

Spring 1964

The Colonnade, Volume XXVI Number 3, Spring 1964

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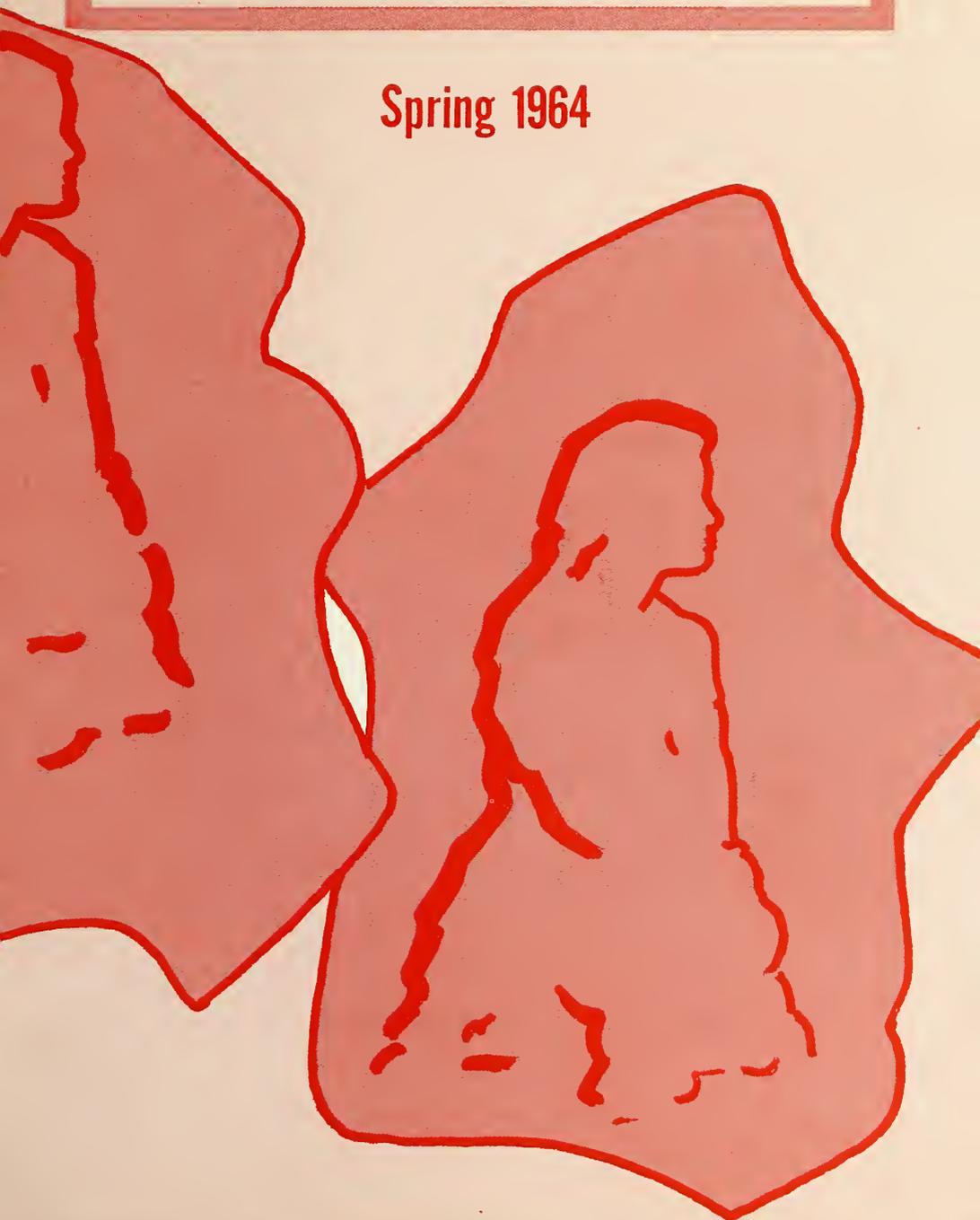
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Colonnade

Spring 1964





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Colonnade

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SPRING • 1964

Volume XXVI

Number 3



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ANGEL

THE SEARCH FOR THE INNOCUOUS MAN

by Michael Forbes

IN the course of day-to-day wanderings, one picks up hobbies that tend to be off-beat. Me, I look for certain people to write about. People who are personifications of certain *types* of people. The little man, the tycoon, the bum, the eternally confident man. And the innocuous man. That last one has given me a lot of trouble lately. The innocuous man—the man who comes in and out, pays his bills, speaks in passing, does his job, and bothers nobody—or bothers others as little as possible.

You see, I don't just sit down and decide to look for a certain type. It comes to me. Like when all this started. I was up at the house ("house," I say; it's an apartment, really) one night; and I had just finished cutting the *hell* out of my finger opening one of those beer cans, whatever they call them, flip-top, tab-top—I won't say what I called *that* one. The idea struck me as I was dabbing on the iodine. "Breathes there a man," I said out loud to myself, "who comes and goes, does his job, pays his bills, speaks in passing, and bothers nobody—or at least bothers them as little as possible?" It really snagged a corner of my curiosity.

Of course, I write for my own amusement. I couldn't sell the stuff. Half of it's libel, and the other half's not worth the onionskin it's typed on. It's just a hobby, but I'm devoted to it. And writing gets me away from things, keeps me working and keeps me from worrying about how everything may be going at the time. And every so often an idea strikes me, the idea of a new type to look for. I've done pretty well in finding them in the past, because I get around enough to see a lot of people, and *they* know people. Of course, there's luck to be taken into account, too. It's a fairly small town, and there aren't but *so* many people. But still I've done pretty well. In the files, I've got typed stories about quite a few types of people. And the particular person who typifies that kind of human is mentioned by name and examined pretty closely. That's what I meant about libel. So now I had a new type. But the person I needed I had found already. And he had been dead three years. Mr. Jorden. A carpenter, as far as I could remember. He'