, does obviously not belong with the hideous neo-impressionism of Seurat: but nor does it with the impressionism of Monet. It is with surprise that one realises how few actual impressionists there are. It was with them the break came; the disintegration of form, the identification of art with nature, via science. Technically it was the analysis of light, and result of the *plein-air* doctrine, that divided Monet from Rousseau, say, and the Barbizon School. But these two innovations precipitated a transformation of outlook. The group-life of French

Impressionism lasted little more than fifteen years. Three names, no more, and the work they stand for—Monet, Pissarro, Sisley—are Impressionism.

If Manet was a man of the museums, so was Cézanne whom he so despised. 'I should like to do something solid and durable', were Cézanne's words, 'like the art of the museums'. But a complete impressionist could only feel embarrassment or boredom in a museum.

Degas, who continuously exhibited with this group from the first, whatever it called itself, strenuously objected during the period when it made use of the term 'Impressionist'. His doctrinally linear canvases could certainly not be described as 'impressions', in the way that the sketchy and spotty *plein-air* work of many of his friends could. That some picture of his in the Salon once secured for him most warm recognition from Puvis de Chavannes is easy to understand bearing in mind his frieze of brown-skinned boys called 'Spartan Games'.

These are the old masters of the modern age. Several good specimens of the work of Toulouse-Lautrec whom I have not mentioned are at the Tate, such as No. 79, 'Jane Avril Leaving the Moulin-Rouge'. The contents of a very early sketch-book by Toulouse are on view, for the information of those particularly interested in this artist, at the Marlborough Gallery, mostly of horses in action. For admirers of Mr. Graham Sutherland the Hanover Gallery offers an opportunity of seeing, in satisfactory quantity, that artist's recent work. The general effect is somewhat garish and raw. The objects or themes dominating all these still-lives or abstract compositions are either palms, bananas, a cactus,

cicadas, or vines. Of the large canvases, 'Palm and Wall' is, I think, to be preferred, with its whitewashed screens, to the hotter 'Large Palm Pergola'—which is too large; its flat unbroken spaces of strawberry pink or canary yellow cry out: but what they harshly demand is to be filled, if only by a variation in the texture of their surfaces. Very successful, it appears to me, are—to take two examples—'Landscape with Banana Leaf', and 'Still-Life with Banana Leaf'.

At the Redfern Gallery is a first small one-man show of much promise. There are not many good artists, so this newcomer ought to receive a loud welcome. It is the Cornish landscape which lies beneath these masks and skeletal shapes of Mr. Bryan Wynter's, for the most part small water-colours or gouaches: sometimes a cottage will stick out, door, window and all, but as a rule is submerged. These small pictures are the intellectual essence of the jig-saw puzzle: but they manage to be as romantic as the big slumbrous port of Christopher Wood's downstairs in the same gallery. Mr. Wynter's birds belong with his landscapes, and deserve the highest praise. At the same gallery Mr. David Jones has a number of large and characteristic water-colours representing a fairy-book world. I am reserving for a further article next week the Vuillards (see the cover of this number) and Renoirs at Wildenstein's and the Lefevre Gallery respectively.



'La Serveuse de Bocks', by Edouard Manet, from the Courtauld Memorial Exhibition



# Round the London Art Galleries

The second of two articles by WYNDHAM LEWIS

AT the Wildenstein Galleries, New Bond Street, the exhibition of the work of Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940) is a great artistic event, the first exhibition of this artist's work that has been seen in England. Revolutions of great violence in the fine arts began to occur about the time his reputation normally would have taken on more substantial proportions, especially internationally. As it was, something like eclipse attended him: the cubist steamroller flattened out his *petit bourgeois* 'intimacies'. Everybody knew of him, but for thirty years he was a background figure, while fresh waves of revolutionaries charged into the lime-light one after the other. It is probable that without this *contre-temps* he might have put forth more solid blossoms.

The present writer was not aware that he still lived until he died: yet as late as the nineteen-thirties he was painting superb pictures, and the nineteen-twenties was probably his best period. But now the lid is to be removed—for the Museum of Modern Art has put on a major show of Bonnard's work also. We should be hearing a good deal more of the *intimistes*, as they were called, in the immediate future. It is as it should be that Bonnard comes into the foreground in New York, Vuillard in London. The former was a dashing fellow as compared with his quietistic, monosyllabic friend, all prudence and integrity: who, if you go to Wildenstein's, you will find is diabolically sensitive, as pattern-making an animal as any Indian, as a draughtsman a peer of one of his two cherished models, namely Degas: whereas his colour is of astonishing subtlety, beauty and range. How with all these intense and captivating endowments he can have remained so placid appeared to have puzzled one, at least, of his intimates.

The 'Seated Woman in Interior' from the Tate, which decorated THE LISTENER'S cover last week, is the only intrusion of youth in a collection given up to old age or its ante-chambers. Vuillard is fond of middle age, but still more of what succeeds it. Rembrandt far preferred sitters to have passed their eightieth year, and Vuillard, who singled him out for particular admiration, was much the same. He did not really paint his friends until they were conditioned, as it were, by time. And so we have the truly magnificent 'Portrait of Roussel in his Studio', to be seen in this show. Roussel is a small seated figure at the bottom of a dark, shadowy and precipitous cave—he is boxed in (enthroned) with a cluster of deep blue shafts. He inclines himself sideways towards us, with his uniformly lined mask like a Chinese sage. He is cut off at the waist, we only see the trunk: pathetically overwhelmed in his gigantic burrow.

Quite near to this is a 'Portrait of Bonnard'. That is very different. Bonnard is on his feet and taut, difficult, it would seem, to subdue to the correct degree of quiescence. Both these splendid portraits are dated 1925. 'Madame Kapferer', who, as the largest figure painting present, has the place of honour, is evidently blind, or nearly so, and her hands

are held before her above the lap in devotional habit. It is, however, too high in key and too distinct in treatment, for dramatic effectiveness. The other side of Madame Kapferer is 'The Roussel Family'. It does not disprove what was written above, as to Vuillard omitting to paint his friends when they were young; for this is a *genre* picture. The old mother in the centre—her face identical in colour with the wall behind it, the only sign of life a dull scarcely visible light in her eyes as she watches the baby without a face—is No. 1 figure in this fine canvas.

Vuillard is the last great impressionist. But were he a true impressionist you would not have encountered in this article the expressions of delighted recognition you have read. Since one of the essentials of Impressionism was *plein air* (and he was only interested in interiors) and another essential was the analysis of light, and the achieving of a maximum luminosity (and he loved only discreet tonalities), he was not impressionist without large qualification obviously. Then he carefully composes his pictures: they are not just jabbed in and left—*impressions*. Yet he himself, at the last, felt, we are told, dissatisfied. In looking back he considered they were 'sketches' only: and he set out to produce something complete—that would not be merely a 'sketch' or impression. And it is because of the 'sketch' factor that he remains an impressionist.

His desire for the perfect, the 'finished', rather than the sketch, is reminiscent of Cézanne, whom in other ways he recalls. Nearly all his friends—Denis, Roussel, Vallotton—leaned to the classical side, or like Denis were confirmed classicists. This played its part in regulating, at least, his Impressionism: one influence and another assisted at the emergence, at all events, of a dish that could only have been cooked in Paris, at a

certain period, of which I must admit to being very *friand*. But alas, when he 'finishes', the spell is dissolved: all that remains is a full-blooded coloured photograph (cf. 'Dr. Viau in his Dental Surgery').

Not many steps up the street, at the Lefevre Gallery, is a Renoir show: not pretending, happily, to compete with the neighbouring sensational exhibition. Although containing nothing important, it deserves a visit. 'Les Pêches' is an iridescent pyramid which, without the signature, would be attributed to a later hand: an example, we assume, of the outrageous versatility of his early years; and as if to confirm this assumption, hung near it is a picture of academic type, as polished and slippery as ice. 'Nu à la méridienne' is a typical small nude, of customary pale salmonish pink with blue eyes. When in 1881 Renoir visited Italy violent disillusion with Impressionism resulted. It was his draughtmanship, he felt, that was most in need of attention: and he practised assiduously. Looking at the shining, hot-coloured, but compact body, then up to the formless countenance, and at the vapourish gluey stuffs in which the body of this 'Nu' is nested, one recalls Renoir's self-criticism: especially so after coming from Wildenstein's.



'Portrait of Madame Kapferer', by Edouard Vuillard



that to try to create the sort of mood of communal excitement that the totalitarians aim at was (a) undemocratic and (b) completely alien to the British character and that we should have to find other means of getting over our difficulties. And I concluded with a modest expression of belief that the necessary adjustment to new difficulties and economic dangers would in fact come out of the political and democratic genius of the British people themselves rather than be imposed from above.

But I am afraid Mr. Pringle deceives himself if he thinks that all that is necessary is peace and quiet and a chance to get on with private living. Would that it were. I can think of nothing nicer. But if he will take the trouble to examine the nature of the international political and economic problems that face this country and the vast readjustments they call for he will see that without an immense national effort in which everyone takes part to the best of their ability there is little chance of our survival as a great nation or even as a solvent one. We have, whether we like it or not, to find a new sense of purpose and a new energy. What, if Mr. Pringle will believe me, I was saying in this broadcast, was that I thought we could be trusted to find them best in our own British way.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.C.1 FRANCIS WILLIAMS

### The Meaning of Democracy

Sir,—Speaking on the western political tradition, Sir Ernest Barker defines 'democracy' as a 'process of government' and, contrasting the divergent conceptions of government in eastern and western Europe but labelling them both 'democratic', he finds 'democracy' a word 'various and particoloured'. This would be true if democracy were in its essence a 'process of government', but this it is not. We only confuse ourselves hopelessly if we do not insist on the simple point that democracy is essentially a way of life, a way of providing an opportunity for discussion and criticism. Inferentially this will lead to legislative and administrative proposals and ultimately it will settle the form of government. The result may be a limited monarchy or a republic; a capitalist state, a socialist state, or even a communist state. But what matters in democracy is not the object aimed at but the method by which it is pursued. If there is no freedom of consent, and, still more, freedom of discussion, the word 'democracy' cannot and should not be used.—Yours, etc.,  
Belfast G. O. SAYLES

### Ideas of Sex

Sir,—I still think Mrs. Winter worries too much over the effect on public morals of popular misconceptions of psycho-analysis and that she is unnecessarily disturbed by the equally uninstructed criticisms of psycho-analytic method advanced by natural scientists. Nevertheless her comment on the relation of science to sexual and ethical codes affords me a further opportunity of clarifying the issue. It is true that the natural scientist is not in a position to throw any light on the nature of morality. Psycho-analysts, on the other hand, have subjected moral processes to the most penetrating researches and have established that both sexual and ethical codes are superimposed on and to a large extent derived from unconscious infantile codes of an incredibly primitive and superstitious nature. For this reason it is essential to determine whether any given moral injunction represents a reasonable consensus of individual and social feeling or is largely a cover for superstition, prejudice and conflict. Hence my original comment that so-called self-discipline is often neurotic in origin.

Mr. O. R. McGregor, still convinced, as no doubt was his grandfather in Victorian times, that prostitution is essentially an economic problem, returns to the fray with undiminished

vigour. In the first place he brushes aside my contention that we have no reliable, controlled and correlated statistics regarding sexual manifestations, either for the eighteenth or the nineteenth or, for the matter of that, the twentieth century; and, in the second, he has an unwarrantably low opinion of those twentieth-century investigations which first established the paramount importance of psychological and developmental factors in all sexual disorders, including prostitution. Mr. McGregor's intransigence tempts me to add fuel to the flames by reminding him that even such 'economic' disorders as pilfering are now known to be determined in a surprising number of instances by the psychological antecedents of the delinquent. Let us, however, agree to differ.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.1 EDWARD GLOVER

### Dr. Summerskill's Broadcast

Sir,—Dr. Summerskill in her broadcast said she turned socialist when she discovered that one-third of the population before the war suffered from some degree of under-nourishment, i.e. got less than the League of Nations minimum of 2887 calories. I pointed out that under her own regime today the position was far worse, since we get on points and rations only 1720 calories. Mr. Morley Davies leapt into the fray, with the claim that it was quite feasible to make up the deficiency from unrationed food.

Twice I have challenged him to tell us how. Twice he has failed to do so. If he expects to be taken seriously he must either answer my challenge or put his pride in his pocket and admit frankly that it cannot be done.—Yours, etc.,  
Oxford CHERWELL

### Standards in Art Criticism

Sir,—The absence of valid and generally accepted standards in contemporary art criticism, the veritable chaos and welter of conflicting opinions which today serve as a substitute for any coherent aesthetic philosophy, are vividly illustrated in the columns of THE LISTENER. Reviewing the Courtauld Memorial Exhibition at the Tate, Mr. Wyndham Lewis takes Seurat, and by implication his admirers, very vigorously to task. Of 'Une Baignade' he exclaims 'What a picture! Nothing could bring to life this dull monotonous expanse'; while the 'Woman Powdering Herself' is an 'empty pretext for the trying out of optical notions'. Now, Sir, unless I am deceived, not long since in THE LISTENER Mr. Herbert Read proclaimed that 'Une Baignade' was one of the greatest of modern masterpieces—if indeed he did not go so far as to pronounce that it is among the most important pictures of any age. Clearly, both of these distinguished critics cannot possibly be right: one of them must be mistaken as to what constitutes the essential attributes of a great work of art. Memories in these matters are mercifully short, and such contradictions are commonly overlooked. But their effect is cumulative: gradually they foster in the bewildered public a conviction that there are no valid standards in art criticism at all, and that personal predilections are the sole explanation of such diametrically opposite views.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.4 RALPH EDWARDS

### Taxation, Incentives and Social Insurance

Sir,—I am much interested by the letter from Mr. L. J. Cadbury in your issue of June 3. I agree with him in thinking it essential that family allowances in the middle classes should be made proportionate to income, as a matter of population policy as well as of social justice. But he is surely wrong in condemning Mr. Chambers's scheme of income-tax simplification on these grounds. There is nothing in his pro-

posals to prevent an arrangement on the lines proposed by Mr. Cadbury in respect of the taxpayer above the £500-a-year category.

To insist on retaining an obsolete system of income-tax collection which is costing the country anything from £50,000,000 to £100,000,000 a year, quite apart from its disincentive drawbacks, cannot possibly be of assistance to the middle classes, or anyone else, in the long run. If there is something which is good in the existing system, let us embody it in the new one, but not at the cost of retaining all the uneconomic features of the present arrangement.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Chambers's proposals represent a means of re-distributing income in a manner favourable to the man with several dependants, and not the reverse, as Mr. Cadbury's letter might seem to imply. For the great majority of families, it would provide a real improvement of their position.—Yours, etc.,  
London, S.W.1 JULIET RHYS-WILLIAMS

## Human Rights

(continued from page 961)

to conduct its own examination not only of the petitioner but of officials of the accused government as well.

Then if these difficulties of ascertaining the true facts have been surmounted, there arises, supposing that the complaint seems to be justified, the question of what is to be done to put the matter right. Presumably, in the first instance, a process of conciliation would be tried, and one would hope that in many cases this would succeed. But conciliation might fail, and there must be measures in reserve for that event. If it does fail, the next step that the sub-committee suggests is one that was strongly pressed by the representative of Australia, namely that the matter should be submitted for final judicial decision to a new Court of Human Rights, and that in the event—the unlikely event as the sub-committee hopes—of the judgment of this Court being disregarded, the matter should then be referred to the General Assembly to take such further action as might be possible. A British proposal went rather further than this and proposed that a state which the General Assembly found to have persistently violated the Bill of Rights should be liable to be expelled from the United Nations. These proposals seem reasonable, and they probably go at least as far as is practicable. They provide means of pressure which might be effective in many cases, pressure, it will be noted, but not actual compulsion. Even so, the representative of the U.S.S.R. objected to them as being contrary to the sovereignty and independence of States, as opening the possibility of intervention in States' internal affairs, and being therefore unacceptable.

One conclusion at least emerges; it would be a disastrous mistake to proceed too quickly. The present intention seems to be that either this year or next the General Assembly should approve some definite scheme. That seems to me an attempt to move much too quickly, for it is no depreciation of the work that the Commission has already done to say that much still remains to be done. I cannot help feeling also that in the present state of international tension, and in the absence of any real consensus of opinion either as to the contents of the rights that the individual ought to enjoy or as to the means that should be used to make his rights effective, any agreement on human rights which is concluded in the near future will be unlikely to mark a real advance. Neither a mere manifesto of high-sounding principles, nor an agreement only accepted by those States in which human rights are already decently secured would be of any real value.—Third Programme



# Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles or talks printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

## Western Union by Industrial Union

Sir,—Lord Hinchingsbrooke's enthusiasm for nineteenth-century *laissez-faire* has combined with his feudal nostalgia to make him resist my argument for an agreed economic integration of western Europe. From his somewhat labyrinthine letter, I have extricated these charges: that as an orthodox socialist I am at one with the high motor executives of Coventry; that I am on the side of the producers as against the consumers; that the industrial standardisation which I advocate destroys the individuality of western European life; and that 'along Mr. Edelman's path spoliation is an endless vista'—whatever that may mean.

Sir, to correct Lord Hinchingsbrooke's misapprehensions I should have to reproduce my broadcast. Allow me to say merely that he is out of touch with thought in his own party if he imagines that the idea of economic planning for western Europe is confined to socialists. Like the defence of the west which depends in great measure on the standardisation of weapons and the concerting of plans, the economic revival of western Europe must involve the standardisation of machines, and industrial harmony. Only thus can western Europe have the economic strength to face the U.S.A.—where standardisation for mass-production is so far advanced—as an equal and friendly competitor. Only thus can Britain avoid the necessity of laying her head on the block of American charity that attracts Lord Hinchingsbrooke so fatally.

The essence of my case is that industrial union, industry by industry, will avoid the evils of cartels and pre-war rationalisation, restrictive and harmful to the consumer, by introducing governments as representative of the consumers' interests, into the discussion. Nor need Lord Hinchingsbrooke fear that the results of industrial agreement will be a dead uniformity. On the contrary, it will afford greater opportunities for specialisation.

The values of western Europe can surely best be defended by preserving, in the first instance, its standard of life. That, I believe, is the task to which most upholders of the idea of Western Union will address themselves. Romantic economists, campaigning like Lord Hinchingsbrooke in armour on horseback, are picturesque; but a hindrance to the cause they have at heart.

Yours, etc.,

House of Commons MAURICE EDELMAN

## Standards in Art Criticism

Sir,—Mr. Ralph Edwards is no stickler for precision. Having asserted that in a recent article 'Une Baignade' was rated as a great modern masterpiece by Mr. Herbert Read, he adds 'if indeed he did not go so far as to pronounce

that it is among the most important pictures of any age'. That would indeed be going far, and is a statement of so different an order, that before committing himself to print he might with advantage have checked up on the text of the article.

However, were Mr. Read to say 'Une Baignade' was the equal of a fine El Greco, I should not conform my view to his, in the interest of that 'standard'—or standardisation—of which Mr. Edwards laments the absence. I do not think I should lure Mr. Read out of his mechanical 'Baignade', if it is true (for I was unaware of the fact) that he is a devotee of that hideous canvas. Were we living in classical times, we should all adhere to a canon: were our society totalitarian, there would be an official canon, too. In both these cases Mr. Edwards would have his 'standard'. As it is, ever since the clear-cut battle of the romantics and the classicists, in the days of Delacroix and Ingres, the situation in the fine arts has grown increasingly complex: though even in the first years of the classic-romantic campaigns, there were few romantics who had not a deep nostalgic regard for the classic—or classicists who did not colour tradition with romance. If Mr. Edwards' letter is innocent, as is announced by its tone and content, this answer should supply him with the information he needs.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.2

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—Mr. Ralph Edwards flatters Mr. Wyndham Lewis by pretending to take his dislike of Seurat's 'Une Baignade' quite seriously. He is too solemn also if he really thinks that 'the welter of conflicting opinions' on art today serves in any sense as 'a substitute for any coherent aesthetic philosophy'. Surely art criticism as it is practised today has no concern whatever with coherence or with philosophy. We are nowadays witnesses of the complete separation of criticism from art history on the one hand, and philosophy of aesthetics on the other. The average art critic of the daily and weekly papers, and of many of the monthlies too, merely describes and records his own reactions, in such a way as to endeavour to arouse some interest in the reader—a valuable activity, no doubt. But he seldom makes any pretence to know the first thing about the history of art, or about the philosophy of aesthetics. He is scared to death if an editor asks him to review a dealer's exhibition of Old Masters, or a book on the Psychology of Perception. Often he is so naive as to confess blandly that Chinese art, or Rembrandt, or Indian sculpture, is unintelligible to him. No doubt this is intended as an ingratiating gesture towards *l'homme moyen sensuel*; oddly enough, nobody seems to regard it as a disqualification for his job.

When such random remarks as he does let fall happen to conflict with those of another critic, or with the sober judgment of an eminent art historian or philosopher, need one begin to wonder about the possibility of 'valid standards' of evaluation? Mr. Edwards' sense of humour should allow him to see that it would give Mr. Lewis no pleasure to dislike 'Une Baignade' if Seurat were not a revered master and that picture his masterpiece.—Yours, etc.,

Rubery

A. C. SEWTER

Sir,—The absence of valid standards in contemporary art criticism, to which Mr. Ralph Edwards refers, is not confined to this country. In America it has been recognised by a spectacular move on the part of the Institute of Modern Art at Boston which has this year changed its name to the Institute of Contemporary Art. In explanation of its action it has issued a challenging statement applicable alike to the criticism which Mr. Edwards quotes and to the even more extravagant appraisals that have been made of some of the 'modern' sculpture now exhibited in Battersea Park. The Boston Statement, which is concerned with developments of the past thirty-five years, declares that 'modern art' has come to signify for millions something unintelligible, even meaningless, and does not hesitate to assert that valid artistic expression has often been exploited for purposes of propaganda or sensationalism. It boldly accepts for the Institute the responsibility of distinguishing 'the good art from the bad, the sincere from the sham, the perceptive from the obtuse', and adds:

It must also proclaim standards of excellence which the public may comprehend. These responsibilities cannot be evaded on the ground that time may reverse such judgments.

It will be the function of the Institute to endorse 'that Art which is the full embodiment of the artist's creative impulse and draws strength both from experiment and tradition'. Its endorsement will take the form of 'exhibition, publication and, where possible, the effective integration of art with commerce and industry'.

Others besides Mr. Ralph Edwards and myself would certainly welcome a similar movement in this country to establish valid standards to which both art critics and responsible organisers of public exhibitions should conform.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.1

DAVID STELLING

## Vuillard Exhibition of 1934

Sir,—In his notice of the Vuillard exhibition at the Wildenstein Galleries your art critic states that it is 'the first exhibition of this artist's work that has been seen in England'.



# Letters to the Editor

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## Mr. Forster on the Aldeburgh Festival

Sir,—Mr. E. M. Forster, in 'Looking Back on the Aldeburgh Festival', says of Benjamin Britten's 'St. Nicholas' that this cantata 'has been written for Lancing College and was only performed by its courtesy, and so a full account of it would be out of place'. I do not know what he considers a full account; his own runs to some hundred words. The London press was not enabled to give any account whatever. Indeed, unlike the local press, we were excluded from the whole of this festival. Mr. Forster appears to have been more fortunate in obtaining the permission of the festival authorities to write his description and to broadcast it. Many will be grateful to him. But the case of this new cantata is different. We outsiders were asked not to mention it since it was, as Mr. Forster owns, commissioned by Lancing College for a first performance there. Yet Mr. Forster did, in fact, give an account of it. I can well understand that he felt 'particularly pleased to be discussing' the new cantata. But knowing that we 'critics and reporters' were not in his fortunate position, might he not have thought again?—Yours, etc.,

London, S.E.3

SCOTT GODDARD

## Standards in Art Criticism

Sir,—Mr. Sewter begins and ends upon a personally offensive note. I will inspect such argument as is to be discovered in between. No *sincere* expression of other than the deepest admiration for 'Une Baignade' is possible—all that is settled once and for all. Such is Mr. Sewter's position. But Seurat died in 1891 at the age of thirty-one: 'Une Baignade' was exhibited in 1884—not 1684. Every art movement, for a century or so, as it has rapidly given place to the next, has furnished its quota of 'masters' and 'masterpieces' for great 'art-historians' and 'aesthetic philosophers' like Mr. Sewter, Neo-impressionism with the rest. Nothing could be less selective. There is no experiment that is not, after the lapse of a few decades—or sooner—canonised. For these philosophies of Mr. Sewter's are, in fact, of the creative-evolutionary type, with a cult of something-in-the-making. Today the nineteenth-century notion of progress has been generally

repudiated. In the arts, however, the glorification of *means* is still operative—if in the main retrospectively.

That such values as those Mr. Sewter would reserve for Seurat are so eternally fixed is untrue, even as that regards the estimates and mental habits—bad as they are—of the contemporary mind. Values have shifted a great deal with regard to Gauguin, and now Van Gogh is in process of revaluation. Seurat is surely not under a glass case. He perpetuated all that Impressionism absorbed from the photograph, especially in his earliest work: and in his 'divisionism' he consummated in the most absolute fashion the typically nineteenth-century *mésalliance* of art and science.

For the rest, there is the not especially edifying spectacle of Mr. Sewter, in a vulgar jeering way, exulting over the press 'expert', so inferior in knowledge to himself (Assistant Director at the Barber Institute). The grotesque insufficiency of the press 'Art Critic', it may be as well to remind this strangely boastful official, is something that the artist, too often its victim, with better right than a mere rampant bookworm, has denounced. Yet were the Barber Institute (to take that as a compliment to Mr. Sewter) and the famous 'Fogg Factory' in Boston to train and supply all Art Critics, here and in the United States, the result would be terrible. Subsequently, no doubt, schools and museums would ask for one of these Barber's blocks (so to speak) or Fogg robots. Indeed already in the United States many provincial museums and institutes have Fogg curators. In conclusion. As to Mr. Sewter's personal offensiveness, it has, in my ears, a familiar ring. In origin, like most personal offensiveness, it is personal, and irrelevant.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—Your eminent critic, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, in his letter last week, appears to regard it as inevitable that standards in art are synonymous with standardisation. I would ask Mr. Wyndham Lewis if he would abolish all standards in life, or solely in the realm of art? One would expect from a man of his far ranging intellectual ability, a deeper perception, which would protect him from falling into such an

elemental error as this confusion of two totally different ideas.

Standardisation, as we in this country are rapidly coming to know only too well, reduces all life to the lowest level, and results in the abandonment of standards, even on purely material levels. On the other hand, a belief in standards in art involves the recognition of certain fundamental qualities which persist throughout the centuries, without in any way affecting the development of ideas, or the changing vision and idiom of expression of successive generations. Surely Mr. Wyndham Lewis would not deny the validity of such essentials as construction, rhythm and balance, which are present in all great painting? Nor, I feel, could he fail to recognise these qualities in both Tintoretto and Picasso, separated though they be by four centuries and a completely different vision of life and method of approach. But neither could he, I imagine, be so foolish as to appraise any painting which was completely lacking in all these three qualities. Therefore, if he accepts these premisses he is accepting standards, but surely not adhering to any definite canon, whether it be classical or romantic.

I sympathise with your other correspondents in their desire for a contemporary art criticism which is based on something more solid than the personal reactions of the critic. For myself, I share Mr. Wyndham Lewis's dislike of 'Une Baignade', but, merely on the score of personal distaste, I should not deny to that picture all of those qualities which my study of painting has convinced me are necessary to the making of a good picture. Mr. Lewis appears to deny the assertion, attributed by Mr. Ralph Edwards to Mr. Herbert Read, that 'Une Baignade' is 'among the most important pictures of any age'. In that denial does he not reveal a, possibly unconscious, recognition of standards?—Yours, etc.,

Edinburgh

MARGERY PORTER

## Ideas of Sex

Sir,—I had not intended to take further part in this discussion, for, as Mr. Beales now points out (June 24), it had strayed a little from the issue that originally divided us, namely, whether there was after all anything particularly



# Letters to the Editor

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## The Aldeburgh Festival

Sir,—In a talk entitled 'Looking Back on the Aldeburgh Festival', printed in THE LISTENER of June 24, E. M. Forster writes: 'The chief item in the first concert was Benjamin Britten's new cantata, "St. Nicholas", which he conducted'.

For the sake of musical history, may I point out that I had the honour to conduct the first performance of 'St. Nicolas' (Eric Crozier's spelling) and I also conducted the second performance. Both took place in the Aldeburgh Parish Church on June 5 and June 12, 1948.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.1

LESLIE WOODGATE

Sir,—Mr. Scott Goddard is justified in censoring my reference to the Britten cantata at Aldeburgh. I was led away by my admiration for the music, and exceeded the brief mention to which I should have confined myself. I apologise to him and to any other critics whom I may have annoyed. I should also like to apologise to the Lancing College authorities; their grievance is perhaps the more substantial, for they commissioned the work.

Mr. Scott Goddard seems furthermore to query my broadcasting about the Festival at all, and here I cannot follow him. I went to Aldeburgh to give a lecture. The B.B.C. approached me afterwards, and invited me to prepare a retrospective talk of a general character. I cannot see that it was improper for them to invite me, or for me to accept.

I have had the advantage of seeing the courteous letter from Mr. Leslie Woodgate which appears in this issue of THE LISTENER. I am very glad that he has called attention to my mistake. It was of course, he, and not Mr. Britten, who conducted the admirable performances of the cantata, and I cannot think what lapse of memory induced me to blunder.

Still ascending, I must next apologise to a saint for mis-spelling his name. That too was unintentional, and that concludes, I should like to think, the list of my errors.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.1

E. M. FORSTER

Sir,—Mr. Scott Goddard writes that 'the London press was excluded from the whole of this Festival'. He is wrong. Four months ago a letter was sent to the editor of each national newspaper from the Festival Committee, expressing regret that free seats could not be given to critics because of limited finance and still more limited space. Any critic who wished to attend performances could, of course, have bought tickets in the normal way. The Festival was mainly financed by small subscriptions from local guarantors and no free seats were given even to those who had worked longest and hardest for its promotion. Two exceptions only were made, when the critics of *The East Anglian Daily Times* and *The Leiston Observer* were invited to performances in acknowledgment of their valuable support in publicising the Festival to its Suffolk audience.

Is it unreasonable to suggest that when London newspapers wish to send representatives to local festivals, they should, by buying tickets, give practical support to a kind of enterprise on which the existence of their critics finally

depends? They may plead precedent in expecting free seats: they cannot plead poverty.

Yours, etc.,

The Festival Office,  
Aldeburgh

ERIC CROZIER

## Origins of Modern Russia

Sir,—Why do normally erudite and careful people write nonsense about the U.S.S.R. and why is it broadcast and printed? No engineer would suggest that the carburettor should be attached to the differential, and if he did no one would print it! But no such rule seems to apply to critics of the U.S.S.R. There is a striking example in Professor Toynbee's talk on 'The Soviet Idea' reported in THE LISTENER of June 17. Let me quote three only of the many points on which I think he has put the carburettor in the differential—all the more shocking because of his general erudition.

The first, which he places in the forefront of his talk, is that 'the Russians' and the rest of the world agree that the Bolshevik revolution was a break in history 'so extreme that, for practical purposes, in trying to understand Russia as she is today, you can start from 1917 and ignore Russia's pre-Communist past'. The truth is that the 'Russians' do not believe anything of the sort. On the contrary, they accept and assert the exact opposite.

The next point is that 'the Russians and their western critics agree in putting it this way: before 1917 Russia was a "capitalist" country; in 1917 she became a "Communist one"'. The answer, again, is that no literate 'Russian' would ever say anything so silly; his view is that his country, so far from 'becoming Communist' at a blow, took at least seven years after 1917 to become substantially Socialist, and is as yet some way from becoming Communist.

The next point is that 'Russia' adopted 'another western way of life in 1917' (i.e., at the moment when she 'became Communist'). Really? Was 'Communism' or the revolution of November, 1917, or the state of society which it introduced, a 'western way of life'? Did any western country have a way of life at all like it? Professor Toynbee, I gather, uses this phrase because he thinks that 'Communism' was made in Germany, apparently because Karl Marx was German. That seems a pretty unscholarly reason; but is it not really nonsense to suggest that in 1917 Communism was a 'western way of life'? It is certainly refreshing nonsense, in comparison with the common line that we must all arrange to be blown to pieces in the next few years because the U.S.S.R. has not adopted the 'western way of life', but is so horribly 'oriental'; but it is still nonsense.—Yours, etc.,

House of Commons

D. N. PRITT

## Standards in Art Criticism

Sir,—Since The Enemy has been reduced, by the unaccustomed attitude of self-defence, to behaviour irresistibly reminiscent of a bad-tempered cat, I may confess that I am terrified neither by his teeth and claws, nor by his savagely arched back and quivering tail. His tail, indeed, provides a suitable handle for my attack; so he must not be surprised if I gently pull it. Mr. Lewis's ruling that personal offensiveness is irrelevant I wholly accept; which saves me the trouble of dealing with one whole

paragraph of his letter, devoted to calling me various unpleasant names, culminating in a 'mere rampant bookworm'. How peculiar that Mr. Lewis should demonstrate such violence in squashing so insignificant an insect!

But the slashes of Mr. Lewis's claws miss me altogether. I am not an apostle of the 'eternally fixed' values. On the contrary, I agree that 'values have shifted a great deal' and that the works of the artists of the past undergo a constant 'process of revaluation'. Neither Seurat, nor Raphael, nor Rembrandt, nor Wyndham Lewis is 'under a glass case'. What then do I mean by referring to 'Une Baignade' as a masterpiece, which will be proof against personal dislike?

Only this, that there are two distinct ways of approaching a judgment of pictures. First the merely personal subjective reaction, demonstrated so lucidly by your eminent critic. Secondly the historical view, which is equally applicable to 1884 as to 1684. In the historical view, 'Une Baignade' would be seen against the background of its own time, of neo- and post-impressionism, of the return to the 'architecture' of pictorial construction, of the whole tendency of contemporary aesthetic feeling, in painters and critics alike. It is in terms of this view that 'Une Baignade' appears as a masterpiece, a crystallisation of the formal ambitions of a phase of taste. Whether I, or Mr. Wyndham Lewis, or anyone else likes or dislikes the picture in 1948 leaves these facts unaffected.

So it seems that we agree about fluctuating values, and we agree about 'the grotesque insufficiency of the press Art Critic'. May I finally conciliate Mr. Lewis by confessing that we even agree about 'Une Baignade' for, masterpiece though it is, I don't like it either.—Yours, etc.,

Rubery

A. C. SEWTER

Sir,—Your correspondent Margery Porter claims that 'construction, rhythm and balance' are 'fundamental qualities which persist (in art) throughout the centuries'. She appears to believe that the appraisal of works of art according to whether they possess these qualities puts criticism on a basis 'more solid than the personal reactions of the critic'. Evidently it has not occurred to her that the only yardstick by which it is possible to measure the extent to which a given work has 'construction, rhythm and balance' is the personal reaction of the critic.

Mr. Edwards also does not seem to realise that a subjective judgment cannot be rendered objective by schematisation. An aesthetic philosophy, no matter how 'coherent', is necessarily a personal invention of which no objective verification is possible. It is a generalised judgment of value, just as the assessment of an individual work of art is a particular judgment of value. Both forms of judgment have an entirely personal origin. That is at once their limitation and their value.—Yours, etc.,

Much Hadham

A. D. B. SYLVESTER

Sir,—Reading this correspondence, Miss Porter's mind has strayed to other levelments than those that would supervene were Mr. Read, myself, and everybody else to reach on all occasions identical judgment about pictures. I made use of the term 'standardisation': in imagination it led her off imperiously to the



food-queue and to where 'utility' garments are displayed. 'Standardisation, as we . . . are rapidly coming to know . . . reduces all life to the lowest level, and results in the abandonment of standards'. So you see, the decay of genteel standards, which Miss Porter attributes to standardisation, she confuses with the relationship of the cultural standardisation necessarily ensuing upon the establishment of a fixed rule, or canon. She is mixing up, so to speak, the Parthenon Frieze with her clothes coupons.

Where Miss Porter speaks of changeless and fundamental qualities, persisting, and providing the obvious nucleus of a universal criterion, she is correct. But where she goes on to use the words 'without in any way affecting the development of ideas . . . of successive generations', she forgets how the twentieth-century art-scene has been one of extreme revolution—not one of people quietly 'developing their ideas', watched over by the Eternal Verities. Finally: standardisation is desirable or the reverse according to the quality of the standard. Of course there are standards. I was astonished by Miss Porter's assumption that I had denied this. What is more, personally I should much prefer on principle a generally recognised rule: but not today.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

### Roman Catholic Church and the West

Sir,—In denying the truth of Mr. Richard O'Sullivan's statement that the Church has always stood for the inalienable right of Christian men and women to profess and practise their faith and educate their children therein, Mr. Harold Binns asserts that it is only to members of their own Communion that such a right is conceded. Presumably his quotation from Cardinal Billot is the best evidence he can produce in support of his contention. Cardinal Billot was notoriously bigoted and his right to be called 'one of the highest authorities on the subject' is, to say the least, questionable, especially as he was the only Cardinal of recent times to be forced to resign his Cardinal's Hat, a fact probably unknown to Mr. Binns.

What cannot be questioned is that the Pope is the highest authority in the Roman Catholic Church; and in his Encyclical 'Christian Education of Youth' Pope Pius XI emphasised more than once the right of all parents to educate their children. Even in a passage in which he was asserting that the Roman Catholic religion was the only true religion, he paused to stress that right of parents, saying: 'And yet she [the Church] so scrupulously respects the sacred natural right of the family to educate its offspring, that she refuses, except under certain conditions and safeguards, to baptise the children of unbelievers or to make any arrangements for their education, until such children are able to make up their minds for themselves and freely embrace the Faith'.

Lest it should be thought that kinship rather than conviction has called me out in support of Mr. Richard O'Sullivan, might I explain that I am not related to him and have never had the good fortune to meet him.—Yours, etc.,

Westcliff-on-Sea

C. J. O'SULLIVAN

### Realities of the Kashmir Problem

Sir,—It has been suggested to me by a friend whose judgment I respect that the reference in my broadcast on Kashmir (published in THE LISTENER of June 24) to the United Nations Commission, which is now on its way to Kashmir, may hamper its work there. My intention was, of course, precisely the opposite. Objection is taken to the words: 'If it tries to impose some solution, however wise in itself, I am afraid it may only add to the confusion'. This, it is suggested, may harden the hearts of

either India or Pakistan, and encourage them to reject a good proposal.

I should be sorry, indeed, if any words of mine were to have any such effect, and I must say I think it most unlikely that they will. But perhaps you will allow me to explain my point a little further, in the hope of clearing up possible misunderstandings. Although I have never, apart from a brief period last autumn, undertaken any official responsibility in India or Pakistan, I have had many friends who have worked as local officials; and those whose record has been most successful have always assured me that, when confronted by a difficult dispute, they have invariably found that the one way to solve it was to get the parties to come and talk, either separately or together, never to prepare a document and then try to get it signed and accepted. The document would be the last stage, not the first. I have followed the developments in Indo-British relations closely over the past twenty years, and I am convinced that what is true of local problems in India applies equally to national problems. Nor does this apply to India only.

It is strange how the fallacy persists that 'the other fellow' can only understand threats and a show of force. Year after year one has heard Englishmen say that those are the only things Indians will understand; and again and again Indians have assured me that they are the only things the Englishman understands. More recently I have heard Indians say that it is the only way to deal with Pakistan, and Pakistanis say that it is the only way to deal with India. Strength and determination no doubt have a place in international dealings; but anything that looks like a threat, any attempt to impose a solution, is the sure road to disaster. If only men would say to themselves: 'How should I behave if I were treated that way?' remembering that 'the other fellow' is in fact a human being very much like himself, some of our difficult international problems might be a little nearer solution.

I do not know any of the five members of the United Nations Commission. But I have reason to believe that they are going to Kashmir with a genuine desire to learn the truth and on the basis of what they learn there, and in the light of their discussions with the statesmen of India and Pakistan and Kashmir, to try to find a way to peace and thereafter to a just solution, based on a free popular vote. Let us hope and pray that they may succeed. Peace in Kashmir is of no less importance to Asia and the world than peace in Palestine.—Yours, etc.,

Birmingham

HORACE ALEXANDER

### Ideas of Sex

Sir,—I have been watching this correspondence with interest, hoping that Dr. Glover would be lured into making some positive statement about the exact nature and methods of this science of psychoanalysis, how it differs from the 'natural' sciences, what training it involves, or what achievements it has made—but in vain. He continues to attack the untrained, the uninstructed, the half-baked, but gives us no opportunity to become more fully baked. (Even a few book-titles would help.) As it is, my previous suspicion is confirmed—that there is an atmosphere of mystery about the equipment of the trained psychoanalyst, which gives him an unfair advantage over his opponents. For instance the psychoanalyst seems to have a habit of refusing to take arguments at their face-value—if one discusses sexual matters frankly, he attributes this to neurotic obsession, and if one does not discuss them at all, he attributes this to prudery and repression.

Therefore I welcome the very positive contribution of Mr. Scott, especially as his authorities appear to agree with my own untrained observations that promiscuity is a sign of immaturity.

Dr. Glover complains that we have strayed from the original subject, Victorian ideas of sex, but as he himself denied that this subject existed in its own right, he can hardly wonder that the discussion has become a general one. He maintains, not very helpfully, that sexual conduct is constant throughout history; I should like to point out another characteristic of human conduct which has persisted throughout history, and that is the idea that men have a certain amount of choice as to whether they indulge in promiscuity (or pilfering, for that matter). Examined from some angles, this idea may appear to be a delusion, but it seems to me the only working basis for a philosophy of life. As soon as a man believes he has no free will, it tends to become true. The Freudian view provides an encouragement, or at least a very good excuse, for this attitude, especially among undergraduates, and in other pseudo-intellectual circles.

And though I fully agree with the arguments of other correspondents as to the influence of economic factors on human conduct, I think a very similar danger (of making people think they have no power of choice in their actions) is implicit in certain current economic doctrines, notably Marxist materialism and its 'fellow-travellers'.—Yours, etc.,

London, N.21

JOAN M. WINTER

Sir,—If I owe apology for intruding into a discussion begun by Mr. H. L. Beales and Dr. Glover, I ask to explain that it was intended to suggest to Dr. Glover that a purely psychological interpretation of social phenomena may be as unrealistic as the purely economic, that the psychological and the economic factor are both abstractions from concrete social reality. The 'economic shibboleth' is a myth (in this discussion) of Dr. Glover's and to reduce the complex of social forces which condition men's behaviour to an abstract 'economic factor', and then further to interpret this factor in terms of simple income, is surely a little innocent?

Dr. Glover would no doubt agree that one's views tend to become an emotional vested interest, which can be argued about rather than argued with, a tendency from which the psychologist is no more immune than any other merely by recognising the fact, but I still regret that he so repeatedly wishes to leave undisturbed the illusions of his critics, even if on compassionate grounds, especially on the question of the relation of science to morality into which he plunged with such airy certitude.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.E.13

F. EVANS

### Borrow and the Gypsy Lore Society

Sir,—In the course of reviewing and praising the recent *Gypsy Folk Tales* edited by the Secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society, Miss Dora E. Yates, I taxed the Society with hostility to the great name of George Borrow; and Mr. Robert W. F. Potter has defended his colleagues in a courteous and temperate letter. Mr. Rupert Croft-Cooke's introduction to the volume lends colour to my charge. Borrow, in his view, is to be blamed for the sentimental attitude to the gypsies which we all deplore. Nothing however could be more foreign to Borrow's own view of the Romany; and if all writers of genius were made responsible for the inferences foolish people have drawn from their works, few would escape. It seemed particularly ungrateful in Mr. Croft-Cooke to turn upon the master without whom, as Mr. Potter excellently says, 'the later *Rais* might never have been attracted to his pleasant paths and fruitful fields of investigation'. And there was the danger that the unwary reader might let himself be warned off one of the supreme geniuses of our nineteenth century.

I have since returned to the scholarly but delightful *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, and have examined every mention of Borrow



## Letters to the Editor

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### Soviet Attitude to the Arts

Sir,—Surely it is odd for Mr. Martin Armstrong (in THE LISTENER of July 1) to suppose that the 'subordination of the creative faculty to a conscious social end' must 'prohibit the exercise of the poetic imagination'. Does he find no poetic imagination in Greek sculpture, Renaissance painting, Gothic cathedral architecture, Milton or Bunyan? It would be hard to deny that these works were created to a most conscious and deliberate social end and I don't suppose their creators felt themselves any less or more free than the Soviet artists to whom dialectical materialism feels as sensible and natural as their beliefs did to the artists of bygone days.—Yours, etc.,  
King's Langley IVOR MONTAGU

### Theoretical Basis of Soviet Communism

Sir,—Does not Mr. John Plamenatz, in his interesting talk on 'Soviet Communism: its Theoretical Basis', in THE LISTENER for June 24, make a very controversial statement in his first paragraph? He says: 'It seems to me that the social and political thinker must construct his theories without paying attention to the conclusions of the speculative philosopher or the natural scientist. The evidence for or against any social or political theory can be provided only by the historian'.

Surely what the social and political thinker cannot afford to construct his theories without paying attention to is the nature of man? Is Mr. Plamenatz then convinced that the evidence for this can be provided *only* by the historian? Is not the inherent fallacy of Marxism to be found in the very fact that it is based on a distorted and incomplete picture of the nature of man? One enters here, of course, upon a very wide field, but it is at least possible that the fact that so very many people feel instinctively something rather sinister about communism, even before they have reached the stage of examining it very closely from the intellectual standpoint, is traceable to this cause. The typical product of communism strikes us as just not wholly 'human'; there is something rather aberrant, in some senses of the word a 'caricature' of the truly human qualities.

Yours, etc.,

Weston-super-Mare I. L. SPENCER

### The Aldeburgh Festival

Sir,—I have read with some interest the letters relating to the performance of the 'St. Nicolas' Cantata at Aldeburgh.

The first official performance, which will be given in Lancing Chapel on July 24, will be conducted by Mr. Britten. Among the 2,000 or more who wish to hear the Cantata we have done our best to insure that not only the music critics, but the press in general, shall be included by invitation, and we only regret that controversy should have arisen, through no fault of ours, in connection with a work commissioned for our centenary celebrations.—Yours, etc.,  
Shoreham-by-Sea F. C. DOHERTY

Head Master, Lancing College

Sir,—Mr. Eric Crozier's letter, published last week, raises an important point of principle which should not be overlooked in any further discussion of the controversy aroused by Mr. Scott Goddard's reasonable complaint.

Mr. Crozier says that the critics of the London papers were at liberty to buy their tickets for the performances at Aldeburgh and presumably to publish their views upon them. Any critic who was unwise enough to write an adverse criticism, however reasoned and fair-minded, would have laid himself open to an action for libel without the protection of the plea of privilege. The invitation to attend performances, with the implied freedom to comment on them, affords the critic that important safeguard from a notoriously imperfect law, and the position cannot be too clearly understood.

Yours, etc.

Cheltenham

DYNELEY HUSSEY

Sir,—I apologise to Mr. E. M. Forster for what I am distressed that he should find in my previous letter, namely a suggestion that there was impropriety in his accepting the B.B.C.'s wise invitation to broadcast on the Aldeburgh Festival. Such a suggestion was never in my mind; and when I said that many would be grateful to him I included myself among his listeners and readers. Let a man go where he likes, say I, and say what he thinks needs saying. Then let him take the consequences, sheltering as best he may both from the storms of hate and from the blistering sun of approval.

Mr. Crozier appears to agree with me as to the right of ingress and the expression of opinion. That, at least, is what I gather from his statement that a critic could have bought tickets for this Festival in the normal way. But does he suggest that the purchase of tickets would have placed me in the same position, in regard to my work as a critic reporting to his paper, as when the normal invitation in the form of press tickets had come my way? If so, I wish he had made that plain in the memorandum circulated to the London press. It is an opinion that needs explicit statement before I, for one, could act on it.—Yours, etc.,  
London, S.E.3

SCOTT GODDARD

### Standards in Art Criticism

Sir,—Mr. Sewter's condescension surely asked for the sort of reply it got from Mr. Wyndham Lewis. But though it is always fascinating to watch the author of *Blast* going in to the attack—for his gifts are best displayed and his 'flavour' most evident when he is disposed to blast or bombard—I fear that the entertainment was given at the cost of further discussion of the main question that this correspondence has emphasised. Mr. Sewter's references to the Psychology of Perception, the philosophy of aesthetics, and so on, are beside the point. These things can inform critical writing without their impressive labels being brandished: indeed a painter-critic like Mr. Lewis is more likely to be able to relate the specialised terms of these subjects to actual visual experience than is the more academic expert.

Braque has said something to the effect that Science reassures us but Art disturbs us. Perhaps the justification of such a distinction is that while science reduces the complexities of experience to the hard, finite terms of a logical system, art simply transcribes experience as such. It is certainly the critic, not the artist, who discovers systems aesthetic or otherwise, in the work of art. But the best critics are more concerned to guide the reader into a position in

which he finds himself free to accept and share the specific experience which a certain work of art contains. A 'valid standard' is a static intellectual counter. It has little lasting connection with that miraculous transcription of an experience gained simultaneously at a number of levels, which is a painting: most critical 'standards' just don't apply—or not for long.

Mr. David Stelling and Mr. Ralph Edwards seem preoccupied with criticism at the expense of art. Is it possible that they wish to avoid the intellectual and emotional disturbance which a good painting should produce in one every time one sees it by having the appropriate 'valid standard' ready to clamp down? We all have an innate tendency to protect ourselves from the imaginative experience of art by interposing a sieve of intellectual criteria. The exercise in visual awareness which every good picture imposes on a receptive spectator can be avoided pretty completely by those whose learning has equipped them with intellectual criteria, but deprived them of an innocent eye.

The only excuse for writing criticism is that for many people the visual experience registered in painting is made more accessible if certain preconceptions are first demolished on their own plane—the intellectual plane. In other words it is previous criticism which makes contemporary criticism a necessity. But the actual words which the critic has used (in discussing an art where colour and form are the medium, not words) have only a temporary validity. The language of the art critic—especially his vocabulary—should be as changing as painting itself: it should be modified ceaselessly. We can never take refuge in unchanging words, or in fixed statements. The validity of our standards—conscious or unconscious—is something that is perpetually disappearing.—Yours, etc.,

Ambleside

PATRICK HERON

Sir,—Mr. Sewter takes eighteen lines to protest that he is quite untouched by what he describes as a vicious attack by a wild cat (namely my last letter—a very savage piece of work you will, I am sure, agree!). I occupy, unfortunately, so much more of Mr. Sewter's field of vision than does Seurat. Again, he states, although he knows this to be inaccurate, that my view of Seurat is 'merely personal'. He is the kind of person who soon would bring any argument to the Tweedledum and Tweedledee stage. So he has growled (with a grimace of heavy insouciance reaching for my imaginary tail)—'Nohow!' Instead of making the appropriate answer, I signify that as far as I am concerned the correspondence ends.

But Seurat is a subject of far more interest than Sewter; let me add a few remarks for the reading public. If 'Une Baignade' or 'La Grande Jatte' appear 'architectural', or seem to introduce design once more into painting, it is largely because Seurat built up his pictures as it were with a lot of little bricks (namely the dots of the *pointilliste* technique). Everything came to look more rigorous and less haphazard: he had frozen impressionism into his formula, imprisoned its untidy freedom in a net of dots. Yet 'Une Baignade', as a picture-postcard, uncoloured, would pass for a photograph. There is no new factor of 'architecture' or 'composition' there—less so than is to be found in Degas. The fact that in this early work Seurat still in the



main used the old earthen palette contributes to its dullness. But a big, bald, unbeautiful picture is a big, bald, unbeautiful picture, whatever part it may play in the professional life of the art-history pundit: in this case a picture so unprepossessing that even Miss Porter and Mr. Sewter admit to feeling, in spite of History, small attraction for it.

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—I mildly deplored his lack of valid and generally accepted standards in contemporary criticism of Art. Mr. Wyndham Lewis replied in a patronising vein—it is comical that he should complain of personal offensiveness—offering me ‘information’ of which I had no need. Now he tells us that ‘of course there are standards’—‘fundamental qualities, persisting, and providing the obvious nucleus of a universal criterion’—though he gives no indication how the criterion should be applied. He even goes so far as to confess that he would ‘much prefer on principle a generally recognised rule’: but not today, which surely suggests that, if he sets store by principle, existing conditions leave something to be desired. He cannot deny that his views of prominent critics are often quite irreconcilable concerning the ‘fundamental qualities’ of a great work of art; and it is highly disingenuous to assume that those who plead for the recognition of standards would like to see standardisation imposed.

I am fully aware that all standards involve judgments of value, as Mr. Sylvester observes—and are therefore subjective, but it is from a consensus of subjective opinions that standards are formed; and there is no apparent reason why ‘the clear-cut battle of romanticism and classicism’ and the subsequent period of ceaseless experiment should render them inoperative. And anyway what is wrong with a subjective judgment? It may well be the only judgment valid or possible within its own sphere. After all, scientific theory involves judgments of value, as we have lately been reminded in THE LISTENER: its exponents would not allow that it is less reliable on that account. I marvel, Sir, at the moderation displayed by Mr. Sewter when so savagely and unjustifiably attacked.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.4

RALPH EDWARDS

### Mr. Francis Williams's Broadcast

Sir,—To deal adequately with all the points in Mr. Williams's last letter would require more space than even you, Sir, with your Job-like patience, could allow. I had hoped that others would have cared to join in this discussion. But obviously Government publicity, as a topic as well as in fact, makes less appeal to readers than the Victorians' ideas about Sex or art critics' ideas about Art. Neither Mr. Williams nor I need be hurt, or even surprised, at this. May I, for my part, briefly conclude this correspondence by pointing out that Mr. Williams fails to separate two completely different kinds of Government publicity. Of course the public wants to know how it is affected by fresh legislation, e.g. National Insurance. In that sense I agree that ‘public information is simply a part of the business of good administration’. But the business of making clear the public's rights and duties under Acts of Parliament differs completely from publicity campaigns for purely voluntary effort—appeals to work harder, for example, or to save more. It was the second kind of publicity which I assumed Mr. Williams and I were discussing.

Ultimately, I suppose, what separates Mr. Williams and myself is that whereas he puts the blame for the sluggish response to Government appeals mainly on the people, I place it mainly on the Government. Whichever of us is right, however, both of us may agree that the fault lies elsewhere than at the purely technical level.

Indeed I have the greatest respect and sympathy for those professionally engaged in Government publicity. It must be a thankless job. Beaver-like they plan and toil all week to encourage, with compelling word and imaginative design, ‘a greater sense of common purpose’ among the citizenry:

Some make big stuff

Some make small.

More from each is

More for all.

And then at the weekend, alas, comes along some politician who, with a few well-chosen words of venom and class-bitterness, contrive to blow their efforts sky-high.—Yours, etc.,

Godalming

JOHN PRINGLE

### Roman Catholic Church and the West

Sir,—Mr. C. J. O'Sullivan may be right in saying that the Jesuit Cardinal Billot was ‘notoriously bigoted’, though it strikes me as an odd term for a Catholic layman to apply to a prince of the Church, and he may also be right in implying (I confess I had never heard that particular bit of sacristy back-chat) that he was ‘forced’ to resign his Cardinal's Hat. But Mr. O'Sullivan is quite wrong in supposing that this in any way invalidates the soundness of the doctrine contained in the quotation I gave from the second part of his *Tractatus de Ecclesia Christi*, the fourth edition of which was published in 1921-22 with the official imprimatur. That doctrine lays it down that non-Catholic parents can claim no right to bring up their children in their own religious beliefs, however sincerely held; for to concede such a ‘right’ to indoctrinate children with heresy would be for a Church, which claims to be the sole divinely inspired guide to truth, tantamount to intellectual suicide.

Nor does Mr. O'Sullivan's citation from Pius XI's Encyclical in any way traverse this entirely lucid statement of Catholic doctrine. Nowhere does the Pope say—nor could he say without contradicting the Church's teaching through the centuries—that heretical parents have the right to teach their children heresy. That, and (for the moment) nothing else is the point at issue.—Yours, etc.,

Bournemouth

HAROLD BINNS

### Reporting Cricket

Sir,—I have only just seen Mr. Salmon's letter. He is, of course, perfectly right in his inference that Mr. Neville Cardus meant to imply by his remark ‘Before lunch 87 runs engaged the attention of the official scorers’, that the batting was so dull, negative and tedious as to engage the attention of nobody else. I apologise profoundly to Mr. Cardus and I trust the sincerity of my apology will not be questioned if I add that my obtuseness was, to my knowledge, shared by some six or seven cricket-lovers of intelligence who also read this remark. I, too, have an admiration for much that Mr. Cardus writes on cricket, but is it not the first duty of a critic—a duty so obvious that I did not mention it in my talk—to make himself easily understood by his readers?—Yours, etc.,

London, W.1

BASSET SCOTT

### Dr. Summerskill's Broadcast

Sir,—I thought I had made clear my inability to meet Lord Cherwell's demand for a ‘menu’ when I said that I was concerned with results, not ways and means; but if a further admission will comfort him, I make it now. I cannot, for instance, explain how the old people of Wolverhampton supplement their rations adequately, but that does not alter the fact that nearly all of them do so.

I must thank Mr. Eddie Williams for supplying the kind of evidence that Lord Cherwell

has failed to produce. But he should surely add two other categories of the adequately nourished: adult workers getting canteen or restaurant dinners, and rural or suburban dwellers with gardens or allotments and able to keep twice the laying hens they are rationed for. His evidence shows that undernourishment is more extensive than I had realised, but I do not think it is as bad everywhere as in the places he cites. However, I withdraw my description of Lord Cherwell's 66 per cent. as ‘fantastic’, but still regard it as much exaggerated. In a recent Gallup Poll enquiry as to people's greatest worry, about 50 per cent. gave the general rise in living costs, about 25 the food supply, the rest gave housing and other troubles. Many persons find the food supply their worst headache without being at all undernourished.—Yours, etc.,

Amersham

A. MORLEY DAVIES

[This correspondence is now closed.—EDITOR, THE LISTENER]

### Tutankhamen and Nefertiti

Sir,—Let me point out some slight mistakes which occur in the talk on ‘Akhetaton: City of the Sun’ in your June 3 issue. Mr. Kirwan represents Tutankhamen as the younger brother of Akhenaton, and would have us believe that Nefertiti was not only the wife but also the sister of the Pharaoh. Surely both assertions must be false. According to the best authorities Echnaton was the son of Amenhotep III and his wife Teje (whose parents Juua and Tuju have endeared themselves to Egyptologists by letting themselves be discovered in their untouched grave some forty years ago), and Nefertiti was the daughter of the high priest of Amon, Eje, himself a successor of Echnaton on the throne. And Tutankhamen, who succeeded Eje as ruler of both kingdoms, appears not to be any blood relative at all of Echnaton, but a boy of uncertain birth who was educated in the palace and married a younger daughter of the royal household.—Yours, etc.,

Karlskoga

TORRE HASSELGREN

Chairman, Anglo-Swedish Society of Karlskoga

### ‘Historical’ Plants

Sir,—Six centuries ago Chaucer was laughing at relic-mongers, and now Sir Stephen Tallents would revive the old game. He wants to see gardens of ‘historical’ plants, stocked with the descendants of such celebrities as the apple tree that dropped its gentle hint on Newton's head. He has himself a tree which can trace its genealogy right back to this fairy tale!

It is only fair to say that, in his broadcast, Sir Stephen admitted his ignorance of history, though he claimed to have picked up a little from herbaceous borders. But his suggestion that these ‘historical’ gardens might start a plant relic trade is sound business. It would ease the dollar shortage. What price the progeny of the famous apple that William Tell shot at? Or a descendant of the original Apple of Discord? And if pressed, we could surely supply a limited number of bushes derived from the blushing pippin that tempted Mother Eve.—Yours, etc.,

Headington

STEPHEN SCHOFIELD

### Radio's Commonest Misquotation?

Sir,—What is radio's commonest misquotation? My answer: ‘fresh fields and pastures new’. It keeps on turning up. Welsh Children's Hour a week ago contained a programme called ‘Fresh Fields’ and July ‘Out of Doors’ included my old friend too, concealed in a chat on the Laughing Frog. In this matter of quotation a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Yours, etc.,

Talgarth

MERVYN JENKINS



Sir,—Let me hasten to assure Mr. Ivor Montagu that I find lots of poetic imagination in Greek sculpture, Renaissance painting, and Gothic cathedrals, but I very much doubt if the artists who produced them did so 'to a most conscious and deliberate social end'. They were far too intent on realising their poetic visions to worry about the social function of their creations. No doubt the Soviet artist who is able to identify himself completely with the present regime in Russia is equally free, but what about the composers Prokofiev and Shostakovich and writers such as Zoschenko who have been severely reprimanded for not subordinating their creative faculty to a conscious social end? *Subordination* is the important word in my contention.

Yours, etc.,

Sutton, Pulborough MARTIN ARMSTRONG

### Standards in Art Criticism

Sir,—Mr. Patrick Heron suggests that Mr. Ralph Edwards and I are preoccupied with criticism 'at the expense of art', whatever that may mean. But it was criticism that was under discussion, that is, the published opinions of the professional critics whose 'intellectual and emotional disturbances' in the presence of the same picture were diametrically opposite to one another. Mr. Heron, of course, triumphantly disposes of the question by begging it. The pictures that he visualises in his argument are 'a good painting' or 'every good picture' or 'that miraculous transcription . . . which is painting'. Is he thinking of characteristic work by Alma Tadema or El Greco or Vermeer or Marcus Stone or Leonardo or Frith or a painter of the Surrealist School? Possibly he would include some of these but exclude others. If so, why? It may satisfy Mr. Patrick Heron to say that some of those pictures engendered in him as a receptive spectator the proper sort of disturbances, but I had a maiden aunt who regarded Marcus Stone's canvases as 'miraculous transcriptions', etc. How am I, Mr. Heron's innocent-eyed beholder, to decide whether to be guided by him or by my aunt or even by Mr. Herbert Read (who differs from Mr. Lewis without arousing in him the reactions of the cuttlefish), unless I have some idea of what are their qualifications for expressing any opinion at all, or in other words whether their standards of judgment have any validity.

As to what Mr. Ralph Edwards and I—and for that matter the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art—mean by valid standards, the last word was said on this subject by Matthew Arnold in his essay on 'The Study of Poetry'. It is worth Mr. Heron's re-perusal.

Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.1 DAVID STELLING

Sir,—Mr. Edwards again! These museum officials work in shifts. But he now comes forward with a new illustration of my uncivilised behaviour. This dates from the first exchanges of this correspondence; his opening letter and my response to it. It appears from the start I have behaved most brutally. But here is what he says. 'I mildly deplored his lack of valid . . . standards . . . Mr. Wyndham Lewis replied in a patronising vein—it is comical that he should complain of personal offensiveness—offering me "information" of which I had no need.' So Mr. Edwards provides an alibi for his colleague (I mean so that he can call me insincere or anything else he choose) on the ground that I was awfully offensive to him (Mr. Edwards) to begin with. This however is a very transparent stratagem.

Mr. Edwards could not be so conceited as to take for granted that his name at the foot of a letter meant anything in particular to me. It in fact did not. He might have been any culture-

spiv or, again, energetic layman with an itch for knowledge, for all I knew to the contrary. Yet the talk of 'personal offensiveness' would only have meaning had the identity of the letter-writer been known to me, or had I realised that a learned custodian of art treasures like Mr. Edwards was involved. The first missive was another stratagem, probably conceived in the pleasant expectation of effecting a public collision between Mr. Read and myself.

Turning to what is non-personal in Mr. Edwards' letter—if one can so describe any of it: he claims to discover in what I wrote the week before nothing but confusion. 'Of course there are standards' I wrote (and he quotes). Who on earth would deny—my words mean—that such things exist, and always have existed. But I 'even go so far', says Mr. Edwards, as to say (quotes) 'I would much prefer on principle a generally accepted rule'.

Now here is where—and how—Mr. Edwards jumbled things up. A rule (or standard, or canon—same thing) is a very particular application of the aesthetic sense, confined to a given community, at a given moment of its history: Florence, Crete, Indo-China, the Inca world. To Miss Porter's wistful assertion that a changeless and fundamental quality persists, providing the obvious nucleus of a universal criterion, I gave my assent: but at the same time pointed out that this transcendent entity cut no ice at all—how the twentieth century had been one of extreme revolution in the arts. A new rule, or standard, every six months at one time obtained. Although an Inca craftsman and Raphael and Phidias and Epstein possess a common core or experience, and out of this fundamental community a universal criterion might, under certain circumstances, be educed, and put into operation—all that has no bearing upon the contemporary scene. But in my reply to Miss Porter—and it is that I am emphasising here—the latter question is quite distinct from that of standards and of standardisation. Mr. Edwards has merged them, and criticised me upon the basis of that identity.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11 WYNDHAM LEWIS

### The Aldeburgh Festival

Sir,—It is plain that critics cannot write freely unless they are protected from the law of libel. It is equally plain that small enterprises like the Aldeburgh Festival cannot afford to subsidise that freedom by giving complimentary tickets to the critics of the national Press.

The Aldeburgh Festival Committee will be happy to give an assurance of privilege to any critic who wishes to attend its Festival in future years. With that assurance, it is to be hoped that critics will not again suspect an infringement of their professional rights if a visitor to Aldeburgh buys tickets, enjoys the Festival and shares that enjoyment with others, as Mr. E. M. Forster did in the excellent broadcast that prompted this correspondence.—Yours, etc.,

The Festival Office, ERIC CROZIER  
Aldeburgh

### Mr. Francis Williams's Broadcast

Sir,—One final word only before Mr. Pringle and I shake hands and call it a day with, I hope, the pleasantest feelings on both sides.

He is quite wrong in thinking I put the blame for what he describes as the sluggish response to government appeals mainly on the people—while he puts it on the Government. I don't blame anybody. I regard it as natural and unavoidable. Indeed that, if I may say so, was exactly the thesis of my original broadcast in which the argument was that within a democratic context and particularly a British context an immediate emotional response to Government appeals was not to be expected—and that

such an immediate response could only be induced by the use of methods and techniques which were essentially undemocratic and ought not therefore to be employed in any circumstances.

That does not mean that I think government appeals and still more government explanations of national problems useless. On the contrary I believe government information services are an essential instrument of modern democracy. But they are only one among several ways in which public knowledge is developed and public understanding of what needs to be done to overcome national problems awakened. Parliamentary debates, Press comments and reports, the pressure of events, personal experience—it is a synthesis of all these, with the Information Services adding their useful contribution of fact and exposition, that produces the public reaction to national problems. If the reaction sometimes seems slow that does not seem to me a matter for blame. Indeed what I was concerned to say in my original broadcast was that it seemed to me natural to the British character that it should be.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1 FRANCIS WILLIAMS

### Roman Catholic Church and the West

Sir,—Mr. Binns's astonishment at my criticism of Cardinal Billot does not, of course, answer it; nor does his ignorance of the Cardinal's resignation alter the fact of it. So I remain unimpressed with his authority as compared with the undoubted authority of the Pope and still cannot see how Pope Pius XI's words: 'And yet she so scrupulously respects the sacred natural right of the family to educate its offspring . . . followed by the reference to "unbelievers" can mean anything less than that the Church concedes this right to non-Catholics.

The present Pope touched on the same subject in his Christmas 1942 broadcast in which he outlined his 'Five fundamental points for the peaceful ordering of Human Society'. He did not restate the principle but took it for granted when, in dealing with one of his points—'The protection of Social Unity, and especially of the Family'—he said that he who would have permanent social peace must (among other things) 'give to the family, which is the irreplaceable unit of Society, the space, light, and air that it needs in order to fulfil its mission of perpetuating new life, and of educating children in a spirit corresponding with its own true religious convictions'. In case this statement, too, be misinterpreted, it should be emphasised that the Pope had previously stated that he was speaking not merely to his own flock but also 'to all those who are united with Us at least by the spiritual bond of belief in God'.

If, however, Mr. Binns is right and my interpretation of Catholic doctrine is wrong, then I fear that almost all the members of the present and past governments of Eire are Hell bound; for not only have they applied this interpretation in practice to the extent of financing the building of non-Catholic schools for the very small non-Catholic minority of their country but they have persevered in their sin by maintaining them.—Yours, etc.,

Westcliff-on-Sea C. J. O'SULLIVAN

### 'Radio's Commonest Misquotation'

Sir,—In your issue of July 15 Mr. Mervyn Jenkins complains that radio's commonest misquotation is 'fresh fields and pastures new'. He goes on to say that in this matter of quotations 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing'. It is indeed, for Mr. Jenkins has been hoist with his own petard. 'A little knowledge' is quite as common as 'fresh fields'. Or was Mr. Jenkins' tongue in his cheek?—Yours, etc.,

Wallington JOHN F. WAY



# Round the London Art Exhibitions

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**A**T times the sturdy patriot-critic turns a blind eye to the obvious: we hear him assert that *now* the centre of artistic activity has shifted from Paris to London. Since no French canvas is any longer admitted to these islands (culturally blockaded by their own government) to promote this illusion presents no difficulties.

But the Paris *mode* in the fine arts has been practically static for two decades. That is all right: the model is so excellent, why change? Why should the English painter not, for the rest of time, ring the changes upon Picasso-Matisse-Modigliani - Braque - Dufy, etc.? There is only one thing: England is so extraordinarily different a place from France. For myself, in the blaze of colour from the walls of Bond Street galleries I bask happily. Logic obliges us, that is all, to ask: Should a painter's work correspond with his environment? Were the dingy London greys of Sickert and Whistler the logical palette for a Londoner?

Upon entering the Adams Gallery, 92 New Bond Street, where 'Ten Young British Artists' have staged a show, no one could complain that the effect is exotic. The 'Ten' belong to another climate of opinion altogether to Bond Street, 1948. They are the dark past. Caine I first noted in the Royal Academy:

he, Cole, and Newton are excellent unadventurous painters. Farther down, in the London Gallery, Brook Street, it is more bracing. There all is excitement. Everybody there is living on their nerves—or somebody else's nerves—and painting on them of course too. An interesting Polish artist, Aleksander Zyw, is to be seen for the first time. But downstairs is where the main excitement is. Mr. Austin Cooper has a number of pictures which are like nothing I have ever seen. He provided me with sensations, too, of an order I have never experienced before.

His is an abstract universe, but violently alive. His backgrounds as a poster-ace provide him with a great experience of natural form. This attempts to break through, but fails. There is no vestige of our logic, yet for another artist it is unquestionably a *speech*—a wild tongue. I do not desire to repeat the sensation: I would be as unwilling to have one under the same roof with me as a bit of radium. Regarding them is to be addressed by someone in another dimension. It is a less pleasant parallel to hearing the authentic voice of one defunct.

Another powerful impression awaited me, but this time one of delighted surprise. Mr. Ceri Richards' exhibition at the Redfern Gallery, Cork Street, reveals an artist of very exceptional vitality. My introduction to his work was in a mixed show. I came upon a picture which was like a live fish in the midst of a collection of dead ones. Or it was like a hundred little fish of brilliant hue, in violent movement, in the midst of a number of big, slate-grey, piscine corpses: and no Paris influence discernible. There is plenty of evidence of it at the Redfern. But his

'Versions' of a 'Rape of the Sabine Women'—except for the superb 'Version 3', where perhaps Matisse collaborated—is *Parisrein*. Of the younger painters I would place him beside Colquhoun—both figure painters. Colquhoun's figures are always hieratically transfixed—erect in stiff Scottish solemnity. Richards' are like quicksilver. I would suggest for immediate purchase by national institutions one of the 'Rape' Versions. His 'Pianist' pictures are delightful performances. In No. 16 the player has a Picasso face but legs of her own. The 'Costermonger'

studies are more purely decorative, but quite admirable.

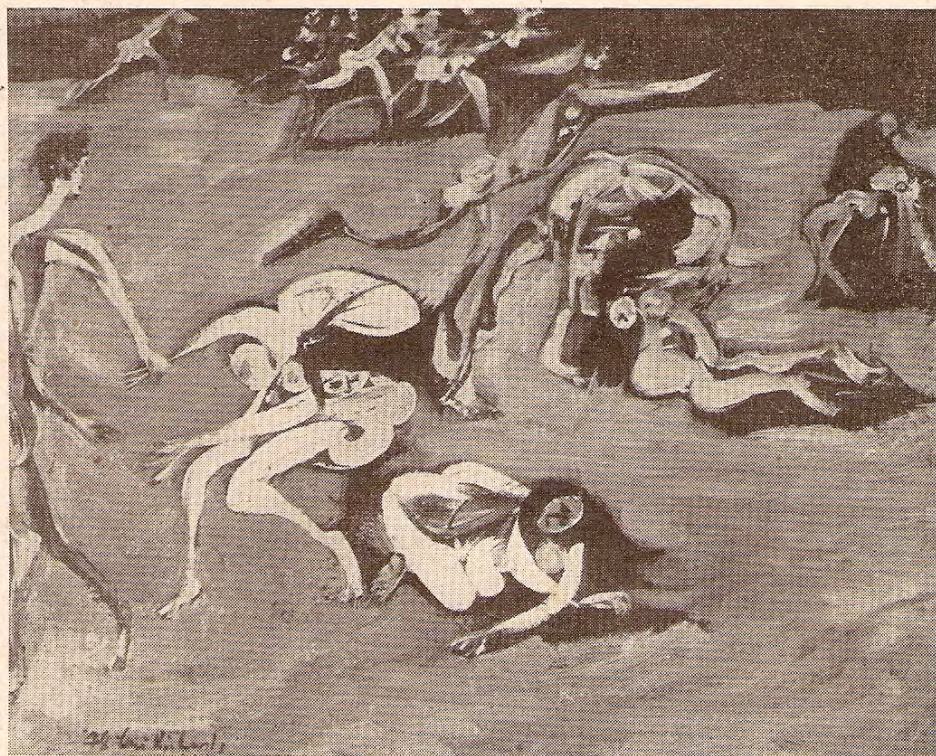
At Roland Browse and Delbanco, next door, there is a collection of Mr. Henry Moore's drawings, 1928-1948. A sculptor is always in danger of becoming something like a public monument—a landmark, its significance no longer recognised. Of international fame, Mr. Moore is passing into the august company of John and Epstein, where people are but too apt to take plastic feats for granted.

Here, it is true, is nothing which I do not feel I have seen many times before (though some were done this year). But also there is nothing I would not willingly see as many times again: whether shelter drawings, pages of scribbled notes, or classico-picassoan giantesses, voluminous but

lashed around with hoops of white bodycolour. It might be regretted that a retrospective selection of Mr. Moore's designs was not weightier and more comprehensive. But there are so many things to delight his admirers that this show will be greatly appreciated.

The 'Recent Paintings of William Scott' at the Leicester Galleries are likewise very much worth a visit. He is a newcomer. What he has to offer is an original idea of colour; a very personal, flat, empty design, as if cut out in cardboard; interesting form. His statement is always so strict, parsimonious, and dogmatically severe, that it looks even emptier than it is. He brings us his mackerel and his marigolds as a child, just able to walk, solemnly brings objects—it would, like Mr. Scott, bring a frying-pan, a birdcage, or a colander—and deposits them as an offering before the attentive adult. I have only one complaint. The surface quality is such as anyone would produce who took up a brush with paint on it, and filled up any given area of these canvasses.

Mr. Julian Trevelyan is not a newcomer, but I fear I have left myself far too little space to speak of a quite extraordinarily good show of his at the Lefevre Gallery. Invariably gay, witty, romantic, several of the canvasses are almost the best I have seen depicting that beloved island—the 'Ile de la Cité', a so much painted spot. 'Paris' is a sister piece. How excellent is the deep-cut trench, the colour of the acid Seine, man's greatest church. Finally, in the same gallery, Miss Anne Carlisle shows at least one notable study, 'Flowers on an Orange Table', which reminded me of an orange still-life of Mr. Scott's.



'The Rape of the Sabine Women': study for composition. By Ceri Richards (Redfern Gallery)



Art

# The Chantrey Collection at the Academy

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**A**LITTLE over fifty years of cold war, between champions of good art and bad art respectively—that is of non-commercial art and of that done primarily with a view to financial reward—has reached the showdown stage at the Royal Academy, where at present the entire collection of Chantrey Bequest pictures and sculpture is being exhibited. The fifty-odd years here referred to lie between 1897 (when the Tate Gallery came into being) and today: and the showdown is between the Tate, which regards as anything but assets the Chantrey pictures and sculpture, and the Royal Academy, whose taste—or absence of taste—those works represent.

It was a Treasury arrangement that the Gallery built by the Tate, and run by the state, should be Chantrey's dream-come-true: a big official palace to receive his big gift. So the R.A.s picked pictures from the walls of the R.A., sent them to the Tate, the Trustees of which shot them promptly down into the cellar.

## 'Modernismus' and a Mellow Monk

Almost from the start, in 1897, however, this Treasury arrangement was recognised to have been a mistake. For after all, there were in 1897 plenty of people whose idea of a good picture was completely different from that of the Council of the Royal Academy. Not only would this apply to inveterate professional opponents of the Academy like Whistler. Everybody at all interested in the Paris schools of that time—in Seurat and Signac, for instance, Toulouse Lautrec, perhaps Gauguin or Van Gogh—would think exactly the same about the Royal Academy as I do: or as Mr. Epstein or Mr. Henry Moore or Mr. Piper do, or Mr. Michael Ayrton or Mr. William Gaunt. Actually, Mr. Gaunt has provided us with the best possible parallel with which to convey the ineligibility of the earlier Chantrey pictures. The Tate started life with eighty-three of them—'not a classic basis on which to build. It was as if a library of the best books began with a nucleus of popular novels'. That was just the kind of thing it was. The present Director of the Tate describes in an excellent small handbook how grim were the prognostications for the future of British art in the first years of this institution—destined apparently to be 'a national Valhalla for shaggy cattle and rollicking monks'. But on such archaic vulgarities the more recent juicy slicknesses—the *Modernismus* of sixty years ago (Scandinavian and German) clumsily Anglicised, and mixed a little with this or that—the all-pervasive dirty and untidy backwash from nineteenth-century Impressionism—these later modes are no improvement. I prefer a mellow monk, a *ham* pirate, or rugged glimpses of Victorian beefsteaks horned, hairy, and on the hoof.

The words of a summary prepared for the press by the Tate is anything but an overstatement: 'Throughout this period (1897-1948) the selection of these works, in which the Tate has never exercised any decisive influence, has been the subject of continuous unfavourable comment'. A select committee of the House of Lords, even, in 1904, under the chairmanship of Lord Crewe, reported adversely upon the quality of the Chantrey purchases by the R.A. The Massey Report in 1946 recommended a device by means of which the Chantrey fund might pass into the control of the Tate. Criticism has come literally from all quarters. And, frankly, it would have been better to leave the Tate completely empty, rather than hang any of the Chantrey pictures of unmixed Academy cookery.

It is an insult to the artistic genius of England—a libel on the race of Hogarth and Cotman and Blake—to offer these things—either those of 1897, or those of 1948—as 'works of the highest merit . . . that can be obtained . . . in Great Britain'. (The words of the testator, defining the objects of his ill-starred Bequest.) I write immediately after a visit to Burlington House—not shocked but ashamed. From Dicksee to Devas it is another world of expression altogether, from that of those great English artists who are the natural models for any 'national collection'.

As a result of considerable agitation, the Royal Academy, in 1922, agreed to the institution of a Recommending Committee of five (three Royal Academicians and two representatives of the Tate Trustees). This

committee was to recommend to the R.A. Council what works it should purchase under the Chantrey Bequest. But the R.A. Council retained its right to veto these recommendations.

Since the two Tate members were outvoted by the three R.A. members, with the R.A. veto threat always present at their deliberations, the result necessarily was an unsatisfactory compromise. The three R.A. members were restrained from acquiring really full-blooded atrocities. On the other hand, when they were brought to consent to the purchase of work by a good artist, it would only be on condition that it was the feeblest or tamest example.

There emerges from this twenty-six-year-long tussle, on the asset side, a handful of twentieth-century works, of some merit, for the nation, plus a batch of Alfred Stevens' drawings. I would name Gilman's 'The Artist's Mother', and Pryde's 'The Doctor'. It appears that even L. Pissarro had to be *pushed* in (though a wan second-cousin of Impressionism is what we mostly see at an Academy exhibition): and even Augustus John—himself an R.A., of a sleeping-partner order, but still an R.A.—would not have made the grade, with his head of Yeats, unless pressure had been exercised from the two outsiders in the Recommending Committee. Similarly Walter Greaves' 'Hammersmith Bridge' or 'The Green Dress' were victories of 'the good Party'. Yet out of any ten things bought with Chantrey money nine have been reverses for the Tate, and the *one* that we mark up to the civilised side has usually been nothing to get excited about—a success to be a little ashamed of, in fact.

The Alfred Stevens' cartoons and drawings must apparently be reckoned a triumph. How beautiful a confirmation of the fact that the Academy does not even possess the solid merit of a body standing for the Tradition—that it is not even *academic*!—merely a collection of businessmen. And the same curious fact is brought out in the difficulty experienced in effecting the acceptance of a Holman Hunt. And it appears they were much too go-ahead to want to have anything to do with the last good picture painted by Sir John Everett Millais.

## Burlington House Tête-à-Tate

There is a list published, and easily obtainable, recording, year-by-year, the Chantrey purchases. This is instructive, and sometimes amusing. The first year of the Recommending Committee, 1922, was a bumper year for art. It was then—in the first-flush of the Tate's admission into partnership—that all the Stevenses were bought. Epstein, Greaves, Innes, are also of that year.

Evidently by 1923 the honeymoon was over: it is the Potboiling Principle's year. In 1924 there are nine names, only one worth while, William Rothenstein. (If I am correct that is a subject with three children, however, in which that severe and excellent artist was trying his hand at an 'Academy picture'.) In 1929 the morale of the Tate members seems to have touched zero. That year they had a *Verd di prato* 'Sea Lion' unloaded on them, as well as stone and bronze. In 1930 they had not recovered. In 1931, however, they rallied and scored two Greaveses. But, after all, Greaves is an old master, and dead people do not worry the R.A. anything like so much as live ones.

Despite a quickening of the pace during the war, it has been, all told, a compromise productive of so little, this Committee, that it would have been better to have declined to go into it. And that holds for all future offers. Nothing but frustration can ensue. The Bequest is that of an academician (Sir Francis Chantrey was a rich R.A.) to the Royal Academy.

To alienate that yearly money from the R.A. and its standards is, I should think, legally an impossible task. Meanwhile the existence of this by no means prodigious sum (today worth perhaps £800) stands in the way of adequate support from the state. Would it not be the best thing for the Academy to keep this collection of ghastly junk itself? Surely the galleries on the right as you go through the turnstile in Burlington House could be reserved for the works of the Chantrey Bequest? The spring exhibition of the R.A. would be a trifle smaller—but still would be all-too-large.



Art

# Round the London Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**R**OOM 13, one of those officially opened by Sir Stafford Cripps a few weeks ago at the Tate, is a very thin slice of an enormous cake. A narrow gallery—half a gallery really—this is where what is most 'modern' is to be found. Great open spaces, serried rows of Turners and other things, intervene between it and the street door. It is only on account of the firmness of the present dynamic Director (to use Sir Stafford's adjective) that, in order to reach it, you are not also obliged to navigate bleak avenues of 'North-West Passages', assailed by the sickly organ-notes of endless Dicksees.

If Room 13 is relatively diminutive, no blame attaches to the Director and Trustees: the small room represents a great personal effort on their part. It is a marvel that there is any 'modern room' at all, seeing that until a few months ago the Tate possessed no money whatever with which to acquire new works.

As it is, some of the pictures in Room 13 belong historically elsewhere. I cannot believe I am giving any offence in saying this. Were it as a faithful disciple of Whistler or Constable, say, that I pursued my calling, I should prefer to be hung among Whistlers or Constables, of course, rather than with Paul Nash or Paul Klee.

Messrs. Coldstream and Moynihan, I feel, would be happier in a room with Sickerts and other English impressionists. However, the fact that the School of the seventies and nineties of the nineteenth century, by no more than a mere five or six small pictures, are represented in Room 13, succeeds in making this slender island set aside for the expression of the contemporary mind seem even more of an atoll.

The Tate should be in a position to proceed to the immediate purchase, as I am sure it would if it could, of several dozen pictures like those of Vaughan, Bacon, Colquhoun, Ceri Richards—or those of the two young painters who had such splendid one-man shows last month, Minton and Merlyn Evans—to mention a few of the best. Ten thousand pounds would do it, annually for four years: a Four Year Plan for Art. Are you so mercenary as to laugh or shudder? For this atoll to become a sizeable little continent, as we should some of us like to see it, will require all of that. Art galleries, like hospitals, ought to be taken over by the State, and be provided with the wherewithal for growth. To suppose that they can survive, as living and growing organisms, on a voluntary contribution basis is absurd. The Arts should be regarded as a branch of Health—the nation's health.

Leaving the Tate, I turn to current shows. In the Arcade Gallery, Bond Street, the 'Borough Group' exhibit, David Bomberg is the leading spirit. What happened to Bomberg after 1920? Was he one of the lost generation that really got lost? Or has he an aversion to

exhibition? He ought to be one of the half-dozen most prominent artists in England. When I got there, the gallery had no one in it: it was nothing but a chaos of pictures only half on the walls. Anything with which that fine artist, Bomberg, has to do you cannot afford to neglect.

Were all members of the R.A. Eurichs, it would be a true *academy*. Richard Eurich, A.R.A., has at the Redfern a fine display of traditional craftsmanship and the mischievous fancy of another age embalmed in this still young mind. His 'Battle of the Boggarts' is a set-to of scarecrows.

The Breton blessing of the sea I like best.

Roland, Browne, and Delbanco, next door to the Redfern Gallery, is rapidly qualifying as the home of the Romantic in Art. I went in to admire Stubbs' 'Lion attacking Horse'—to look at the white horse's frantic face and superb knees. I encountered the Red Cross Knight too. I noted how much at home is Mr. Piper, that man of ruins, among these products of a distant day. The 'Borough Group', from the glimpse I had of them, are rip-roaring flaming romantics. But whatever the mode, whether the sedately bourgeois archaologising of Piper or revolutionary eruptions into glaring pigment, there is an awful lot of romanticism in the market-place just now.

Max and Gladys Maccabe share the walls of The Kensington Art Gallery, 15, St. Mary Abbots Terrace. With these very talented young artists, we are reminded again of Ireland (they live in Belfast) and of its awakening visual consciousness. Gladys Maccabe often attains great delicacy. She is anecdotal; the greater severity of Max has a special appeal for me. His fish rival Minton's last month's fish: though they are more tubular, the other's a glittering flat ornament coughed up by the ocean, or like a barbaric tin plaque to hang from a neck-chain. Max's twenty-guinea 'Still Life' is worth at least two hundred. This gallery, under the able direction of Mrs. Marchant, can be depended on for shows of high quality.

I am dismayed at what still remains to be noticed. Dufy is at the Hanover Gallery. No one in England can approach the joyous dexterity and superficiality of 'The Changing of the Guard'. Upstairs Isabel Lambert stalks Klee successfully with nightjars, lizards, cockchafers, and recipes. At the St. George's Gallery Frances Hodgkins may be seen again, a great woman artist. Finally, to do justice to Ivon Hitchens at the Leicester Gallery I have no space, I regret to say. This is an artist for whom I have not greatly cared. Now I change my mind. As he emerges from his feathery jabs of paint—from capricious and accidental hedging round of Nothing, as it seemed to me—into more explicit scenes, I become his admirer.



'Fishes', by Max Maccabe (Kensington Art Gallery)



## Art

# Painting in America

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE United States is not only a vast and teeming country, but physically one of the most beautiful in the world. Conditions, however, are not favourable for the development of the visual arts. Seeing the power-house out of which it comes, painting in America is on the modest side. Mexico expresses itself with far more power and authority. Contemporary American writing, for instance, attains, in its kind, to a pre-eminence to which American painting can lay no claim. There are no plastic Hemingways, no Pound or Eliot among the painters. One would have expected the reverse of this: namely, that in a new society the more direct visual medium would have preceded, have matured more readily than, the more artificial verbal one.

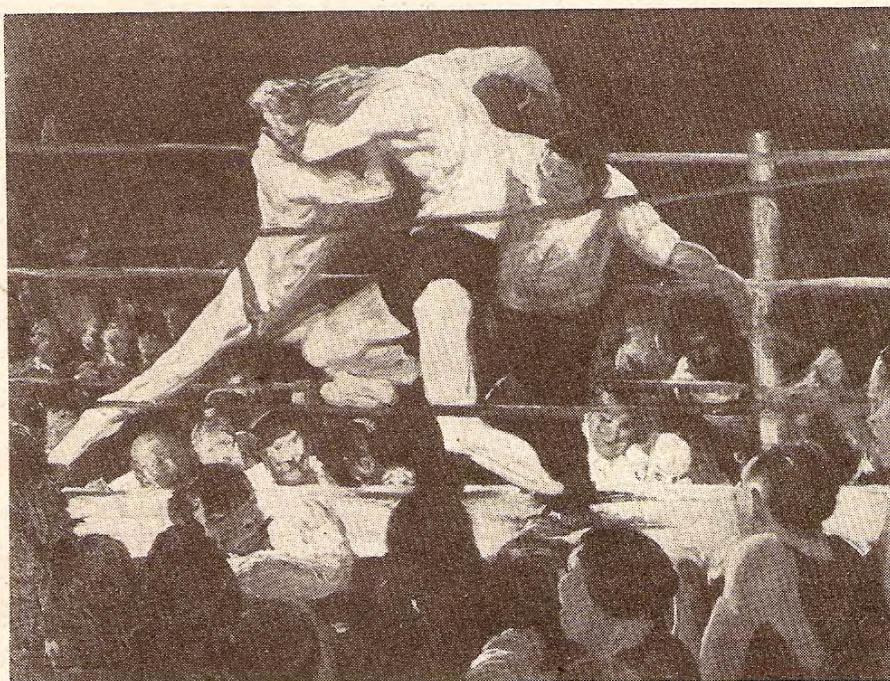
Nor can it be argued, I am afraid, that the writers have shown a tendency to reside elsewhere than in the U.S.—in evidence of this pointing to Mr. Hemingway of Paris and Havana, or to Mr. Pound of Rapallo, or to Mr. Eliot of Russell Square. For the painters are not 100 per cent. transatlantic products either. Among twentieth-century American painters, incontestably one of the very best is Lyonel Feininger: and he has passed most of his life in Germany, where, notably, he was one of Gropius' brilliant colleagues at the Bauhaus. Grant Wood, even, responsible for 'American Gothic' (the bald farmer with the pitchfork, standing solemnly beside his nordic consort)—most earthily American of all the middle-west regionalists, Wood owed everything to his years in Munich. There *Neuschlichkeit* was in flower, and he learned how to be a regionalist: a thing he would never have done had he stopped where he was, in his native 'region'.

These reflections have been prompted by the appearance of a new book on American painting\*. It contains fifty reproductions of oil paintings—each a 'milestone'. A page of biography and critical appraisal accompanies each artist's work: by way of introduction, there is a quite intelligent historical outline. These texts are the work of Mr. Frederick Wight, Director of Education at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. The book is a serviceable guide. The colour plates are far above the average of English colour work. All I would say is that had 'art' paper been provided for the monochrome half-tones it would have been much more satisfactory. A very fine picture of Burchfield's suffers terribly as a consequence.

The United States is a country that is always 'coming of age'. Here in the blurb of *American Painting* I encounter for the hundredth time that phrase: 'tells the story', it reads, 'of the coming-of-age of American art'. There is of course nothing answering to that description to celebrate. In the 'eighties and 'nineties of the last century Twachtman, Dewing, or Tarbell—or Eakins, a fine Paris-trained painter—were just as mature. Something has come to a head in this century. But it is a very profound change, not a maturing. And it has happened everywhere. It is in no way peculiar to America.

Now Mr. Wight (not responsible for the blurb) recognises that an 'international undertaking' is involved, not a national. But he would say that all intelligent Americans were pleasantly conscious of having emerged from national immaturity. Let me quote him however: he is speaking of the 'ash-can' group. 'In America this salutary defiance had taken a special turn. Here there was a glorification of burliness, and the frontiersman was made to do double duty as the type of the common man. Theodore Roosevelt set the style and created a national hero in the Rough Rider. . . . In painting Luks and Bellows put the professional athlete on canvas; the tough guy was here—and here to stay'.

'Teddy' led off, as the century opened, with an outburst of contagious juvenility, at the thought of which Mr. Wight and all other educated Americans shudder. Under Roosevelt I, Americans turned to the primitive, the raucously immature, the masculinity of the schoolboy. The art brought into the country with Feininger, Grosz, Tchelitchew, etc., cannot but be inimical to the terrible legacy of Bullmoosism. But that, Mr. Wight would agree, is an insignificant local issue. It is my opinion that Americans are apt to confuse a little their paro-



Stag at Sharkey's, by George Bellows

From 'Milestones of American Painting in Our Century'

chial emancipation from the 'strenuous' with great international innovations.

A number of pictures have been chosen by Mr. Wight which represent, more or less, the above-mentioned revolutionary change. Berman, Gottlieb, Blume, Stuempfig may be mentioned. There is very little of the grimly photographic of the Hopper order: yet one feels that some agency or other has exerted a restraining influence upon Mr. Wight. There was no reason to put a Marsden Hartley on the cover: it makes the book look like a collection of Canadian (very cold and splashy) pictures, rather than American. A place is found, of course, for Bellows ('He never went abroad and he made a virtue of it'): a spirited piece of ringside journalism.

Georgia O'Keeffe is not present: but that was probably due to the crotchety obstruction of the late Stieglitz, the Vollard of New York. On the other hand Marin is represented—not, I fear, very well. Marin who was supported and encouraged by the admirable Stieglitz for forty years, is the most perfect of living American artists: what he does is very slight and frail, but of superlative precision. A lithograph of Whistler's is about its weight: but was not Whistler a 'butterfly'? Another very fragile but exquisite artist is Morris Graves, who lives with the birds. The magic of his 'white writing', in the specimen that we see here, does not come off. Let me conclude by saying that American painting deserves your attention: but what is best in it, and what, apparently, is most American, is the last thing you would expect a great tough giant of a country to produce. It is just a few delicate scratches on a piece of paper, or a small bird, or a mouse, lost in a white calligraphical maze.

\* *Milestones of American Painting in our Century*. By Frederick Wight. Max Parrish. 21s.



# Round the London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE Hanover Gallery is soon to hold an exhibition of the work of Francis Bacon, among the most original of the young. One piece is already at the Gallery. But let me say at once that no man from the racecourse or from the Cup Tie crowd—the

public of Sir Alfred Munnings' choice—would greet this work with anything but derision. It is of a man with no top to his head. Not of course that this will be the only evidence in my article of how conspicuously I differ from Alfred the Great.

Bacon's picture, as usual, is in lamp-black monochrome, the zinc white of the monster's eyes glittering in the cold crumbling grey of the face. Bacon is a Grand Guignol artist: the mouths in his heads are unpleasant places, evil passions make a glittering white mess of the lips. There are, after all, more things in heaven and earth than shiny horses or juicy satins. There are the *fleurs du mal* for instance.

Of the new shows at the Hanover, Sigmund Politzer's button-studded cypriot chairs, though good, are less substantial than Charles Howard's abstractions. Of his hard, polished, and immaculate arrangements I prefer 'Matement', 'Ultimate Recesses', and still more 'The Improved Dilemma'.

But Giorgio de Chirico provides the great sensation of the month: and there is far more to the drama of his recantation than just a man's violent severance from his past and flouting of his fame. Imagine, for instance, on the political plane, Mr. Molotov recanting. What would he become? A democrat, a social-democrat, an anarchist—or nothing? In England there is at present a retreat from the extremes: some artists go back to Cotman or to Palmer and live in their time; others to some great French Impressionist—or to Wilson Steer! So the big question of the moment is this: If you throw over all that the twentieth-century revolution in the arts has stood for (among other things the repudiation of the materialistic chaos of 'impressionism', and the re-establishment of formal values) *where are you going to?* Are you going back? Is that the only way you can think of going?

The London Gallery, 23 Brook Street, offers us a few examples of the earlier Chirico: a little canvas, for instance, on which is glued a Petit Beurre biscuit. Date 1915: title 'Death of a Spirit'. Presumably the 'spirit' referred to is the human spirit. Near it hangs a still earlier canvas, 'Melanconia'—the usual white statuary of Greek antiquity introduced into a vast drab emptiness, symbolising the machine-age scene. For nostalgia for the past was *always* a feature of this Italian's creative impulse.

Next, to Suffolk Street: there, in the Summer Exhibition of the R.B.A., a room has been set aside for the work of the *newer* Chirico—who loathes the Petit Beurre, and spurns the 'super-real'. Some evil genius, he believes, led him to stick biscuits on to his canvases. To the

consternation of his hosts (if I may judge from a conversation with one of them) he displays a sleekly-painted female nude outstretched before a stage-ocean. It is easy to understand how both Academicians and Royal British Artists must feel about this 'academic' performance. In the main decadent Impressionists themselves, how they must bristle with the dogmatic pugnacities of the eighteen-eighties at the sight of his many fanciful feudal fripperies, of the 'Combattimento sotto un Castello' type: how deeply they must feel themselves compromised at finding themselves in danger of being taken for the time-mates of Delacroix or of Chassériau.

So Chirico may change his style but not his uneasy destiny. The nude self-portrait of this silver-haired, angry old painter—as ever superbly painted—is eloquent. May he yet, fine workman that he is, shake off the spell of the past: which first led him into a high metaphysical region, and now has betrayed him into platitude.

There are some artists who are not disposed to make their way back into the nineteenth century—prefer the twentieth. For instance, at the Lefevre Gallery Colquhoun and MacBryde maintain their exposed, obviously twentieth-century, position. But how long is it before they have to retire to Dumfries or Dundee—or else reform, and paint like a slightly less Whistlerish Lavery,

or a watered-down Sisley? Specimens of Colquhoun's monochromatic line monotypes—looking like unaccented pen-drawings—as well as his beautifully coloured monotypes, should be in every public collection in England.

There is good draughtsmanship too—not so robust but highly sophisticated—at the Galerie Apollinaire. The figures of a young Scottish artist, Eli Montlake, are disconcertingly deficient in apparel. It was the wish of so respectable a man as Carlyle to see the House of Commons compelled to sit naked. He thought it would improve its politics. In Mr. Montlake Scotland has produced another moralist.

The consequences of the lifting of the ban on the sale of French pictures here will not, it seems, be so revolutionary as one would expect. (1) Checks still exist; and (2) the prices of pictures worth bringing over are prohibitive. A picture painted by a French contemporary fetches three times as much as precisely the same picture would if painted here:



'Workman with Dove' by Eli Montlake, from the exhibition at the Galerie Apollinaire



and no American is going to walk into the Lefevre and buy a Colquhoun or Minton. Paris, he argues, is where good modern pictures are painted.

With that, and the well-heeled professional francophile, in mind, let me say that the Marchand show at the Gimpel Gallery—a first-fruit of easing import controls—is a blaze of rich juicy colour, an orgy of flamboyant decoration. The big ‘Astarté’ and the tapestry display all

the fantastic triviality and even silliness of which France is pre-eminently capable. At the Marlborough Gallery a young Parisian, F. Gall, portrays himself in a bread-queue—a capital idea. At Roland Browse and Delbanco, a dead Frenchman, Degas, has a fine pastel, No. 21. If I have space to say it, one André Bicat, at the Leicester Gallery, in pictures in the desk-corner, reveals a rich romantic vein.

Conlon



## Art

# Emergence of Mr. Wyndham Lewis

By ERIC NEWTON

**A**FTER what Mr. Ayrton, in his Foreword to the catalogue of the Wyndham Lewis exhibition at the Redfern Gallery, calls a long conspiracy of silence, Mr. Wyndham Lewis has emerged again. The critics are in full cry, and it is possible that he will prove to have benefited from his past neglect.

Cold comfort, perhaps, to the neglected, but stimulating to the neglecters to find that an artist of the first importance has been dormant among them for so long and has now at last come into the open. Wyndham Lewis had become almost a legend. Legends belong to the past—and lo! he steps forward with his work—1912-1949—in his hand and challenges us to call him old, or even old-fashioned, or even, if it comes to that, dated.

The result is extraordinary. He turns out to be none of those things. He started a movement thirty years ago, used the then current cubist or near-abstract idioms, and we find his work more convincing now than it was then. I submit that if this can happen then he is a great artist. Also he is certainly not a legend: he is a truly contemporary artist, whether he makes a near-abstract drawing called 'Timon of Athens' (1913) or a portrait of T. S. Eliot (1949), which would certainly have found no difficulty in getting into the Royal Academy.

The exhibition is, in fact, a delightful proof that it doesn't matter what -ism a great artist subscribes to or invents. His work won't look 1913ish. It will just look satisfying, and the only relevant question is 'satisfying in what way?' If I were asked to define him I should call him *Gothic*, an adjective which doesn't belong to a period but to a temperament. He is hard, spiky, dynamic, full of thrusts and counter-thrusts, a bit tortured, very compact, and, above all, an inventor of shapes. Wherefore he is that very rare phenomenon in this century, a good (not a great) portrait painter whose portraits are also exciting pictures. His portraits are not only likenesses: they are shapes evolved from the sitter and his environment. This is the shape of Mr. X or Miss Y, not an inventory of their clothes and features. They bulge here and break out into little points there, they are vaulted and buttressed, fretted and smoothed till they achieve a queer, personal equilibrium so satisfying that it robs little words like 'Vorticism' of their meaning.

What applies to his portraits applies equally to his other pictures—'The Armada' (on the cover of this issue), 'The Mud Clinic', 'The Cubist Museum', etc. The shapes are smaller and more tightly packed, the pattern less closely bound to the bulk of a single human being, but the architecture is just as homogeneous. They vary in merit because the ideas behind them are not equally realisable in terms of architecture. The architect who is good at Town Halls might be bad at Railway Stations. But apart from their individual merits they serve a useful purpose by proving that the portraits are not different in kind from themselves. They are only different in function.

In his capacity as critic, Mr. Wyndham Lewis had some thoughtful

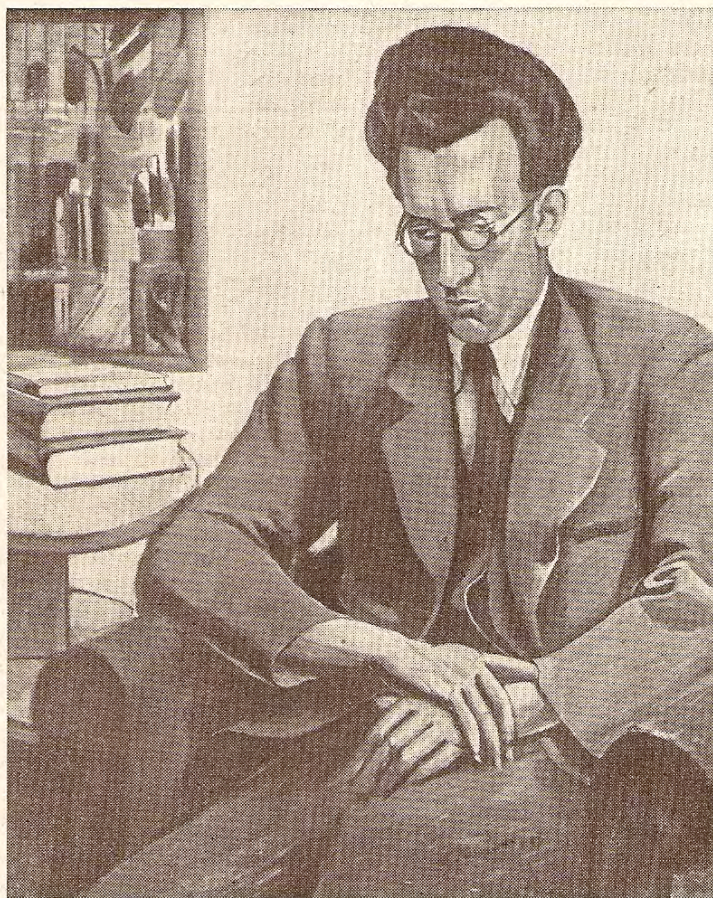
things to say, in *THE LISTENER* last week, about another artist, Giorgio de Chirico, equally legendary, equally pioneer-spirited, who is holding a big one-man show of recent work at the R.B.A. Galleries. I am tempted, while I am writing about Wyndham Lewis' paintings, to comment on his writing, too: and, if he will forgive me, to add a note of my own on Chirico, for there seems to me to be a parallel between the two artists. Each illuminates the other. Also (with the exception of Mr. Lewis' article) the new Chiricos have been greeted with silence.

This is not the silence of conspiracy but of impotence. Criticism, in this case, is inarticulate because it does not know what to say. Here is the man who occupies so much space in the last chapter of all our art histories—the precursor of Surrealism, one of the pillars of the edifice of 'Modernism'—suddenly presenting us with something that looks rather like Delacroix and rather like Rubens with strangely distorted echoes of Chirico, and proclaiming that 'Modernism' is bankrupt. The solemn moonlight on the deserted arcades, the football-headed figures, the pale ghosts of dream-horses have gone, and their place has been taken by an earthy, hearty world of Classical nudes, equestrian warriors in fancy dress, and rhetorical self-portraits: 'Surely a little vulgar: and surely more than a bit out of date' thinks the critic, not daring to say so in case he might be wrong and fearful lest this might be the dawn of another -ism.

Chirico's latest work does not inaugurate a new -ism: it is an attempt to revive an old one—Humanism—and to protest against the non-Humanistic art with which so many twentieth-century painters have been experimenting. It is also an attempt to revive the painterly

tradition inaugurated by the Renaissance and exhausted by the mid-nineteenth century. To our puritan British eyes it seems uncomfortably lush and unspiritual, but our eyes are prejudiced. Chirico is Classic in just the same sense that Wyndham Lewis is Gothic. To Italian eyes this Classical romanticism is no more strange than Wyndham Lewis' Gothic romanticism is to ours. The two men are, in a fundamental sense, counterparts of each other, and the emergence of both in the same week is significant. They are both Humanists, and they are both out to prove that painting is a matter of seeing with the heart and painting with the hand. It has been an unfashionable creed for forty years, but a minor swing of the pendulum seems to be on its way.

Good taste and sensitivity are not what Chirico is after. Vigour, exuberance, an exultant materialism which is sometimes tasteless but often richly impressive, have taken their place. Mr. Wyndham Lewis calls it 'platitude', which means, I take it, the rather too solemn delivery of a rather too familiar idea. I find these ideas familiar but not solemn—spirited, rather. This is certainly not an instance of an artist relaxing his early tension in his later years; Chirico is still very recognisably Chirico, but he has undergone a considerable change of mind and heart.



'Portrait of Julian Symonds' (1939), by Wyndham Lewis



# The London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

WHEN interested by the work of one of 'the young', I like if possible to check up on personality and physique. For I know that this poor devil has to pass through two or three more wars, a revolution, and a number of depressions. Most, I feel, will fall by the wayside—their talents will die, if they don't. But about Michael Ayrton I entertain no anxiety: his stamina is unmistakable, since it is of a piece with the air of stability possessed by his work. At the Redfern Gallery, where he is holding an exhibition, is the classic serenity he so much prizes—even to a touch of coldness. Where the women are symbolically distressed, or distracted, by the first signs of a great storm, it is but in a rhythmic trance of distraction. With Michael Ayrton, unlike the other 'young', we have emphasis on subject-matter. It was in Italy he found this specific material, and found himself too, I believe. He may be the bridge by means of which the British 'young' move over into a more literary world again. Michael Ayrton is one of the two or three young artists destined to shape the future of British art. All I am able to do here, as there is no space for description, is to urge the reader to go to 20 Cork Street and be among these splendidly-promising pictures.

Massimo Campigli is one of Italy's most celebrated painters: and a comprehensive exhibition of his work is to be seen at the St. George's Gallery, Grosvenor Street. Campigli inhabits a world in which is neither man nor mannish thing: only the effete joys of very gentle, moon-faced women. The latter have long noses and small mouths pursed at a sweet shrewd angle. You will know at once where they come from, namely from Pompeii that was destroyed. The Italian returns as naturally to the Rome of antiquity as Piper and Rex Whistler do to the age of Jane Austen or of Samuel Pepys. A very innocent eye, however, has to be adopted for the fresco art of Pompeii. If Campigli is as monotonous as Marie Laurencin he is a highly interesting artist, and incidentally a fine draughtsman, as revealed by his drawings and lithographs at this gallery.

With the Picasso lithographs at the Hanover Gallery, 32a St. George's Street, we encounter an artist as volatile and pluralist as Campigli is the reverse (dominated as he is by a single female personality). It is impossible to imagine Picasso married, stylistically, to one Pompeian woman. He would raid Pompeii as he would loot a Pacific Island culture. But three months would be a long time for Picasso to remain with any culture, or its graphic embodiment. Or so it was. Today this great eclectic seems to mark time, ringing the changes on past successes. He is the first great universal or cosmic artist, as some products of the transatlantic 'melting-pot' are the first cosmic men.



'Girls with a Bird', by Massimo Campigli

It is surely time for a revaluation of the French Impressionists, or painters roughly grouped as such. The only ones that would suffer by such a revaluation are the authentic fanatics for *the impression*—the camera-snap as it were with brush and palette. Of these Monet is the key figure. The exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery, New Bond Street, shows only a few and no very important pictures unless it is



'Portrait of William Walton' (1948), by Michael Ayrton

the familiar Manet 'Portrait de Méry Laurent'. Degas always comes off best. He never got Ingres out of his system; and his early copy of Poussin's 'Rape of the Sabines' hung always in his studio. No silly fashion for *the impression* could break through that armour.

The Fine Art Society's Summer Exhibition (148 New Bond Street) is instructive. 'In Water Colour the English have excelled' we often hear. But only of a small fraction is this true. There can be few things so unrelievedly platitudinous as a display of English Water Colours. All the greater is one's delight on coming upon the Edward Lear group here—sixteen in all. Most seem to be sold: and I sincerely hope that those masterpieces, 'Lake Como' (120), 'Berat' (123), and 'Colombo' (126) now belong to the nation. In the same gallery the visitor must not fail to note Rowlandson's fat eighteenth-century kiss under an umbrella, or Samuel Palmer's two scenes, dyed deep in the dark juices of romance, like the effect of prolonged tobacco smoke.

At the Zwemmer Gallery, 26 Litchfield Street, those who understand something about these things will rejoice. In the fine arts an understanding of good drawing is evidence of a final mastery of the visual language. Marc Chagall's etched illustrations for Gogol's 'Les Ames Mortes' are dazzling performances. We are of course back in the Ballet Russe in a number of these things: but what struck me in Nos. 22, 23, 31, 44, 49 and 52 was that here is a sort of agreeably crazy Russian Rowlandson.

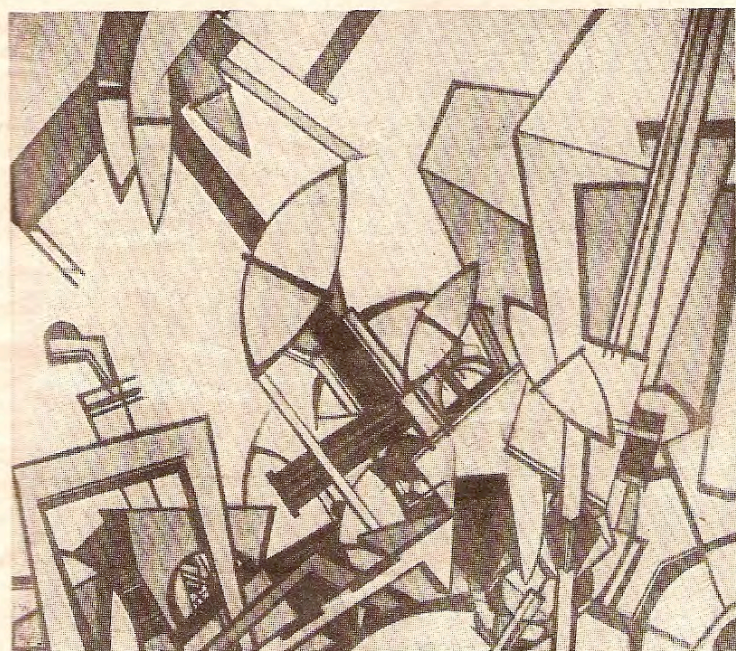
At the Leicester Galleries is much to interest the Victorian expert: drawings and paintings by Pre-Raphaelites and others. I saw Miss Siddal as I passed—who worked in a draper's shop at the opposite corner of Leicester Square, and there Rossetti first saw her: and I believe I espied 'Love Locked Out' in the large room. The catalogues had not arrived. New paintings by Edward Burra are massed behind the Victorian façade. I share Burra's emotions regarding war: when I see the purple bottoms of his military ruffians in athletic action against other stout though fiendish fellows, I recognise a brother. In the present show I find there is too much that looks like a large, not very sensitively coloured, magazine illustration. 'Zoot Suits' for instance. He is at his best in 'Project for Don Juan'. If I might venture the suggestion, he should avoid the familiar. He is not at home in it, and is led into banality. And no show of Burra's is complete for me without the bulging husky leathery shapes I associate with him.



# Edward Wadsworth: 1889-1949

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**T**HE artist who has just died was a notable one. Here, first of all, are the data the occasion demands. Edward Wadsworth, A.R.A., was born October 29, 1889, at Cleckheaton, Yorkshire. His mother was Scottish; it was at Fettes that he received his non-technical education. At Munich (1906) via industrial draughtsman-ship his art-training was begun. After that came Bradford, and finally the Slade School of Art, London (1910-12). He first exhibited as a 'vorticist' a year or so after leaving the Slade. His 'vorticist' period and his connection with me terminated with the dissolving of 'X Group'



Cape of Good Hope (reproduced from *Blast* No. 1, June 20, 1914)

immediately after World War I. The Associateship of the Royal Academy came late, in 1943.

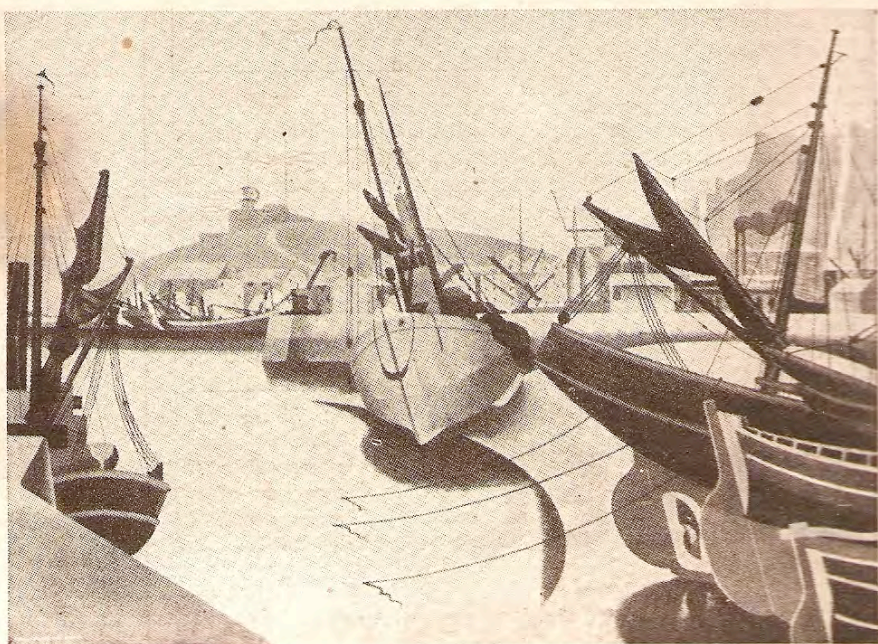
Wadsworth belonged to a wealthy factory-owning family, of the great wool-city of Bradford. He was yet another example of how an artist—much more in our commercialised age than formerly—should possess the wherewithal to acquire his expressive equipment at leisure, without the necessity of exposing his talent to the blunting and vulgarisation incident to commercial work. You have to have a hideous amount of character to survive without that adventitious aid. And even with the startling quantity of character involved, there would have been no Cézanne minus a papa, nor a Van Gogh minus a brother. The *rentier* background is stressed here by way of stimulus to the State—which in destroying the *rentier* must understand it is removing the artist's papa, and should be prepared to become a Papa (or Big Brother) itself.

I should be sorry to perform on my old comrade, for obituary purposes, that post-mortem operation consisting in a hasty extraction from the remains of a potted abstract: declaring, 'There, that is what he was, that is what is worth preserving'. To Time alone, and many busy hands of various kinds of men, should be left that task. I am only *one* kind of man, and can only record my impression. His place in twentieth-century English art is, I am sure, quite secure.

Like Paul Nash, he was not a figure painter. He was a painter of scenes and objects: a crowded port, or a Black Country waste strip, with a few shrivelled trees, between two factory-masses: otherwise, a ball of waxed nautical twine associated with a sextant or a marlinespike.

About 1920 I remember Wadsworth taking me in his car on a tour of some of Yorkshire's cities. In due course we arrived on the hill above Halifax. He stopped the car and we gazed down into its blackened labyrinth. I could see he was proud of it. 'It's like Hell, isn't it?' he said enthusiastically. (To forestall correspondence, it did not seem to me like Hell. But perhaps I am more particular.) A series of small scenes of the black industrial savagery outside Birmingham, perhaps they were woodcuts, was Wadsworth at his best, to my thinking. For he had machinery in his blood, and he depicted a machine with as much loving care as another man would lavish upon a cow or a bunch of grapes. But if he had a passion for machines, the nautical, rather oddly, disputed with the mechanical for the first place in his mind. Service with the Marine Reserve in World War I left him with a rolling gait, a becoming tan, and an unrivalled collection of salty limericks. At one time he rented a studio at a south-coast port in order to hunt nautical subjects and be near other old salts. Then his father died and he became very rich. His eventual absorption by the Royal Academy was on the way for a decade or so. Although regrettable, it did not soften his hardness, but it did brighten his pictures, so that anything he did in the end looked rather like a lurid geometrical flower. But at length he did definitely turn to flowers themselves, towards the end abstracting again, but with a bunch of flowers as his starting-point.

It seems a far cry from a casting-shop to a chrysanthemum (except that with him the latter would be of metal); and the true Wadsworth is to be found among the blast-furnaces, where no flower grows, or such is my belief. All that I can say, in conclusion, is that Wadsworth was an important artist: that as much as Old Crome was a genius of agricultural England, Wadsworth was a genius of industrial England (deflected, so I think, into nautical channels): that he had a power of generalisation and design uncommon in England—had he been French he would have been something like Léger, and been better understood by what we call 'the logical French mind' than he ever will be here; but that the passage of time can only make his best work more, not less, respected.



Port de Mer: both paintings by Edward Wadsworth



## Art

# The London Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**W**HAT the various coloured races involved would make of Picasso's borrowings from their traditional culture—those of course who are still impregnated with tradition—is a question that must have occurred to many people. That question may in part be answered by an exhibition at the Berkeley Gallery, 20 Davies Street. Two coloured artists are showing their work. Kofi Antubam, son of a paramount chief, is from the Gold Coast; Denis Williams is from British Guiana.

The paintings of Antubam are naturalistic, quietly tinted, Akan scenes, such as an English artist might have done on a visit to those parts, collecting his work under the title 'Life of the Akan Natives'. Perhaps the son of the paramount chief has given the answer, though if one could leave a Mendi or Poro alone with Parisian primitivism for some time it would be still more interesting to see the result. Mr. Antubam was too long at the Achimota College.

Mr. Williams, on the other hand, possesses most remarkable gifts. Collectors would be well-advised to have a look at these pictures. I wish that some could be bought. After three years in England, and prolonged contact with European primitivism, Mr. Williams produces 'Monolith', which has a look of Picasso, and 'Figure', with a lemonish illumination reminiscent of Vaughan. Anyway, this descendant (as he tells me) of African slaves, responds to European barbarism with enthusiasm. The 'dark unconscious', as Lawrence would have called it, staring at itself in the Picassoan mirror, is unquestionably a fascinating spectacle—though when I mentioned Picasso he answered, 'It is not a case of my going to Picasso, Picasso came to Africa and to me'. In the Colonial Exhibition at Marble Arch more of Mr. Williams' pictures are to be seen, as anthropological curiosities rather. The hanging and lighting is unfortunately not good.

At the Gimpel Gallery, 50 South Molton Street, is 'The Story of a Portrait': pictures by M. Reynold Arnould of Paris. This is a series of canvases, all of the same fat man. They begin with a complete naturalism, and end in a highly abstract form. It demonstrates how the Paris School starts by a careful copy of nature, which it then breaks up, pulls about, refashions, until we have 'an abstract'. The purpose may be to prove how irrelevant nature is in an abstract picture, and the futility of the Paris method of abstraction. But more probably it is intended to show what good little naturalists the French really are.

Mr. John Craxton belongs to the youthful *avant-garde*—for I have to use this term: at the London Gallery, 23 Brook Street, he is to be seen in force, with several big canvases. The smaller his pictures are the better; and when small, very good. He does not deviate idiosyncratically from many exponents of this type of monotonously bright painting—as Vaughan does so markedly depart, for instance, so that the moment you see one of his works you recognise it as a Vaughan. Craxton is like a prettily tinted cocktail, that is good but does not kick quite

hard enough. He is very young and will probably become more taut and individual.

How pleasing it always is to turn into Bruton Place, go up into the Beaux Arts Gallery—Major Lessore (Sickerts' brother-in-law) sitting at a table, appearing as you approach the top of the stairs. One does not go there for 'a kick' though, but for the more relaxing

appeals of Sylvia Gosse, Teddie Wolfe, Fitton and Steer: and to chat with this gallic sage.

As to what takes one so far afield as the Whitechapel Art Gallery, that, on this occasion, is a very melancholy errand. A memorial exhibition of Mark Gertler's work has been assembled there: and I cannot at all agree with the catalogue that it is most fitting it should be held in Whitechapel—room should have been found for him in some centrally situated Gallery. The evidence of one of this country's crimes against art is to be found in the most convincing form in this exhibition: and that perhaps is why it is at Aldgate East, where few people will see it. As the most overwhelmingly incriminating items I would select 'Mr. Gilbert Cannan at his Mill', a wonderfully successful picture, and the 'Roundabout' (1914 and 1918 respectively). Oh, but those are early pictures, you will object. Unfortunately for that objection there is 'The Spanish Fan'. The date of this is 1938, the year before he killed himself; gassed himself, quite simply because no one would buy his pictures, and he had no money.

Have you noticed in latter-day England how artists show great promise, often, and then 'go off'—or actually go to pieces? It is not the rule elsewhere that artists get worse as they get older. Why that

phenomenon only is met with here is easily explained. Their power does not prematurely wane any more than Rembrandt's, or Titian's, or Cézanne's, or Daumier's, or Poussin's. No, what happens. . . . But you know how sweet a tooth our public has, how unwilling it is to give its attention to anything a little severe, how it exerts its slothful, sentimental pressure from the first moment a fine artist reveals himself. Flowers, and still lifes with jolly little ornaments soon begin to appear in an English artist's work. It is all he can sell. Some in the end do no more good work at all. Gertler *did*—it is that that causes one to be particularly indignant.

The Royal Anthropological Institute, 21 Bedford Square, has an Exhibition of 'The Traditional Art of the British Colonies'. There is an Ibo head in wood with a slot-mouth, and No. 39, a large shoulder mask, both interesting; but there are very few things of artistic, as distinct from anthropological, interest. Nigerian Masks and Headdresses are also to be seen at the Zwemmer Gallery, 26 Litchfield Street. Finally, the Summer Show at the Redfern Gallery, 20 Cork Street, contains a good specimen of the work of every good artist in England. The only thing not there is the work of the bad artists. There is also a splendid Bonnard pastel.



'Figure', by Denis Williams, at the Berkeley Gallery



Art

# Bread and Ballyhoo

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE position of the painter in Great Britain has at all times been uncomfortable: today it has so greatly deteriorated, economically, that in a few years there will be no art except 'commercial art', and no painter except the 'week-end painter'. Even the 'potboiler' output has steeply declined, its market melting away—*vide* R.A. sales. This situation is known to a large number of people, and it is surprising how silent everyone is about it. Certainly there is a big new racket, if I may use so flippant an expression, prone to suppress, in the interests of Optimism, such information. But silence is not in the interest of painters, except for a very few. The optimism in question is not the confidence resulting from health, but rather the high spirits of well-paid grave-diggers.

With living costs more than doubled, with the impoverishment of everybody except the manual worker, the artist's case would only have to be stated—with the irrefutable data of studio-rent, cost of materials and frames, food, heating and lighting, dealers' 33½ per cent. commission, and it would immediately be recognised that, unless subsidised or protected, that particular 'cultural' activity is at an end.

There is a great deal going on of a character to obscure such hard facts, and, to some extent, it is intended that it should. The public's ears are filled with the ballyhoo of the great feats of our officials, who—to cheer you up after what I have just said about the painter—are flourishing as never before. For every painter who puts away his brushes and palette in despair and goes into commercial art or—still worse—potboils, at least three officials are signed on to 'feed art to the people', to watch over our 'art treasures', or to show the foreigner how cultured we are. No less than 157,452 people visited the Tate to see Van Gogh's pictures. I would not question the value of moving pictures about—they ought perhaps always to be on the wing. But the fact remains that Van Gogh's travelling expenses, as things are, come out of the pockets of *living* painters. Nor can any conceivable good be done to *living* art, whatever it may or may not do to the public, by those huge spectacles of grandly-dressed Emperors, Infantas, or Princesses, and Peter-Paul's gigantic charcuterie, like the Vienna pictures. Indeed, it operates in the reverse sense. People go sightseeing to these lavishly advertised 'cultural' displays instead of visiting the small Picture Galleries of the West End, which show work in progress here and today.

## The Reaction of the Artist

It would be a pleasant change to see these same sightseers re-routed, to see them swarm into the dealers' shops: the salesmanship of the London dealers would be put to the test; the public would certainly acquire a far more intimate knowledge of art by conversing with the dealers, arguing with them about what they had for sale, than it does where the big loan collections are staged. Canvases of the so-called 'gilt-edged' class have a chilling effect, they are remote and economically august, like the Crown Jewels. No one can look *with pleasure* at a picture worth forty thousand pounds. The way for people to learn about pictures would be to go where they are being painted—why not take parties to private studios, by arrangement with the artist?—or to the place where newly painted pictures are hung up for sale.

If this policy would be liable to bring officials or even Councillors in contact with other than hand-picked yes-men artists that would be too bad. I see the difficulty: some of these fellows are very uncouth, and quite certainly desperately hard-up. But as far as the principle of 'feeding art to the people' goes, which is what is supposed to matter, it would be a more creative experience for the uncultured millions. *The painting of Today for the public of Today!* There is another principle, the advantages of which are many and impressive. Before canvases depicting Infantas and Doges the general public can only have at the best *historical* sensations, which is not what an Art Gallery is for.

The reaction of the artist to the sudden popularity of art as 'Culture', as a thing to make a noise with, as if it were a large and hollow object, devoid of life, is understandable. It is as an artist I am speaking here:

and the painter's viewpoint is so exceedingly rarely heard that it must, I am aware, sound a little strange at first.

The artist's reaction—and it is not only *mine* but that of all artists not in some manner privately protected (and the latter are usually not those with most vitality, since vitality offends) this reaction will probably seem not only impolite but unjust. If it is to be heard at all, however, it is best that it should be heard undiluted. The official art-boom policy, then, is looked upon by the artist as merely a noisy and immensely expensive Facade: a pretence of ardent activity in the interest of the arts, but which in fact resembles an elaborate screen arranged to conceal a dying man, to spare others the shock of witnessing this demise. Those imposing institutions, the Arts Council or the British Council, by their mere existence serve to conceal from the public the neglect of contemporary art. It would be far better, from the artist's standpoint, if they were not there. Things could scarcely be worse: and without these make-believes it might become plain to the public how desperate things are.

## Can We Afford a Renaissance?

When and why the building of this cultural Facade began we know. Lord Lloyd, actually, was the pioneer. That initiative 'to assuage the conscience of the age'—to show how art blooms in the midst of bloodshed—was sooner or later taken up on all hands. The action of the Pilgrim Trust developed into what is now the English equivalent of a *Ministère des Beaux Arts*, namely the Arts Council (the chairman of the Arts Panel presumably the *de facto* *Ministre*). The great national collections, boroughs, even counties (*e.g.* Leicestershire) joined in. Now the Festival of Britain looms in the distance.

By 1945 such a Facade had been run up, suggestive of a 'cultural awakening'—like a Renaissance facade in a Hollywood set—that, echoing the slogans of the official propaganda, the public must have said to itself 'there has *never* been such an interest in the arts!' But there is of course no renaissance or rebirth. You cannot have a renaissance of the *living* arts without patrons, or patronage. Artists unfortunately cannot live on hot air. But the State has killed the geese that laid the golden eggs (or is in process of discouraging them financially with such efficiency that most as patrons are already dead), but it has not itself become a giant Goose, occupying the economic vacuum. If it believes it has done that, with its Councils, it is deceived, or has been deceived.

From the official attitude the natural deduction would be that visual art in England today, though of course its existence had to be recognised, is not deserving of much attention. This estimate is violently unfair. Actually England is so well-endowed with artists of first-rate quality at the moment that, given the opportunity (*i.e.* the official economic support) it could in fact *be* what it is merely officially *advertised* to be. The ballyhoo could be transformed into reality. There is an unusual wealth of young talent, at last up-to-datedly equipped, not harking back to French Impressionism, or to pre-Impressionist romanticism. But there can only be *promise*, in the absence of substantial support. All that Nash, myself and others—to put it that way—worked to create in England is *here*. From my standpoint, the country is bursting with good painters. I feel, and for the first time, at home. But the capital needed to exploit this creative outburst is spent in other ways.

What is the total outlay, annually, of H.M. Treasury for the purchase of work by living English artists? It is in fact so small that it would not do much more than keep a half-dozen artists, were they the sole beneficiaries. Three grants are involved, namely that to the Tate and those to the Arts Council and the British Council. The sum which the latter institutions elect to spend is modest but not very clearly defined. £2,000 may be spent by the Arts Council, but only if there are 'enough interesting pictures' available. The British Council would not agree it spent anything like that yearly: but both are fairly regular purchasers in picture exhibitions. I would guess that between them they spend £2,000 or £3,000 yearly. The Tate's £2,000 grant has to cover foreign and British works for over a century.



The State is not necessarily mean, but, one supposes, ignorant. The responsibility lies elsewhere. A phoney list could very easily be drawn up purporting to show that an extremely large sum is spent every year for the purchase of contemporary works of art—by the provincial cities, societies, the Chantrey Bequest, the Transport Board, and indomitable collectors. Such an inventory would be highly misleading. Our society is being socialised at top speed, and the main buyer of good pictures has always been the middle class, most deeply affected.

The subject is so intricate—there are so many official alibis to be dealt with, the multiplicity of conflicting values where pictures are concerned is such a source of confusion—that all that can be done in an article is to stimulate attention. We have, however, one piece of first-rate evidence, of the utmost concreteness. I refer to the 'Income and Expenditure' pages in the *Third Annual Report of the Arts Council* (1946-7). They are not very explicit, but the following facts stand

out. The sum finally at the disposal of the Council that year was roughly £450,000. As I have said, of this a maximum of £2,000 is ear-marked for the work of living artists. But Covent Garden pulled down over £90,000. Music, all told, received £212,000—theatrical companies £56,000 odd. But the essential—the stupefying—figures are 450, and 2.

The Council's Art Department has much less money to spend than the Drama, but it spends it practically all on exhibitions, lectures, and salaries. There are no lectures listed in the above Report on 'How to act' or 'How to play the oboe'. Drama is treated as creative art, Opera and Ballet the same. The visual arts, however, are treated as a branch of education. The artist, the *producer*, is sacrificed to some idea of *consumption*: he is smothered beneath a mountain of 'cultural' advertisement. The cultural publicity man, the educationist, and the 'amateur', have supplanted the artist: the painter is being talked and explained, Art is being boosted, off the face of the earth.



# Round the Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**L**OUIS LE BROCCUE, the young Dublin artist, shows water colour and ink drawings at Gimpel Fils in South Molton Street. He is a most accomplished draughtsman: in his water colours, small and perhaps too trivial scenes are uniformly gay, and sensitively coloured. Aubusson Tapestries, at the same Gallery, are explained in a brief note, in which one learns that an eighteenth-century Director 'assigned to tapestry the role of reproducing oil paintings'. But this seems to be the fault with the mid-twentieth-century ones too. Lurçat's fine 'Cock of the Day' must be excepted from this criticism entirely.

The London Gallery were still hanging when I arrived, but I was able to see the work of the interesting new Spanish painter, Estéban Francés. Certainly the colour is a novelty, and there are a few new surrealist props—a big metal flying dragon, existing in sunsets in space. I bought in the shop the *Bulletin International du Surréalisme*, No. 3. On the cover is a female nude, but the face is partly that of a skeleton, with the skull's well-known self-satisfied grin. 'How profound!' I reflected, 'and how original!' I tried to imagine the kind of man who would find it worth while to produce this hackneyed piece of painted philosophy. But next I went to the Hanover Gallery, and there Pavel Tchelitchew, with all his great ability, was busy with the same super-real stock-in-trade. A man's head with the arterial and other tubular machinery seen through diaphanous flesh. Some of the drawings are studies for a large picture named 'Hide-and-Seek'. Downstairs recent sculpture by F. E. McWilliam may be seen—most successful when farthest from the Afro-Picassoan.

An Italian painter, Lelia Caetani, has quite a large exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery, New Bond Street: mostly landscapes. She succeeds in transforming Italy into a country climatically much like Scandinavia. In Nos. 5, 14, and 20, where one colour or a few enable concentration upon a pattern, the results are admirable. Peter Lanyon has a room at this gallery, too. Pre-war Sutherland mountain-landscapes are the main inspiration, but a few recent pictures promise something new—one in particular like a giant ivory-sculpture. Finally John Minton, just back from Spain with some most brilliant water-colours, has sent three along, and more are expected.

Taking these Galleries in geographical sequence, we arrive at Wildenstein's, selected by the Arts Council for an exhibition of Gerard David. Mr. Friedländer's introductory note in the catalogue is not calculated to send up our temperature: 'In the history of art David represents the end, the tuneful knell of the fifteenth century in an ageing city (Bruges)'. Was this the best trumpeter they could find? What a dismal blast he gives forth! But, indeed, David is so obviously the last tired wave, which has not even the strength to break but melts away with a gentle sigh, that his resurrection in the first place was distinctly unkind, and it was typical of the Arts Council to have spent money so badly needed at home in bringing David over here.

Adrian Ryan has a second one-man show at the Redfern Gallery, Cork Street. This young painter is said to have 'returned to the palette of the Post-impressionists', though perhaps one should go further back and just say Impressionists (with a dash of 'fauvisme'). The portrait of a girl ('Polly', I think) stands out. Thomas Carr is a quietist, who has several fine landscapes. Some drawings by Gwen John at the same Gallery should command the attention of collectors.

She was an extraordinary person.

Next door, at Roland Browse and Delbanco, you have two days only in which to see an excellent 'Leda'; also green, red, white, and brown cows, upon icy-glittering downs, beneath a rushing and ice-pierced sky. And the cows are made of paper. Henry Gotlib's cows are like this because he does not believe in cows—that is what makes them so interesting. It involves an elaborate journey to see Josef Herman's pictures of miners, but it is worth it: they are at the Geffrye Museum in Shoreditch. Herman lives at Ystradgynlais, a Welsh mining village. There is no 'nobility of toil' stuff in what he does. The miners life, as he sees it, is hideous and dark—so dark, in fact, that some of his canvases are little short of pitch-black. It is always possible to discern, however, a miner or two in slow motion—painfully slow owing to the opaque medium in which they live: either entombed in the black earth, or (as in 'Evening at Ystradgynlais') relaxing in the hideous black-red glow of the furnace-effects produced by the setting sun. He may also be seen engaged in musical relaxation: puffing out powerful hymns to the miner's black God: or milking a black cow. So go to 'Ystradgynlais in Shoreditch'.

From the Geffrye Museum it is not very far to the Whitechapel Art Gallery, where 'Pictures for Schools' are being shown. This is the 'Society for Education in Art' scheme, supported by the Arts Council. In the catalogue foreword the Arts Council is seen exhorting schools and colleges to purchase pictures. While ardently seconding this appeal, let us not relax our pressure upon the Arts Council to spend more money on pictures, too, as a small slice out of the funds reserved for plays, ballets, and operas would enable them to do.

The J. Leslie Wright Collection of English Water-colours is of peculiar interest because of the very fine examples of Rowlandson's drawings. No nation on earth, I suppose, having produced Thomas Rowlandson, would have so completely forgotten it had done so as this country did. There have been signs recently of a change, and here he fills the side of a large room. In any show of Early English Water-colours one has to pass wastes of blowsy brown trees (that is part of the fun, I believe) to reach such a superb thing as Bonnington's 'St. Etienne, Beauvais', which, with the 'Paris', are the pictures in this collection I especially admire. The set of Turner water-colours, beginning at No. 218, are matchless performances in this medium, one of infinite delicacy. Mr. Wright has made an amazing collection, and what is more has displayed an enterprising spirit.



'Bath Beau and Country Beau' (showing George Morland outside the New Rooms, Bath): pen and water-colour by Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827). From the exhibition 'Masters of British Water-colour' (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) at the Royal Academy



## Art

# Round the London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THESE are half-a-dozen very interesting exhibitions this month, from the Belgian Baron, the Rousseau of Big Business, served up by the London Gallery, Brook Street, all the way back to Ethel Walker at the Lefevre Gallery, who has been called the G.O.W. of English Impressionism. She was a pillar of the 'New English' in its palmy days and when Sickert and Steer both died in 1942, 'Now I am the only painter left in England!' she exclaimed, aghast at her solitary eminence. Or that is the story. It is easy to understand what an outstanding Impressionist must have felt confronted with that double demise. Miss Walker might have felt a little less like the last of her tribe, or of a great race, had she known that in Euston Road a group of painters had sworn that Impressionism should not die. French Impressionists (of the last phase) are to be seen at the same Gallery—Bonnard's 'Dans le Jardin' is an oasis of peaceful power and beauty—or so it seems as I look back, for immediately afterwards I went to Francis Bacon's exhibition at the Hanover Gallery whose world is as far as it is possible to get from the robust serenity of French painting of the Impressionist school.

This Hanover Gallery show, however, is of exceptional importance. Of the younger painters none actually *paints* so beautifully as Francis Bacon. I have seen painting of his that reminded me of Velasquez and like that master he is fond of blacks. Liquid whitish accents are delicately dropped upon the sable ground, like blobs of mucus—or else there is the cold white glitter of an eyeball, or of an eye distended with despairing insult behind a shouting mouth, distended also to hurl insults. Otherwise it is a baleful regard from the mask of a decayed clubman or business executive—so decayed that usually part of the head is rotting away into space. But black is his pictorial element. These faces come out of the blackness to glare or to shout. I must not attempt to describe these amazing pictures—the shouting creatures in glass cases, these dissolving ganglia the size of a small fist in which one can always discern the shouting mouth, the wild distended eye. In the 'Nude', in front of not the least ominous of curtains, about to enter, the artist is seen at his best. Bacon is one of the most powerful artists in Europe today and he is perfectly in tune with his time. Not like his namesake 'the brightest, wisest of mankind', he is, on the other hand, one of the darkest and most possessed.

In violent contrast to this is Victor Pasmore, for whom everything tends to the White as with Bacon it does to the Black. He has a most exciting show of quite abstract pictures at the Redfern Gallery. It is as tense as a game of chess—but there are no howls when you lose. It is not an affair of life and death: death is not of the *parti* any more than it is 'In the Garden' with Bonnard. This exhibition is *exciting* to the

artist—its excitements are not those of life in the raw, as with Bacon. Description of course is hopeless. What in a picture we call 'composition' is abstracted from the rest and of course it is not all geometries. First structure is developed, as it were the skeleton of pictorial organisms. Then this purely compositional creation takes on features of its own. Admittedly such abstractions are as abstruse as the

work of 'difficult' writers. It demonstrates what a very serious artist Pasmore is that he should go aside and, in the teeth of an economic blizzard, devote himself to this unpopular type of work.

Returning to the Lefevre, and this time it is drawings, not paintings, to be considered, a group of Augustus John drawings contains at least two superb specimens. John has always been olympianly remote, a psychological factor which I think the critic should remember. Time obsesses us. But for John I am sure Mantegna is as contemporary as Matisse. 'The Head of an Old Gipsy' is traditional drawing of the very highest order, it would do credit to any of the greatest masters of the Renaissance. It is also psychologically as humanistic as work of that time. To continue with drawings, William Roberts at the Leicester Gallery has a great display (twenty-eight altogether): for those who can appreciate fine drawing a memorable collection. These things are very different from the work of John, and it may be instructive to compare 'Ironing Board' by Roberts with John's Gipsy. For Roberts man is a machine, for John he is a spirit.

At the Leicester also is a very notable show by a new artist, Bateson Mason. At the Royal College of Art when he was a student there I remember selecting a work of his for a first prize; but I had no idea how exceptionally talented an artist he was to become. These pictures are most romantic landscapes, touched with Surrealism, the paint of fine quality, the colour brilliantly successful. In the same neighbourhood, 15 Lisle Street, is the A.I.A. Gallery. This is a small Gallery run by a few artists to exhibit their own pictures—obviously in the hopeless attempt to escape the dealers' 33½ per cent. commission. Works by Minton, Uhlman, Trevelyan and others occupy wall sections. The wife of one of the artists runs the Gallery. There are fine Minton's, and a set of admirable landscapes akin to those of Mason by Fred Uhlman, of whose work I can never see enough.

Gimpel Fils of South Molton Street have several items, all interesting. William Johnston has very delicate wash drawings, there is Jean Lurçat, and a group of bold, black criss-cross abstractions by William Gear, and lastly a couple of pieces in ivory-like wood by the admirable young sculptor, Robert Adams. At 14 Brook Street there is a small well-chosen exhibition, containing a good Craxton and several good Massons, of which 'Barrage' is particularly fine.



Study for Nude (1949), by Francis Bacon, from the exhibition at the Hanover Gallery



(v) The export of rice of the 1948-49 season was rather less than one third of the figure for 1930. In 1939-40, India and Ceylon together took two-thirds of Burma's total rice exports, and the decline of a supply of this magnitude has naturally been a source of anxiety to India where the threat of famine is ever present. But the reduction is not due to independence!

(vi) I have no detailed information about the post-war state of the canals in the Mandalay and Kyaukse districts. The sluice-gates at the head-works of the Shwebo canals were blown up by the Japanese before their retreat, but were repaired by the Irrigation Department on re-occupation. In the Minbu district in which there are also large-scale irrigation works, a new difficulty was met with in 1947. Villagers belonging to the communist inspired 'Cultivators' Unions' were refusing to carry out the duties imposed on them by the Canal Act of clearing and keeping in good repair the minor water-courses and distributaries; their argument was that the Irrigation Department was paid to do this. I have little doubt that the silting up which inevitably followed has by now led to a grave deterioration of the whole system. The headworks of the Mon canals at Sedaw were extensively damaged by flood-water in the monsoon of 1948. As this area was a favourite haunt of gangs of armed robbers, I do not suppose the necessary repairs have yet been carried out.

Yours, etc.,

London, S.E.9

G. L. MERRELLS

### Problem of a Common Language

Sir,—I was greatly interested in the third Reith Lecture on the problem of a common language and in the correspondence on this subject which has appeared in THE LISTENER. The question seems to be whether Esperanto, as the only planned language which has met with any success, or one of the greater ethnic languages, such as English or French, should be adopted. I have also heard a strong case made out for Spanish, and Russian is the first foreign language in the Slav countries. Moreover, Italian, although it is not so widespread, is much better suited to international communication than either English or French. While serving in East Africa I noticed that Africans, although they heard English constantly, learned little beyond the rudiments of this language by ear; nor, while in Madagascar, did they fare any better with French: on the other hand those who had served in Abyssinia seemed to have collected a large Italian vocabulary. This was no doubt due to the greater clarity of spoken Italian when compared with English or French. I may also add that Esperanto, having the same vowels as Italian plus a regular stress accent, also has this advantage of phonetic clarity.

Another East African experience also throws light on this problem. Thousands of us learned Swahili, the *lingua franca* of East Africa, not for its literature which is many times smaller than that of Esperanto, but for its practical utility in the affairs of everyday life. Swahili also has the same phonetic basis as Esperanto.

I am not opposed to the teaching of ethnic languages for their cultural value (I am myself an honours student of German) but I cannot blind myself to the fact that the reading of the literatures of other nations is a pleasure reserved for the few who are able to specialise. Fortunately, however, we need not despair either of having a common language for everyday use by all or of being able to read the literature of other nations. Let Esperanto be taught as the first foreign language and the problem of direct communication between nations will be solved. Fifteen years' experience of using Esperanto and other languages convinces me that this is the only practical solution.

In addition to achieving this main objective, Esperanto could also be used as a means of discovering those children who could with profit

take up the study of one of the ethnic languages. A wider choice should be allowed in this matter than is at present the case. There are other languages than French and English. The specialists thus produced could then be of most service to their fellows, not by lamenting the fact that they alone were capable of reading other literatures in the original, but by producing worthy translations from these literatures into their mother-tongue and (especially for those whose own vernaculars are unsuitable mediums for translation) from their mother-tongue into Esperanto.

By following this twofold path we could achieve a common language and a common culture not only for western Europe but for the whole world.—Yours, etc.,

Newcastle-on-Tyne K. I. STEPHENSON

### Henry Moore

Sir,—Surely Francis Watson 'is on the wrong tack' by calling Dürer as his witness. The treasures from the Golden Land admired in 1521 in Brussels were gold and silversmith's work, 'all kinds of *Wunderdinge* for men's use', and he exclaimed at the 'subtle ingenuity' of their makers. He would not have applied that term to the lumpy 'Recliner' illustrated in your columns. Anyway he did not copy them, but continued sanely to work in the Christian-humanist spirit of European culture, going to Italy for his inspiration. So did Alfred Stevens.

Yours, etc.,

London; N.W.3

HORACE SHIPP

### Round the London Art Galleries

Sir,—Mr. Wyndham Lewis' generous reference to the Lisle Street Gallery involved him in error in non-aesthetic matters.

Our gallery is not 'run by a few artists', but by the Artists' International Association, with a membership of 500 and with sixteen years' record of organising major and minor exhibitions, apart from other activities; this gallery alone has shown the work of 200 artists in two years. The gallery is not managed by 'the wife of one of the artists', but by exhibition committees of professional artists who, with the secretary, apply the policies of the Association's Central Committee.

The gallery is not run 'obviously in the hopeless attempt to escape the dealers' 33½ per cent. commission'. It is run (i) to enable the work of acknowledged artists to be selected by those who are themselves practising artists; (ii) to try out the work of unknown members who later will be (and are) taken up by the dealers who are our invited and welcome guests. Any commission factors are very qualified; many exhibitors do 'escape' (to use Mr. Lewis' word) the commission; yet when we sometimes borrow members' work from a dealer we readily pay the relevant commission (not 33½ per cent.).

Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.2

BERYL SINCLAIR

Chairman, Artists' International Association

Sir,—Mr. Wyndham Lewis' remark, in his 'Round the London Art Galleries', that 'in Euston Road a group of painters had sworn that impressionism should not die' calls for some clarification. What does he mean by 'impressionism'?

The word was originally applied by accident and without thought to various French painters who were interested in a nineteenth-century science of seeing. We all know today, as Renoir, Cézanne, Seurat and some of their contemporaries were not slow to discover, that the conveyance in pigment of the tones and colours of a particular scene is not the only factor in the art of painting. Does Mr. Lewis mean to

suggest that the painters who taught in Euston Road ignored the lessons of Cézanne?

What is the proper meaning of the word 'impressionism' in the criticism of painting? Let us describe it as plainly as possible, thus: impressionism is the kind of painting that would convey the impression of something it does not define. We might perhaps say that the best works of Samuel Palmer and of Paul Klee fulfil this condition, but those of Degas and Coldstream do not. To the best of my knowledge the students at Euston Road were not taught to convey impressions, but how to draw and paint.

Yours, etc.,

London, S.E.1

C. PINSENT

### 'Body and Mature Behaviour'

Sir,—With reference to Mr. Marshall Carrington's letter in THE LISTENER of November 10, my book is a study of anxiety, sex, gravitation and learning, as its title clearly says; it deals with the functional unity of environment, emotions, growth and maturity of mind and body, and only the treatment of these subjects can be novel. The book was never intended to be a manual or a practical guide in a technique; nevertheless, the chapter 'Tonic Adjustment' gives the broad lines of my technique and the principles to follow. A full account and directions for self re-education is now nearing completion and will be published in due course.

I have read Mr. Alexander's books but could not make much out of them, as I did not understand them. I preferred, in these circumstances, not to refer to them at all. From what little I have gathered on reading these books, I believe that his practice is better than his theory. In humans the eyes and the conscious have an overriding influence over the neck reflexes which cannot, therefore, be referred to as 'primary control'. I have used such expressions as 'feeling right' and 'manner of doing', but neither my arguments nor my conclusions are in agreement with Mr. Alexander's. Mr. Carrington's reference to parallelism is preposterous unless he means parallel but in the opposite sense.

However, at the recommendation of a new friend, H. Harris, M.D., that the publication of my book brought me, I have been having lately personal experience of Mr. Alexander's technique at the hands of Mr. C. H. Neil and Mr. Eric de Peyer and I find it much more effective than my reading has led me to suppose.

Yours, etc.,

London, N.W.3

M. FELDENKRAIS

### Crossword No. 1,023

Sir,—As several people have written to ask how this arithmetical puzzle can be done in less than half a lifetime, may I answer them in print? There is no need to work out any high power. The calculation here required by such a thing as 29<sup>41</sup> — 53T (which turns up for 3 across) can be done in ten minutes on one side of a postcard. We have to relate powers of 29 to multiples of 53. Let m/ stand for the words 'a multiple of'. Then:

Powers of 29:

1st is m/53	— 24
2nd is m/53 + 576	i.e. — 7
3rd " + 168	+ 9
5th " — 63	— 10
10th " + 100	— 6
13th " — 54	— 1
26th " "	+ 1
39th " "	— 1
41st " "	+ 7

Thus 29<sup>41</sup> is 7 more than a multiple of 53. Postcard ends. From data known at this stage, 3 across can only be 484. The workings are not all as easy as that one.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.2

W. McNAUGHT



that to try to create the sort of mood of communal excitement that the totalitarians aim at was (a) undemocratic and (b) completely alien to the British character and that we should have to find other means of getting over our difficulties. And I concluded with a modest expression of belief that the necessary adjustment to new difficulties and economic dangers would in fact come out of the political and democratic genius of the British people themselves rather than be imposed from above.

But I am afraid Mr. Pringle deceives himself if he thinks that all that is necessary is peace and quiet and a chance to get on with private living. Would that it were. I can think of nothing nicer. But if he will take the trouble to examine the nature of the international political and economic problems that face this country and the vast readjustments they call for he will see that without an immense national effort in which everyone takes part to the best of their ability there is little chance of our survival as a great nation or even as a solvent one. We have, whether we like it or not, to find a new sense of purpose and a new energy. What, if Mr. Pringle will believe me, I was saying in this broadcast, was that I thought we could be trusted to find them best in our own British way.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.C.1 FRANCIS WILLIAMS

### The Meaning of Democracy

Sir,—Speaking on the western political tradition, Sir Ernest Barker defines 'democracy' as a 'process of government' and, contrasting the divergent conceptions of government in eastern and western Europe but labelling them both 'democratic', he finds 'democracy' a word 'various and particoloured'. This would be true if democracy were in its essence a 'process of government', but this it is not. We only confuse ourselves hopelessly if we do not insist on the simple point that democracy is essentially a way of life, a way of providing an opportunity for discussion and criticism. Inferentially this will lead to legislative and administrative proposals and ultimately it will settle the form of government. The result may be a limited monarchy or a republic; a capitalist state, a socialist state, or even a communist state. But what matters in democracy is not the object aimed at but the method by which it is pursued. If there is no freedom of consent, and, still more, freedom of discussion, the word 'democracy' cannot and should not be used.—Yours, etc.,  
Belfast

G. O. SAYLES

### Ideas of Sex

Sir,—I still think Mrs. Winter worries too much over the effect on public morals of popular misconceptions of psycho-analysis and that she is unnecessarily disturbed by the equally uninstructed criticisms of psycho-analytic method advanced by natural scientists. Nevertheless her comment on the relation of science to sexual and ethical codes affords me a further opportunity of clarifying the issue. It is true that the natural scientist is not in a position to throw any light on the nature of morality. Psycho-analysts, on the other hand, have subjected moral processes to the most penetrating researches and have established that both sexual and ethical codes are superimposed on and to a large extent derived from unconscious infantile codes of an incredibly primitive and superstitious nature. For this reason it is essential to determine whether any given moral injunction represents a reasonable consensus of individual and social feeling or is largely a cover for superstition, prejudice and conflict. Hence my original comment that so-called self-discipline is often neurotic in origin.

Mr. O. R. McGregor, still convinced, as no doubt was his grandfather in Victorian times, that prostitution is essentially an economic problem, returns to the fray with undiminished

vigour. In the first place he brushes aside my contention that we have no reliable, controlled and correlated statistics regarding sexual manifestations, either for the eighteenth or the nineteenth or, for the matter of that, the twentieth century; and, in the second, he has an unwarrantably low opinion of those twentieth-century investigations which first established the paramount importance of psychological and developmental factors in all sexual disorders, including prostitution. Mr. McGregor's intransigence tempts me to add fuel to the flames by reminding him that even such 'economic' disorders as pilfering are now known to be determined in a surprising number of instances by the psychological antecedents of the delinquent. Let us, however, agree to differ.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.1 EDWARD GLOVER

### Dr. Summerskill's Broadcast

Sir,—Dr. Summerskill in her broadcast said she turned socialist when she discovered that one-third of the population before the war suffered from some degree of under-nourishment, i.e. got less than the League of Nations minimum of 2887 calories. I pointed out that under her own regime today the position was far worse, since we get on points and rations only 1720 calories. Mr. Morley Davies leapt into the fray, with the claim that it was quite feasible to make up the deficiency from unrationed food.

Twice I have challenged him to tell us how. Twice he has failed to do so. If he expects to be taken seriously he must either answer my challenge or put his pride in his pocket and admit frankly that it cannot be done.—Yours, etc.,  
Oxford CHERWELL

### Standards in Art Criticism

Sir,—The absence of valid and generally accepted standards in contemporary art criticism, the veritable chaos and welter of conflicting opinions which today serve as a substitute for any coherent aesthetic philosophy, are vividly illustrated in the columns of THE LISTENER. Reviewing the Courtauld Memorial Exhibition at the Tate, Mr. Wyndham Lewis takes Seurat, and by implication his admirers, very vigorously to task. Of 'Une Baignade' he exclaims 'What a picture! Nothing could bring to life this dull monotonous expanse'; while the 'Woman Powdering Herself' is an 'empty pretext for the trying out of optical notions'. Now, Sir, unless I am deceived, not long since in THE LISTENER Mr. Herbert Read proclaimed that 'Une Baignade' was one of the greatest of modern masterpieces—if indeed he did not go so far as to pronounce that it is among the most important pictures of any age. Clearly, both of these distinguished critics cannot possibly be right: one of them must be mistaken as to what constitutes the essential attributes of a great work of art. Memories in these matters are mercifully short, and such contradictions are commonly overlooked. But their effect is cumulative: gradually they foster in the bewildered public a conviction that there are no valid standards in art criticism at all, and that personal predilections are the sole explanation of such diametrically opposite views.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.4

RALPH EDWARDS

### Taxation, Incentives and Social Insurance

Sir,—I am much interested by the letter from Mr. L. J. Cadbury in your issue of June 3. I agree with him in thinking it essential that family allowances in the middle classes should be made proportionate to income, as a matter of population policy as well as of social justice. But he is surely wrong in condemning Mr. Chambers's scheme of income-tax simplification on these grounds. There is nothing in his pro-

posals to prevent an arrangement on the lines proposed by Mr. Cadbury in respect of the taxpayer above the £500-a-year category.

To insist on retaining an obsolete system of income-tax collection which is costing the country anything from £50,000,000 to £100,000,000 a year, quite apart from its disincentive drawbacks, cannot possibly be of assistance to the middle classes, or anyone else, in the long run. If there is something which is good in the existing system, let us embody it in the new one, but not at the cost of retaining all the uneconomic features of the present arrangement.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Chambers's proposals represent a means of re-distributing income in a manner favourable to the man with several dependants, and not the reverse, as Mr. Cadbury's letter might seem to imply. For the great majority of families, it would provide a real improvement of their position.—Yours, etc.,  
London, S.W.1 JULIET RHYS-WILLIAMS

## Human Rights

(continued from page 961)

to conduct its own examination not only of the petitioner but of officials of the accused government as well.

Then if these difficulties of ascertaining the true facts have been surmounted, there arises, supposing that the complaint seems to be justified, the question of what is to be done to put the matter right. Presumably, in the first instance, a process of conciliation would be tried, and one would hope that in many cases this would succeed. But conciliation might fail, and there must be measures in reserve for that event. If it does fail, the next step that the sub-committee suggests is one that was strongly pressed by the representative of Australia, namely that the matter should be submitted for final judicial decision to a new Court of Human Rights, and that in the event—the unlikely event as the sub-committee hopes—of the judgment of this Court being disregarded, the matter should then be referred to the General Assembly to take such further action as might be possible. A British proposal went rather further than this and proposed that a state which the General Assembly found to have persistently violated the Bill of Rights should be liable to be expelled from the United Nations. These proposals seem reasonable, and they probably go at least as far as is practicable. They provide means of pressure which might be effective in many cases, pressure, it will be noted, but not actual compulsion. Even so, the representative of the U.S.S.R. objected to them as being contrary to the sovereignty and independence of States, as opening the possibility of intervention in States' internal affairs, and being therefore unacceptable.

One conclusion at least emerges; it would be a disastrous mistake to proceed too quickly. The present intention seems to be that either this year or next the General Assembly should approve some definite scheme. That seems to me an attempt to move much too quickly, for it is no depreciation of the work that the Commission has already done to say that much still remains to be done. I cannot help feeling also that in the present state of international tension, and in the absence of any real consensus of opinion either as to the contents of the rights that the individual ought to enjoy or as to the means that should be used to make his rights effective, any agreement on human rights which is concluded in the near future will be unlikely to mark a real advance. Neither a mere manifesto of high-sounding principles, nor an agreement only accepted by those States in which human rights are already decently secured would be of any real value.—Third Programme



charm is arrogant. One has only got to hear him say 'Hail! Kala!' to recognise this.

I take it the Republican Government claims to be civilised, and the first thing is to enforce the rule of law. I can see no signs of that yet. As regards crime—violent crime—I base my views on Mr. Churchill's figures in the debate in the House of Commons, the figures were not challenged by Mr. Attlee, and unless my calculations are very much out there was a rise of 800 per cent. on the 1930 figures.

There are two points in Mr. Merrells' letter that should not be allowed to go by default. 'In due course came slumps in world markets, and years of bad harvests, and the outcome has been that Burma has a legacy of chronic agrarian indebtedness'. Strange to say, though most of my service was particularly tied up with crops and agriculture, I cannot remember these slumps. If Mr. Merrells will refer to settlement reports he will find that the price of paddy in Rangoon—export centre—from 1900 to 1930 steadily rose, and so did the export of rice. Where are these slumps and scarcities?

'I would point out that statistical and other information is not now so easily accessible as it was when Burma was a British dependency'. Perhaps this is just as well, otherwise the public here would realise what a mess had been made by departing in such a hurry, and leaving a decent peasantry in the hands of incompetent politicians, many of whom have paid the ultimate penalty, the death of a tyrant! The fact that we, and the Japanese, left behind arms and ammunition may mean to a criminal people a great opportunity; but sten guns don't go off by themselves. The real cause of much of the present trouble lies in—'The sudden access of unaccustomed wealth encouraged the Burman's natural leaning towards extravagance and thriftlessness'. He desires to and does live beyond his means, there comes a day of reckoning, some excuse must be made, blame the British Raj!

Thakin Nu's suggestion to take over one-third of the Burma Oil Company's shares is amusing, it would get them nowhere, even if they could find the money. What is needed is an additional £3,000,000-£4,000,000 to rehabilitate the oil fields. Can anyone expect—in present conditions or the near future—that any responsible body of men will find that sum, as confiscation would probably follow when the work was complete.

I would like to give Mr. Merrells a free translation of a Burmese proverb: 'Beware of a buffalo with a kalauk\* and a man with a rosary'.

Yours etc.,

Hampton Wick

D. F. CHALMERS

\* Hollow wooden clapper bell

## Babur

Sir,—In my broadcast on Babur printed in THE LISTENER of November 3, I attributed Babur's two decisive victories in substantial part to use of artillery.

My attention has been kindly called by Mr. Davies, Reader in Indian History at Oxford, to the fact that it is very doubtful whether in fact Babur had any large amount of artillery. It is clear that he used some at Panipat, but on looking again at the account of these two decisive battles as given by himself, I am sure that my statement about the importance of artillery in the victory was too sweeping. I hope you will allow me to correct this. He won by generalship and the quality of his troops much more than by artillery.—Yours, etc.,

Chathill

BEVERIDGE

## Round the London Art Galleries

Sir,—First, I must apologise for having failed to understand how vast an organisation was massed behind that modest little Gallery in Lisle Street: also for implying that the 500

A.I.A. artists felt anything but grateful admiration for that splendid body of men, the London dealers. Miss Sinclair's words 'readily pay the relevant commission' I liked particularly. It shows the proper spirit: though I confess to feeling a sneaking satisfaction when Miss Sinclair ruefully agrees that 'many do escape' (meaning pay no commission at all, I hope).

As to Mr. Pinsent, when he asks 'Does Mr. Lewis mean to suggest that the painters who taught in Euston Road ignored the lessons of Cézanne?' I can assure him that no such foul suggestion could ever stain my pen. I have seen faint traces of a consciousness of that master in at least one Euston Roader. It was for me a matter of genuine surprise to learn that any Euston Roader would object to being called Impressionist. That is what I should have thought they *wanted* to be called. These painters are not surrealists, nor Futurists, nor Cubists, nor Fauves, nor Expressionists, they are not romantics, nor classicists. They are realists who certainly would not have painted as they do if the French Impressionists had not been their inspiration. The *isms* are merely tags, of course, with which the modern schools are labelled. But I fear there is no such abstraction as just 'teaching people how to draw and paint' (I quote Mr. Pinsent). You must teach them to draw and paint in some *definite way*—usually your own—whether you intend to do so or not. Then you will refer your students to the work of certain masters—your favourites. The teacher is not an ahistorical automaton existing in an aesthetic vacuum.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

## Henry Moore

Sir,—Horace Shipp and I are at all events on different tacks. I used Dürer as a hint, not as a proof. Mr. Hendy never said that Henry Moore was 'seeing through the eyes' of a pre-Columbian sculptor or 'copying' his work. He suggested that Aztec and other influences available to contemporary artists had provided something which Moore 'could look at freshly, and not through the tired, cultured eyes of intervening generations'. If Renaissance sculptors themselves had not found something that they could look at freshly in pre-Christian art, Mr. Shipp would not now be talking of the 'classico-Christian' culture. Mr. Shipp wants to stop that culture cold at Michelangelo's particular amalgam of past and present influences. I should have thought that was being 'ultra-sophisticated' to a peculiarly infructuous degree.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.2

FRANCIS WATSON

## The Baila of the Kafue River

Sir,—Mr. Kenneth Bradley says the Baila men knock out their teeth to look like their cows, for which they have a great affection. The true explanation is that it is a totemic rite. In the first instance it was done to young girls on attaining pubescence, and was a personable means of making known the fact they were of a marriageable age. Only one tooth was knocked out. Later, men of the Snake Totem knocked out all their incisor teeth, leaving only the canines, which made them have fangs like their totem. It is possible the totem of the Baila men may be a cow, but I have always understood the cow was sacred to Hathor, Lady of Light in the Moon.

His explanation of the 'pigtail' comes very far short of its real meaning. Incidentally the chignon is quite common, not only in Africa but also among men of other countries, and if he studies ancient Egyptian paintings he will see figures with a long 'tail' hanging down the back, sometimes from the neck, sometimes dependent from the crown of the head. It was

a rope or chain worn in some of their ceremonies, and when round the neck signified their belief in God, and their dependence on him. When worn on the head it was the spiritual form, and showed the wearer was judged and justified, and had been led by it through all the darkness, dangers and difficulties of the Underworld to the Realms of the Blessed.

It is only to be expected that the real meaning has become obscured and distorted through the passage of time, and the explanation given him may have been believed by them; and then again it may not. It is a religious symbol, and the primitive native is very shy of opening his mind and his mouth to strangers. This rope is also met with in divers places all over the semi-civilised world. In civilised countries Freemasons have it.—Yours, etc.,

Tettenhall

ARTHUR H. FULLERTON

## African Regional Scientific Conference

Sir,—There is a serious error in the second paragraph of the article on the African Regional Scientific Conference in THE LISTENER of November 17. My original word 'sparsely' has been replaced by 'vastly', and instead of the words 'there are fewer than 200,000,000 in the African continent' you have printed 'no fewer than 200,000,000'. This, of course, makes nonsense of the whole point I was putting forward on the population of Africa.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.1

B. LOCKSFEISER

[We regret these errors.—EDITOR, THE LISTENER]

## Aspects of Goethe

Sir,—Those of your readers who have followed the remarkable effort put out by the B.B.C. on the centenary of Goethe, may be interested to know that it is impossible to read a complete set of his plays in English. After attempting for some years to get a copy I have to report failure. It is impossible to find a copy of *Stella* in English, either in shops or through the library system. Now this is I think so remarkable, as if a German could not get a copy of say 'As You Like It' in German, that it calls for some explanation and comment. It can be explained no doubt, but in face of many enquiries I have made, I should be glad to hear what others think.—Yours, etc.,

Batley

J. HAROLD BROWN

## Medical Reference Book

Sir,—We have in preparation a reference book giving particulars of the scholarships and other financial grants which are available for medical training or research. Every medical school and university in the country is co-operating in supplying material together with a large number of schools and charitable organisations. Some awarding body may have been inadvertently overlooked, and it is clearly important that the reference book should be as complete as possible. If, therefore, any of your readers knows of an award or grant for medical training or research, particulars of which have not already been supplied, I should be grateful if he would kindly communicate with me.—Yours, etc.,

JOHN PRINGLE

Public Relations Officer

British Medical Association,

Tavistock Square,

London, W.C.1

The Nottinghamshire Education Committee has published a *Report of the County Library for the Year 1948-49*. The Library has issued over 2,500,000 books during the year. No book, the report states, has seriously rivalled Mr. Churchill's *The Gathering Storm* in popularity. Books on sport were nearly as much in demand as biographies. A number of new mobile libraries has been ordered and there are 176 village libraries in the county.



## Art

# Round the London Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE Lefevre Gallery was my first call, John Minton was the attraction. This show is the result of a visit to Spain, a country most congenial to his vision. Had there been two or three more of them, this show might have been called just 'Matadors' (or 'Killers', to translate the word). These 'Killers' are the traditional dandies of the world of sport: the Spanish paradox has attracted yet another painter. The principal of 'The Two Bullfighters' (see this week's cover), very tall and slender, is halted impassively, limply holding the folds of his cape like a bundle of sticks, bored, immaculate, heroically the opposite of 'dynamic'. This, with its elegantly composed vertical blades of colour, is an achievement. The picture by the window of a single matador is superb in colour: all of the Valencia and Alicante drawings are very fine: though there is a watercolour landscape of his at the Leicester Galleries which is packed to bursting with formal beauty.

In philosophy a pretentious jargon has often impressed, so in painting there is a jargon, and it impresses. Minton does not employ such adventitious aids. Nor is Minton a violent painter. I could mention several who are more like a prize-fight than he is. This is because nature is not violent and he is a naturalist. His is the classical attitude, he is not self-assertive. He may exploit—it is open to all good naturalists to do that—the violences and oddities of nature: but never in such a way as to suggest that the calmness of nature, the norm which the snobs call 'dull', is not equally the object of his cult.

Yet going from Minton's show to the Howard Bliss Collection, on view at the Leicester Galleries, is almost like leaving a prize-fight at Madison Square Gardens and passing into the remoter parts of Central Park on a foggy autumn night. This is a large collection and there is a small percentage of exceptions; Matthew Smith's 'Roses and Pears', Adler's 'Composition—Nude', or Craxton's 'Boy on a Blue Chair', might be cited. But these are departures from a pervasive dimness.

Here is a collector possessed of a most extraordinary predilection—for the thin brown dim amorphous world, in fact, of Ivon Hitchens, the major influence obviously in the making of this collection. I venture to think that this is a kind of pictorial world to which a musician would be attracted: and of course this is a constatation, not a criticism. Very rapidly Mr. Bliss made an enormous collection of relatively inexpensive, for preference *weightless*, but invariably tasteful, things. At first one does not notice the few 'strong' things—though of course there are no Colquhouns, and other 'strong' artists are in their milder moods: and probably William Scott with his eggs and frying pans is the collector having a little quiet fun with himself.

There is a most interesting foreword by Mr. Bliss. A 'lyrical affinity' with Gainsborough Mr. Bliss sees as the prerequisite, in a picture, for admission to his collection—for joining his other 'problem children' as he calls them (though as Gainsborough is hardly a 'problem child', it must be Hitchens, rather, that he has in mind). The psycho-

logical exclusiveness of his taste is better conveyed further on. To be enabled to exist 'without change of mood' (his words) among objects which stimulate that mood, was apparently our collector's aim. This fixing of a mood—at least so deliberately—is surely a novelty in the West, and Mr. Howard Bliss evidently attributes to pictures a much more active function than other *amateurs*—even if for him it is a somewhat negative action that is sought.



'Villa Solaia' (1949), by Theodore Garman, from the exhibition at the Redfern Gallery

The Mid-day Studio Group', of which Lowry is the senior member, has a show in the cellar of the 'Twenty Brook Street' Gallery. They have broadcast a letter in which most accurately they assert that 'painting is rapidly becoming a rich man's hobby': further that 'If the Arts Council was interested in fostering regional art it would not be necessary for the artist to find the money for such a venture'. There's a lot of good sense up in the North. At the Redfern Gallery Theodore Garman, an important newcomer, is to be seen. On entering the gallery you are overwhelmed by a

rancid vegetation, tropically gigantic. Such pictures are not seen at their best all around one, in a small room. A little concentration on individual pictures will soon reveal how excellent is the workmanship. The 'Villa Solaia' is admirably composed: and what tremendous vitality there is in the 'Tamarova'. Vitality is what Garman's pictures essentially possess, these heavy coarse green forms, these large pale faces in which the universal green is reflected. The huge plants are suggestive of daring tapestries, as are even the colours, with their selective monotony. The aforesaid vitality, however (although that is not all), assures this artist of a high place among his contemporaries.

Really the best way of assessing the merit of Alan Clutton-Brock's pictures, at the Marlborough Gallery, 18 Old Bond Street, is to say that they display the stark opposite of 'vitality' which however does not at all mean absence of life. Just as a canvas of Pasmore's (whose work some of these things recall) is not looking for power, any more than Henry James was trying to be a big barbaric passionate writer, like Zola, so the last thing that this particular painter wants to do is to knock you down. Hemingway once described (as another illustration of what I mean) how one of those from whom he learned his trade in Paris counselled him to turn the gas down lower and lower—this figuratively of course—lower and lower yet, until it was almost extinct. But Clutton-Brock might almost have been listening to some such stylistic advice when he produced a most admirable painting called 'Elevenes' of a woman and child sitting at a table. The faces are seen in that ultimate moment before the gas fades out altogether! Opposite this is a highly successful flower piece. The pigment is always pure and light, faded biscuits are favoured, discreet greens, no colour that confers too rich a body. There are commonplaces: but a number of the pictures here are of a most fastidious perfection.

The critic today, moving from show to show, has somehow or other to accommodate chaos, which I hope I have done.



# Round the London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

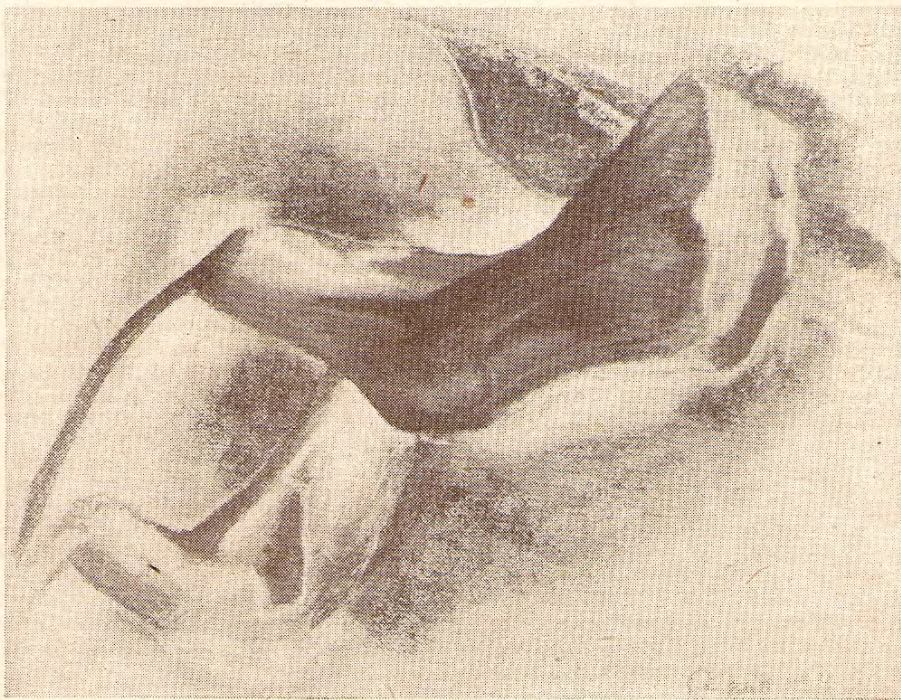
**T**O pronounce upon a first one-man show is a responsibility. I have two or three here. Eric Peskett, at the Paul Alexander Gallery, 190 Church Street, Kensington, for instance, is showing a large group of drawings (with wash mostly) and some sculpture. The best of the sculpture is an abstract marble downstairs. Some drawings are of a very fine quality. 'Grass Vetch Buds' or 'Conker Case' are practically abstract compositions. His future, I feel sure, lies with the Vetch buds. When I think of Peskett's little 'Nut-shell', however, it occurs to me he should go warm himself at Hamersma's incandescent 'Fag-end'. Cyril Hamersma is a barber in a hospital. When he is not shaving the patients and the doctors he paints pictures of tremendous expressiveness—but of so austere abstract a power that it is perhaps absurd to hope that he may be freed from this drudgery. His first one-man show at the London Gallery, 23 Brook Street, is an event. I was surprised to learn that the red storm in chaos I had seen and admired in the window was really a pair of brown shoes: and was also duly astonished to learn that the large glowing object upstairs (more like a rough tinselled cylinder in an African sun) was a cigarette. The Ecole de Paris is to blame for such confusions. First there has been the smartalecking of the dealers and pundits, of course; and then the habits of the painters themselves, in using a still-life or a bonhomme to arrive at something of so different a nature as an abstract composition. But to conclude: this elemental energy of Hamersma's, if scientifically harnessed, might be used to light and heat the hospital or several hospitals. A great deal of unwanted artistic genius will in the end perhaps be technologically exploited, like a mountain torrent or a split atom. But shaving and haircutting!

At the same gallery is Mr. Desmond Morris, who is exceptionally young. He is at a violently receptive stage: I feel sure something will emerge. One of his principal models, Joan Miró, is in some force in the next room. At the Lefevre Gallery is a large and important exhibition of sculpture and drawings by Barbara Hepworth. For some reason all the drawings are naturalistic, the greater part of the sculpture very abstract. Furthermore, the drawings are described as 'Studies for Sculpture'. But for what kind of sculpture? Not that on view. The surgeons operating would make a very fine painting. This extraordinary woman would be in her element handling the white masked abstractions of the operating theatre. She should attempt a large-scale monochrome in a dry medium. Meanwhile she is showing some of those things which are practically translations into the monumental medium, stone or wood, of certain ideas of Picasso, in which she and Moore overlap. Then there are some fine grotesques, for instance 'The Cosdon Head' in blue marble. One thing the abstract-primitive fashion has done is to give opportunities to the gothic imagination and has produced a wonderful crop of grotesques. The Miró exhibition furnishes several examples: his comic faculty is irrepressible. But nearly all the Paris School extremists break out frequently into Dadaish fun.

The Henry Fuseli Exhibition is at the Arts Council's New Burlington Gallery. The Briton loves a good stiff climb. I can guarantee him a climb in this case that will bring out all that is grittiest in him. Fuseli was a super-illustrator, a rip-roaring romantic with a classical training, and he comes to us recommended by Blake as the only real person in England at that time. Eight years' academic training in Rome had made a businesslike artist of him, where Blake remained

an amateur of genius. To be clear as to Fuseli's limitations, think of Hogarth's 'Shrimp Girl': but 'Mad Kate' shows him a painter of high order. For composition he possessed a genius—'The Women of Hastings' is a striking example. His power as a draughtsman is not exceptional. A study of Plates One and Eight in the catalogue will make this clear. An insensitive line, in both cases, limits the shadow above the nostril. A lack of any fine observation of form in the features should be noted—or anywhere else in the drawing. Yet the floating eyelid in Plate One is amusing, and in both designs the composition is superb.

The Redfern Gallery, Cork Street, shows the works of Rolf Durig, who is twenty-three, a Swiss, rich, lives in a chateau in



'Grass Vetch Buds', by Eric Peskett, at the Paul Alexander Gallery

Photograph: Frank Wyse

France, and as for transport, there is his Rolls-Royce. These facts, however, have not prevented his acquiring considerable power as a painter. The impression this exhibition leaves is, I am afraid, indecisive. Of the two distinct genres we find represented here I myself prefer the little orange-red corridas. But the Negroes trapped in an exotic vegetation might prove the better bet, I cannot say. At present the pressure is not very great, though steady.

Edward Lear's water-colours have abounded in the last few years. At his best he is almost in the class of Bonington, and his things have a wonderful Shelleyan beauty. The Mediterranean which Englishmen saw in Shelley and Lear's days will never be seen again. But I always go where Lears are showing in order to be in the company for a moment of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò. The Leger Gallery, 13 Old Bond Street, has 'Mediterranean Scenes' of Lear. It is perhaps for literary reasons, too, that I like a contemporary artist, who is in fact a vice of mine. I refer to Fred Uhlman, who has a large show at the Leicester Galleries. The hard-times-and-hard-tack snobs must frown on Uhlman. He sings of melting Rivas, of Berber Bazaars, of Blue Danubes—and of impossibly gay Brightons, in contempt of the Zeitgeist. I just have space to refer to Bomberg. He and his group are in the wilderness ('Book Worms', Newport Court, their lair). Will they successfully Putsch the London Group or not? With this dramatic question I close my article.

*The Essential Samuel Butler* (Cape, 12s. 6d.) contains selections from some of Butler's writings—among others, *Erewhon*, *The Way of All Flesh*, *The Fair Haven*, and the *Note-Books*. In his introduction Mr. G. D. H. Cole, who has made the selection, expresses the hope that readers will thereby be sent in search of the many good things he has not been able to include.



## Art

# Fernand Léger at the Tate Gallery

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE Arts Council shows us Fernand Léger close on the heels of Fuseli. The Tate Gallery contributes two large rooms, and Mr. Douglas Cooper has written the foreword to the catalogue, and nineteen drawings and about half-a-dozen canvases from his collection are present on the walls. Léger is a hero of twentieth-century art; in a sense he belongs to history as much as does Fuseli. Certainly he still paints as well as ever, but it is the same picture that he paints: an over-life-size female figure in cold monochrome, the face a parody of the classic mask—this figure appearing in association with highly mechanised stock decorative properties, most typically coloured red white and blue, just like flag-colours—no subtleties—or perhaps some metal flowers and leaves will be used. This female figure has a half-dozen identical-twin sisters. Sometimes they all appear together, as diving girls for instance, a dense monochromatic ganglia, or else, less involved with one another, as in 'Composition with Parrots', a splendid performance. When we think of Léger we see in the mind's eye within narrow limits some such picture as that, just as Braque's name evokes something like a peasant patchwork quilt, of the kind the French-Canadian 'habitant' contrives, only of great elaboration. Léger's subject-matter is human—if this coarse abstraction of a pseudo-classical female can be called that. Lastly, working in a city full of rug-designers, his things suggest neither rugs nor patch-quilts. Also on the credit side, no good taste is anywhere discernible.

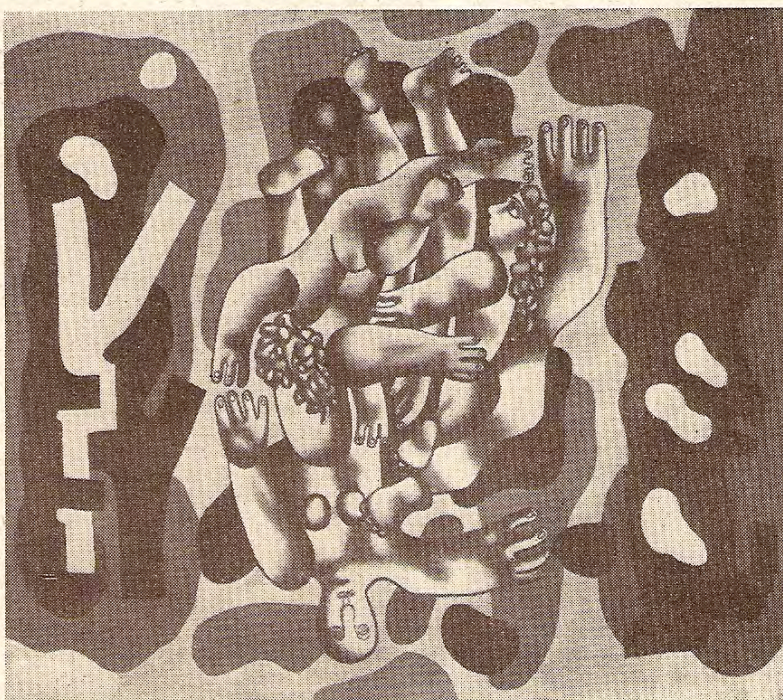
Let me say at once, after this cold-blooded inventory, that Léger appears to me a great muralist (if you will forgive the word). These are powerful designs that we see at the Tate, and if they would be most appropriate in a cocktail bar or public baths, do not let us be snobbish about baths and bars.

Is the monstrous outbreak of eccentricity, as the public regards it, in the visual arts during the first half of this century, just another 'art movement'? Here I am a partisan and my answer may seem to go without saying: but at least nothing would shake my conviction that new techniques of expression are now necessary and that these unpromising experiments have logically conformed to what the circumstances demanded. Given a little social stability, this typical twentieth-century art could, with its architects (e.g., Corbusier, Lloyd Wright), its ceramists, sculptors, textile designers, dress designers, etc., have quickly transformed our scene. But have you noticed that all the star-exponents of this great revolutionary movement are old? At the best of times men move slowly, and these times are superlatively difficult and distracting.

The present exhibition invites us to define Léger's position in twentieth-century art. His limitations are aggressive, he makes a merit of them; and time, for him, is the only reality. From 1940 to 1945 he was in the U.S. One of his lectures there was described to me by a fan. It seems he mentioned in rapid succession a number of famous artists—Manet, Courbet, Gauguin, Bonnard, Degas: after each name he shouted fiercely 'A la gare!' Literally, of course, 'to the railway station', its idiomatic significance is more lurid. On the physical

plane it was once 'A la lanterne!' for everyone in palace or *hôtel*: where reputations not persons are involved, it is 'A la gare!' for all in the contemporary pantheon.

It is difficult for a true Frenchman not to be an 'à-la-gariste', as it might be called. If much of it is noise, it is apt either to imply, or lead to, subjective frenzy. The French disdain of all that is not French is a familiar feature of 'à-la-garisme'. The collective mind, of course, is subject to constant change—and its changes, under the direction of the *Zeitgeist*, have the value of absolutes. Yet as Mr. T. S. Eliot has very well said, this change is 'a development which abandons nothing en route, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare or Homer or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen'. But it superannuates, while the change is occurring, all values immediately antecedent to itself. There is, however, a massive animal confidence that goes with an exclusive belief in actuality: and that Léger possesses. And we may from this point proceed to what most contributes to Léger's marked identity among painters of the Paris School: I refer to his attitude to the Machine. The Italian Futurists, it is true, were Machine Age enthusiasts long before him, but among French painters he, more than anyone, has advocated the introduction of machine-values



'Divers', by Fernand Léger

into the work of art. His approach to pictorial composition is that of the engineer to a precision job.

In a book just published, *Fernand Léger et le Nouvel Espace\**, you may read how, in World War I, Léger 'became the first painter to interpret our industrial civilisation'. As I have said, actually he was not at all the first, but we learn how the gleaming machinery that hurled shells at the enemy was a revelation to him. 'I was dazzled by the breech of a 75-millimetre gun which was standing uncovered in the sunlight: the magic of light on white metal. . . . Once I had got my teeth into that sort of reality I never let go of objects again'. Signal boxes, lottery urns, and tugboats were other objects, seen then, which he was never going to take his teeth out of. So the standardised woman who is the central object of his later pictures may find herself (in a 'new' red white and blue space) between a railway signal-box and a lottery urn. Léger abandoned, as he observes, in favour of these excitingly concrete objects, 'the abstractions' of pre-war—tricolor trees and dirtily-coloured cubistic compositions. But his role of 'interpreter of industrial civilisation' ended about 1924, though everything remains mechanised, including the stock woman with tubular limbs and body, and flowers or clouds. In Mr. Cooper's Léger book which I have mentioned the text is in French and English, the photography is extraordinarily fine. Being the work of a man who is a considerable Léger collector, it is a partisan statement—Léger is to be preferred, it is implied, to Braque, Picasso, Gris, etc. He sees that his hero is 'vulgar' and 'coarse'. But that we may regard as an asset. And indeed Léger's should, in the last analysis, be regarded as a popular genius, paradoxically expressing itself in a highbrow idiom. Under other circumstances he would have produced magnificent posters. Mr. Cooper's assertion that the art of the French hoardings owes much to Léger sounds likely enough.

\* By Douglas Cooper. Lund Humphries. 42s.



Art

# Round the London Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

OF the many new pictures I have seen in the March exhibitions the ones that have interested me most are those of Julian Trevelyan, at Gimpels, 50 South Molton Street. Such paintings as 'Taormina' and 'The Goldfish Tank' are an act of violent imagination, an uncovering of what nature's photographic veil conceals, and what without some violence does not emerge. Such pictures as these probably never could have existed except in succession to 'abstract art'—which latter is itself the most sterile thing imaginable, but when *reincarnated* in this fashion develops an almost matchless truth to nature, in the deepest sense. Abstraction, let me add, is great fun for a short while, but no one but an idiot—or a Dutchman, like Mondrian—would pass his life in that vacuum, any more than he would voluntarily live in an iron lung. Finally, Trevelyan's small portrait of David Gascoyne is charged with an extraordinary nervous life. At Gimpels also is Brenda Chamberlain's first show. There is no nervous excitement with her: 'Boy with Crab', or the Mother with a child, go through life in a disagreeable trance. The first discovers himself in the company of a crustacean, and toys nervously with it; the second discovers she has a baby, and, with pessimism, suckles it. There is a 'Fisherman Resting'. He resents it but was born to rest.

The Aepley Replicas are a third feature at Gimpels. This is a quite new development. Malraux writes 'These are no longer reproductions, they are *objects* in their own right'. Whatever the process may be, there is a canvas, and there is oil-paint on it—a full impasto. Were a factory founded, where young artists who had been born too late turned out facsimiles of famous contemporaries, the effect would be the same. They are from twelve to twenty-two pounds. Do you think this will be to your advantage, artists? Do you rejoice, little art lover? The next Gallery on my list is the London Gallery, Brook Street. There are some Max Ernsts not of exceptional interest; and Sonja Sekula (an American-Swiss Sonja) exhibits mazes of lines calculated to do any man's heart good who is a fanatic of the abstract. At Tooth's, 31 Bruton Street, are twenty-nine French pictures. 'Nu sur fond rose' by Dufy is exquisite and gay. It is only £550.

The Redfern Gallery, Cork Street, shows the work of the gifted son of Frederick Spencer Gore, himself a Frederick. It is a notable first show. His landscapes and still-lives are more muscular than his father's; one, even, is rather unexpectedly *cubed*. Roland Browse and Delbanco have some early Sickert paintings, one characteristically dark early Music Hall scene. An especially fine picture of Beecham conducting is the outstanding exhibit. Upstairs, same Gallery, are two talented Australians, Mollie Paxton and Brian Midlane—man and wife aesthetically indivisible. Some of these elongated figures if hung among Modiglianis would suggest a visual affinity, though much more furnished and romantic.

So much of Australia is desertic and the aborigines unmolested by the Whites, that the stone-age continues in full swing. Arnhem Land in the north, nearest to Asia, is where the most interesting contemporary work

is done, and by far the most important remains of earlier cultures are found. At the Berkeley Gallery, 20 Davis Street, are to be seen what are apparently part-copies of prehistoric cave-art in that region, by James Cant, who has worked in collaboration with an anthropologist, Charles Mountford. The latter, in introducing the exhibits, writes: 'He (the artist) has not set out to make exact reproductions'. All I can say is that

he *should*. How would it be if the prehistoric cave-art of Spain or Rhodesia came to us adapted by some twentieth-century artist—in a form that will allow the artists of a modern civilisation to appreciate their beauty'? Some of these things do look like the work of authentic primitives however. It is essential, though, to discourage artists from improving on or Kleeising the art of prehistoric cultures turned up by anthropologists. We should not have to guess, as here, which is prehistory, which Melbourne or Sydney 1950.

In Epstein's stone carving of Lazarus at the Leicester Galleries he has produced perhaps the most impressive of his series of giant carvings. These works, in which the subject-matter, the story, is so important, are what we are accustomed to call 'literary' today. They are literary in the sense in which the King of Judah (Chartres), Rodin's Burghers, or Michelangelo's Dying Slave or Pieta, are literary. Epstein in his Lazarus is, I believe, celebrating the great power of our blessed Lord, who *can*, today as much as then, call men back from the dead. But at the least this face rolled back upon a shoulder, the rest of the body still numb, as it stands tied up for the last sleep, is a feat of the creative imagination. In this fine show there are a number of small masterpieces, like the gold-bronze head of Ann Lucia Freud.

The New Burlington Galleries are in Old Burlington Street. And the Institute of Contemporary Art presents 'new trends in contemporary paintings and sculpture' which in fact are old trends in painting and sculpture: so the 'New' Gallery in the 'Old' Street is symbolic. In the slip prepared for the press the claim to be showing something *new* is reiterated. The ballyhoo of newness again, is as old as the hills: and

there is nothing novel here except that every individual is a little different from any other individual. These remarks, provoked by the tone of the promoters of this very average modern picture show, does not mean that Bacon's pictures are any less fine than when they were seen a few months ago at the Hanover; or that Craxton's big picture, or still better his 'Bathers near the Hotel' is not very excellent, and the sculpture highly expressive. (Actually, if we are to put a premium on newness, the 'collateral descendant of Francis Bacon' is the only relatively young artist so far qualifying.) The French artists have been picked on account of (1) their relative youth, and (2) their abstractness. They are much less interesting than the English—if only because (in the end) a section of a brown check dressing-gown is less interesting than a man in a brown check dressing-gown: and ten brown or blue and green check dressing-gown sections mixed-up into a solid brown check mass is not more interesting than one section. Yet a lot of painters and pundits seem to think it is.



'Lazarus' (detail), by Epstein, at the Leicester Galleries



# Contemporary Art at the Tate

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

SUPPORTERS of the Contemporary Art Society have staged an exhibition of more than 300 paintings, sculptures, and drawings at the Tate Gallery: not works purchased by the Society, but selected from the private collections of members. Why should they have decided to make this *demonstration*, as their Chairman describes it? Ah, that is what makes the exhibition so interesting. Is it (1) the swan song of private collecting? Or (2) will it succeed in reinvigorating private support of the arts? There is another aspect of it: (3) is this a phase in the close co-ordination of private and state-patronage—seeing that practically all those on the art committee set up by the state (in its 'Arts Council') including the Art Director, are also members of the Contemporary Art Society?

In an introductory note in the catalogue the Chairman of the executive committee, Sir Colin Anderson, disclaims any intention on the part of the Society to aim at a representative show of contemporary art. Yet it does in fact illustrate most adequately what kind of work has interested the intelligent minority most during the past forty years. 'The kind of contemporary work which is actually being enjoyed in the home' the Society's spokesman particularises. For of course one of the main prejudices to be overcome is that 'modern' work proves disturbing in the home, that it cannot be *lived with*. Those disinterestedly concerned with the improvement and development of taste in England recognise this as a primary difficulty: which is why we find the home stressed—as the natural place even for a serious picture—in this statement of aims in the catalogue. For the rest, it is as a recruiting campaign that we are officially invited to regard this exhibition. 'New blood' is what is asked for. There is some new blood in this Society already, and it is a great improvement on the old.

Before turning to the vastly important questions, discussion of which this exhibition imposes, I would like to say what a fine collection it is. It is of a sober excellence, extremism is markedly absent. Also, there is a significant absence of large canvases, such as you would see in any French exhibition. The only really large canvas is Augustus John's 'Dorelia'. John's work, or that part of it which posterity, I think, will value most, is dominated by the figure of Dorelia. Could the decorative black fence be spirited away from this masterpiece its power would be enhanced. A great number of Moore's and Piper's things are here—the former's cracked figures and the latter's cracked walls. (The psychology of the crack is deserving of study.) Piper of course is a vetustic specialist. His old cliffs and aged buildings provide the surfaces and advance the mood he prefers. Dufy himself could not handle watercolour and wash with more deftness and bravura than he. None of Moore's splendid carved or modelled *Mother and Child* pieces are here, those stone-age idylls where he is most himself. Two of Victor Pasmore's atmospheric transparencies, one with bird and

moon, are outstanding exhibits. 'Evening Star' has all the perfectionist exquisiteness of the best Whistler. The vigour of this artist is demonstrated by the fact that, having achieved a quite new sort of perfection for him—as in 'Evening Star'—he plunged abruptly into abstraction: abandoning all his wonderful lyricism to go pioneering with a pack of cards. Then Sutherland's 'Descent from the Cross'

is a memorable sketch, in which the nest of brilliant thorns loading the head is a fine invention, the fresh, almost gay, spring colours are the first elemental intimations of the Resurrection. Lastly, Frances Hodgkins, Australia's greatest artist, seems to have the colour values of a slightly saponaceous aquarium tank: and her forms are apt to be flattish, as if subjected to the pressure of a heavier element than air. There are eleven of her exhibits. Then Gilman, more and more, attains a long delayed posthumous recognition. Forty years ago is of course when this well-merited interest should have been accorded him.

I have space only briefly to indicate the situation implicit in this 'demonstration' at the Tate. In England without promotion and protection visual art cannot exist, except of course for the potboiler. This was a fact recognised very clearly by Ruskin, and later by Fry, who, in its early years dominated, if he had not been responsible for, the Contemporary Art Society. So the very existence of this Society would seem to involve the axiom *All serious painting in Great Britain can only exist privately, or semi-privately*. The organisation of charity is not what is proposed but what is the next thing to it. The public-spirited rich are urged to purchase what is otherwise practically unsaleable in this country.

Let me say at once that the above axiom is to my mind unchallengeable, so long as an only partially collectivised economy exists. An enlightened public of minute size (whether organised as a Club or Society or not) will certainly have to carry the artist on its back—or a select few artists. They must be severely restricted in number. Should some of these artists carried on the back of the make-believe 'public' get chosen because they are light-weights or fly-weights, what more natural?

This carefully planned collectivised patronage plays the part of a stage-army. It supplies the illusion of an 'art-world' in England. In the past—forty years ago when the Contemporary Art Society was founded—art was so sick that artificial respiration was necessary. Today, and I get tired of saying this, the situation is *not* better. How could it be? But the activities of the above stage-army, with which the museums, the state, and even the dealers, co-operate, puts up a terrifically life-like show: with this and the masses of pictures of all nations, times, and schools always on view, the public, the *real* public, could not do otherwise than believe that art is booming. Between the wars, gazing in from the outside, into this sheltered little so-called 'art-world', with its carefully regulated economic climate, in which like a small herd of gazelles Britain's team of 'modern' artists subsisted—to the



'Portrait in Albion' by Robert Colquhoun. From the collection of Mr. Edward le Bas



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outsider it was unimpressive, to say no more. Since the end of the war the wind of the outside has been permitted to penetrate and to freshen up the enervating atmosphere. The presence in this exhibition of several Colquhouns is a sign. But to conclude. We must accept it in England that the artist has become the inmate of a very small private world. The drawbacks of this are obvious. They are those of a large family unit. Favouritism is an unavoidable curse of family life, all competing for the love of Papa and of the Uncles. Then the art itself is liable to suffer, both because of interference on the part of the Guardians, and through a sense of futility consequent upon living so

artificial a life. Every step should be taken to counteract these tendencies. Since the state has come on the scene, although at present it is identical with the private set-up, it should in the end be possible to depersonalise the mechanism of patronage.

But at this time my analysis can be taken no further. Everyone should see this momentous show. It is I believe a last attempt to save the Exchequer from having to carry on its back an 'art-world' which is a major casualty of the industrial age—an atlantean task for which it has little appetite. Were it obliged to assume it, it might drop the whole 'art-world' into the Thames, after carrying it for a year or two.



## Art

# Round the London Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**A**PRIL is an all-French month, or almost that, in the principal London Galleries. The Adams, Beaux-Arts, Gimpel, Lefevre, Leicester, Marlborough, and Wildenstein Galleries all have shows of French pictures (in the case of the Gimpel those of a Parisian Russian). On the other hand the Kensington Art Gallery has an exhibition of recent work by Pauline Konody revealing a most delicate vision—scenes through windows I especially recall—and African scenes by Audrey Weber. Ernest Norland and M. Leszczynski are to be seen at Twenty Brook Street, the marine studies of the latter, as in his 'Devonport' (No. 49), I preferred.

At the Islamic Cultural Centre, Regent's Lodge, is an exhibition which unfortunately closes on April 20, but I daresay the tapestries will still be visible, and deserve a visit to a quite unusual extent. They are the work of young Egyptian peasants, assembled in a school by Professor Habib Gorgi. The idea has been a return to the most ancient local traditions, via the mind of the child. Whether the child secretes, as Professor Gorgi believes, a pre-dynastic sensibility or not, the tapestries (rather than the sculpture) actually produced are amazingly fine. Finally, The Crusade to Prevent the Third World War deploys its militant painters, headed by the American, Kek, at the Asian Institute, 17 Irving Street. And now for the French exhibitions.

Since the war it has devolved upon British artists to purvey new art to the British public. England has been a right little tight little all-British preserve. But the seals have been removed and Paris is pouring in. Mostly so far it has been 'gilt-edged' pictures, but the more contemporary come over here as well.

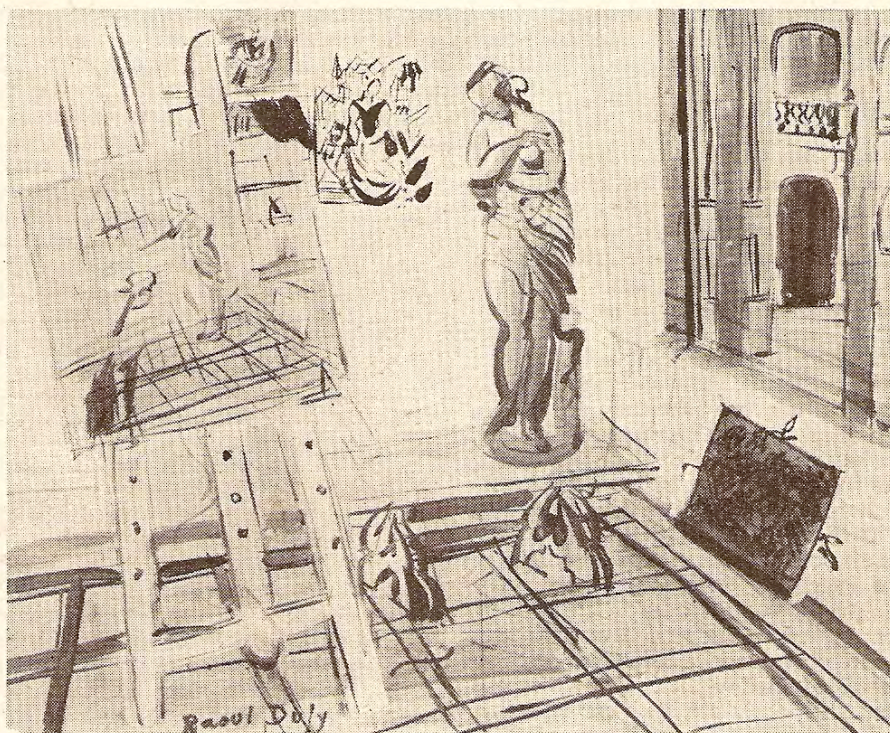
Those who have seen the Contemporary Art Society's exhibition at the Tate will recall that the pictures have been sorted out into two kinds, namely (1) the moderate, and (2) the not-so-moderate, or those with extremist tendencies. A well-known critic was prompted to speculate which of these two tendencies was the better adapted to the English temperament—say Matthew Smith on the one side and Robert Macbryde on the other. A question easily answered; the more moderate is the more acceptable. As far as it goes that answer is correct. But it would in fact be the answer, it is necessary to remember, in the case of every public, including the French. The early exhibitions of the French Impressionists in Paris were greeted with howls of execration.

Whether it is the moderate, or the extreme, which corresponds with the taste of the British public is not all, if I remember rightly, that the critic in question had in mind: it may even have been the British artist, rather than public. But public and artist are not identical. Both Moore and Dobson, for instance, are typical Englishmen, and they tread the experimental path as though to the manner born. If now we turn to Paris again with a view to discovering what is the natural bent of the French artist, we will find he is more in harmony with the public. A majority of the arch-experimenters of the twentieth

century, domiciled in Paris, have been foreigners: Picasso, Gris, Dali Spanish; Matisse Belgian; Chirico and Modigliani Italian; Brancusi Rumanian. For the man of French race the traditional restraints hold back from the wildest excesses. The English artist has no historic piety of that kind.

Or the above remarks about the French would have applied ten years

ago. Of purely French painters, of the masters of the Paris School, Derain is probably the finest, and he is extremely traditional. But has French traditionalism weakened? Has the new twentieth-century cosmopolitan sensibility taken the place in France of the inherited cultural norms? A visit to the Leicester Galleries will go some way to answering such a question, though probably what is to be found there is susceptible of opposite interpretations. It is a quite large collection of specimen pieces, as it were, of what interests Paris today. Most of the best-known young French talent is represented. It seems to demonstrate, to my mind, that the historic France is no more, that the new sensibility has triumphed, but that what has been produced so far is distinctly palid stuff. Of course there are exceptions. I was much struck



'L'Atelier du Peintre' (1946), by Raoul Dufy, at the Lefevre Gallery

by Legueult's canvases in the more moderate room (for the moderates and extremists are in separate rooms, though there is not much difference) and Buffet's monochromes are very good. I liked Geer van Welde. But the general effect was empty and depressing. Tal Coat is almost an ultimate fade-out, in a devitalised colourless calligraphy.

The Lefevre Gallery is now at 30 Bruton Street, where this time they have a large ground-floor gallery. They open with a fine show of Dufy's paintings and gouaches. Dufy is one of the most French of artists—as French as a *soufflée en surprise*. What rather follows from this is that he must be at the top of his form to be himself, and of course he is sometimes flat and without surprise. These are mostly scenes in the artist's studio: one, with brown stairs in the middle, especially fine. There is also a first-rate nude. The Marlborough Gallery, Old Bond Street, carries heavier big-money stuff of which it has several very fine specimens. There is an early Bonnard, 'Le Goûter', a remarkable picture of two bourgeois eating, the boy's napkin tucked in his neck. The Beaux-Arts, most picturesque of London Galleries, has *Maitres et Petit-Maitres*. Among the former is Derain, with a classic head of great beauty. There are Tisso's two sisters, the nun and the *femme du monde*, singing a duet; one of his admirable story-telling pictures. And there are others. Whereas at Wildenstein's are three of Millet's greatest pictures (which show you do not have to go to Russia to get the spirit of the Volga Boat Song) and the stormy skies and sunless woods of the Barbizon landscapists.

Gimpel Fils are showing a collection of figure paintings provoking melancholy regret, for they are those of a practically unknown painter called Mintchin, a Russian who went to Paris, during six years painted these wonderful pictures, and died, in 1931, while still young.



# Round the London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

THE Rothenstein memorial exhibition at the Tate is a historical event even more than an artistic one. In the history of English art Will Rothenstein should be ranked with Ruskin. He wrote no *Stones of Venice*, it is true: on the other hand, and what is much rarer in England, he would never have mistaken Whistler for a Cockney nor missed out on his 'Nocturnes'. Let me begin with the actual exhibits, and speak of Rothenstein's invisible assets later. There are three main sorts of picture here. (1) The early work, with a Whistlerian palette but a non-Whistlerian subject-matter. The 'Coster Girls' is a good example. Two Forain-esque Cockney girls stand before a Whistler backcloth. (2) There is the series of 'interiors'. I have heard it said that these blazed the trail for McEvoy, Orpen, etc.—or perhaps it should be said revived the pre-Raphaelite interior for their benefit. (3) Lastly there are the farm-buildings, quarries, and, I suppose, most of his famous drawings of famous men.

In these selections from a life-time of hard work one notes with admiration the uncompromising severity—the reason, of course, for the coldness of the public during his life. The severity is to be seen, perhaps, rather in what he *would not* do than in what he *did*, though in all conscience his farm buildings are bare, yellow and dry enough to satisfy a Saharan nomad. There is nothing to recall the desert, certainly, in the immaculate interiors where an Edwardian *bourgeoise* plays with her child. Yet even there it is as puritanically free of the extraneous as a hospital and as clinically clean. The human values inherent in a Vuillard interior are absent. His mind was at its roots a little arid. But a devouring interest in people is superadded in the case of his portraits, which is why it is there we see him at his best, or so I believe. In Augustus John's amusing tribute, written for the catalogue, most justly the word *heroic* is employed. (Rothenstein's) 'standards were high and difficult enough, God knows . . . even his failures were heroic'. Of course Rothenstein was a hero: and a typically English hero too. His was the Dunkirk spirit. He knew that the artist in England has his being upon a precarious beachhead in Philistia. He stood his ground with heroism, gradually filling a barn with his unsold canvases. 'I have a very fine and complete collection of my own pictures', he told me. It was most fortunate that he was rich. Often his temper, on the other hand, was so optimistic that one would have said he regarded himself, in spite of all the frustrations, ideally an inmate of the City of God, rather than engaged in a bitter rear-guard action. Such optimism is not inconsistent with the Dunkirk spirit. The English appetite for Dunkirks may be traced to 'Bible-religion', with its history of a small people often in a tight corner. In such natures the bitterness actually appears to feed the optimism, too. From his Paris training Rothenstein derived the same advantages as those possessed by Sickert or Whistler. Fresh from Paris, for instance, he could not fail to notice how little the English are attracted by drawing, an art so greatly prized by the French. And more than anybody it was Rothenstein who compelled people here for a while (for they have relapsed) to recognise the technical beauties of this sometimes rather shoppy form of artistic expression. He was a born

teacher, an eager mentor. To have his brains picked was what most delighted him. His were public, not private, brains. And he was one of the last people in England able to distinguish between what is authentic, and what is not, in the field of art.

Next, the Royal Academy. An effort has been made this year to create the impression that a new start has been made at that institution.

On arrival, I very soon discovered that this year's display was, if possible, worse, except for the presence of two colossal items, the work of the two 'rogue' Academicians, John and Spencer. Stanley Spencer, with all his brood of fat check-jumpered Sunday School teachers and suburban charladies, has been resurrected, on an unprecedented scale, in the so-called Lecture Room; and Augustus John's 'Little Concert'—which is really a very *big* Concert—creates a redoubtable diversion in Gallery III. This is the main Gallery, where all the worst pictures usually are.

'The Little Concert' cannot be said to 'ginger up' the Academy: all it does is to introduce into it a foreign body of impressive size. Also it only serves to shame the avenue of potboilers it dominates. As to Spencer, he has unquestionably this time contributed greatly to the advertisement of Lady Godiva, but he cannot always be rising from the dead. For the rest, there is Gallery VII. This they keep for segregating misfits or violent cases. Alas, there are no notorious law-breakers, only three charming pictures of Minton's—which, no doubt, are regarded as pretty tough. On entering VII one is conscious of a sudden absence of vulgarity: nothing more. If you move, as I did, from VII into the Sculpture Gallery, the unspeakable Godiva, in white marble, rises into the air above you, on her marble charger. The



'Coster Girls', by Sir William Rothenstein

relaxing atmosphere of Gallery VII, I found, had unmanned me. Lady G. made me feel unwell. Visitors to the R.A. are recommended to proceed immediately to Godiva and toughen up with her right away.

At Arthur Tooth's in Bruton Street an important exhibition of Spencer's work coincides with the present Royal Academy. His 'Resurrection' at Burlington House measures 7 x 22 feet, and three studies for it are to be seen in Bruton Street, along with Bluebells and Begonias, which artists in England who choose religious or other weighty subjects are obliged to offer, at the same time. The Bluebells pay for the paint and brushes for the 'prestige picture'. But that is not the reason for the Bluebells and Fuchsias in Spencer's case, seeing that every picture at Tooth's has a red 'Sold' spot on it.

This is a good opportunity to discuss Spencer in general. His work could come from no country except Britain. No harm in that: but it is by no means the best work done here. That Spencer is not the Royal Academician's cup of tea must also be said. The type of woman predominating in a Spencer picture has something to do with it. She is at times aggressively corpulent, her fat and homely face is drained of all intelligence, she lollops about matter-of-factly in her grave, or leans over the headstone to chat. What is more, Spencer's Resurrections invariably occur in the lower-middle-class section of the cemetery. It would be difficult to imagine anything more calculated to lower the tone of a high-class Exhibition like the R.A. than the



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presence on the walls of a few dozen of these women. It is obvious that they could not be introduced into the same Gallery as the Bishops and Lady Mayoresses.

Now what would make Spencer unpopular with a Royal Academician would not disqualify him, of course, with an artist. Yet he is not the artist's cup of tea either. Here I hesitate, remembering that many people, even Sir William Rothenstein, have thought very highly of Spencer's work. The reader should remember this too. But the typical contemporary painter finds it impossible to think so highly of this work, and his reasons may I think be fairly summarised as follows. I may say they are the reasons I myself would give. Spencer, it is felt, is careless of paint. His painting is the negation of quality. It is quantitative. He is endlessly repetitive. One feels he could turn out a thousand figures as easily as a hundred, it would take him ten times as long that is all. All would wear jumpers (even his angels wear jumpers), all would have the Cookham face and the light mouse-coloured bobbed hair. In his multi-figured compositions the detail (the jumper, etc.) is a convention poor in form, illustrational. The colour is drab. Think of a 'Resurrection' 7 x 22 feet by Rouault. Of course his could not be like that; but the *Gemeinheit* need not be so virulent. There is still

his 'quaintness' to be considered. It is English art-studentish: it is the diluted 'primitivism' of the school 'Sketch Club'. His naivety is painful, like the oppressive archness of a self-conscious little girl. For all this I respect Spencer. Were he to paint the figures in his compositions as carefully as his excellent self-portrait at Tooth's all would be well. He inhabits a different world from the potboiler. He has a visionary gift, after all.

Eight other exhibitions were visited by me, and the best picture I saw was a Géricault horse at Rowland Browse and Delbanco. Next door at the Redfern Gallery Patrick Heron hovers; when he settles I feel it will be in a Braquish locality. Whitechapel Art Gallery is remote but it deserves a visit: Ten artists, from Grant to Vaughan, show how they began and why they went wild. Returning to the West End, Gimpels have Pic, and for the Degas-fan at the Lefevre Gallery a number of Degases not seen here before have arrived from Paris. The Marlborough has Maze and the Parker Gallery, 2 Albemarle Street, celebrate their bicentenary by attempting to conjure up that moment 200 years ago when Parkers was born with the aid of a display of contemporary prints, perhaps the most vivid of which is 'The Ladies' Cricket Match' by Rowlandson.



## Art

# Round the London Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**A**FTER the rarefied atmosphere of the Paris Galleries, round which last week I was moving—an air thin, unsubstantial, as befits the borderline of the *néant*—London's Galleries seem well below the timber-line, dense, warm, and human, with the familiar imagery of earth, if blurred at times or even simplified out of recognition. Were Gimpel Fils, for instance, in Paris, it would be solidly abstract. As it is, the only abstraction there is that of a young Canadian sculptor, Peter Sager. But he is *completely* so. Indeed were he otherwise he could never have been admitted to the 'Réalité Nouvelle', where he has recently starred. In the same Gallery is the work of five students. They were exhibitors at the all-England student exhibition at the R.B.A., selected as the most promising by a Gimpel committee. Gottschalk and Sumray are actually two of the best artists in England, Sumray's 'The Lovers' having a Negro intensity of melancholy mirth. Gottschalk works on an egg-farm, a shameful waste of the divine spark.

Of the 'classics', two small but absolutely first-rate Courbets are at the Lefevre and the Hanover Galleries. At the Lefevre are other 'XIX-Century French Masters'. Upstairs at the Hanover are two fine Sutherlands, especially 'Landscape with Pointed Rocks'. But among contemporaries it might almost be called a Sutherland month, since his works dominate the Redfern in Cork Street, where a sort of modernistic free-for-all is in progress—one cannot call it an *exhibition*, that is far too civilised a term. Every artist in the world appears to be there and a good few who are not. Sutherland comes out very strongly indeed. Lastly there are the Pissarro shows, the son at the Leicester Galleries and the father at Matthiesen's—the latter a born inspirer of revolutions, whose own pictures were curiously mild. And Craxton is at the Mayor Gallery and at Blairman and Sons a pupil of Zoffany, Henry Walton, is resurrected in groves of tall and handsome furniture, though better than what is called a 'furniture painter'.

In approaching the Italian Exhibition at the Tate, the main feature of this article, I should like to make a few observations about what is called 'art criticism', but which today is so often not criticism but propaganda in the case of those who write exclusively of the *avant-garde*. By this term is meant those who believe that the naturalism we find in gothic, renaissance, baroque, romanticism, impressionism, and post-impressionism is to be transcended. The naturalistic giantesses of Picasso or Léger's big doll as much as the abstract symbols of Kandinsky belong to the era that is succeeding the graeco-roman, for Picasso's giantesses are big fat insults to the classical. In England, with critics who cannot shake off a taste for nature in the raw and probably secretly prefer Munnings to Mondrian, lip-service to any aberration however violent is never withheld. The streamlined *avant-gardist* criticism usually is sincere but looks equally artificial. There is a danger of criticism finally disappearing altogether, of analysis being disallowed; of propaganda—and official plaudits superseding criticism entirely.

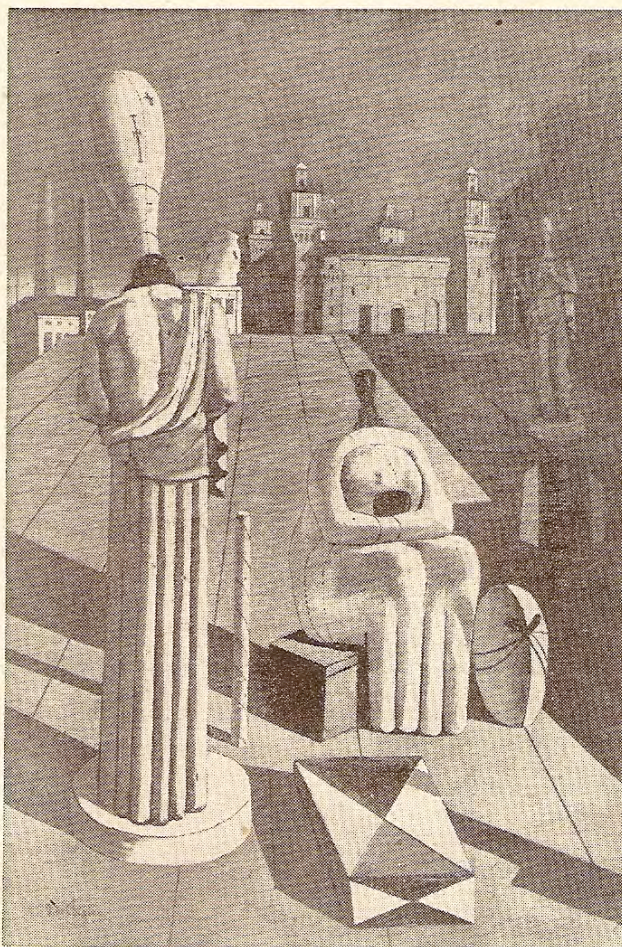
Since it is 1950, in other words, do not let us always be behaving as though it were 1910. At a time when state officials and gallery directors describe as a 'reactionary' anyone preferring the art of the Crete of antiquity or Renaissance Tuscany to that sponsored by Marinetti or Apollinaire, surely it is no longer necessary for any person of

goodwill to limit himself to propaganda, as if the 'moderns' were still in the catacombs. So now for the 'Modern Italian Art' at the Tate: and it will be as a critic, not as a propagandist of the 'modern', that I shall write. To insure the great impulse to find for our twentieth-century consciousness a visual equivalent, it should not be encouraged to remain merely a series of 'rebellious' gestures. A brick thrown through a plate-glass window, or derisive scribbles upon a convenient wall—which frankly is all that Miró's illustrations for Dada are—is not what the innovators should be doing today. But to begin with, the manner in which the 'Modern Italians' have been served up leaves something to be desired. The kind of elementary guidance the public require is not supplied in the catalogue. No understanding is shown of the educative problem involved. Futurism, Chirico's surrealism, and Modigliani are an odd mixture, which should have been stressed. The Italian responsible for the Introduction asserts of a painter named Morandi, 'We stand in awe before his work'. Seeing that the work in question is not very interesting, some local fetish is probably involved.

Italians are not the best people to get to write about Italians, just as for an objective account of English painting one would look elsewhere than in England. But even more important is the question of the technique of introduction. For instance, some specimens of Futurist propaganda selected from the manifestoes of Marinetti, from his anti-*passéiste* teaching, polemics against museums, frantic hymns to Power,

Speed, Action, would have helped the spectator to understand the pictures. The way in which Fascism grew out of Futurism should at least have been mentioned. The logical result of such a philosophy, just as much in art as in politics, might have been indicated. The approach is not critical but amounts to a kind of insipid propaganda. The disintegration of the image involved in these ultra-dynamical theories did not appeal to myself and my painter friends when the futurist crusade was launched, and the prospect of statues whose eyes, lips and limbs would move naturally disgusted Brzeska, so at Marinetti's lectures he protested with great violence. Indeed, it would be more correct to say that the futurists received a 'hostile reception' from artists rather than (as stated in the catalogue) from the public.

With regard to the other exhibits, a few quotations from surrealist literature, and a brief explanation of the theories responsible for de Chirico, would have been appropriate. And Modigliani's drooping comically Cézannesque puppets might have received a little critical elucidation. All I need add is that these futurist and surrealist pictures are mostly ill-painted *demonstrations* only—unlike the majority of canvasses of the Paris School. But de Chirico still seems to me to prove himself a great romantic.



'The Disquieting Muses' (1917), by Giorgio de Chirico, at the Tate Gallery



# Round the London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**B**Y far the most interesting of current exhibitions is 'Children's Art 1950', at the Royal Institute Galleries, Piccadilly. One hundred and fifty thousand people visited this extraordinary innovation, for which the *Sunday Pictorial* is responsible, last year. It is just as crowded at present. It must be given first place because it contains much more art of high quality than is to be seen anywhere else—though no exhibitor is over sixteen, and some are only five. Then the issues raised by this new annual event—significantly situated opposite the Royal Academy—would alone require one to feature it. It is not far also from the dealers' galleries where 'avant-garde' shows are held, an even more suggestive circumstance: for much of the work displayed there is deliberately infantile. This does not only apply to Klee's or Miró's pastiches of Child-art but to a general predilection for 'the Innocent Eye'. Picasso, so Mr. Herbert Read alleged in his opening address, on visiting a Child-art exhibition, described how he had striven to identify himself with the child-artist. 'At that age', Picasso said, 'I could draw like Raphael. It took me years to learn to draw like these children'. So it is obvious how momentous this development is: the authentic Child has stepped on to the stage, up till now the playground of adults. But what makes this a really serious matter is that because of a novel educational technique, he presents himself equipped with all the latest adult devices. It is not the untrained child in this case, with its customary pot-hooks and mannikins—though this plain unvarnished child finds a place here too. It is a miniature Miró or Dufy, coached by some zealot of the new educational technique, some Matisse and Miró-minded adult. Surely the little dog should laugh to see such sport and Chagall's Cow jump over the moon. So far only the Royal Academy has reacted, in the form of utterances at an R.A. banquet by Eton's headmaster, pooh-poohing (I gather) 'Child geniuses'. But the 'avant-garde' in the little Galleries may ultimately have more cause for concern than the Worshipful Company of Potboilers across the road.

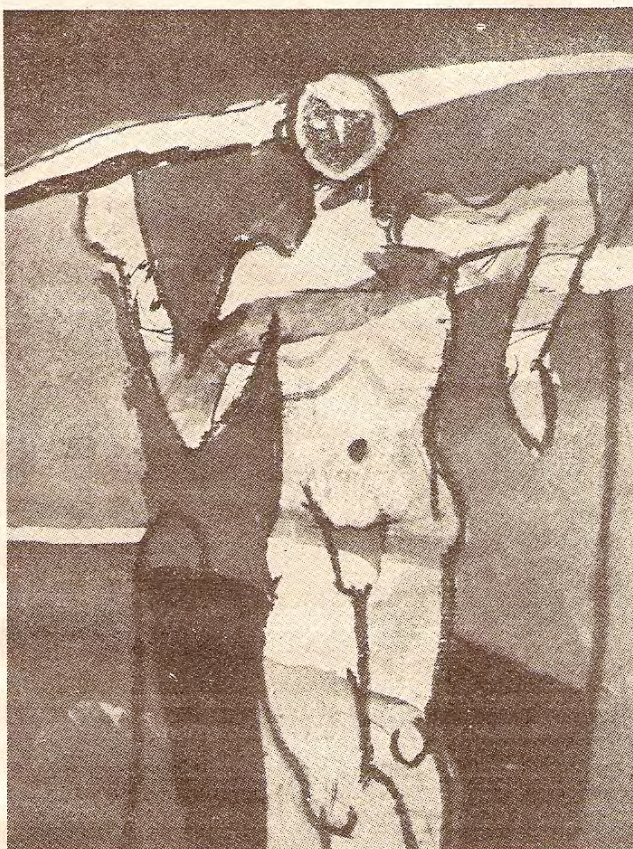
There are expressive regions to which the Child is unable to attain, however he may be coached—Raphael if you like, though there are works more inaccessible to Childhood than his. Will the adult artist at length be obliged to abandon the delights of Childhood—just as the artist forsook naturalism confronted by the camera? Such a question may be premature, but it is not irrelevant.

It is its tendentious character which makes this show of such unusual interest—the shadow of the adult behind the Child. There are 30,000 entrants, we learn, and only 300 are accepted and hung. Those chosen are sent in by a school possessing a teacher inspired by Mr. Herbert Read or from some family where intellectual influences are present and active. An injunction of Mr. Read's is, like a sacred text, hung conspicuously on the wall in the main gallery. The golden rule for the teacher is to be a *collaborator*, not a mentor, is what it says, though I forget the words. Nothing new about that: but it draws our attention to how much adult collaboration is discernible throughout this exhibition. And why not? Child art is generally dull. But this show proves that the Bonnard-Rouault-Matisse-Dufy-taught children (and some

are already adolescent) are anything but dull, and often brilliantly effective. The Innocent Eye has been disciplined, the virgin vision harnessed. Mr. Read is to be complimented on what is largely the result of his teaching. Soon oil paints will be at the disposal of all talented children, some will take the abstract road: there will be maestros of fifteen and sixteen; after two or three years of Trilbyesque precocity to

lose their virtuosity. Writing in the catalogue Mr. Philip James of the Arts Council is candid. 'This exhibition is more a tribute to teachers . . . than a showing-off ground for children who are only being their natural selves'. There is little evidence of the 'natural self' among these highly selective exhibits. Mr. James shares with me, I see, a dislike for 'the superficial freedom to splash about'. He adds that 'There is a high degree of self-discipline' here. One might almost say that there has been a conspiracy on the part of a few advocates of visual revolution to mobilise the Kindergarten against reaction. Three hundred compositions by carefully picked schoolchildren are produced, and the promoters cry: 'The Children are with us—they are natural visual revolutionaries! The Bauhaus reveals itself in the nursery! The artistic revolution is justified by your children!' What takes away a little from this impression is the nature of the prizewinning picture, 'Harvesters', a typically sentimental rustic idyll inspired by Palmer. This is possibly a deliberate backsliding on the part of the committee.

The other shows must be compressed, I am afraid. Particularly I would mention Bacon at the Hanover Gallery (and in a super-real setting two armoured swordsmen at it, the artist's name being Hilly); the Vaughan show (gouaches) at the Redfern; at Roland,



'Ochre Bather', by Keith Vaughan, at the Redfern Gallery

Browse and Delbanco next door a superb Colquhoun, and a Welsh colliery valley by Herman, and two other pictures of less interest; at Gimpel Fils a first show of a wonderfully talented young musically-minded abstractist, Alan Davie, also a disciple of Herman's George Fairley; lastly, at the Whitechapel Art Gallery is the 'East End Academy'—but a far more serious exhibition than its Royal namesake in Piccadilly. Reverting to the Redfern, Vaughan's 'Cain' has unforgettable ribs, and is a first-rate Vaughan figure, but there are rather too many slight things in the show.

Three large new canvases by Bacon prove him once more to be the most astonishingly sinister artist in England, and one of the most original. About the Colquhoun at Roland, Browse and Delbanco, and an almost equally fine one hanging a month ago at the Lefevre Gallery, it is difficult to speak with patience. Why on earth do they remain unsold—one even is priced at less than a hundred pounds? Something must be done about this: we do not want one of the two or three most talented artists in England to waste the rest of his life teaching in a Scottish school, simply because his subjects are tragic, and tragedy is not popular in paint. I make this protest especially on behalf of Colquhoun, because he is one of the only tragic painters in England at this time, and is an artist who has never compromised. But it must not be thought that he is the only artist who is in that position. *Art Lies Bleeding* at least as much today as just before the war.



# Round the London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**D**URING the four-weeks-long eclipse of *THE LISTENER*, there were several exhibitions which should, I think, be mentioned, though new ones are now there in their place. At the Redfern Gallery, for instance, Oscar Dalvit of Zurich exhibited for the first, but we must see that it is not the last, time in England. He is very much more than just post-Klee. He is a superb artist, as exquisite as any on the continent, and still young. Then Ben Nicholson, at the Lefevre, as chastely cold as ever, had some austere statements of spatial relations, no more afraid of emptiness than Burra or Topolsky are of fullness. The great ability as a draughtsman of Janko Adler was well demonstrated at Gimpel Fils. A full retrospective show of this artist will be eagerly awaited. And let us give a farewell salute to Rembrandt and his 'Family Group', greatest of bourgeois psychologists.

A show which is certain to attract a good deal of attention this month is 'Paintings by Some Members of the Camden Town Group', at the Lefevre Gallery. Sir William Rothenstein once sagely observed (he was referring to what he regarded as the phenomenon of Sickert's great reputation), 'In England if you only live long enough you become a great painter'. This used to be true, I think. However that may be, if a man has been dead, or if a group has been extinct, for two or three decades, he or it appears suddenly to acquire value to dealer or biographer.

And some excessively dull dogs and dull groups do in this way get fished up. As to the Camden Town Group of forty years ago, though not interested I was there. There was nothing in England then but Impressionism, slightly stimulated here and there by reflections of Vuillard or Bonnard—not of Van Gogh or of Gauguin, as Mr. Maurice de Sausmarez says in the catalogue. As I have referred to this introductory note, let me also observe that it was with surprise I read: 'Apart from an agreement about the needs for an association of painters that would give equal opportunity for exhibiting to artists of various tendencies whose views were in conflict with established societies, it is difficult to find any common factor among the members of the group'. What surprised me here was to find a distressing family likeness overlooked and petty differences singled out. A pervading dinginess, drabness, and marked lack of interest in form, is what one is aware of as one gazes around one—not the fact that there are of course some who, given the power, would have liked to be one thing, some another. That is how this collection of artists appeared to me at the time: past sensations are revived, no more. An honourable exception is Gilman. His portrait of Sylvia Gosse might find itself among Vuillards without disgracing itself. He discarded the muddy palette of most of those around him, and in his deep parsonic voice rejoiced in primary colours.

As a nation, the English are naturalists. Impressionism is a kind of painting suited to their temperament. In 1911 there was the Camden Town Group: then about thirty years later I entered a small Gallery off Piccadilly and really believed myself at first among French Impressionist pictures. There sure enough was a Degas, there a Monet. But upon inquiry I discovered that this was merely a new demonstra-

tion of British loyalty to French Impressionism and of British desire that that movement should not like others pass into history but be kept alive continually by new adherents—something like the flame that is perpetually rekindled in the Arc de Triomphe. This was the Euston Road Group. I feel sure that three or four decades hence another recrudescence of Impressionist ardour will occur in England until finally,

perhaps, it will be claimed as 'British'. Let me say at once that if a Camden Town team were matched against a Euston Road team it would be a pretty near thing. Of course, if there were half a dozen good Sickerts and good Gilmans they would win. But with the team on show at the Lefevre it would be a walk-over for the Euston Roaders.

The doctrinaires of the photographic 'real', the French Impressionists, were to my mind inferior to those who came before them and those who came after them. But a man of great talent often transcends his own bad doctrine: or so I reflected as I found myself in the presence of the Claude Monets at Gimpel Fils. There are certainly several large and imposing specimens of the kind of Monets which are star pieces in collections. But there is also a kind of Monet I have not noticed before: several canvases which contain no features, hardly any objective content at all—reminiscent in this respect of a very late Turner, when his eyesight only permitted him to see the shadow of things. There are two very exquisite, very luminous, Monets in this Gimpel exhibition tending to this same featureless ideal.

We go back to round about the same time at the Redfern Gallery, Cork Street. Here it is 'The Pointillistes and their Period'. It is unfortunately more Period than Pointillistes, however. The specky effect of Pointillisme as seen at a yard or two is rather attractive: of

more visual value than when you retire to the prescribed distance, say ten yards. Next door, at Roland Browse and Delbanco's, is something of surprising excellence. It is a small head in stone (of 1928 I think) which is, if I am right, Henry Moore at his very best. The third dimension is the naturalistic dimension. But Moore overcomes the limitations of the round with great resource. Most of the other sculpture there shows how important it is to know how to circumvent the natural platitude of the dimension of life. Upstairs at this gallery is a new Slovak painter, Bornfriend. The peasant influence is visible, it jostles to good effect the western intellectual severities.

When an artist has evolved a manner so intensely personal that a picture of his can be recognised a half-a-mile away, and has for a number of years remained pretty stationary, it is most unusual for him to break the spell and open up on us with a new line. Yet this is what has happened at the Leicester Galleries where Ivon Hitchens has broken out of his brown web and revealed to our astonished gaze a large recumbent nude female. What is one to say, except to congratulate him on this comely girl, and wait to see what is going to happen next? To conclude, the Hanover is showing large decorative arrangements by Robert Medley: and Tooths have Tristram Hillier, a little lost I feel in the English landscape, and Geoffrey Tibble. With the latter we are back in France with the French of the 'eighties with a vengeance.



Head of a Child, by Henry Moore: from the exhibition at Roland Browse and Delbanco's



appeared to. Too many 'ifs and ands' and 'perhappes' and so on would have taken away a lot of its charm, and to change the title to 'A Possible Cosmology' or 'One of Many Cosmologies' would have been to write down to the drab what was a fine vigorous approach. I cannot believe that a cosmologist, 1,000 years ago today, or 1,000 years hence, could ever have in his head that his theory was anything but a speculation. That would be presumption gone mad, but you must try and put your case as if you believe it.

Professor Dingle has always been a giant-killer and a very courteous one, and to have got him into the lists is refreshing and a privilege for us all. Where Mr. Hoyle put his foot in it was bringing in his private theological views. Very curious this; no doubt sincere, but having little to do with his subject unless he was going to place heaven cosmologically! Always a difficult feat. Up arises Miss Dorothy Sayers, with a very original and brilliant talk. I admit solipsism has attractions when everyone else but yourself is imaginary, but that *we* should be the imaginations of a Solipsist Deity I do not myself find comforting, although it is ingenious. The trouble is, that just as the past contained some very surprising and unpredictable events, so indeed will the future, and we poor mortals stand today in this speculation, as we shall for ever stand, bound Prometheus-like to the rock of our finite knowledge.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.1 BRABAZON OF TARA

### Understanding the Universe

Sir,—May I draw attention to two mutually apposite passages taken from your issue of November 16. The one is from the letter by Mr. James Hemming on page 547:

The universe, including man, is not a record; it is a process in action. Or, if you prefer to, you may properly describe it as a creative process being worked out.

The other is from Thomas Carlyle, as quoted by Lord Horder on page 541:

I don't pretend to understand the universe—it's a great deal bigger than I am. . . . People ought to be modest.

Yours, etc.,  
London, S.W.15 GORDON STOWELL

### Intelligence Tests

Sir,—In her interesting letter in THE LISTENER of November 9 Miss Fryd refers to my talk on mental testing, and asks about 'the social purpose of such tests'. Is the object to find out *how* the child should be educated or merely *whether* the child should be educated? If the former, then, she thinks, there must be 'a great need for several new series of tests' for other characteristics besides intelligence.

Since every child, no matter how defective, is capable of at least some form of education, the psychologist's task is to discover the most appropriate method. For this purpose, I fully agree, it is essential to assess, not only the child's general capacity, but also his special abilities or disabilities as well. If this was not made clear, the reason simply was that, in the short time available, it was only possible to illustrate the essential idea of mental testing by taking intelligence as the most convenient example. The assessment of special characteristics—such as memory, imagination, verbal facility, manual capacity, and the like—is a more difficult problem. Nevertheless, as will be seen on referring to the published handbooks or guides for mental testing, there are now numerous well-standardised tests for the abilities to which Miss Fryd has referred.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1 CYRIL BURT

Sir,—In his recent discussion of intelligence and its testing Sir Cyril Burt mentioned in passing the question of a possible decline in the national intelligence. 'Since brightness and dullness are hereditary, and the dull are breeding twice as rapidly as the bright, it would seem that the average mental level of the whole nation is bound to decline'. But, he added, mental tests have not been in use long enough for us to obtain any convincing first-hand evidence one way or the other.

This is not quite true. In 1932 the intelligence of all eleven-year-old Scottish children was tested. In 1947 a second survey of all eleven-year-old Scottish children was made, using the same test. This second survey was carried out precisely in order to throw light on the question raised by Sir Cyril. Had the results shown a decline in the average test score, there is little doubt that this would have been considered as evidence of 'declining national intelligence'. Such a decline was confidently predicted by some psychologists before the investigation was begun. In fact, however, a significant rise in the average test score and hence the average I.Q. was found.

Before we conclude that this rise in the average test score indicates a 'real' rise in the intelligence of Scottish children over a fifteen-year period, doubts may be raised about the whole formulation of the problem posed by Sir Cyril Burt. Is the concept of intelligence, not to speak of 'national' intelligence, a meaningful one in any biological or social sense? Is it not likely that intelligence tests are not suitable instruments for measuring changes in 'national intelligence'? (A single film seen by a large group of children might conceivably raise or lower the average test score of a community by one or two points. What of the experiences of a lifetime, changes in the way in which English is taught in the schools, the amount of time given to arithmetic or money sums, or practice in comprehension? It is naive to argue that such changes can be measured quantitatively.)

Secondly, are the genetic assumptions upon which such predictions about 'national intelligence' are based, true? Are they sufficiently comprehensive to enable true deductions to be drawn? The Scottish surveys suggest that they are not; and biologists, notably Professor Penrose, have pointed out serious weaknesses in their formulation. The history of economics is full of dreadful examples of what happens in society when 'scientific' theories, which run counter to humanitarianism and common sense, are put into practice. Intelligence testing is likely to provide examples no less striking to the historian.

Yours, etc.,  
London, S.W.4 J. TIZARD

### Juvenile Delinquents

Sir,—In the programme entitled 'Juvenile Delinquents' (the first in the series called 'Report to the People') broadcast on November 10, one of the chief questions raised was the cause or causes of delinquency in the young. In this country the earliest and the most reliable investigations into the problem were those carried out by psychologists, often with the co-operation of official bodies like the London County Council or the Home Office. As a result the commoner causes of juvenile delinquency are now known. In the programme, however, no reference whatever was made to such researches. The first 'witness' to be introduced was a psychiatrist (i.e., an actor representing a psychiatrist). Asked to explain the difference between the psychiatrist and the psychologist, he replied: 'A psychologist is an expert in "mind measurement". He may or may not have taken a degree in psychology at a university, but as a rule he is not a doctor. A

psychiatrist is a doctor'. Later he was asked whether, since he was medically qualified, he himself carried out medical examinations of the children referred to him. He answered that he left this to their own doctor. In reply to further questions, he agreed that he did not regard all delinquents as 'mentally ill'; the majority were merely cases of 'maladjustments'. Nor did his treatment consist in medical treatment; it was (he explained) rather a form of 'moral education'.

Since in most cases neither delinquency nor its cause is an illness of any sort, and since the treatment is in general educational rather than medical, many listeners must have been left wondering why so much importance was attached to the evidence given by a practitioner with medical rather than psychological, educational or social qualifications. It should be added that no local education authority, and no competent body would employ a psychologist who did not possess a degree in psychology (or its equivalent) as well as evidence of practical training at a child guidance centre. It is a gross mistake to suggest that a psychologist's work is confined solely to those qualities of the mind which can be formally tested and measured; psychology is the scientific study of the *whole* mind or personality. On the other hand, although the psychiatrist possesses a medical qualification (not necessarily a degree), nevertheless few psychiatrists have had a full training in psychology as such.

Towards the end of the hour the psychiatrist and his colleagues agreed that, since the evidence had been so conflicting and was based so largely on personal impressions and even 'guesswork', there was an urgent need for scientific investigation. This would seem to indicate that the psychiatrist was entirely ignorant of the large amount of successful research already published on the subject in well-known works by British and American psychologists, and had even failed to read the numerous articles referring to such work that have recently appeared in the pages of the ordinary medical journals. Certainly, those who listened to the programme must have been left with a wholly erroneous notion of existing knowledge. No doubt here, as in every scientific problem, there is room for further research, particularly as to the application of that knowledge and the effects of different modes of treatment. But in regard to the main causes there is almost unanimous agreement among competent psychological authorities. The fact that the programme was so effectively devised and so admirably produced and presented makes it doubly unfortunate that so wrong an impression should have been conveyed.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1 ALEC RODGER

### Henry Moore's 'Head of a Child'

Sir,—In THE LISTENER of November 9 you publish a photograph of Mr. Henry Moore's 'Head of a Child', and an explanatory description of it by Mr. Wyndham Lewis. His words are as follows:

Next door . . . is something of surprising excellence. It is a small head in stone (of 1928 I think) which is, if I am right, Henry Moore at his very best. The third dimension is the naturalistic dimension. But Moore overcomes the limitations of the round with great resource. Most of the other sculpture there shows how important it is to know how to circumvent the natural platitude of the dimension of life.

Those of us ordinary laymen, who do their poor utmost to understand and appreciate modern sculpture as illustrated, for instance, by the photograph of Mr. Moore's head referred to above, are faced not only by the 'queerness', according to all normal human standards, of the works themselves, but also by the equal 'queerness' of the explanations given by the art critics.



To inexperienced eyes these works seem to approximate more than anything else to the first efforts of young children, though I am not intending thereby to depreciate their value as art. Yet obviously, from what Mr. Wyndham Lewis says, they must be the result of profound reflection. As I understand Mr. Lewis, Mr. Moore succeeds in overcoming the limitations of the third dimension, which is, I believe, the dimension of depth or thickness and thereby it appears in 'circumventing' its 'limitations'. The 'natural platitude of the dimension of life' refers again, I must suppose, to the third dimension. Platitude, in the Oxford Dictionary, is given two meanings. The first is 'flatness, dullness, insipidity, commonplaceness'. Does Mr. Lewis mean that human beings, portrayed normally, would appear to possess merely these qualities, and that an artist must overcome this tendency by endowing his sculptures by methods akin to those of Mr. Moore, with other and finer qualities? But are the qualities so portrayed likely to be finer than those universally understood and admired in the work say of the Greeks, or of Michelangelo and the Florentine sculptors?

It may be, however, that all that I say is nonsense, and not at all what Mr. Lewis means. I would, therefore, be most grateful, if he could explain his meaning in words that the simpler among us could better understand.

I might perhaps venture to add that the second meaning given by the Oxford Dictionary to platitude, is a 'flat, dull, commonplace remark or statement, especially one uttered or written with an air of importance and solemnity'.

Yours, etc.,

London, E.C.2

BRAND

### The Camden Town Group

Sir,—In your issue of November 9, Mr. Wyndham Lewis' reference to my foreword to the catalogue of the exhibition of 'Paintings by some members of the Camden Town Group' at the Lefevre Gallery calls for comment. He raps my knuckles for mentioning Van Gogh and Gauguin but gives an entirely false account of how I have mentioned them. Nowhere have I suggested that they were established influences in the England of 1911-14 and my reference to them in discussing the development of individual artists is fully authenticated. Of Gilman I have said that he 'later transferred his allegiance to Cézanne and Van Gogh' and in support of this observation let me quote Mr. Charles Ginner, a member of the Group who has given this record of Gilman's development during these years: '... he soon altered his view and developed a great admiration for this Dutch Post-Impressionist master placing Gauguin, his first love, last in the famous trinity—Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin'. In 1919 Mr. Lewis himself, writing of Gilman, says: 'If you went into his room you would find Van Gogh's letters on his table, you would see postcards of Van Gogh's paintings beside the favourites of his own hand'.

Roger Fry's first Post-Impressionist exhibition of Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin and their contemporaries was held in 1910. Apart from this, Ginner and Lucien Pissarro were sources of information about developments later than Impressionism unless we have got to the point of seeing only 'petty differences' between Seurat and Sisley. R. P. Bevan had worked with Gauguin at Pont Aven.

Mr. Lewis is surprised that I should reject easy generalisations and spend time in what he calls 'singling out petty differences'. I have referred in my note to the similarity of handling to be found in the Sickert-Göre-Gilman coterie but, in writing of the Group as a whole, I still find it difficult to discover any significant

common factor between Gilman and Innes or Ginner and Duncan Grant, all of them members of the Group, though not all represented in this show. The fact that Mr. Lewis can see no differences worth noting but only a 'distressing family likeness' is merely an admission of his own indifference. They are as clear as those between McBryde and Colquhoun or Minton and Vaughan. His decision that family likenesses are distressing must be of astonishingly recent date.—Yours, etc.,

Leeds

MAURICE DE SAUSMAREZ

### In Defence of a Classical Education

Sir,—The basic factor in sin is residual animalism', writes Mr. Hayward with an air of adolescent bravura. In other words, there is no sin of mind or spirit. The cardinal sin in the Christian view has always been that of pride. To squeeze this into Mr. Hayward's definition of sin as 'residual animalism' would be formidable indeed—unless he pipes up the Monarch of the Glen. If the rest of the 'difficulties' in his 'list' for confounding Mr. Hollis be of the calibre of this one, he is well advised to keep them to himself.—Yours, etc.,

Long Crendon

H. J. MASSINGHAM

### The Reith Lectures

Sir,—Would you accept the enclosed instead of a 'letter to the Editor' in the usual form?

#### To a Reith Lecturer

THOU, who art ever *Young* yet old in fame,  
Increasing both thine own and *Oxford's* name,  
Hast told with gentle voice the listening world  
(Grimly embattled, its war-flags unfurled)  
Thy verdict, won by anatomic skill,  
That all our little meed of wit and will  
Is but the jangle of some grocer's till;  
And all our fears of loss and hopes of gain  
Nought but a feeble lightning in the brain.

Is, then, the poet nothing but the word?  
Is, then, the soldier nothing but the sword?  
Does each of fifteen thousand million cells  
Find beauty in the sound of chiming bells,  
Or find a likeness to melodic sound  
In the rich colour of an autumn ground?

Yet, if each cannot, how can all conspire  
To simulate an intellectual choir?  
What of that man whose limb did strangely move  
When *Penfield* sought his marrow-map to prove,  
But yet denied that, though his arm did rise,  
It did so by his wish, for he willed otherwise?  
What of ourselves, who know a dream's a dream  
And take not always things for what they seem?

Old *Aristotle* of the Hellene shore  
(True father of our zoölogic lore)  
Confused not How with Why, nor Stuff with  
Form,  
Discerning Cause from Cause as wave from  
storm.

Great *Thomas* gript the mystery of the Soul,  
Defining it a substance simple, whole  
All without parts, and with our flesh all one  
Acting on it and by it acted on,  
No chimaera yet not a thing alone  
Sitting remote in majesty away  
From the rude body which its power doth sway.

*Nihil in intellectu est quod prius non  
In sensu erat*—so old *Oxford's* Don  
(By her forgotten now) did loudly cry  
And damned for fool the man who would deny  
That, as the lock doth closely fit the key,  
So if we choose to look we needs must see  
How for each faculty within the mind  
A counterpart in flesh is there to find.

So if the brain be but a texture made  
From threads of jelly, head-to-tail all laid,  
Mapping our world within their bony shell—  
But knowing naught of either Heaven or Hell—  
What model else have we by which to show  
The march of sense and motion, and to know  
In fruitful measure how the whole doth go,  
But strange, intricate things devised by man  
Upon like pattern and an equal plan?

If this be error and upon me proved,  
Then nerve ne'er twittered—No, nor muscle  
moved!

M. A. MACCONAILL

Department of Anatomy,  
University College, Cork

### Curing Social Sicknesses

(continued from page 575)

many members of local authorities who simply have not time to concentrate on particular social issues which should not be left entirely to the expert judgment of paid officials, whether social workers or others.

Finally, there is the question of who should keep a critical eye on current social policy and current social philosophy. As I have said before, I see no reason for continuing to assume that the civil service, national and local, cannot be critical of itself, and I see no reason why trained social workers in the public service should not be capable of constructive criticism of their departments, and, although it is a terribly slow process, of the education of their lay masters on local authorities. But, as I see it, the major function of social criticism is now going to descend upon the universities, whose departments concerned with the social sciences must assume more and more the functions performed in the past by the Booths, the Rowntrees, the Webbs and possibly the Octavia Hills. In the days of those great pioneers the social sciences were barely recognised as reputable fields of critical and constructive scholarship. Those days have gone. The social sciences have come to stay, although they are still under-manned and somewhat starved of money for the equivalent of laboratory facilities. In any field of learning, it is the job of universities to approach critically the orthodoxies of the past. New evidence from science and medicine and history is continually making old assumptions appear in different perspective. So, in the social sciences, it is unreasonable to have university departments which are not critical of current assumptions hatched in the past. I cannot for the life of me see how these university departments will ever be popular among those who accept conventional social philosophy. Like Beatrice Webb, they ought to be pretty suspicious of themselves if, given independence, they find themselves widely popular.

This means that our university departments must organise themselves in such a way that their members and students are involved in the day-to-day operations of society at the points where relationships creak or do not exist. They ought to be sharing the moral responsibility of statutory officials and voluntary workers. They ought to be turning out writing which is comprehensible to the practitioners and which is a challenge to, or contemporary defence of, traditional practice. They ought to be turning out students who, when they have some years of practical experience, bring trained and critical minds to the problem of keeping the social services abreast of the challenges that are set. They must desire to *solve* problems and not only to *study* them. The universities have no more reason for complacency than any other of the organisations with practical and moral responsibility in the welfare state.—Third Programme



# Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles or talks printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

## The New Cosmology

Sir,—In dealing with the hydrogen content of the sun in his recent letter Professor Dingle has raised a specific scientific point, and in so doing has made it plain that he himself has failed to understand the new position. The overwhelming abundance of hydrogen referred to by Mr. Hoyle is not merely 50 or 60 per cent. by mass but something more like 99 per cent. as compared with heavy elements. This means, in terms of numbers of particles, not that hydrogen outnumbers heavy nuclei by only ten to one—and this is what Professor Dingle has said—but actually by thousands to one. It is this tremendous hydrogen abundance that Mr. Hoyle demonstrated from considerations of stellar structure in 1947, and it is this extremely high ratio that has such really serious cosmological implications.

Professor Dingle, however, seeks not only to deprive Mr. Hoyle of credit for this important step but also to introduce what reads very much like a personal attack. Ten years ago Professor Dingle was similarly scolding Sir Arthur Eddington for something or other, and ended by laying down the following precept of conduct in these matters: 'Ideas may be flogged without mercy, but personal abuse is an unfair and ineffective weapon'. Were Eddington with us still he would I am sure be having a good chuckle at Dingle's error (as no doubt Professor Dingle will be doing himself now that it has been pointed out).

In dealing with this question of hydrogen abundance, I write not to defend Mr. Hoyle but to supply for the general reader emphatic contradiction of the impression that Professor Dingle's letter might wrongly create in regard to a point that will have already become common knowledge among serious students of stellar structure. Professor Dingle says in effect that he does not attempt to criticise the scientific basis of the new cosmology: should he do so, however, he will discover what many scientists know already, and what listeners have intuitively divined, namely that when Mr. Hoyle speaks on problems of cosmology and astrophysics he knows what he is talking about.

Yours, etc.,

Cambridge

R. A. LITTLETON

Sir,—On the nature of Immortality Miss Sayers declares that 'the concept of *infinitely prolonged time* has no place in orthodox Christian doctrine'. She is mistaken. In *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine* (1943), page 58, it is said that in the 'life beyond the grave' the happiness of the good 'must be of *unlimited duration*, and must be known to them as such, otherwise it would not be perfect happiness'.

Yours, etc.,

Edinburgh

WALLACE TAVENER

## Henry Moore's 'Head of a Child'

Sir,—The great role of the Oxford Dictionary in contemporary controversy will be noted some day by the social historian. And calling to his aid this famous lexicon Lord Brand, in THE LISTENER last week, convicted me, as he believed, of calling the round flat, of asserting that the third dimension is really the second dimension. For had I not referred to *the round* as the platitudinous dimension: and is not the platitudinous simply *the flat*? But a platitude is not something *physically flat*: the second and third dimension were not involved, for instance, when 'old sealed-lips' delivered himself of one of his famous platitudes.

It is easy to understand Lord Brand's feelings at finding himself in an age when a sculptor flattens a female face as if some titan had sat on it and is applauded for doing so. Where is the lovely naturalistic profile of Hellenic art?

But many people today, myself among them, consider that the Greeks of antiquity were, with their naturalism, fastening upon Europe for 2,000 years a theory of art which is radically mistaken. The third dimension is dangerous for the European artist: there lies in wait for him the naturalistic canon of tradition as nowhere else. The second dimension is, by reason of its limitation, less prone to perpetuate this ancestral vitalist mistake. By platitude I mean, in this connection, the platitude inherent in the natural. To identify nature with art is in an artist a deadly sin.

Your other correspondent quoted me as saying that Harold Gilman possessed Van Gogh photographs. But he did not paint like Van Gogh.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

## Collecting for the Tate Gallery

Sir,—In his interesting talk 'Collecting for the Tate Gallery' Mr. Rothenstein chided a 'critic' who recently had nothing better to say of the Tate than that it 'is not entirely at a standstill'. As this anonymous critic may I intrude upon your space to quote what I actually said (THE LISTENER, August 31, 1950)? For Mr. Rothenstein has arbitrarily lifted a seemingly negative phrase out of a longer sentence and claimed that in it I 'summed up' my 'considered conclusions' concerning certain additions to this national collection.

This is not true. What in fact I said was: 'The Tate is not entirely at a standstill and so let me tell you what excellent things they have bought . . .' And so I did, but here we come to more of Mr. Rothenstein's juggling. At this point I went on to consider favourably works by four painters and to criticise sharply those by three others. All the rest of Mr. Rothenstein's list of nineteen names were mentioned by me in entirely different contexts. I specifically pointed out that many of them were unworthy of a place in a collection which Mr. Rothenstein himself describes as 'the national collection of British painting' and 'the National Gallery of the future'. I said, for example, of the Gainsborough that it was 'the polished up remains of a mediocre portrait . . . hardly a worthwhile addition to a national museum'; of the John that it was 'flashy' and an 'undeserving work'; of the works by Morandi and Manzu that they were 'indifferent'; of those by Rouault, Dufy and Gris that they were all 'of inferior quality'. Why then does Mr. Rothenstein ask of me: 'Just how much more . . . did this critic expect of an institution with a basic annual income of something less than £3,000?' I should have thought it was obvious.

No one expects the Tate to do the impossible with its limited resources. But as those who go the rounds of London sale-rooms and galleries must know, better pictures, both English and foreign, ancient and modern, and of museum quality, have been available for purchase by the Tate Trustees during the last years at far more advantageous prices than they have paid for inferior works. For example, the Tate might have acquired at auction in London in 1948 a



# Round the London Art Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**W**HEN first I found myself among Colquhoun's new pictures, I realised something was different, though it was not different enough for it to be a revolution. At first sight it might have been just the same desolate Scottish hag (if I may be forgiven the harsh word, and the hag's acquaintanceship I greatly prize), just that superfine creation, only less sombrely dressed. Then of course I recognised that I had to do with a novel personality, and actually a different climate. Colquhoun was for six months in Italy, and all these pictures, fifteen oils and as many monotypes, are the result; but what is significant is not the difference, but how small a change the visual assault of Italy succeeded in making. This tells one a lot about Colquhoun.

I heard from the artist himself how terrific he had found the Palio at Siena, about the Renaissance pageantry, the trumpeters, the banners, the masked figures leading in the horses, the wild horse-race that is part of a medieval hippic encounter: he spoke with rapture of this tremendous carnival, the seething and bedizened crowds. The only record of all this *seeing* is the twisted face of a kitchen-boy carrying something, two white-washed heads repeated in several canvases, these and other unidentifiable heavily formalised figures placed against a flatly filled in background, emanations as evocative as much of Seouf as of Siena. When he was telling me about the crowds, the trumpets, the horse race, he was not boasting of his rejection of this material. He almost might have been saying that he wished he had been another type of artist, so that he might have got some of this joyous tumult on to a canvas. As it is the stylistic instrument which is Colquhoun the artist has a very powerfully developed *psychological* function, as it has a very limited range. His Scottish female figures are essentially X-ray character shots, it is what makes Colquhoun so original a painter, so that you can identify one of his works immediately. Here his kitchen-boy carrying a saddle—the head of it, that is, the important part—in its gelatinous pink, even has rather the appearance of an X-ray photograph.

When a Colquhoun show opens, something, for me, is happening: it is as if I read that a rocket had been fired at Mars or the Moon. In the past Colquhoun's rockets have reached farther than most of those leaving British soil. This time it is more a routine annual try-out. Once or twice in these columns I have expressed the view that an artist who relies entirely or mainly on his memory tends to lose formal density. A course of hard work from nature is the obvious corrective. Take a case in which an artist wishes to depict, in however extreme a formula, a saddle. The result must be far more rich in form if a number of careful drawings of saddles have been made. But by devoting so much space to technical details, I fear the many excellences of this fine show, at Reid and Lefevre's, may have been obscured.

At the Fine Art Society, 148 New Bond Street, Sir William Russell Flint is holding a large exhibition of drawings. There are a great number of voluptuous nudes: indeed it is a long time since I have seen such a display of pretty nudity. Gazing at these softly moulded limbs of odalisques I wondered why artists today so seldom resort to this obvious means of pleasing. But I remember how in the past I

handed a number of nudes to a dealer, expecting him to beam with pleasure. Instead he shook his head. 'I always find a nude exceptionally difficult to sell', he told me. 'If at last it finds a buyer, he (for it is men who buy nudes) brings the blessed thing back the next day'. When asked to explain, 'Wives do not like them', he said. There are other reasons of course. In any case, this great privilege immemorably possessed by artists, is one seldom invoked. When nudes occur in contemporary art they are sexually repulsive, or of a type to justify the slogan: 'Nothing so chaste as the nude'. But I have been betrayed into recording a social change. Russell Flint's clothed women are artistically superior to those *desnuda*. He is one of the solidier Academicians; not an impressionist, I mean.

Now I will turn to a bird of another feather. With the ensuing outburst regarding the Picasso exhibition at the Burlington Galleries we move into another dimension. We cannot speak in the same breath of Flint and Picasso. This said, I will unburden my mind. Picasso is not prolific, he is incontinent. There are drawings all round the walls of this large gallery: from each and all I have got a kick so many times before, or from things all but identical; the charm works no more. All I see are design after design tirelessly smart and slick, though of course blamelessly high-brow. Just always

so much more of the same thing, mechanically *ad infinitum*. For me this prima donna has leapt back on to the stage one thousand and one times too often. An artist depending for his effects on surprise, upon paradox (which supplies the 'kick'), is necessarily in the position of the illusionist. Picasso has never allowed disillusion time to set in: he has tirelessly produced new surprises. Often with his work, 'stimulating' as it is, I could have wished a little less of this almost snug vitality, incessant technical glitter. I would think of the perfection of the communion with nature, without bang and glitter, of a Chardin or a Corot. Admiring as I do this conjuror, that is how I usually react.

The specific purpose of the present exhibition was, presumably, to introduce the public to 'Picasso céramiste'. It is a pity that so few ceramics were available for this exhibition. In presence of Picasso's ceramics the sensations recorded above recur. Instead of this proliferation of tropical baroque in form, and cascades of barbaric ornament, oh for the linear purity of Sung, just as a building by Lloyd Wright is what we would yearn for if we were obliged to live with Rococo.



'Masked Figures', by Robert Colquhoun, at the Reid and Lefevre Galleries



not have the attributes ascribed to Him, the argument is about as logical as to say that there is no sun, or that the sun really has no light, because after all we attribute to it what is in our eyes. It comes to this: God can be known only by His own light; so that we are justified in ascribing to Him the light we see. He reveals Himself in the spiritual and moral ideas and ideals to which men attain. He is the living God. With His being He fills the universe so that it lives by His activity. And men can perceive Him in its grandeur and mystery

when they have opened their spiritual vision to His light. In His light we see light.

Theism has been called an adventure of faith. In the last analysis all our knowledge has in it an element of faith. We can never be sure that we know anything but we live by convictions to which faith gives the power of certainty. For life demands positive affirmation. We cannot live with an eternal question-mark. And faith in God makes an affirmation about the universe which makes sense of human life.

—Home Service

## Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles or talks printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

### The New Cosmology

Sir,—Dr. Lyttleton's letter emphasises the magnitude of the task I undertook in attempting to break the shell of self-complacency that surrounds the so-called 'new cosmologists'. In my broadcast I said: 'In 1939 it was first realised that hydrogen must be overwhelmingly the most abundant element in the universe'. I was referring to the work of Eddington and Strömberg; let me here consider Eddington alone for brevity. He pointed out that there were 'two possible compositions of the Sun [and other such stars] for which the observed and calculated luminosities will agree. These are found to be 33 per cent. and 99.53 per cent. hydrogen. The existence of the second solution has been noticed by Lönnqvist, Menzel and B. Strömberg. The first solution, 33 per cent., agrees exactly with Strömberg's calculation'. He gave reasons for then preferring the lower figure, which however he increased to 40 per cent. by weight (i.e. around 90 per cent. by atomic counts) from wave-mechanical considerations. In *New Pathways in Science* (1935) he wrote: 'I think that the one important change in the last seven years in the theory of the stellar interior is the recognition that hydrogen is very abundant'.

In 1947 Mr. Hoyle chose the higher of Eddington's alternatives, and, thereupon regarding himself as the discoverer of the hydrogen abundance, he challenged my date for the discovery. When I give the reference Dr. Lyttleton intervenes and points out my 'error', at which I am supposed to laugh, in 'failing to understand the new position. The overwhelming abundance of hydrogen referred to by Mr. Hoyle is . . .'. But what has the subject of Mr. Hoyle's reference to do with the matter? It is what I was referring to that is in question.

I confess that I do not understand this strange phenomenon; I pass it on to Sir Cyril Burt. May one not refer to any work other than Mr. Hoyle's without 'seeking to deprive Mr. Hoyle of credit' for something else? Was Eddington's presumption in attempting to anticipate Mr. Hoyle so monstrous that mention of it has become unthinkable? Mr. Hoyle may or may not know what he is talking about. What he and Dr. Lyttleton seem incapable of understanding is what I am talking about, and it is his incredible inability to conceive that there were astronomers before he was vouchsafed to us, and will be others after the gift is withdrawn, that is partly responsible for his ideas now being treated with so much less respect than in fact they deserve.

I have, however, a real slip to correct. Writing from memory I confused Eddington's discussion of the hydrogen content of the white dwarf with that of the main sequence stars. The former was in 1939, the latter in 1932. (The quotation above is from his paper in *Mon. Not. R.A.S.*, April 1932.) I should have given 1932 instead of 1939. I regret the mistake, though it is

immaterial here, but if Dr. Lyttleton had paid as much attention to dull facts as to sparkling illusions he would certainly have noticed it.

I can assure Lord Brabazon that I carry no guns. The surgeon's knife is the most that I have to declare in the way of unpleasantness, and I always use the methods recommended by the N.S.P.C.G., even when stalking other game. Lord Brabazon ascribes Mr. Hoyle's faults to an abnormally protracted youth. I would gladly think so, and if this discussion should assist his progress to maturity he will automatically realise that I wish him nothing but good. In the meantime, however, the idea that personal belief in a thing entitles one to proclaim it as though it had been finally established as worthy of belief raises a somewhat terrifying prospect for the future of broadcasting. I remain unconvinced that misrepresentation is necessary to charm, and I look forward to the time when the beauty of Mr. Hoyle's utterances will be made much more beautiful by that sweet ornament which truth doth give.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1

HERBERT DINGLE

### Nature and Art

Sir,—The truth of Mr. Wyndham Lewis' statement, 'To identify nature with art is in an artist a deadly sin', depends on which view of 'nature' he refers to. There are three, entirely different.

There is what Eddington called the 'familiar view': that of a world of objects in space, which we make up by associating sight with touch at an early age, the commonplace view of everyday things, without which we could not engineer ourselves in physical existence. Convenience, not truth, is the guiding motive of this aspect.

Then there is the view of science, where accurate observation is demanded instead of convenience. The reactions of dummy observers (scientific instruments) are preferred as the means of observation, on account of their reliability and measurable accuracy. According to this view, what we call solid objects is chiefly space, energy organisations taking the place of objects; from contact, by means of our sense mechanism, we get the idea of solid things, etc.

The third view, that of the artist, is apt to be neglected by the fashionable abstract art of the moment. The retina picture is contemplated with the mind swept clean of all the practical considerations of the familiar view, seen as form, tone and colour, for themselves alone.

A new and wonderful world of visual music is thus opened out, which has inspired the passion and devotion of great artists down the ages. This is the mine from which they have dug the matter of their art. A unifying universal influence can be found presiding over all. This is the common denominator of all art and the source to which it looks for its sanctions.

Identifying himself with this 'nature' is not a

deadly sin to the artist. The deadly sin is taking the commonplace familiar view as his gospel, or setting himself up in self-centred isolation (the Lucifer attitude) and creating according to his own wayward whims, regardless of all else. It is only when the individual self is lost in this universal that great art is born.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.8

HAROLD SPEED

### The Soviet Approach to History

Sir,—The evidence that Mr. Hilton offers about the freedom of criticism and counter-criticism among Soviet historians will hardly bear the weight he puts upon it. If Picasso can be used for advertising communist-sponsored Peace Congresses while within the Soviet Union his work his stigmatised as bourgeois and decadent, Petrushevsky can surely be recommended to historians in this country, despite his being out of favour at home.

Much more to the point is the chequered history of Soviet historical journals and their editorial boards and attitudes over the past years, which can only reasonably be interpreted as indicating that the decisive conclusions are reached outside historical circles proper. This does not mean that an officially-sponsored school of thought can always regard itself as safe. The blow dealt by Stalin recently against the long-dominant school of philologists connected with the name of Marr, must be as fresh in Mr. Hilton's mind as in my own. The historical story is a more tangled one. And I must content myself with referring Mr. Hilton and your readers to the series of articles on Soviet historiography that have been appearing from the learned (and marxist and by no means anti-Soviet) pen of Dr. Rudolf Schlesinger in the invaluable periodical *Soviet Studies*, of which he is editor. My broadcast was much indebted to these articles, which amply bear out my substantial point.

I should perhaps add that I see no need for regarding the situation described as due to some peculiar malevolence among Soviet historians or politicians. Official control of doctrine and consequent sterility seems to me no more than the inevitable product of the application to the publishing industry of the socialist principle of the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Free historical inquiry is one of the multitudes of benefits that we owe to the capitalist system. But I would not expect Mr. Hilton to agree to that.

May I in conclusion express my personal pleasure at the news that we are to have a translation of Kosminsky and perhaps of Petrushevsky as well, and express the hope that Mr. Hilton and his friends will secure for us translations of recent works by other leading Soviet historians. It will then be possible to make a serious confrontation of the merits of the two systems as far as producing major historical



## Art

# A Negro Artist

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**I** DO not wish to be guilty of what is called overpraising (as if an artist could be overpraised), but I consider Dennis Williams a young man of very remarkable talent. He paints pictures the size of a pantechicon with as little effort as the blackbird sings. But these huge canvases are not the apparently care-free vocalism of a bird, they are heavy with human import.

The canvases are big because there is such a volume, such a weight, of emotion there, requiring a big receptacle into which to pour itself. And even so there is congestion. The small Gallery, Gimpel Fils, looks to me as if it might burst at any moment, for these pictures do not stop growing when Williams lays down his brush. They are like a jungle, their vitality is boundless. His is a devouring impulse to create: not to create with the implacable concentration of some artists, but just to go on pouring himself out, upon canvas after canvas. And he paints finely, he is not merely fecund. In spite of the fact that Dennis Williams speaks with an unmistakable Welsh accent, he is a Negro. But because of the empire-building propensities of the Briton of yesterday he is British, for he comes from British Guiana. Georgetown the capital city is where he lives. It is anything but the jungle: there are splendid boulevards, lined with blood-red trees, a fine hotel (for Sahibs only), a busy port. The Negroes are tennis and cricket playing Negroes; Milton, and the other national poet Shakespeare, is what they are brought up on, but especially Milton. Williams' feelings about Milton are as emphatic as were, until recently, those of Mr. T. S.

Eliot. He was a highly-salaried post-office clerk working in handsome offices. Consequently, the jungle is not a feature of his daily life. But the jungle is there in the background, behind the rice and sugar plantations outside the city. And it obsesses the pictures he paints, existing like an atmosphere about the symbolic figures, which stand entranced in a hot yellow vegetation. It is perhaps atavistic. But whatever the reason may be, these are jungle pictures: only, in this art of Social Symbolism, the jungle stands for our existence on this earth.

One of the three large pictures is called 'Hysteria'. The main figures are a pregnant woman, a hysterical man, and a newspaper seller. The man convulsed by hysteria is mankind today. The role of the newspaper seller is to be an intermediary; it is through this shouting man that all the violent news from everywhere reaches us, the news responsible for our condition. The pregnant woman stands for man's hope. The future lies in her belly: a millennial hope of a future when men will no longer exploit, torture, and kill one another. For Williams is, among other things, a millennial politician. The three figures stand testifying to their respective symbols in their symbolical jungle. Another large picture is entitled 'Human World'. With that we emerge a little from the jungle. The central figure is again a pregnant woman, standing, by reason of her condition, for the way out, for the new regenerate mankind. On her right is a clergyman. He does not see her: he is supposed to be insensitive to all without, not part of his

doctrinal dream. On the other side is an average young woman presumably immersed in being an average young woman. As if this obtuseness on either side were not enough, to the extreme left is a blind man, who is of course past caring. So in this case we see pregnancy encompassed by human obtuseness. It must be noticed that although these figures are supposed to be *in a street*, they are unrealistically lined up across the canvas, each displaying his or her individual symbol. All the realistic machinery is dispensed with. It is a parade of symbols.

The third large picture is named 'Burden and Release'. Here, although it looks much the same, is a sugar plantation. The lot of the Negro, and related to that the lot of the underdog everywhere, is, with Williams, an ever-present tragedy. The word 'Korea' is for him a violent irritant. The smaller 'Plantation' pictures, as much as the large ones, are Moralities. At this point I must mention a theoretical complication. Williams is an existentialist, or has been greatly influenced by the teaching of Sartre. 'Anxiety' is a word that often recurs in his conversation: the Kierkegaardian 'Angst' receives a new interpretation entangled with contemporary politics. 'Horror' is another word obsessively frequent. It is what Anxiety merges in when stimulated by such symbolic names as 'Korea' or 'MacArthur'.

In this set of paintings, with the monotony of a tom-tom, practically only one colour is used: namely yellow. His highly successful use of this colour tells one something about the colour. Its effectiveness in sustaining precisely the reaction

he requires of us is remarkable. It is wearying, in the way intended. Lastly I find I have not mentioned the fact that Dennis Williams is a very fine draughtsman, as, being a figure-painter, he is bound to be. People do not become figure-painters if their draughtsmanship is defective.

I have spoken only of his Social Symbolism, of work which is naturalistic, as it must be to present his symbolic message with maximum effect. But there are other paintings in this exhibition, of a kind he was doing three years ago. Less naturalistic, the moralities, the illustration of social ideas, are absent. The evocation, in magical terms of the forest, is one I would especially note: there is considerable abstraction, however. For myself, I prefer this more detached phase of his work. I am not proposing to mingle criticism with my eulogy of this brilliant newcomer. The figures of his symbolic moralities are excellent, whatever value one may attach to the philosophy or politics inspiring them. Neither of these is to my liking, but good philosophies do not make good paintings, and a bad philosophy an artist may find excessively stimulating. There are many weighty arguments in favour of enlisting the visual art in the service of a cause, or more generally of humanity. Some people will prefer the work he does coloured by social and metaphysical theory. All I have to do here is to acclaim these pictures, full of power and of vitality. No one interested in what is being done in London today should fail to see them.



'Human World', by Dennis Williams, at Gimpel Fils



to see is that self-discipline is a moral problem for which marxist materialism and the historical method offer no solution.—Yours, etc.,  
Churt  
GEOFFREY BRACKEN

### Doctrine of Karl Marx

Sir,—In his talk on Adam Smith and Karl Marx, Professor Postan claims that Marx 'merely elaborates the pessimistic themes in the writings of the liberal economists like Ricardo, Malthus. . . . It [Marxian doctrine] derives from Ricardo's theory of economic rent, with its implied prophecy of increasing scarcity of productive resources; it derives also from Malthus' pictures of poverty growing with increasing pressure of numbers. More particularly, it derives from the doctrine of the so-called wage fund. . . .'

It would be interesting to know by what mental alchemy Dr. Postan is able to transmute into these alleged affinities the quite express repudiations by Marx of all three. First, the 'so-called labour-fund theory' is stigmatised as 'a dogma used for an apologetic purpose'—a dogma which results in 'a silly tautology' (*Capital*, Vol. 1. English Edition of 1889, page 621-3 *passim*). Second, 'the Malthusian population phantasy' contained in 'a sensational pamphlet' which is 'plagiarism from beginning to end' is condemned as 'a libel on the human race' (Letter 72 of Marx-Engels *Select Correspondence*). The amusing, and even less polite, abuse of *Capital* Vol. 1. p. 629-30, I will omit.

I have pursued the wearisome but scholarly convention of detailing exact references as an earnest that these quotations are not torn from their context. The whole matter, however, was put succinctly sixty-five years ago in the Rev. Philip Wicksteed's *The Commonsense of Political Economy* (Vol. II. p. 706 *Das Kapital: A Criticism*)

It has been held by economists of the most widely divergent schools that the wages of manual labour normally tend, under existing conditions, to sink to a point at which they barely suffice to support existence and allow of reproduction. . . . This position is accepted by Marx. But if his results coincide in this respect with those of the older school of Economics, the grounds on which he rests them are, of course, entirely different. In the Malthusian philosophy the reason why wages steadily tend to the minimum . . . is a law not of society but of nature. It need hardly be said that Marx does not grant these assumptions (the monstrous assumptions of Malthusianism), and must therefore find some other explanation of the phenomenon they are called on to account for. It is not in the material environment of humanity, but in the social and industrial organisation of capitalistic societies, that we must look, according to Marx, for the reasons that force men to accept starvation wages [the italics are mine—R.B.].

Third, the optimistic view of Marx and Engels, in reply to the 'natural', 'iron', laws of wages of Malthus and others (like the optimistic view of contemporary marxists in reply to Vogt and other neo-Malthusians), is put by Engels:

We start from the premise that the same forces which have created modern bourgeois society . . . these same means of production will suffice to raise the productive power of each individual so much that he can produce enough for the consumption of three, four, five, or six individuals. . . . Too little is produced—that is the cause of the whole thing. But why is too little produced? Not because the limits of production are exhausted. No, but because bourgeois society does not and cannot wish to produce any more.

Lastly, no reader of Keynes' *General Theory* can be unaware of the reasons why Keynes proposed state 'intervention' in economic affairs. The unlimited investment opportunities of Ricardo's period of capitalist expansion required the state to do no more than guarantee private property in the means of production and the

right to employ labour. It is the decline of these opportunities, the consequent economic stagnation and its concomitant social unrest which have moved the Keynesians away from economic liberalism. Their conversion to 'collectivism' does not, however, extend to criticising the liberal theory of value and income distribution—a critique which unites all marxian socialist thought, be it that of the Revisionist, the Austrian and German Social Democratic Parties, or the Stalinists.—Yours, etc.,

Leeds

R. BELLAMY

### John Stuart Mill and Liberty

Sir,—Mr. Noel Annan's recent Third Programme talk on John Stuart Mill ('Definitions of Liberty') seemed to give the impression that in Mill's view the possible tyranny by the majority in matters of opinion was an inherent flaw in the democratic idea.

Mill indeed feared the 'herd', as he himself called them; but this was only because, through no fault of their own, they were uneducated. It was this fact, which, in his words, made him 'less of a democrat' than he had been in his Benthamite period. Indeed Mill's views on freedom cannot be appreciated without considering the assumption at the base of all his social theories; it is that men are what they are by virtue of their education. If the ignorant and unformed banded to suppress the minority view, it was a case of slaves imposing slavery, and especially so when they were egged on by unscrupulous or equally ignorant demagogues. But for Mill the cure was to realise not to restrict democracy, and as he always insisted, education, properly understood, was the essential means. The guarantee of the freedom of the few lay in the freedom of all.

In other ways too Mill's concern with freedom was very much wider and more human than appeared from Mr. Annan's rather arid account. For instance, Mill advocated the vital freedom of active participation by all in the organisation of industry, industrial democracy. But this was again on the condition that they were educated to the required level; and Mill believed that the common run of man could be brought up to a sense of service, and self-expression and freedom in their employment, to a degree beyond the conception of most people of his day. Further, although Mill seemed to believe that this could be achieved by a reformed and humanised capitalism, he did not hesitate to condemn the gross economic inequalities of his day, which secured the freedom of the few at the cost of its denial to the rest.—Yours, etc.,

Luton

D. GERAINT EVANS

### Nature and Art

Sir,—Whether it is a deadly sin for the artist to identify himself with nature depends, Mr. Harold Speed suggests, on what you mean by 'nature'. I should say that it depends, rather, on what you understand by 'identify'. Mr. Speed analyses 'nature' into three entities. But how could I have meant the molecular universe of Eddington? That is not visual. As to natures one, and three, in his peculiar trinity, that is an unreal division. A chair, and a painting of same, by Van Gogh, cannot be described as two natures. When we say nature we mean the objective universe.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

### The Importance of Sade

Sir,—I notice that Mr. John Russell tells us, in an oracular aside, that Sade is 'the most important French writer of the eighteenth century'. More important than Voltaire? or

Diderot? or Montesquieu? or Rousseau? Perhaps Mr. Russell will tell us why?—Yours, etc.,  
Oxford  
A. L. ROWSE

### In Defence of a Classical Education

Sir,—The ingenious assumption of our more publicised biologists that views divergent from their own must necessarily be the result of 'emotional bias', to quote a phrase used by Dr. Julian Huxley in his letter in your issue of December 7, 1950, is as diverting as it is significant.

In April 1943, in the *Hibbert Journal* Dr. Julian Huxley wrote:

It is also important to note that biological progress demand no special agency. Like specialisation or adaption it can perfectly well be accounted for in terms of natural selection.

Then followed as robust and brash a piece of professional dogmatism as one might hope to find. He proceeds:

It would take too long to justify this statement in detail: I must ask my readers to take it for granted as the findings of modern biology. Biological progress, in other words, does not demand the intervention of a conscious Divine purpose, nor the operation of some mysterious life-force or élan vital: like most other facts of evolution it is the automatic result of the blind forces of reproduction, variation and differential survival. Newton's great generalisation of gravitational attraction made it possible and indeed necessary to dispense with the idea of God guiding the stars in their courses; Darwin's equally great generalisation of natural selection made it possible, and necessary, to dispense with the idea of God guiding the evolutionary courses of life. Finally the generalisation of modern psychology and comparative religion make it possible, and necessary, to dispense with the idea of God guiding the evolutionary courses of the human species through inspiration, or other forms of supernatural direction. This is where modern psychology enters the picture. For a justification of our moral code, we no longer have recourse to theological revelation or to a metaphysical Absolute; Freud, in combination with Darwin suffice to give us our philosophic vision. (From an article entitled 'Man—The Trustee of Ethical Goodness'.)

Beneath this facade of hardy certitude one is strongly tempted to diagnose a certain sensitiveness to the unequivocal assertions of some eminent representatives of the 'exact' sciences, to the effect that biology may not properly be reckoned among such sciences. Freudian psychology is a double-edged weapon, and could have much to say to biologists who, excluded from the inner sanctuaries of 'exact science', erect replica shrines for their own kingdom, and proclaim them to be just as good.

Exact science does not recognise 'blind forces'. All it recognises are pointer-readings, which it links with other such readings. It is the quantitative aspects of data that are susceptible of exact analysis, not the qualitative aspects. The axioms of exact science are not exact, in the sense that they can have *a priori* validity. They are based on humanly discriminated qualitative aspects. 'The comparativity that has to be assumed axiomatically, is a merely qualitative discrimination of likeness and unlikeness'. (Eddington: *The Nature of the Physical World*).—Yours, etc.,

Godstone

H. D. GRIFFITH

Sir,—Dr. Huxley must think I am a reactionary (blessed word!) or even a Fundamentalist. I am neither, nor am I ignorant of modern biological tendencies, nor am I actuated by an emotional bias. No! It is Darwin, upon whose work the Theory of Natural Selection is founded, who was emotionally unstable. There was an animus in all his work in favour of chaos and blind chance. He once admitted



Stott tells us he has encountered in 'institutions'—namely, 'children whose [alleged] "mental defect" might have been emotionally induced'? Of course, it is not sufficient to say 'might'. To support their case both Dr. Ingham and Dr. Stott should quote actual figures.

Dr. Ingham thinks that I ought not to 'pretend that such tests are precise instruments for measuring innate ability'. But both at the end of my talk and in my various books and articles I have repeatedly disclaimed any such precision. However, instead of quoting what I have actually said, Dr. Ingham prefers to invent what he 'assumes' I would have said. 'One may assume' (he writes) 'that if Jimmie had been found to have a mental age of seven or eight years instead of twelve, on the intelligence test, he would have been dubbed mentally defective', despite the fact that quite possibly mere truancy or 'other non-intellectual factors' had reduced his score. But this is an obvious fallacy. My conclusion about Jimmie was based on the principle that if a child *succeeds* in the tests described he must be acquitted of mental deficiency. Dr. Ingham supposes that this is equivalent to maintaining that if a child *fails* in such tests he must therefore be certified as defective. Moreover, he ignores the fact that the 'subjective' method of making 'more or less sensible guesses' is by no means the only alternative to systematic testing. Of course, every form of measurement is subject to some degree of error. The real question is: how large are the errors? If my critics really imagine that, during forty years of research, it has never yet occurred to psychologists that truancy, emotional disturbances, or other non-intellectual factors 'might' affect assessments based on such procedures, then I shall be happy to send them a list of statistical studies where such problems have been fully examined in the light of statistical data.

Like Dr. Ingham, a good many doctors base their doubts on the fact that they personally have 'used mental tests frequently'. But it is not sufficient just to have 'used' such tests for a year or two; (and Dr. Ingham will agree that his own experience has been rather brief): it is also necessary to have been fully trained in the use and interpretation of these and other methods. Since I have recently had numerous inquiries from anxious parents about the validity of 'diagnoses based on tests', may I repeat what I have said elsewhere? 'The idea that any untrained person can diagnose mental deficiency by an intelligence test alone is as foolish as trying to diagnose scarlet fever by simply using a clinical thermometer'. Both psychologists and the Ministry of Education have repeatedly insisted that, for those who undertake psychological examination of school pupils, it is not enough to possess a psychological or medical degree: they must also have had a practical training at an approved psychological centre and first-hand experience as teachers in dealing with children.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1

CYRIL BURT

Sir,—It so happens that both in the talk by Sir Cyril Burt on 'The Psychology of Crime' and in the letter from Dr. Alec Rodger on the feature programme 'Juvenile Delinquents', the competence of the psychiatrist in this field is called seriously in question. It amounts to saying: 'Medical men keep out'.

Since this whole matter of the distinction between psychologist and psychiatrist, and their spheres of work must be very confusing to the public, it is perhaps worth dwelling on some aspects of the matter as put forward by Sir Cyril Burt.

It seems that psychiatrists, having chiefly a medical training, should only deal with the 'abnormal', and since delinquents are for the most part 'perfectly healthy and normal individuals' the psychologist alone should deal with their problems. Yet Sir Cyril comments on the fact that 'At least 50 per cent. of our delinquent children appear to have been born with an unstable temperament'. Again: 'During adolescence the physical condition of the offender may play a still more important part'.

Now these are: (a) deviations from the normal, and (b) conditions intimately tied up with heredity, temperament and physique; which surely concern those with a medical training (plus knowledge of psychology, sociology, etc.). Sir Cyril knows well enough that the dividing line between normal and abnormal is purely arbitrary: in fact a popular rather than scientific notion—so why drag it in? And why mention the beliefs of medical men generations ago, and not the contributions of Freud, Kretschmer, Healy, and many others to the study of individuals?

Sir Cyril also knows that reports to the Courts, etc., are at present nearly always signed by a psychiatrist rather than a psychologist, and that they are generally the result of team work with psychologist and social worker. Rivalry between these groups does not exist in clinics where they work together in a team; it appears to exist in the minds of some professors who seem to echo the refrain quoted (perhaps 'unconsciously') by Sir Cyril: 'I do not like thee, Dr. Fell'.

Psychiatry needs no defence—rather it has been over sold to the public and needs criticism—but it is unnecessary to decry its function in order to boost psychology: both are needed in the field of social science.

Yours, etc.,

Birmingham

CHARLES BURNS

Sir,—If mental diseases are but exaggerations of tendencies we all show—e.g. X is a mild manic-depressive and Y is a schizoid—where is the boundary line between the provinces of the psychologist and the psychiatrist?

Of course psychiatrists should study psychology and psychologists medicine, but damn all degrees!—Yours, etc.,

Donhead St. Mary

V. H. M.

### The Nation's Pictures

Sir,—In THE LISTENER of December 7 Mr. Eric Newton wrote: 'Had Cromwell's aesthetic sense been as highly developed as his moral code . . . the National Gallery would today be the greatest wonder of the world'. What are the facts? It is true that on February 22, 1649, Cromwell as Chairman of the Council of State recommended that the collection of King Charles I's pictures should be committed to safe keeping for fear of embezzlement; but when in July, 1649, Parliament passed its ordinance for the sale of the King's goods, including his paintings and sculptures, Cromwell was absorbed in the preparation for his Irish campaign. The sale of the collection took place chiefly in the years 1650 and 1651 when Cromwell was in Scotland and Ireland. Its first purpose was to raise money not for the army, but for the navy. At the time nobody protested on aesthetic grounds. The bulk of the collection was sold before Cromwell became Lord Protector. Cromwell was no Philistine or spoil-sport; he loved music and a glass of wine; he had himself and his family painted by Samuel Cooper; he bought sculpture. There is no real evidence that he was personally responsible for the present deficiencies of the National Gallery or that his 'aesthetic sense' or 'moral code' had anything whatever to do with

the sale of King Charles I's pictures. As a journalist Mr. Newton knows that one cannot libel the dead. But those who treasure the memory of a great man can come to his defence.

Yours, etc.,

A. RUSSELL-SMITH

Secretary of the Cromwell Association

### Nature and Art

Sir,—Mr. Wyndham Lewis in reply to Lord Brand stated that 'the third dimension' is dangerous for the European artist, yet the Henry Moore 'head' in question, however much it overcomes the 'limitations' (whatever 'limitations' may mean—since to include a dimension would, in theory, be a limiting factor, to exclude a dimension an enlarging factor, and, of course, in practice a sheer impossibility) of the third dimension, certainly it is not a two-dimensional object, so whoever Mr. Lewis quotes in support of this 'two-dimensional art' Mr. Moore's head cannot be said in any way to be an example of this art since it has both depth, breadth and height.

Does Mr. Lewis, in fact, maintain that Egyptian, Greek, Gothic, and Renaissance sculptures, not to speak of the European tradition of painters, starting with Giotto, including such names as Masaccio, Titian and Rembrandt, were labouring under the deadly sin of identifying nature with art? and that, therefore, he and his friends are, at last, on the right track? If he does so, we at least know where we are, for both, using his arguments, cannot be right.

Yours, etc.,

Slade School of Fine Arts,  
London, W.C.1

J. EVLEIGH  
H. M. ROBSON

### International P.E.N. Club

Sir,—Acting upon two resolutions passed in September 1949 at the Venice Congress of the International P.E.N., its Executive Committee, at a session in London last April, decided to form a special committee concerned solely with writers in exile.

The special committee's purpose is to arouse interest in, and provide help to, those authors who seek freedom of artistic expression outside their own countries. It will try to give them opportunities for creative work by means of freer access to the book market, the radio and the press. Stress will be laid on the encouragement of young writers whose literary start is made even more difficult by their statelessness.

As the idea originated in this country, one of the main refuges for exiled writers of all nations, the committee is opening its activities in London, but hopes to extend them to other P.E.N. Club centres where similar schemes may later be developed. The task lying ahead of us is formidable and we cannot achieve any measure of success without the aid of all colleagues whose practical goodwill we now solicit. At the same time, we invite the writers in exile who live in Great Britain and who think they are eligible for P.E.N. Club membership, to communicate with us (personally or in writing) at Glebe House, 62-63 Glebe Place, London, S.W.3. Committee members will attend for consultation on Mondays and Tuesdays between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., starting on December 11, 1950.

Yours, etc.,

For the International P.E.N. Club  
Committee for Writers in Exile:

STORM JAMESON, HERMON OULD, STEPHEN SPENDER (British Sponsors), MARIA KUNCEWICZ (Chairman of Committee, *pro tem*)  
London, S.W.3

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## Letters to the Editor

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### Nature and Art

Sir,—Mr. Wyndham Lewis appears to think that the Greeks identified nature with art and he tells us that 'to identify nature with art is in an artist a deadly sin'. Possibly, but what makes Mr. Lewis, or anybody else, suppose that the Greeks or any other great artists did so? If we are to take Mr. Lewis seriously I will agree with him when he says (THE LISTENER, December 14) that it depends on what you understand by 'identify' (not that he tells us what he understands by 'identify') and not 'nature', since 'nature' must mean the visible world. What else can it mean to the visual artist? The word 'identify' means 'to make to be the same'. And Mr. Lewis cannot put any other interpretation upon this word. The Greeks, according to him, merely copied, or imitated nature. It is almost incredible that anyone with any knowledge of the arts should think this, but Mr. Lewis does. The actor in the theatre whose performance seems to the audience to be so natural, but is, we know, highly artificial, is, on this reasoning, identifying nature with art. But the actor does not identify nature with art, otherwise all his art would amount to would be actually to behave on the stage as anywhere else, tone of voice, diction, movements, gestures, etc., being just 'as in life'. In THE LISTENER of November 30 Mr. Lewis wrote: 'Many people today, myself among them, consider that the Greeks of antiquity were, with their naturalism, fastening upon Europe for 2,000 years, a theory of art which is radically mistaken'.

Is Mr. Lewis familiar with the noble examples of Greek art in the British Museum? Are the Parthenon sculptures, and those from the Mausoleum, and the Tomb of the Nereids, mere copies, mere imitations of nature? Are these sublime works of art, among the most nobly beautiful in the world, nothing more than skilful, imitative carvings in marble? Had the Greeks done no more than copy nature they would not, in spite of their miraculous skill, have been great artists at all. Mere copying might demonstrate a very high degree of skill, but skill is not enough. It is an essential, but it is only the instrument of thought, imagination, and feeling. From what point of view were the Greeks 'radically', that is basically, fundamentally, mistaken? Were their notions of truth and beauty essentially wrong? And are those of Mr. Lewis and the moderns he champions basically right?

And what was the Greek 'theory of art'? They had no theory of art as Mr. Lewis has theories of art. The Greeks loved beauty, and their art is an expression of that love. They sublimated and in their art heightened the beauty of nature, that is, they heightened man's sense of it, and with the *subtlest* art too. To the Greeks the world was a beautiful place and the chief beauty of the world was the beauty of form (a view still held by genuine artists and all who have a cultivated sense of the beautiful) and this is not a theory, but a perception and a conviction, and is, indeed, the *origin* of the creative impulse in the artist, if he is a genuine artist, capable of arousing interest in the *thing created*, rather than the creature who made it. The only theories artists have dealt with problems of expression and technique. Where are cubism, futurism, vorticism and all the other 'isms' today? These were attempts to create, out of nothing, new pictorial languages, and disguised poverty of feeling, thought, and false impulse, as though a writer, having no mastery

at all of his own language, attempted to attract attention to himself by inventing a new one, which, whilst having plenty of sound and fury, signified nothing. All are dead and forgotten.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.14

A. K. LAWRENCE

Sir,—The Slade School somewhat tardily joins Lord Brand's protest. My answer to Mr. Harold Speed in THE LISTENER of December 14 is equally relevant in this case.

Identification with nature, and the use of nature, are quite distinct. The Greeks of antiquity were the pioneers in a mistake on which centres the main controversy today. It was the mistake of confusing scientific values with aesthetic values and so giving western art its naturalist canon.

The view that it does not matter whether you are showing the third dimension upon a flat surface (a wall, or board, or canvas) or have gone over into the third dimension itself and are carving in a solid material seems to me to be disproved by the work of Michelangelo. How Michelangelo's titanic dreams are betrayed, when they emerge in marble! What a sadly different thing the 'Sistine Adam' would be in white marble. The Greek naturalism, in some way, was neutralised in the flat. To affect to prefer Michelangelo's sculpture to his other forms of expression, including poetry, is the result of the literary approach. The 'classic' naturalism comes out better on a flat surface than in the round. The last statement will not, I hope, raise the whole City of London against me.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

### The Study of the Mind

Sir,—In THE LISTENER last week Sir Cyril Burt asks whether I 'really suppose that the diagnosis of mental deficiency turns merely on a lack of elementary knowledge such as an "ordinary examination" might reveal'. I did not intend to cross swords with him on the use of intelligence tests for diagnosis of mental deficiency about which I know little, but rather on the use of these tests for classifying normal children. The present correspondence shows that classification by intelligence, whether defined as inborn or not, may be as unsatisfactory when applied to backward or sub-normal children as when applied to the normal.

Professor Young has reminded us that we think by comparisons. We can think about the mind only by comparing it consciously or unconsciously with something else. Sir Cyril Burt seems to compare the mind with something simple and static that can be measured—let us say a cathedral; this enables him to make all sorts of measurements, and having done so he will wish to say that very much remains unaccounted for. I prefer Professor Young's more thought-provoking comparison with a nation—a people (he said a population). (It is true that Sir Cyril Burt made the same comparison in his final talk, but with the object of bringing the concepts of individual psychology to the aid of social anthropology, not *vice versa*.) We can speak of a backward people, and measure backwardness by degree of industrialisation or amount of literacy, but anthropologists are now cautious of describing one people as intrinsically, permanently, inferior—potentially less able—than another.

Sir Cyril will not expect me to answer the

question quoted at the beginning of this letter in the caricatured form in which he has posed it. But I should like to cite the following points in support of a more cautious statement: (a) Knowledge is not measurable in the terms ('lack of', 'amount of') used for a simple substance like water. There is incorrect knowledge as well as truth, and one drop of firmly, emotionally held error may be more disastrous for intelligent behaviour in any society than the lack of pints of correct knowledge. (b) A school child, or even an adult, may appear idiotic if he has failed to grasp at the appropriate stage the meaning of a few key words conveying basic concepts. (c) These two considerations probably apply equally in the first few years of life when the first basic 'rules in the brain' are formed.

Dalton was able to weigh atoms before he could prove their existence, and his concept of atomic weight survives and is useful to this day. But, had we continued to think of atoms as minute cannon balls, we should not have learnt to release atomic energy. Similarly, the over-confident use of I.Q.s and simple measures of aptitude may retard the development of a fuller knowledge of human beings which will release the common man's mental energy for the building of a better world.—Yours, etc.,

Cambridge

J. L. BRERETON

Sir,—Sir Cyril Burt's letter of December 21 compels me to clarify a number of points.

He agrees that if a child fails in the tests, it does not follow that he must be certified. If this point had been made in the original talk, I should have had no cause to comment. I assumed that 'if Jimmy had been found to have a mental age of seven or eight years instead of twelve, on the intelligence test, he would have been dubbed mentally defective'. This seemed to me to be implied by the speaker when he said 'before we can diagnose Jimmy as mentally defective, we must show, first that his backwardness is general . . . and secondly that it is genuinely inborn . . .'. It appeared to me that he then proceeded to discuss intelligence tests as methods of showing this. I would certainly not suggest that Sir Cyril Burt would diagnose a child as mentally defective on the evidence of a low test result alone, but I think listeners unacquainted with his writings may well have gathered that this was the procedure that psychologists might adopt.

I said that 'In such a situation, it is as well for the psychologist . . . not to pretend that his tests are precise instruments for measuring innate ability'. This was a general statement and I was, of course, not suggesting that Sir Cyril was guilty of deception.

He gathers from my letter that I would 'have us go back to the old "subjective" methods adopted by school doctors before intelligence tests were introduced'. I should be interested to know whether anybody else gathered this. I did not intend to suggest that subjective methods were a satisfactory alternative to tests but merely to point out that tests themselves did not entirely rule out subjective evaluation.

'The real question is', he writes, 'how large are the errors?' Barbara Burks tells us (and Sir Cyril has quoted her with approval) that to the variance in I.Q. (as actually tested) 'the total contribution of innate and heritable factors is probably not far from 75 or 80 per cent.'. If we accept 80 per cent. as a reasonable figure, and many believe it to be an overestimate, the statement can be interpreted as follows. It means



## Letters to the Editor

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### 'The Critics' and Mr. Pasmore

Sir,—In last Sunday's broadcast 'The Critics' were supposed to discuss the exhibition of more or less 'abstract' paintings which Victor Pasmore is now holding at the Redfern Gallery. When it came to it, the speakers whose subjects were 'theatre' and 'radio' had no shame in declaring themselves at a loss for any intelligent reaction whatever when confronted by Mr. Pasmore's canvases: and they succeeded in suggesting that, for them, all abstract art was equally unworthy of serious consideration on the part of normally cultivated and articulate spectators.

This is not the first time that speakers in this programme have boasted an indifference towards and ignorance of, the kind of painting or sculpture some specimen of which was supposedly under review. Such examples illustrate a phenomenon which friends from abroad find it hard to believe when we mention it—namely, that it is no matter of concern to the sensitive, well-educated Englishman that he should be found lacking in any knowledge of—or concern for—the contemporary visual arts.

If the art critic, in last Sunday's programme, were as far behind the times in his acquaint-

ance with the theatre and the cinema as his colleagues, the theatre and film critics, were in their awareness of contemporary art, he would not yet have seen his first talkie or anything written by Bernard Shaw since 1906—when Cubism was born. As it was, this art critic—Mr. Denis Mathews—battled patiently (and with an admirably simple vocabulary) to no effect, so far as most of the other critics were concerned. They merely revealed to the millions listening that Mr. Mathews' explanations meant as little to them as the paintings in question.

Yours, etc.,

Welwyn Garden City      PATRICK HERON

### Nature and Art

Sir,—Mr. A. K. Lawrence, R.A., proposes a debate on what is 'beautiful'. There would be little sense in debating that with a Royal Academician. If the white marble Lady Godiva which dominated the sculpture gallery at the last Royal Academy exhibition is beautiful, then I do not like beauty. I prefer the ugly, such as we find in Henry Moore's head reproduced in THE LISTENER last November, or let us say Epstein's head of Einstein.

I will not discuss beauty: but it was a happy

thought of Mr. Lawrence to mention the contemporary theatre. His definition of *art* is the trouble taken by an actor or an actress to make us believe that we are looking at a scene in real life. That is not how I would define it. It does not seem to occur to Mr. Lawrence that the type of play in which an actor is obliged to do this is not the only type of play. The so-called 'realistic' theatre of Ibsen, Shaw and Priestley, useful as it is in providing moral instruction, or comedy of no artistic pretensions, is anything but an example of a high art form. However much, as ardent feminists, we may approve of 'The Doll's House', as artists we should prefer a play by Racine. The theatre of Ibsen identified itself with nature in the way intended by me when I made use of those words. And in deploring the triumph of that type of theatre, I should not be advocating the banishing from the stage of everything remotely resembling what is human. I am not particularly pro-abstract.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—Absence in the U.S. has prevented me from replying till now to Mr. Wyndham Lewis' answer to my letter. He is mistaken in thinking



I meant to convict him of anything. I merely asked him to explain his meaning more clearly—How indeed could anyone suppose that the Oxford Dictionary, in defining 'platitude' as 'flatness, dullness', etc., meant physical flatness?

As to the second and third dimensions, Messrs. Eyleigh and Roberts of the Slade School of Fine Arts have already answered Mr. Lewis in THE LISTENER of December 21, much more clearly and succinctly than I could have done. I would nevertheless like to expand briefly what they say about Mr. Lewis' view on nature and art.

The Greeks of antiquity, Mr. Lewis says, fastened on Europe 'for 2,000 years a theory of art, which is radically mistaken': the Greek theory being, it seems, that the artist must 'identify' art with nature. This mistake has of recent years now been for the first time discovered. All have been out of step except our Johnny. Now all is different and presumably all competent artists now paint and sculpture better than any of the masters of the past 2,000 years. This is certainly 'saying a mouthful'.

I am no art critic, but I should like to ask whether any great artist has ever 'identified' art with nature. Surely, as Mr. Speed says, each illumines nature and gives it a different character according to his own genius. Consider the long line of painters portrayed in Sir Kenneth Clark's most interesting book *Landscape into Art*, all of them differing in their interpretation of nature, and each interpretation having a beauty and fascination of its own.

Nature, in the context we are discussing, means, I take it, all that we see and apprehend with our five senses (except what is absolutely man-made as for instance a great city). If artists were to turn their backs on all this—they could not in fact—with what could they replace it, beyond purely geometrical designs? Their own dreams? What they can conjure out of their own brains and imagination? But both dreams and imagination must inevitably be contaminated by nature known through their senses. They can of course be sure of not 'identifying' their art with nature, if they take care deliberately to distort nature. But will that lead to great art?

It is sometimes said that all of us, artists included, cannot but lose faith in and love of nature, as it is now revealed to us by science. We know now, it is said, that the lovely scenes before us are not 'real' but merely masses, cells, atoms, electrons. Nature is now, moreover, too immense; man is dwarfed by it; it is too indifferent to man, too frightening.

All this seems to me mistaken. Do young men cease to love their girls, because in 'reality' they are only electrons? Lord Keynes in his memoir of the young Cambridge philosopher, Kenneth Ramsay, quotes him as saying: 'I don't feel the least humble before the vastness of the heavens. The stars may be large, but they cannot think or love; and these are qualities which impress me far more than size does. I take no credit for weighing nearly seventeen stone. Modern Nature is, it is true, not simply the gentle nature of Wordsworth. Yet it is sufficiently a home for human beings and other living things for life on this planet to have lasted for 1,000,000,000 years. Science has revealed nature as infinitely more thrilling, wonderful and mysterious than we knew, and man's achievement in evolving into the sole conscious witness of it the more astonishing. 'Religion', wrote Professor Whitehead, 'begins with wonder'. May not this also be true of art?—Yours, etc.,

Rugby

BRAND

### Man without God?

Sir,—In his talk in the series 'Man without God', the Rev. J. Leycester King refers to recent investigations which show that 'from about ten to twenty-five per cent. of the indus-

trial population of this country are suffering from psychological troubles which disadvantage them to a more than trivial extent in their health, happiness and efficiency'. He goes on to argue that 'these are the psychological signs of a sick society', and that the cause of the sickness is 'the deadly insecurity of a generation which has lost its God'.

Father Leycester King may be right in his diagnosis, but his argument involves an enormous unproved assumption—namely, that the incidence of neurosis is higher now than it was in the days when belief in God was more prevalent. As no earlier figures are available, the assumption can be neither proved nor disproved; but such anecdotal evidence as can be obtained from, e.g., Victorian biographies and letters, suggest that 'psychological troubles' were far from rare in those God-fearing generations.

As further evidence of the sickness of modern society, Father Leycester King points to the 'notable increase in the so-called psychosomatic diseases'. But this increase may well be due largely, if not wholly, to improved diagnosis. Recognition of the part played by psychological factors in causing physical illness is a comparatively recent development; and fifty years ago, most of the conditions now diagnosed as psychosomatic would have been regarded as purely physical in origin.—Yours, etc.,

Aberdeen

MARGARET KNIGHT

### 'The Threshold of Great Things'

Sir,—I listened with keen interest to the Rev. C. H. Dodd's four sermons on 'The Coming of Christ' and was glad to study them at leisure in your pages, but many will regret with me that the fundamental fact of this great subject was evaded. In a fine passage in his third sermon Dr. Dodd emphasised that the coming of Christ was 'a piece of real history, history made out of the same stuff as the history we know', but he makes no reference to the corollary and consummation of this historic fact as clearly taught in the New Testament: 'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven' (Acts i, 11). Here is a Divine promise that the risen Lord Himself in person will return literally to this earth in the actual bodily form the Apostles knew. It is in that sense that the Seer in the Book of Revelation exclaims, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus'.

This personal Second Coming is always associated in the Scriptures with an unprecedentedly desperate plight of the human race which is truly descriptive of the chaos of our times—as Daniel puts it, 'There shall be a time of trouble such as never was'. In our world today there is little confidence among men that men, unaided, can put things right. In his addresses Dr. Dodd faced this fact in the light of Christianity, as he so eloquently declared, 'When Christ came into the world 1,950 years ago, something quite new entered history, from beyond the frontier of human existence, and the whole outlook for mankind was in this world permanently altered. It put history into a new gear'. Because of that Dr. Dodd went on to state that 'it is an open possibility' that in our time the power from beyond the frontier will intervene again. Surely, it is more than 'an open possibility'. It is a definite matter of clear Divine revelation. A personal Second Coming of Jesus of Nazareth 'in like manner' as He went is to be just as new an entrance into history as the first coming. Once again He will put history 'into a new gear' with the result: 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever'. The whole outlook for mankind in this world will be altered again: 'Behold, I create all things new'.

Here. It is this central feature of the Gospel that convinces many that we are indeed on 'the threshold of great things'.—Yours, etc.,

Oxford

EDGAR E. TAYLOR

### The Reith Lectures

Sir,—While deeply admiring Professor Young's Reith Lectures, I cannot help feeling that in his last lecture he went too far. He tries to show that 'we can say everything we want to say quite well without speaking all the time as if we were inhabited by this spirit called mind'; and retorts to the statement 'I have consciousness and I may lose it when I bang my head', by saying, 'What you meant to tell me was that following some particular blow on the head you were unable to act as an observer or transmitter for ten minutes. . . . If [consciousness] is a thing in the ordinary sense it could be observable directly like any object'.

Surely the Professor is making the mistake made by many scientists whose work is inevitably concerned with the examination of objects and phenomena in the world around them. Their minds are always groping outwards and they tend to forget the source from which that groping started. They forget, in fact, that every thing observed demands an observer. There are indeed two distinct kinds of reality, which could be called subjective and objective, or active and passive. The scientist in his work is concerned only with the objective and passive form. But there is always the reality of the observer as well as of the thing observed, and it is a 'higher' or at least a 'more immediate' form of reality. . . . The room in which I sit, Professor Young's lectures, and indeed all the outside world and my own past experience, are to me primarily imprints on my consciousness. In speaking of 'the past' even, it would be more accurate to say 'memory' and of the future 'expectation'. The existence now of my mind (whatever that may mean) is the one fact of which I am certain. Compared to this reality of the subject, the reality of the object—of the outside world, of time, of my own brain even as a material entity—is important certainly, but secondary. I am infinitely less certain of it. While we can 'recognise the multiplicity of ourselves', there is still, in spite of Professor Young, 'a semi-thing—the mind' and it is supremely and uniquely important.—Yours, etc.,

Hexham

B. C. R. NICHOLL

### The Study of the Mind

Sir,—Dr. Burns disagrees with the roles that Mr. Rodger and I have assigned to psychiatrists and psychologists in the study of young delinquents. Both the letter from the Secretary of the British Psychological Society and my own earlier talk on the subject 'amount', so he feels, 'to saying: "Medical men keep out"'. That was certainly not my own intention, nor, I think, was it Mr. Rodger's. The moral rather was: 'Put the psychologist back in'.

Dr. Burns apparently agrees that delinquency as such is not a specific form of mental illness, as was formerly supposed. But in that case, it is not easy to see why the psychological reports must be 'signed by a psychiatrist' instead of by a psychologist. The reason he gives is that, though delinquency is not itself an actual illness, it is nevertheless a result of '(a) deviations from the normal, and (b) conditions intimately tied up with heredity, temperament, and physique'; and a knowledge of such things, he says, requires a 'medical training'. But why? The study of heredity is a branch of biology, not of medicine; the study of temperament is a branch of psychology; and the study of physique (i.e., the normal structure and functions of the body) is the task of the anatomist and the physiologist.



## Letters to the Editor

### 'The Critics' and Mr. Pasmore

Sir,—Mr. Heron is in an unnecessary flap. Nobody has insulted abstract art in 'The Critics'. All I said was that as a long admirer of Victor Pasmore's pictures I regretted that he had now moved on to a stage where I could no longer follow him: the only implication being that the loss was mine and in no wise that 'cultivated persons' had no use for abstract art. As for being 'ashamed', why should I be ashamed to admit inability to understand? I do not for instance understand Chinese and should be sorry if one of our leading poets suddenly decided it was the only language worth writing poetry in. Perhaps I should try to learn Chinese. Meanwhile, I would be most ashamed to pretend to like something I do not like; that is the worst critical failing and productive of much boredom all round.—Yours, etc.,

London, N.W.8 PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE

### Nature and Art

Sir,—In his letter Lord Brand says, in other words, what Mr. A. K. Lawrence said the week before. Such arguments as he uses have been used a thousand times in the past, and have been adequately dealt with by early polemicists of this

revolution in the arts. Mr. Roger Fry was the first writer of any importance in England to lend his support to the new schools. If Philistia mobilises, and there are signs that that may be happening, then I suppose we have to go back to elementary exposition. At present I feel rather as if a lot of people had suddenly sprung up and clamoured 'What is all this Relativity about?'

One mistake of Lord Brand's however I will correct. The abstract in the visual arts is not very greatly favoured by me: I do not like to see nature dogmatically banished any more than does Lord Brand. Also I would observe that during the past 2,000 years a great deal of European art has not been Graeco-Roman in inspiration. To go no farther, there is El Greco. There is Giotto preferred by me to Raphael: and the reasons for that preference may serve to define the way in which my taste differs from that of Lord Brand, or that of Mr. A. K. Lawrence, R.A., or, for that matter, from that of Mr. Coldstream.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—In THE LISTENER last week you published Mr. Wyndham Lewis' comments on my letter of December 28. These are an evasion of the sub-

ject under discussion, and a misrepresentation of what I wrote. In dealing with his opinions on Greek art I did not misrepresent, nor did I even paraphrase, but quoted what he said and dealt with that. The rules which govern controversy will not permit of any other method. However, Mr. Lewis' way is not to deal with what I wrote, but to put forth his own entirely imaginative version of my letter. He speaks of debate, but he is no debater. In controversy objections must be met, not funkied. Mr. Lewis merely pontificates, and, if challenged, is evasive, irrelevant, and false. He now tells us that the theatre of Ibsen, Shaw and Priestley which he 'deplores' identifies nature with art, simply because it is not poetic drama! Can anyone make sense of this incredible argument? And irrelevant, even if it were true. Anyway, it is, like his statements about Greek art, merely pontificating. There is nothing said in support of the opinion. And why compare representational visual art with that of the dramatist?

Mr. Lewis says I proposed a debate on what is 'beautiful'. I did nothing of the sort. I examined his assertions and showed them to be absurd. As for Mr. Lewis' remark that there would be little sense in discussing the subject of beauty with a Royal Academician, if this



pseudo-irony called for comment it would be that obviously there could be no sense at all in discussing the subject with Mr. Lewis.

We were debating whether the Greeks did or did not 'identify nature with art'. That was the subject. In proving that they did not do so, I used the simile of the actor's art, an obvious illustration of an artist who *seems* to be natural but is, in fact, highly artificial in bringing off illusion, and is certainly not identifying nature with art. Mr. Lewis says that I 'defined' what he calls 'art'. I did nothing of the kind, and leave definitions of 'art' to him and other theorists who use that overworked monosyllable in the abstract sense. He says that I define 'art' as 'the trouble' [his word] 'taken by an actor or an actress to make us believe we are looking at a scene from real life'. I did not say anything of the kind, either as a definition of 'art' or the art of acting. This is Mr. Lewis' notion of all acting amounts to, *not* mine. 'Looking at a scene in real life'? Of course, the visual part of the actor's art, important though it is, is still the least part of it. As for my 'happy thought in mentioning the contemporary theatre', I did not mention the contemporary theatre at all, but the art of acting, and what I said is as true of David Garrick as of Sir Laurence Olivier.

Mr. Lewis writes: 'The theatre of Ibsen identified itself with nature in the way intended by me when I used those words'. I have already shown that 'those words' can only mean what they say. We have had no supporting arguments about Greek art, and none about the realistic theatre which Mr. Lewis 'deplores' but only the pontifical assertions, which are meaningless. And being published in such an important educational and cultural journal as *THE LISTENER* they called for examination and comment. Regarding Mr. Lewis' likes and dislikes concerning the works of living sculptors, these are beside the point. I am not concerned with Mr. Lewis' tastes, but the principles on which representational visual art is founded. I will only observe that as he admires the portrait head of Einstein, by Epstein, a piece of naturalistic modelling, cast in bronze, like all Epstein's portraiture, to be consistent we expect him to 'deplore' it for it does achieve an astounding illusion of life! Is it not identifying nature with art?—Yours, etc.,

London, W.14

A. K. LAWRENCE

### Crisis in the Far East

Sir,—Sir John Pratt, in *THE LISTENER* of January 4, evades the issue by asking interesting but irrelevant questions. As I have made clear on many occasions, my own sympathies—like his—are much more with the Peking Government than with the Kuomintang. Also I think that General MacArthur is a singularly unsuitable representative of the United Nations. But no system of law could work if it were made to depend upon our individual likes or dislikes for the judges or police officers appointed to enforce it. Despite all Sir John's red herrings, the crucial fact remains that the Peking Government's forces attacked, and are still attacking, United Nations forces in Korea. Unless the world is to stagger from one disaster to another because its peoples lack the imagination or the courage to put an end to anarchy, there must come a time when they accept the verdict of an international organisation, even when it goes against their own immediate interests or sentiments.

Why, Sir John asks, was North Korea declared an aggressor whereas the Kuomintang Administration in Formosa was 'placed under the protection of the American Navy'? In so far as this question affects the United Nations and not only the United States Government, there

seem to me to be three obvious reasons. One, no member State brought the Formosan question before the United Nations until after the invasion of South Korea had begun. Two, the most that the Americans can be accused of is helping one set of Chinese against another, which is precisely what the Russians have done on the other side. Three, the arrival of American warships at Formosa—American soldiers there number well under a hundred—was designed to 'neutralise' the island, and at least it put an end to the bombing of the Chinese coast, about which the Peking Government is so naturally indignant.

But the Peking Government, on the other hand, sent its armies into another country to attack a force that was acting on the orders of the United Nations. Furthermore, they continue their attack despite mediatory efforts at Lake Success which have included the offer of a cease-fire, a demilitarised zone along the 38th parallel, and a ban on reinforcements to either side. If Sir John Pratt can see no difference between these two actions, I must regretfully conclude that he is one more victim of the blindness that can be produced by political prejudice.

Surely the aim of all men of good will must be to prevent the destruction of the United Nations and the extension of the war. Does Sir John Pratt really believe that the best way to do this is (a) to make wild accusations against the Americans at a time when sympathy and moderating counsel are most needed to prevent their wounded pride from seeking relief in an all-out war against China; and (b) to distort the genuinely idealistic motive which—far more than any admiration for the regrettable ambitions of General MacArthur—has led so many people in so many countries to support the United Nations effort in Korea?—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1

VERNON BARTLETT

Sir,—Believing that access to knowledge is the keystone of democracy, I am disturbed by the letter of Sir John Pratt in which he says that the full story of the beginning of the war in Korea has never been reported in our press. Sir John should surely be asked to substantiate this very grave statement.—Your, etc.,

London, N.W.9

P. HOOD

### Man without God?

Sir,—Miss Margaret Knight taxes me with having made the 'enormous unproved assumption' that 'the incidence of neurosis is higher now than it was in the days when belief in God was more prevalent', and in this connection she makes reference to the Victorian era. A careful re-reading of my broadcast shows that I did not make this assumption. It might, however, fairly be said that I implied that an abandonment of belief in God would have as one of its results an increase in the incidence of neurosis. And, since it is generally recognised that religious belief has in fact declined, I may seem to be committed to the view that there has been a corresponding increase in neurosis. Actually, a critical mind will perceive that the terms of my broadcast do not commit me even as far as that. For instance, I do not feel that the available evidence justifies me in concluding that an increase in neurosis since 1890 is directly related to a decline in religious belief since 1890. My views as to the *speed* with which disintegrating factors work themselves out in the social organism are tentative in the extreme. It may well be that some of the psychopathological *sequelae* of the religious decline of the last sixty years have still to be awaited.

Now has the incidence of neurotic disability increased or not? That is the important question; and Miss Knight is quite right in thinking

that we are unable to answer this question by recourse to reliable figures of incidence covering even the past few decades. But this does not mean that the question must perforce be left unanswered, for there may be other approaches to a solution. My own impression, gained from extensive case-work, is that neurosis has increased notably even during my own adult lifetime. I find that impression confirmed by many other workers specially qualified to judge. But, as a scientist, I am not satisfied with impressions, and I look for some more objective confirmation. In seeking for it, I come up against the difficulty to which Miss Knight calls attention, namely that the apparent increase in neurosis is perhaps due to fairly recent improvements in diagnostic ability—in other words, the possibility that the disorders were always there, though now we are able to spot them and to give them labels.

I am, of course, quite prepared to agree that the megrims, vapours, declines and spleens of former times would nowadays be diagnosed as neurotic conditions. But a mere elaboration of psychopathological classification and increase in diagnostic acumen cannot account for the observed fact that psychosomatic disorders formerly contracted almost exclusively by women are now being increasingly contracted by men as well. Similarly, certain psychosomatic troubles which were formerly almost a male monopoly are now attacking the other sex. Moreover, there is a progressive fall in the average age at which these disorders are contracted. These and other changes of 'biological indices' are competently discussed by J. L. Halliday in his *Psychosocial Medicine*. There is even an *a priori* confirmation of my impression, and I wonder how Miss Knight would deal with it: it is generally admitted in psychological circles that the most prolific cause of neurotic disability is faulty family relationships. But family relationships have observably deteriorated. Therefore, *caeteris paribus*, the neurosis rate has risen.

May I gently twit Miss Knight with the unwarranted assumption implicit in the last paragraph of her letter; namely, that increased ability to diagnose diseases as psychosomatic is the same as increased ability to diagnose psychosomatic diseases? Let us take the case of a disease 'x', which is characterised by a clearly recognisable constellation of observable bodily symptoms. Let us suppose that in 1890 its incidence was 2 per 1,000, rising through 3 per 1,000 in 1900 to 7 per 1,000 in 1940. In 1945 it is discovered that this disease 'x' is, in fact, a psychosomatic disease. The fact that its psychosomatic nature was first diagnosed in 1945 does not invalidate the conclusion that the incidence of this psychosomatic disease has been increasing since 1890. Now there can be little doubt that there are diseases of this kind; old familiar diseases whose incidence is rising, and the psychosomatic nature of which has only recently been recognised.

It is tempting to reflect that if Freud's account of religion were correct, there should have been a pronounced *decrease* in the incidence of neurosis since the passing of the 'ages of faith'.—Yours, etc.,

Roehampton

J. LEYCESTER KING, J.S.

### The Marxist View of Liberty

Sir,—Professor Levy's summary of my argument seems to me a very fair one, though I would not claim the theory as new. I think that the idea that office selects power-centred individuals means rather more than that those interested in politics are willing to undertake political tasks: it would be a truer analogy if we say that those interested in cruelty tend to undertake tasks in concentration camps, and those interested in larceny to find posts in gangs. At a time when the teacher-child relationship



recent tragic parallel to this General's relations with his Government. In 1917 Lloyd George wanted to dismiss Haig, but the war was in such a critical stage that he could not challenge the powerful reactionary elements in Britain that supported Haig, and regarded him as a military idol. The result of this political deadlock was the most senseless and inhuman battle in history—Passchendaele. Is it not apparent that the immature and irresponsible support for General MacArthur in the U.S.A. has weakened President Truman's authority? The result of this might bring upon us a far worse calamity than Passchendaele.

For this and other reasons, and in the interests of truth, Sir John Pratt's letter (which may well become historic) should be published in every journal in Britain and America. It has often been said that the war in the Far East pleases the Kremlin: it pleases nobody else. But it is surely Mr. Vernon Bartlett and not Sir John Pratt who is evading the issue regarding its origin.—Yours, etc.,

Caernarvon

S. OWEN TUDOR

### Nature and Art

Sir,—Another noisy Academician! What a peppery body: Mr. A. K. Lawrence's letter was like the banging of doors by an angry man, but it is, of course, mostly bluff. 'We have had no supporting arguments about Greek art', he writes: and he affects to believe that all the views expressed in my articles and letters are 'theories' of my own. But the naturalism of the Greeks is a historic fact: feeling that that naturalism was artistically a mistake is anything but confined to me. Were I to object that much of Rodin's sculpture is too naturalistic Mr. Lawrence I am sure would describe this as an idea of great novelty, an eccentricity of which I alone would be capable.

Now, I am not going to expound common-places of contemporary thinking for a Royal Academician. And this flying to arms in defence of Hellas by the likes of Mr. Lawrence is remarkably burlesque. I must confess to a scandalised amazement (as well as amusement) when in his first letter I saw this slick portraitist indicating as his alibi the figures of the Parthenon. The Greeks were wonderful artists even if one may criticise their direction. The gentlemen who carry on business in Piccadilly, for whom Mr. Lawrence is the spokesman, are the children of the camera not of the idealised archetypes, of Phideas' images of physical perfection, nor do they think like Plato, but like the businessmen they are. I should not have spoken so plainly of course had Mr. Lawrence not talked tough.

For the rest his enthusiasm for the *trompe l'oeil*, whether in acting or in painting, is comprehensible, but shall I, two weeks hence, be asked to explain this original idiom of mine? He regards it as an opinion peculiar to me that the Barker-Shaw type of play is artistically wanting. Gordon Craig he may never have heard of, to go no further. He pounces upon Epstein's head of Einstein as I meant him to do. Ah, so he likes naturalism! He was triumphant. But of course such naturalism as *that* no one can fail to admire. I was speaking of the principles shaping our culture. Because in general their naturalism, when we compare it with the Chinese, must be condemned, Hogarth's 'Shrimp Girl' is nevertheless one of my favourite pictures.

Mr. Lawrence correctly describes the function of this paper as in part educational. But it would be anything but edifying were the local fish-monger to burst into a lecture-room and denounce the lecturer because, through the window, he had thought he had heard him saying 'stinking fish'. There are few people in England today who regard the Royal Academy

as a factor in education. It is wasting people's time to take this heckler seriously. And this is the last occasion on which I shall do so. We know what his Party is: it is the Party of Mammon.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.11

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—I am glad to note that 'the abstract in the visual arts is not very greatly favoured' by Mr. Wyndham Lewis and that he does 'not like nature dogmatically banished'. But does Mr. Lewis like nature, and particularly human nature, distorted—not distorted as El Greco (a master whom even Philistia must recognise) sometimes distorts it, but grossly, absurdly distorted till it becomes wholly unrecognisable? This it seems to me is what modern artists and particularly sculptors so often do, and what critics praise them to the skies for doing. Those who saw a recent exhibition of 'Sculpture in the Home' sponsored by the Arts Council of Great Britain will fully understand what I mean.

If Mr. Lewis feels alarmed that Philistia may show signs of getting above itself and that in consequence and with a heavy heart he believes he 'must go back to elementary exposition', I should welcome his decision. I would hope he would then explain in the simplest terms he can find what is the profound discovery, equivalent to the discovery of Relativity in the realm of Physical Science, by means of which modern artists are enabled to put into the shade all or nearly all the masters of the past.

Yours, etc.,

Rugby

BRAND

Sir,—None of Mr. Wyndham Lewis' letters, or any of the others, have faced up to the question that started this correspondence—which of the three main views of nature it was a deadly sin for the artist to identify himself with?

Mr. Lewis in his answer says he could not have meant the molecular view of science, as it was not visual. Agreed. But what of the other two? He gives 'the objective universe' as his definition of nature, which is, of course, Eddington's 'familiar view' and I understand him to suggest that any other is not realistic. But surely Mr. Lewis is not of those who would contend that this popular view is the only true way of interpreting visual experience? I quite agree with him that for the artist to identify himself with it is a deadly sin.

But the artist has another way of seeing. The ever-changing pattern of forms, tones, and colours on the retina can be contemplated for themselves alone, and their relationships, and not, as in the familiar view, to signify objects in space, etc.: as in music we contemplate sounds for themselves alone, and their relationships, and not, as in speech (which is the familiar use of sound) as signifying ideas. Seen thus as pure vision, a wonder world of visual music is opened up, which has appealed to the intuition of artists throughout the ages, and supplied the raw material of their art.

In the same way that we identify ourselves with the composer of a great symphony, Bach, Beethoven, etc., when we experience it, so the artist when moved to experience visual music in nature finds himself identified with what is inspiring him, a universal co-ordinating harmonising influence. Not to identify himself with this is a deadly sin for the artist. Setting himself up as a god in his own right and creating in defiance of any universal guiding influence, is the besetting sin of some artists today.

Of course, if Mr. Lewis prefers ugliness to beauty as he says he does in his last letter, that would explain much. And is it not, alas! the smart creed? Somerset Maugham says in *Cakes and Ale*: 'Let us face it, beauty is a bit of a bore'.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.8

HAROLD SPEED

### Holbein and his Successors

Sir,—Mr. Ellis Waterhouse's broadcast on Holbein will have been justly admired for its lucid exposition of the essentials of the master's genius and of the transformation which that genius had undergone in his later phase. But perhaps one may be permitted to dissent from Mr. Waterhouse's estimate of the Nostell version of 'The More Family'. He observed of it that 'from a little distance which veils the inadequacy of the visible drawing, this striking picture gives more than an echo of what Holbein's finished work must have looked like'; whereas I think many will feel that even before one has got close enough to notice the comical dog—from the foreground another as preposterous has been happily cleaned away—it shouts 'copy' or 'derivative' at one across the gallery, and is indeed but a far-away echo of Holbein. Do not all the excellencies with which Mr. Waterhouse credits it properly belong to the famous Basle drawing (sent as a present by More to Erasmus), and are they not found so diluted here by the mediocre painter, Rowland Locky, who has signed this Nostell version?

But to describe it as a 'lovely and human painting', is to read qualities into it which the picture does not possess. Apart from his coarse facture of the paint and the heavy, insensitive touch, if compared with drawing, in which with a masterly economy of line each individual sitter is so vividly portrayed, the figures seem frozen into immobility, the movements are arrested, and the original spontaneity of the gestures has quite disappeared.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.4

RALPH EDWARDS

### 'The Critics' and Mr. Pasmore

Sir,—I did not say abstract art had been 'insulted' by Mr. Philip Hope-Wallace and his colleague. But I feel that listeners are certainly not getting their money's worth when members of 'The Critics' are too lazy to examine, in an articulate fashion, what it is that happens to themselves when they are confronted by certain works of art—even those for which they think they have little taste: Mr. Pasmore's pictures, in the present case. After all, to say (as Mr. Hope-Wallace and Miss Bruce Lockhart did) that an abstract painting means nothing to one is not really true. Everything means something to one—even a form of art for which one has not already accounted to oneself (or others) in words.

Surely it is precisely this sort of effort which we are entitled to expect from speakers in 'The Critics'? The whole point in this programme is that we hear the expert, on each of five subjects, followed by four 'inexperts'. No one should be allowed to get off with a shrug and a 'this means nothing to me'. In what way does it mean nothing? And what sort of 'nothing'? One can always try to describe the very sensations—visual or aural—which, one is telling oneself, mean nothing to one. One can also be pretty articulate on the actual subject of one's own lack of 'understanding'. As a matter of fact I would recommend both these as exercises for extending what one must call, I suppose, one's 'sensitivity'. I know this from my experience as a critic of modern painting. Very often, faced with some sort of work of which I could make nothing, I have started to try to describe the look of the stuff; and this attempt at mere description has itself led me, by imperceptible degrees, to a certain surprising sympathy and even insight. If Mr. Hope-Wallace would sit down and write 500 words of plain description of those spirals and squares of Mr. Pasmore's—so that we see from his words what such canvases look like: their 'meaning' can be ignored for the time being—



## Art

# Round the London Galleries

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

**H**AS the Machine Age a jester? Have machines a sense of humour: is a Diesel Engine conscious of being ridiculous, as is that far more extraordinary machine, Man? Our digestive system is a super-machine for the transformation of porridge, bacon and eggs, lamb cutlets and gooseberry fool, into energy. This, in our more reflective moments, appears to us funny. Does a helicopter or a combine harvester ever realise itself, and does it laugh? These are the kind of questions elicited by the mechanical sculpture of Mr. Alexander Calder, some specimens of which are now showing at the Lefevre Gallery.

Calder is an American: he is probably America's best living artist, and he is an engineer. For a great skyscraping land, machine-made, worshipper of technic, this is as it should be. Or so one would say though there is the complicating factor that these contraptions do not *effect* anything. They are mechanical futilities. They come from the workshop of a facetious, idly ingenious, machine-minded man. Whether these toys would amuse an engineer as much as they do me I am not sure. Calder, for all I know, may have been a failure as an engineer. My knowledge of machines is too slight, perhaps, to appreciate his 'mobiles'. It is easy to understand how a machine which has taken to thinking, like Man, should develop hysteria in contemplating itself, and have a laughing fit about its hearing holes, its smelling and breathing holes, its intestinal barrel on legs. But whether the machines man creates do, as extensions of his mind, in a sense share in such reactions I am not competent to decide. I can only speak with confidence of a locomotive (not the stream-lined latest model, but the traditional puff-puff). That *knows* that it is absurd. There is no doubt about that.

In addition to his sculpture, Calder has produced a profusion of barbaric ornaments, some of them reminiscent of Gothic or Viking art. As a straight craftsman, a steelsmith as we might say (for steel or tin, not gold or silver, are the metals of his preference), he is tremendously expressive.

Mr. James Johnson Sweeney, who provides a foreword for the catalogue, has on the balcony of his handsome penthouse in Manhattan a large 'mobile'. This clatters about when it blows. For its existence it has no other visible purpose. But in his bedroom I noticed a large spray of tinfoil, which was graceful as well as amusing. So there are two kinds of work which have made Calder the best-known artist of the New World. Only the so-called 'sculpture' is at the Lefevre.

As Mr. Sweeney says, Calder possesses 'a very youthful heart'. His social peculiarities are legendary and they also, with a juvenile direct-

ness, tend to ignore inhibiting rules of social behaviour. Mr. Sweeney recalls how once after dinner Calder went to sleep on the floor at his wife's feet. The host and hostess conversed over his prostrate body, but as it became late Mr. Sweeney went to bed, leaving his wife to mount guard over the guest. About two o'clock Mr. Sweeney awakened; astonished to find that his wife was not there he hastened to the living-

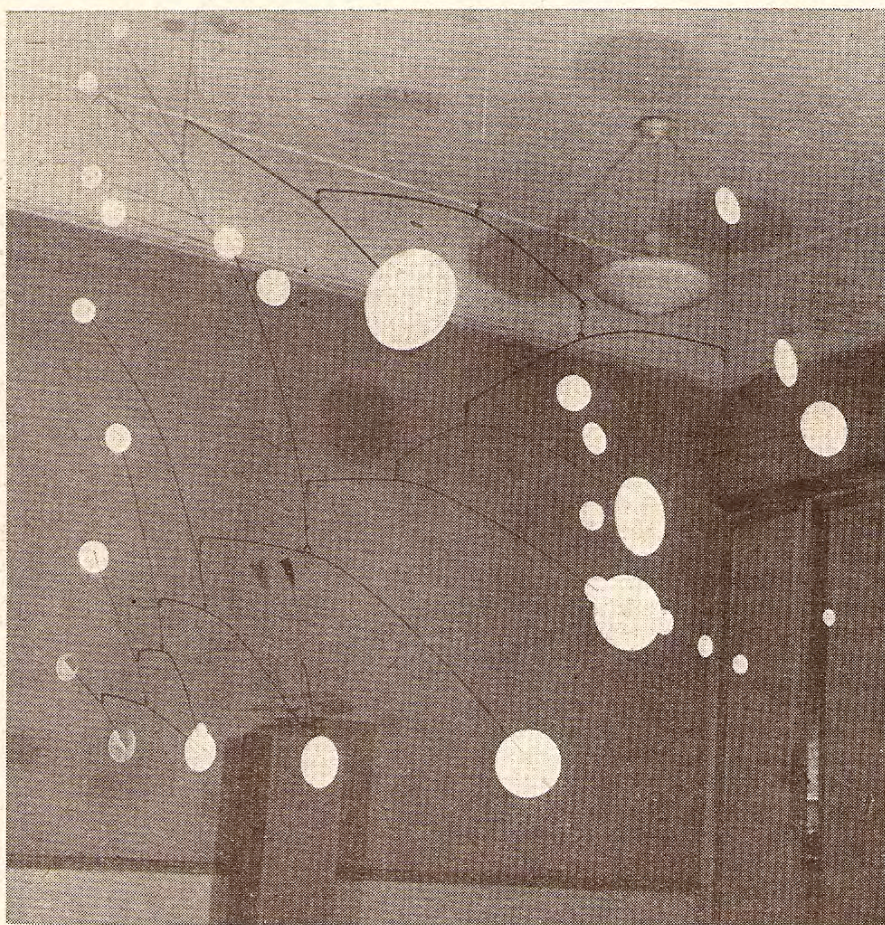
room. There he found her, knitting away, Calder still stretched out at her feet. When Calder came to London in the 'thirties people conversing with him were surprised and abashed to notice that quite suddenly he had fallen into a deep sleep. Whenever bored he slept.

The group of 'mobiles' collected in the present case are of a very different character to Mr. Sweeney's rather dull and noisy machine. The Lefevre Gallery is full of a soft tinkling suggestive of an Indian temple: the air is full of the movement of large and small, black, red, and yellow metallic leaves. They are the airiest things imaginable. If they touch your head or leg they gently recoil. In assembling them, I was told at the gallery, once you have found the point of balance your work is done. The system of objects begins floating around: I suppose that the Gallery is more like a tank of mesmerised, slowly groping fish than anything else. How the public is going to be got into it I do not know.

These huge toys are a mechanical triumph, obviously. Their beauty is kinetic, not visual. It is their hypnotic movement, their positions in the air, not the things themselves, which delight us.

There are for me three sources of main interest this month, apart from Calder's 'mobiles'. The Gallery at Heal's, under the active supervision of Anne Fison, has given the Penwith Group artists domiciled in Cornwall, their first show in London. When I say that this Group contains Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Peter Lanyon, Bryan Wynter, and Sven Berlin the importance of the show is obvious. The Leicester Galleries show excellent specimens of the work of a number of living artists, such as Hitchens, Vaughan, Sutherland, Ayrton, Evans, Rosoman. Lastly, Gimpel Fils have abstracts of great linear excellence by James Hull: and works by the International Guild of Engravers, all priced at three guineas. For that sum you may have an original Lurcat, Manessier, Tal Coat, Pignon. For the art of Ancient Nigeria, and water colours lent by the Frobenius Institute, it is to the Berkeley Gallery you go. Nor should you omit to see the 'Agricultural Hotels', and desolate scenes round Cooper's Creek by Sidney Nolan at the Redfern.

[An article on the Ecole de Paris exhibition will be appearing later]



One of the 'mobiles' of Alexander Calder at the Lefevre Gallery

Photograph: J.-D. Rivier



## Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles or talks printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

### Crisis in the Far East

Sir,—One cannot judge the reasons which prompted United Nations action in Korea by confining attention to the events covered by Sir John Pratt's letter.

Whatever may have been said in the way of bellicose talk by leaders from North or from South Korea before the invasion, one cannot disregard the fact that by crossing the 38th parallel on June 25, North Koreans tried to solve by force of arms a problem which the U.N. General Assembly and its commissions in Korea had been attempting to solve by peaceful negotiation for two and a half years. The record of that work speaks for itself and can be read in the U.N. Official Reports for 1948, 1949 and 1950.

The U.N. was asked to concern itself with the Korean question in 1947 because the two major powers most directly concerned, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., had been unable to agree the ways and means for arranging national elections as a step towards Korean independence. It would have been no solution to leave Korea's future as a unified country lying frustrated in the negative results of negotiations up to that time. So the U.N. Assembly was asked to give a majority decision as a directive in line with the Cairo Declaration which stated that Korea should be free and independent.

From 1948 onwards, International Commissions, representing the U.N. Assembly, worked in Korea. The records show that they worked to bring about the unification of Korea after free elections. They did not support any particular administration. They offered to authorities in North and South Korea the same facilities for arranging elections under international observation. They were denied access to the North. Thus they were able to observe elections only in the South, but they continued to attempt to negotiate with North Koreans and with Soviet authorities so that elections could be nationwide.

After the elections in the South, the U.N. Commission was kept in Korea to continue to work for unification. Its reports already referred to, show it to have been critical of any action, whether taken by the North or the South, which in its view might further divide the country and make unification even more difficult.

These international Commissions were for the most part composed of small or middle Powers. India has been represented every year; the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. were at no time on these field missions.

The U.N. field work in Korea is regarded, by an overwhelming majority of member-states, as being objective and international. The Commissions' recommendations therefore caused the General Assembly by resolution to regard the Republic of Korea as a lawfully-established government. Thus Sir John Pratt's suggestion of a North Korean administration supported by the U.S.S.R. and the Republic of Korea supported only by the U.S.A. is an over-simplification. By crossing the parallel on June 25 the North Koreans were moving against the results of international consultation that had been wide, thorough and protracted. Since June 25, at least fifty member-states have supported U.N. action in Korea. It is well known that there have been subsequent divergences of view as to how the action should be carried through, but within the scope selected by Sir John Pratt there can be no doubt that there was an overwhelming

majority of U.N. member-states convinced that the North Koreans had committed aggression against the principles of the U.N. Charter and despite the constant efforts that the U.N. had been making for two and a half years to negotiate with them.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1  
GEORGE IVAN SMITH  
Director, London Information  
Centre of the United Nations

Sir,—While accusing the British press of failing to report the full story of the origins of the Korean war, Sir John Pratt states a case that depends on the omission of important evidence, in particular the report of the United Nations Commission dated June 24 on their tour of the frontier. This stated that 'South Korean army is organised entirely for defence and is in no condition to carry out attack on large scale against forces of North' (Annexe J of British White Paper, Cmd. 8078 of 1950). Apart from this Sir John Pratt's case depends on equating South Korean words with North Korean deeds. The South Koreans made threats which their forces were completely incapable of carrying out. Whatever happened on June 25, the North Koreans had an army vastly superior in offensive weapons and proceeded to use it in an attempt to conquer the whole of Korea, in which they nearly succeeded.

There is strong evidence to support the charges that General MacArthur and his political associates would like to embroil the United States and, if possible, the United Nations in a war with China. But the ability of this group to influence policy has depended at every crucial point on Communist assistance. Suppose the North Korean army had remained on the 38th parallel where it could have repulsed with ease any South Korean attack. And it is almost certain that the North Korean Government, set up by the Russians and dependent on Russian military supplies, would have accepted Russian advice against taking the offensive. There would then have been nothing to justify U.N. military support for South Korea and no foreign forces would have supported any South Korean attack. Suppose that the Chinese Government, instead of actively applauding the North Korean attempt to settle the Korean problem by war, had exerted its influence in favour of a peaceful settlement. There would then have been no pretext for United States intervention in Formosa and it is practically certain that China would by now have obtained both Formosa and the seat on the United Nations. Suppose that, even now, the communists were to indicate their desire for a peaceful settlement, as opposed to a settlement which would give them the fruits of victory without fighting. It is certain that the attempt to brand China as an aggressor would fail.

Sir John Pratt discredits his largely sound case against General MacArthur by his refusal to criticise the more fanatical, but equally unscrupulous and irresponsible men on the communist side who combine professions of violent hostility against the extreme anti-communists with practical collaboration in opposing every attempt to settle international disputes without resort to war.—Yours, etc.,

Hull  
MICHAEL LINDSAY

### Nature and Art

Sir,—Last week Lord Brand repeated an assertion made in an earlier letter; namely that

those who support the new schools regard the work of Klee, Picasso, etc., as 'putting in the shade all, or nearly all, the masters of the past'. This is a misapprehension of what is at issue. A painter who in 1951 works along expressionist or surrealist lines is not thinking of putting Raphael or Ingres in the shade. His object is not to paint a better picture than the old masters in the National Gallery; but (if he thinks of that at all) to paint a different picture. The age of atomic fission is singularly different from that of the Renaissance or of the early nineteenth century. Again, the title 'Sculpture in the Home' suggests to me that the officials responsible for it are as blissfully unaware of the time they live in as are those members of the public who protest at their idea of a 'homey' kind of art.

Obviously much contemporary art is of a tragic nature, hysterical or terrible. Taken as a whole, the home is the last place for it, except the home of a hardened highbrow. 'The accelerated grimace' of the age is productive of distortion, deplored by Lord Brand. But some of the distortion in question is satire; much is classifiable as pure grotesque. There is a great deal of gaiety too. It is one of the only ways left to contemporary man to be gay.

Mr. Harold Speed is a pantheist. I cannot share his pantheistic transports.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.11  
WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—In my last letter to you I exposed Mr. Lewis' peculiar controversial methods, and at the same time brought him back to the subject under discussion. But in his letter in THE LISTENER of January 18 he again evades the issue we have been debating in characteristic fashion, conveniently ignoring my just charges that he misrepresents what I wrote, a simple, but at the same time not permissible, expedient in controversies of this kind. In fact he again misrepresents what I said, adding suppositions, and so proceeds to deal with his opponent in masterly fashion. The first supposition is that I should deny that the sculpture of Rodin is more naturalistic than that of the Greeks. Why? I should not. It is more naturalistic than Greek sculpture. There are other suppositions, but one is enough. Mr. Lewis may suppose what he likes; there is no harm in it, but it is not argument, nor is it sense to deal with anything but the facts. Further Mr. Lewis somewhat naively informs us that 'the naturalism of the Greeks is a historic fact'. Of course it is. Who has disputed it? Mr. Lewis appears to have lost all consciousness of what the theme of this debate is. This is because Mr. Lewis' language is imprecise, even for an art theorist. When boiled down his arguments, such as they are, merely reveal that he likes one kind of thing and dislikes another. Then why not say so? It is his objective statements which have been challenged by Lord Brand, Mr. Speed and myself. No one, so far, seems to share his view as expressed by him.

I have never disputed that the word 'naturalism' may be applied to Greek art, though, in my view, the word 'realism' is a truer and a better word to express the ideas conveyed by all the great art of Europe. There are degrees of naturalism, as this correspondence has revealed, but we have not been discussing the interpretation of the word 'naturalism' at all, but the assertion that to the Greeks, and all European



artists, nature and art are one and the same thing, and that this, in theory, is radically wrong, and that the occultists, whom Mr. Lewis champions, are radically right. That is the point we have been debating, and the issue arose not because of what Mr. Lewis wrote in an article, but what he wrote to you in a letter. In describing me as a 'heckler' he reveals that he sees himself as the only contributor who may ascend the rostrum, your other correspondents being first, second, or third, or even fourth citizens, who are 'hecklers'. He is unable to grasp the fact that in the correspondence columns of THE LISTENER all are public speakers.

I remind Mr. Lewis that my first letter to you (on December 28) began: 'If we are to take Mr. Lewis seriously', etc., clearly indicating that what I took seriously was not so much the statements of Mr. Lewis, but the fact that they were given such important and such wide publicity as your columns afford. In fact they challenged examination on this account. Mr. Lewis says now that from now on he will not take me seriously. Nonsense! What he means is that from now on he will have to do so.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.14

A. K. LAWRENCE

### Man without God?

Sir,—Margaret Knight finds my denial of having made a certain assumption 'rather puzzling'. But why? Either my broadcast took the form of an argument whose validity depends on an 'enormous unproved assumption', or it did not. If it did, it should not be difficult, with the printed text available, to give precise reference to the terms of the defective argument, instead of referring vaguely to 'some of his statements'. If it did not, then why be puzzled at my denial?

When I say 'I see in all this the deadly insecurity of a generation which has lost its God and its Father', I am giving my own opinion. Obviously it is for others rather than myself to say what that opinion is worth. I have formed that opinion against the background of a lifetime of experience, specialised study of the available evidence, and enquiry from others of greater experience whose judgment I value. If this background constitutes what Margaret Knight designates my 'preconceptions', then of course my opinion is influenced by my 'preconceptions'. The atheistic 'preconceptions' of a consistent Freudian would rule out the explanation I have advanced for the enormous volume of psychological disability which afflicts society today, and would cause him to seek for an alternative explanation. But my 'preconceptions' may be right, and those of the Freudian wrong—quite certainly both cannot be right. It was neither to my purpose, nor even practicable in a fifteen-minute broadcast to justify my 'preconceptions', and I should strain the hospitality of your correspondence columns were I to attempt to do so in a letter.

By the way, I wonder if it has ever struck Margaret Knight that if society is psychologically sick, it is likely to remain unaware of the real cause of that sickness, which will be concealed from it by 'mechanisms' analogous to those which operate with the individual patient. Rationalisation will lead it to project the symptoms on to almost any cause except the real one.

Yours, etc.,

Roehampton

J. LEYCESTER KING, S.J.

Sir,—Surely both Father King and Miss Knight pursue a will-o'-the-wisp if they seek statistical or 'objective' criteria of the relation between disbelief and neurosis, since evaluation of such an equation must be primarily subjective and personal.

Past and present statistics of formal allegiance

to this or that ecclesiastical organisation can have but uncertain relevance; while the line between normality and abnormality is of so hypothetical a character as to render the supposedly relevant statistical averages only of conventional interest in this particular problem.

So that while it may be true, as Miss Knight wrote, that Father King's 'assertions about the relation between unbelief and neurosis must have been based solely on his personal experience of psychological case-work', the statement hardly constitutes a valid criticism, since the available evidence can never admit of any other basis of assessment. The evidence is the same for all; the assessment of it must be ultimately a matter of purely personal interpretation.

Yours, etc.,

HUGH D. GRIFFITH

Pwllheli

### The Mark of Greatness

Sir,—The very least one can expect of a man, whom one is asked to look upon as 'great', is that he should have the courage of his convictions. Now, in his talk on Baron Friedrich von Hügel, Father M. C. D'Arcy makes no mention of the fact (which, perhaps, would not fit very neatly into his picture) that the Baron was, for years, regarded as the leader of the Modernist movement in the Roman Church. Certainly Father Tyrrell so regarded him. There is abundant evidence of this in Maud Petre's *Life of the celebrated ex-Jesuit*—a book, by the way, which Roman Catholics are forbidden to read. The movement was mainly concerned with the history of dogma and biblical criticism: on which subjects—until it became dangerous to be too outspoken—Tyrrell and von Hügel were in complete agreement.

When, for example, the papal Biblical Commission, amongst other curious 'findings', affirmed the authenticity of I John v. 7, a text which has long been recognised by scholars as spurious, von Hügel commented as follows: 'A system cannot claim to teach all the world and at the same time erect an impenetrable partition-wall between itself and the educated portion of that world. This opinion of the Biblical Commission is surely but one link in a chain of official attempts at the suppression of Science and Scholarship, beginning with Erasmus and culminating with Richard Simon and Alfred Loisy'.

A few years later the storm broke: the air was alive with ecclesiastical thunder and lightning; Tyrrell, Loisy, and others were excommunicated; but von Hügel somehow escaped unscathed. Like Lord Acton before him, he managed to dodge the Vatican's thunderbolts.

Thereafter the Baron never meddled with biblical criticism. He maintained a discreet silence. Now, I submit, with due respect—*salva reverentia* and all the rest of it—that a great man, or even a moderately courageous one, would have spoken out.

Yours, etc.,

Bournemouth

HAROLD BINNS

### The Stephen Family

Sir,—Your recent references to the Stephen family have reminded me of an occurrence in India of which I remember Sir Fitzjames Stephen (I was a boy) giving an account to my parents. Sitting in court as judge, a young native was, he said, brought before him, at the instance of the local Hindu priests, charged with spreading subversive doctrines opposed to the established religion. Sir Fitzjames retained a recollection of criticism of alleged superstitious practice, and of insistence on the brotherhood of mankind. It struck the judge at once, and forcibly, that he found himself in the same dilemma as Pontius Pilate. To gain time for reflection, he enquired whether the police had anything to say

as to the accused's character. The reply was that there was nothing against him; his father was known as a very respectable man, by trade a carpenter. This was enough for Sir Fitzjames. Having cautioned the defendant, he dismissed the charge against him. Would *O si sic omnes*. I venture to ask, be an admissible comment on his judgment?

It would be interesting to know whether the incident is recorded in any recollections of Sir Fitzjames's, or in Leslie Stephen's memoirs of him.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.1

CLAUD RUSSELL

### The Importance of Sade

Sir,—Mr. Russell makes a case for the interest of Sade—perhaps even for his peculiar interest today; but that is quite a different thing from his being 'the most important French writer of the eighteenth century'. The statement remains oracular—and silly.

Mr. Russell now admits that it would be absurd to suggest that 'the historical importance of Sade is in any way comparable to that of writers like Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau'. But there remains also their intrinsic literary importance. Does Mr. Russell suppose that of Sade to be in any way comparable to those—or of several other French writers of the eighteenth century?

One sees that nothing much remains of the original statement. Merely the suggestion that Sade has a particular importance for today. Mr. Russell's identification of 'the most characteristic and odious features of modern life' is again oracular—he speaks for himself. Personally I think there is much to deplore in this habit of self-pity among contemporary intellectuals.

Yours, etc.,

Oxford

A. L. ROWSE

### Going to the Pantomime

Sir,—I am much obliged by Mr. Lambert's correction of my statement that the Surrey Theatre was in the Westminster Bridge Road. I ought to have checked my reference, but I hope I may be forgiven for confusing bridges that I crossed at least sixty years ago. One of the pleasures I get from these broadcasts of mine about an older London is the invaluable correspondence they bring from listeners.

Yours, etc.,

Denchworth

COMPTON MACKENZIE

### The Spread of Rumour

Sir,—I listened to 'The Spread of Rumour'. Mr. Charles Gibbs-Smith quoted the old story of Russian soldiers passing through England during the 1914-18 war as an illustration of rumour, when it was actually a fact. I challenge anyone to prove otherwise.

Russian soldiers arrived in Invergordon from Archangel and were entrained for Southampton. They came from Russia (also entrained in Rosshire) so where is the rumour? Will the War Office, or the Highland Railway who supplied the troop trains, deny any record? Will the Harbour-master's office at Invergordon deny passing foreign troopships? Will the Records Office at Perth deny supplying extra rations to the 3rd Battalion Cameron Highlanders depot for the purpose of supplying appropriate meals for the disembarking troops? Will the older inhabitants of Invergordon deny the arrival of foreign troops?

No snow on their boots, and they were not bearded, but they were Tsarist troops, equally as smart as our Guards. I was on duty with the Cameron Highlanders entraining the whole Division, even including nurses.

Yours, etc.,

Ilford

R. C. ROBERTSON



# The Sea-Mists of the Winter

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

IT became evident quite early that it was going to be a deplorable winter. The cold was unvarying, it had purpose it seemed. Usually in a London winter it forgets to be cold half the time; it strays back to autumn or wanders dreamily forward to spring, after a brief attempt at winter toughness, perhaps squeezing out a few flakes of snow. But *this* winter though it experienced its usual difficulty in producing anything but a contemptible snowfall there has been an un-British quality, an unseemly continuity.

Speaking for myself what struck me most was the veil of moisture, like a sea-mist which never left my part of the town. I remember first remarking this just before Christmas. I said to Scott, my journalist-newsagent-friend, that these perpetual mists must slow him down in the morning; he drives up to business in his car, from his home in the outer suburbs. He did not seem to mind a light sea-mist, for he shook his head absent-mindedly. Another time I was talking to him over the magazine counter of the shop and indicating the street outside, with its transparent film of blue-grey. I protested, 'Another mist!' He looked out and said, a little sharply, 'There is no mist'. I did not argue, I supposed that he meant it was not up to the specification of what he called 'a mist'.

But you may have seen through my innocent device. The truth is that there was *no* mist. The mist was in my eyes: there was no sea-mist in nature. In spite of conditions which, one would have supposed, would have made it quite clear what these atmospheric opacities were, it took me a considerable time to understand. It was not, you see, like this that I had imagined my sight would finally fade out. 'You have been going blind for a long time', said the neuro-surgeon. And I had imagined that I should go on going blind for a long time yet: just gradually losing the power of vision. I had never visualised mentally, a sea-mist.

In such cases as mine there always arrives a time when normal existence becomes impossible, and you have to turn towards the consultant who has made a specialty of your kind of misfortune. When I started my second portrait of T. S. Eliot, which now hangs in Magdalene College, Cambridge, in the early summer of 1949, I had to draw up very close to the sitter to see exactly how the hair sprouted out of the forehead, and how the curl of the nostril wound up into the dark interior of the nose. There was no question of my not succeeding, my sight was still adequate. But I had to move too close to the forms I was studying. Some months later, when I started a portrait of Stella Newton, I had to draw still closer and even then I could not quite see. So I had to have my eyes examined. This was the turning-point, the date, December 1949. What, in brief, is my problem, is that the optic nerves, at their chiasma, or crossing, are pressed upon by something with the pleasing name of craniopharyngioma. It is therefore a more implacable order of misfortune than if I had a jolly little cataract. There has been a great acceleration of failure of vision during the last seven months or so. Of course I was told that I should first lose my 'central vision' which would mean that I should no longer be able to read or write. Already I was obliged to read with a magnifying glass. Then I found that I could no longer read the names of streets, see the numbers on houses, or see what stations I was passing through on the railway. About that time everything except banner headlines was invisible: then I found I could no longer read the letters inside the finger-holes of a telephone-dial. At present, if I wish to dial a number, I count the holes with my fingertips until I reach the opening where I know the letter I have to locate is situated. Thus seven is P.R.S., five is J.K.L. I know what letters the holes near the beginning and end of the half-circle contain, and what the figures are as well.

As to typing, it is some time ago now that I ceased to see distinctly the letters on the keys. I still write a certain amount with a pen or pencil, but I write blind. However much I write on it, the page before me is still an unsullied white: and sometimes the lines I have written distressingly amalgamate. The two books on which I am at present working, one a novel, the other an art book, will proceed quite smoothly, but the method of their production will be changed. A dictaphone, or

'recorder' as the Americans call it, will supersede the pen or the typewriter, at least as far as the first stages of composition are concerned. Many American writers I am informed employ the recorder, although possessing ordinary visionary powers.

As to the sea-mist, that is now too pretty a name for it. Five or six weeks ago I still went to my newsagent to have a talk with Scott and make some purchases. He of course would move about as a fresh customer would come in and demand attention. At any given time I found it extremely difficult to decide whether he was there before me or not, for he would come back and stand silently near me, and often it was only because of the tobacco he was smoking, and a slight movement in the mist before me, or at my side, that I knew that he had returned. Recently he has told me that he realised that half the time I did not know he was there. I went to other shops as well, as long as it was possible: but when for me the butcher became nothing but a white apron, and the skinned back of a bullock protruding, as it hung, seemed to me a fleshly housewife, I ceased to be a shopper. Now I take my exercise arm-in-arm with some pleasant companion, and it is surprising how easily one can thread one's way in and out of the shadowy pedestrians, very slightly steered by another but sharp-eyed person.

Sometimes I am still at large solo, though increasingly rarely. I may go out, for instance, and some twenty yards away look for a taxicab. In these cases I will stand upon the edge of the pavement, calling imperiously 'Are you free?' to owner-drivers, who probably observe me coldly from behind their steering wheels as if I were the Yonghi-Bonghi-Bo. I signal small vans, I peer hopefully at baby-trucks. At length I get a response. It is a taxi! But I assure you that it is one thing to hail a taxi-cab, another to get into it. This is quite extraordinarily difficult. I try to force my way in beside the indignant driver. He or I will open the door. But as I see everything so indistinctly I attempt to effect a passage through the wood of the door itself, in Alice Through the Looking Glass fashion, rather than take advantage of the gaping hole in the side of the taxi produced by the opening of the door. It is with a sigh of relief that I at last find my way in, after vainly assaulting the stationary vehicle in two or three places. This I realise must be extremely difficult to understand for a person with rude eyesight and piercing vision.

The failure of sight which is already so far advanced, will of course become worse from week to week, until in the end I shall be able to see the external world only through little patches in the midst of a blacked-out tissue. On the other hand, instead of little patches, the last stage may be the absolute black-out. Pushed into an unlighted room, the door banged and locked for ever, I shall then have to light a lamp of aggressive voltage in my mind to keep at bay the night.

New as I am to the land of blind-man's-buff I can only register the novel sensations, and not deny myself the enjoyment of this curious experience. It amuses me to collide with a walking belly; I quite enjoy being treated as a lay-figure, seized by the elbows and heaved up in the air as I approach a kerb, or flung into a car. I relish the absurdity of gossiping with somebody the other side of the partition. And everyone is at the other side of the partition. I am not allowed to see them. I am like a prisoner condemned to invisibility, although permitted an unrestricted number of visitors. Well, Milton had his daughters, I have my dictaphone.

This short story of mine has the drawback of having its tragedy to some extent sublimated. Also, we have no ending. Were I a dentist, or an attorney, I should probably be weighing the respective advantages of the sleek luminol or the noisy revolver. For there is no such thing as a blind dentist or a blind lawyer. But as a writer, I merely change from pen to dictaphone. If you ask, 'And as an *artist* what about that?' I should perhaps answer. 'Ah, sir, as to the artist in England! I have often thought that it would solve a great many problems if English painters were born blind'.

And finally, which is the main reason for this unseemly autobiographical outburst, my articles on contemporary art exhibitions necessarily end, for I can no longer see a picture.



majority of sexual deviations involve the employment of such zones; but, with a single exception, this material is ignored, though the deviations are fully studied from the genital point of view. The one exception is the peculiar erotic sensitivity developed in the tips of the new antlers of the stags of red deer during the rutting season.

Many conclusions drawn or suggested by the authors are technical; but a couple are worth drawing general attention to. Homosexuality, the authors are convinced, is not connected with any physiological or hormonal imbalance, and so cannot be 'cured' or modified chemically: it is a general mammalian potentiality which can become dominant as a result of social pressures or individual vicissitudes. Secondly, the observations on the great apes, and observations and experiments on other mammals throw into sharp relief the differences between male and female sexuality. In non-humans female sexuality is much more closely linked with the reproductive cycle, and, at the appropriate periods, most females will accept any suitable male and will appear insatiable. Male sexuality on the other hand is far more cortical and cerebral, and seems to show far more variation; male apes, or porcupines, will develop an exclusive attachment to one female, forsaking all others; pairs of male dolphins will neglect available females to sport with one another exclusively. The extent to which these observations can be applied to human beings is a matter for further investigation; there is evidence to suggest that one of the most distinctively human traits is the separation in most women of their conscious desires from their reproductive cycle. People who wish to argue on these or allied subjects will find *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour* indispensable; the material is presented clearly, objectively, and with relatively little jargon or specialised vocabulary. A glossary is thoughtfully provided for those who fail to recognise some of the technical terms.

GEOFFREY GORER

## Augustus John Looks Back

Chiaroscuro: Fragments of Autobiography

By Augustus John. Cape. 30s.

AUGUSTUS JOHN is an exceptionally good writer; and upon this most reviewers have dilated, with a tendency to compare him with other painters who have written books. This is the obvious reaction, it would seem, when a painter takes to the pen: to see a man of that calling engaged in literary composition, affects people as if they had surprised a kangaroo, fountain-pen in hand, dashing off a note. The truth is that Augustus John is doubly endowed: he is a born writer, as he is a born painter. Had nature been less prodigal, had she made him a great writer and left it at that, England would have possessed, in all likelihood, another romantic novelist of the first rank. And then it may be noted that his observation is not markedly visual: it is just good observation, not suggestive of any specialist bias. To illustrate this, let me take the account of his caravanning from Effingham to Cambridge. Near Watford an inn was found which accommodated the caravan in its yard. 'Our host turned out to be an accomplished clown. Every evening he dressed up in fantastic attire and entertained his customers with his excellent buffoonery'. Neither Daumier nor Rouault would have handled this figure in so polite and abstract a manner; it is the genteel language of the eighteenth century and after. There were in the caravan beside John himself 'two sisters and a little band of children', D., and a groom called Arthur. There is no *description* of any of these people: the reader has no idea what they *looked* like.

'Fragments of Autobiography' is the sub-title of *Chiaroscuro*, and the book consists of a great number of more or less short pieces, each supplied with a descriptive heading. The first fifty pages are consecutive narrative: reading should start at page one, for these fifty pages are perhaps the best things in the book. What is more, the reader will be closer to John himself as he grows up with him, and is at last sitting in the café at Vattetot-sur-Mer, Orpen and the ladies drinking Calvados to wed themselves to the soil 'of which it was the quintessence', than will be the case when he finds himself, for instance, in a Venetian palace, watching Lifar and Lady Melchett posturing in a manner that would produce in Firbank an ecstasy of aesthetic ravishment.

Undoubtedly there will be a temptation to regard this book, because of its form, as a 'lucky dip', and without delay, to go on dipping for

personalities, for famous names and amusing bits. In that way these early narrative pages might never be read at all—this in spite of the fact that the young Augustus John is better worth reading about than millions of countesses and statesmen. But the starry names, with which his text is thickly studded, are of all sorts and conditions: we start by sitting at a table in the Café de la Régence with the exiled Oscar Wilde ('warmed up with a succession of maraschinos', genially coruscating), and upon the last page, almost there is another coruscation; Bernard Shaw is fetched in a military car to 'cerebrate' in a large chair in John's studio, for a solid hour, at the request of 'Monty', who wished to encounter the celebrated sage.

Frieda, Auguste Strindberg's 'pretty little gaoler', is a star-performer in this book, her reckless John-hunt responsible for situations of mag-



Augustus John as a young man

From 'Chiaroscuro'

nificent farce: but at the time in question, the adjective 'pretty' was anything but descriptive of her. Indeed the total absence of endearing young charms was why John was always in flight. My flight, to which he alludes, derived its furious élan from the same cause as his own. It was only lions (budding and in tawny flower) that Frieda set her cap at: I do not believe that sex had anything to do with these disturbances of the peace of an eminent male. She was just a scalp-hunting mid-European—for the rest, a decided asset in the sleepy London scene, as was, of course, John himself.

It is good news to hear that he proposes to write further autobiographical fragments. Next time he should, perhaps, supply some particulars, identifying people mentioned in passing, unknown outside his private circle. This does not apply to many of his personnel, who are fairly, but not unduly, glittering; but, just here and there, I felt, it is taken for granted that he and the public have the same visiting list. He might also make use of his great powers of observation, and now and then go in for rather more description of personalities. Then, since he so excels in that respect, several blocks of sustained narrative would be very acceptable.

John refers to himself as a creature of a golden age: but, he observes, 'the monster is amenable and responds to kindness'. No reader of *Chiaroscuro* will doubt that this most picturesque of British lions is other than *salonfähig*; some have thought too much so, but how could one occupy the position of court painter, for it has almost been that, and not grow a little courtly? There is no question as to Augustus John being a great extrovert. On the other hand, this century has produced



a most marvellous crop of phoney extroverts, headed by Colonel Lawrence (two or three of whose arch and cosy letters are made good use of in this book). I wonder if it is not possible to detect a soft streak or two in Augustus: for does he not confess that he has always been afraid of policemen? He only ceased to be frightened of girls, it seems, after he grew a beard. This is, perhaps, too much to believe; but a beard in the twentieth century does not mean quite so much as it did in the nineteenth, even if you add a pair of piratic ear-rings.

WYNDHAM LEWIS

## Intimate Relations

The Roosevelt Letters. Edited by Elliott Roosevelt.  
Harrap. 30s.

IN JANUARY 1945, when he was inaugurated for the fourth time as President of the United States, Franklin Roosevelt said: 'We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community. We have learned the simple truth, as Emerson said, "The only way to have a friend is to be one"'. This was the creed that governed Roosevelt's personal and public life, and its application is amply illustrated in the third volume of his private letters, now published by his son, Elliott. This volume, starting in 1928 when Roosevelt became Governor of New York State and continuing through the twelve years of his Presidency, covers the whole period of his greatness. Inevitably, therefore, it is less concerned than were the two earlier volumes with private and family matters, but there is no marked change in style or tone. Whether he was writing to cronies at home or to kings abroad, his was essentially 'personal correspondence', free from affectation or formality and designed to create an intimate relationship without respect for Protocol. 'I hope you will feel free', he said in a letter to Mr. Chamberlain in September 1939, 'to write me personally and outside of diplomatic procedure about any problems as they arise'.

Roosevelt believed—and with one notable exception his belief was justified—that there were not many problems of state which could not be solved by direct negotiation between the parties concerned. He realised, as he wrote to his Ambassador in Berlin in 1936, that 'The theory of Woodrow Wilson that one can appeal to the citizens [of a country] over the head of their government is no longer tenable', but this only made him the more determined to establish close personal contact with the leaders of other powers, preferably on a 'first name' basis. In all the letters published in this volume only those to the Pope open with a strictly formal salutation.

It is clear from this volume that Roosevelt lost no opportunity of expanding the range of his correspondence. Their mutual interest in stamps provided the pretext for him to send a longhand note to King George V soon after he became President—a note which began 'My dear King George' and ended 'with sincere regards, believe me, Faithfully yours'. His correspondence with Mr. Mackenzie King started in his first year as Governor of New York with an 'informal and wholly unofficial note' indicating his desire for 'an opportunity to talk things over', and progressed to the stage of his writing in 1941: 'Sometimes I indulge in the thoroughly sanctimonious and pharisaical thought, which I hope that you are occasionally guilty of, that it is a grand and glorious thing for Canada and the United States to have the team of Mackenzie and Roosevelt at the helm in days like these!' In this volume there are letters to Stalin, Mussolini, Chiang Kai-shek and nearly all the other leading political figures of his time, but Roosevelt had no personal correspondence with Hitler and the only message he ever sent to Hirohito was not written until the eve of Pearl Harbour and did not reach the Emperor until after the Japanese attack had been made.

In Roosevelt's mind his letters represented only the first stage in the creation of those personal relationships on which his diplomacy was built. The next, he hoped, would be the man-to-man meeting by which he set such store. He was not writing facetiously when he said in a letter to his Ambassador in Berlin in 1937: 'If five or six heads of the important governments could meet together for a week with complete inaccessibility to press or cables or radio, a definite useful agreement might result or else one or two of them would be murdered by the others!' The supreme test of Roosevelt's faith in personal meetings between heads of states came during his war-time conferences with Churchill and later with Stalin as well. This volume reveals—what Mr.

Churchill has discreetly omitted to mention—that six months before the first 'Big Three' Conference at Teheran, the President endeavoured to arrange with Stalin a secret meeting from which the Prime Minister was to be excluded. Making this proposal in May 1943, Roosevelt wrote, 'I want to get away from the difficulties of large Staff conferences or the red tape of diplomatic conversations. Therefore the simplest and most practical method that I can think of would be an informal and completely simple visit for a few days between you and me. . . . It is my thought that neither of us would want to bring any Staff . . . and that you and I would talk very informally and get what we call "a meeting of the minds"'. On this occasion Roosevelt proposed that he and Stalin should meet at the Bering Straits, but the plan came to nought. One cannot help feeling, however, that this individual approach by the President weakened his chances of securing a reasonable agreement with Stalin. This overture—and Roosevelt's independent behaviour later at Teheran—was designed to assure the Russians that they were not dealing with an Anglo-American bloc, but the result was to encourage Stalin to exploit the divergence of view that had already developed between the President and the Prime Minister about the conduct of the war and the structure of the peace. By exploiting Anglo-American disunity and by playing upon Roosevelt's trust and friendliness Stalin was to gain substantial post-war advantages. Yet the effort to win his friendship had to be made and no man of his generation was better fitted to make it than Franklin Roosevelt.

Although this volume runs to 530 pages, it does not contain more than a fraction of the letters Roosevelt wrote during his years of public office. The editor explains that this is due to security regulations necessarily imposed by the United States Government, especially with regard to 'material that would be prejudicial to the maintenance of friendly relations with foreign nations', and 'documents containing derogatory remarks concerning the loyalty, character and integrity of individuals'. Necessary though these restrictions are, they prevent us from forming a true impression of the scope and influence of Roosevelt's vast correspondence, and many readers will be disappointed to discover how severe the restrictions are. For instance, the only letters covering the two most important journeys of Roosevelt's life—those to Teheran and Yalta—are six written to Mrs. Roosevelt and these are largely personal. Of some 2,000 communications which passed between the President and the 'Former Naval Person' in the most famous exchanges of the war, only twenty appear and few of these are of great significance. For the proper assessment of Roosevelt and his letters the historian must await the publication of the full file.

CHESTER WILMOT

## B.B.C. Reporter in Korea

Korean Reporter. By René Cutforth. Wingate. 13s. 6d.

THIS MODEST ACCOUNT of six months spent in Korea as the B.B.C.'s special correspondent is not only by far the best book, either British or American, so far published about the United Nations campaign in Korea, it is one of the best descriptive books I have read about any war. This is to some extent due to the tersely colloquial style of much of the writing which, although it could be irritating in other circumstances, seems here exactly right; also Mr. Cutforth is an acute observer who wastes no words on inessentials, so that his prose is as clear-cut and hard as the Korean landscape itself.

Wisely, he tells us little about the actual battles since Korean place-names do not mean much, but he has a great deal to say about the abnormal conditions in which the campaign is being fought. There is, for instance, some mention of the wind on nearly every page. This cruel Siberian wind, says Mr. Cutforth, was so intense that it created a definite fear which sapped every kind of morale, and its effect upon the skin was as though the thermometer had suddenly dropped fifty degrees. But the wind was only one factor that militated against success. There were also the narrow roads cluttered with refugees and the brutalities quite openly perpetrated by the lawful Korean Government in support of which the United Nations were fighting.

In the early days of the campaign there was a feeling among the Americans that the war could be won by machinery; that it did not imply much more than a ride through the country with a loaded gun on one's knee. But when Mr. Cutforth left in July last year there was,



## Other *Listener* reviews by Wyndham Lewis

Eric Gill, *Art* (26 September 1934)

[Another review]

[Transcript of a television broadcast, 1939]



Books and Authors

# Tradesmen, Gentlemen and Artists

Art. By ERIC GILL. Twentieth Century Library. Lane. 2s. 6d.

Reviewed by WYNDHAM LEWIS

HERE, I AM SORRY TO SAY, is yet another attack upon the pagan or secular principle in art. (I cannot help sometimes feeling sorry that M. Maritain has not spent the major part of his time in the aloof austerities of a contemplative life; rather than in over-stimulating journalism!) And here, improperly, I think, commercialism is blamed for the secular character of contemporary art. For that, however, it seems to me, we have to go back to the age of Galileo, and stop there. Whatever may have been the role of the Medicis, in fertilising art with their 'dough', the usurious banker-kings of the modern world (the villains of the piece according to Mr. Gill) have extremely little to do with art of any sort, except perhaps music. And they prevent no one from going to church: rather they encourage it, since by that means people are kept out of establishments of good cheer, where they spend too much money.

But the crimes of commercialism—of regarding everything in terms of buying and selling—have often been most ably exposed by persons less famous than Mr. Eric Gill. What is peculiar to Mr. Gill's exposure is the great stress he lays upon the virtues of *anonymity*. 'Art', in his definition, is just anything we do: walking, for instance, is a major art; lighting the fire, playing tennis, painting the Sistine Ceiling, painting the front door—everything is equally an 'art'. So why make a fuss about it? And above all, why notify the world *who* did it, whatever it may be? When you stick a couple of stamps on an envelope in their right place (a difficult art!) you don't *sign* your handiwork, do you! Well, the same applies to sticking statues on the front of Chartres Cathedral. Such is the argument.

No theatrical producer could hate the 'star', and the whole principle of the star performer, more fiercely than does Mr. Gill. At the mere hint of a *name* associated with a work of art—the name of the fellow who did it—Mr. Eric Gill drops his chisel and mallet and bursts into angry speech. There is for him something 'unholy' about a signature upon a picture or statue. 'Anonymous art is essentially religious art: and religious art is essentially anonymous. And all art should be religious art. Such is Mr. Gill's argument. God's signature, as it were, is to be seen upon everything that is excellent. Why should the irrelevant name of an individual creature be there too?

'That the "star" performer is (entirely apart from his or her princely salary) a nuisance, who would deny?—seeing what attributes today conduct an artist, in most cases, to stardom, and its Rolls-Royces. All performers, of any excellence, act, paint, carve, build or write as if they were nameless. But the thing once done they 'touch' the money to which their name entitles them; or the object once made, they duly sign it—if their signature is worth anything: for the thing could not have been done at all (for the greater glory of God or otherwise) if it had not been for the name in question, as things are. The thing is after all none the worse for the little discreet signature in the corner, even if it be none the better. But there are some people, says Mr. Gill, who fancy themselves as 'the Burgess', if possible the burgomaster. Yes, we might add, and there are some who, William Morris-like, fancy themselves as 'the craftsman', still. The latter is a less objectionable form of romanticism than the former, but it remains a romanticism—a defect where Reason is concerned (and Mr. Gill is all for reason, of course).

Many attempts have been made recently (mainly by those same commercial gentry disliked so much by Mr. Gill—since 'names' have to be paid for—the 'name' costs money, even if it makes money) to return to a mediæval anonymity. To suppress the 'star', the 'great name', is as much a dream of his 'money-bug' as it is of that 'maker', Mr. Gill. 'How lovely'—has pondered the publisher, the impresario, the advertisement agent—'how lovely if I could sell to the public for just the same money a theatre, a concert, a Book Club, an art-gallery ticket, but one which entails no expensive *name* whatsoever as an attraction!' (The cult of the 'first novel' is an illustration of this. No love of 'youth' or of 'budding talent' comes into the salesman's strategy. When the *second* novel comes along, that fact becomes at once apparent to first-novelists.) All this is a commonplace of the art-scene with which Mr. Gill is dealing; everyone will agree with him regarding the corruption that accompanies the cult of the 'name'. But is he really helping the artist (or the craftsman) of this 1934, by his insistence—in an age fetid with self-advertisement—upon a personal obscurity, an obscurity in which he could not participate himself if he

would? The lines of social snobbery upon which his argument runs, however, give a very odd twist to this in many ways admirable diatribe.

'The painter is a tradesman—a high-class tradesman, high enough sometimes to be the friend of princes, but never a gentleman'. These words may be taken as the burden of Mr. Gill's song: though a 'tradesman' at no time has any painter worth talking about been. And always it has been the prince who was high enough—just of sufficient distinction of intellect—to be classed as the friend of a great painter: not *vice versa*. And the sense in which Mr. Gill uses the word 'gentleman' smacks (pleasantly it is true, but with a painful unreality) of a social system that is extinct, and of a snobbery which, it is perhaps as well, is obsolete. 'Where is now the Gentleman'—in spite of the fact that neither Adam delyes nor Eve spins any longer, the machine having replaced their crude activities?

Mr. Gill is throughout preoccupied by: (1) the 'gentility'; and (2) the anonymity of the painter, architect-sculptor, and indeed all 'artists'. He would have us all go back to the good old days when a rope was placed across a drawing-room, in front of the piano, to prevent the musical performers from contaminating the guests, or when the painter of pictures ranked beneath the tallow-dealer. He is really astonishingly preoccupied with questions of precedence, in a way that would do honour to an Anglo-Indian official.

What is this strange antediluvian social snobbery that causes this distinguished sculptor to so go on about trade—about art being 'a trade'? Fine as much of Mr. Gill's book is, what is he in fact talking about, with his 'workmen' and 'gentlemen' in the year of disgrace 1934? If you insist upon treating Mr. Augustus John, say, like a plumber (and sturdily refuse him the title of Esquire upon an envelope, to take an illustration in the spirit of Mr. Gill's text) you certainly have to treat surgeons, for example, in the same manner. What on earth was the Government thinking about in elevating a man in such a trade as that of Lord Moynihan's to the peerage? No: that rather unpleasant type of workman, like the famous butcher who performed the first Caesarian operation, would remain, side by side with butchers and barbers, as 'tradesmen' or 'workmen' pure and simple—and so spare Mr. Gill (a bit too sensitive to these class distinctions of a happier day) the distress of remarking one of these low fellows intruding into, say, such a distinguished preserve of the 'upper-classes' as the lounge of the Savoy Hotel: where in future nothing but city gentlemen, Brits and Yanks (with perhaps an occasional penniless Lord or two, or General, dependant upon their favours) would be seen.

But since there is no point in wasting time in discussing these niceties of 'tradesman' status where the artist is concerned, as does Mr. Gill, unless there is *somewhere* a category of men who are admittedly in a social universe so far superior to that of the mere landscape-painter—or surgeon—as to require all this insistence upon his inferior social status: who then, constituted as society is today, are these privileged grandees? Who else can they be than the members of the monied mercantile class who occupy the great houses and hotels, for the most part, in the West End of London, and fill its clubs? And—with no disrespect at all to the gentlemen in question—would Mr. Gill require of us a bearing of respect, and forms of address appropriate to a non-proletarian rank, for his usurious magnate, and withhold the same from Mr. Augustus John, Sir Hamilton Harty, Lord Moynihan, Sir Edwin Lutyens? Is the occupation of these latter so much less noble and worthy of respect than is the acquisition of wealth in finance and in trading?

Mr. Gill has made me stick up for the poor impoverished 'artist' more than I ordinarily do; for I am sure under Mr. Gill's rule there would be no 'art' left at all—as things are. But I would not have it thought that, as regards much that Mr. Gill says, I am out of sympathy: I am in entire agreement with him upon many points, among others upon the necessity for art to rest upon more serious foundations than upon the personal vanity or uncultivated pleasure-sense of a good-timers' democracy. If people were shown pictures or carvings that were of gods or devils, or of holy men or saints, they would not expect them to be *pretty* at least. They would not impose upon the artist standards of a sugary—or of a human-all-too-human-pleasantness—the equivalent in the matters of the eye of the 'happy ending' in popular fiction.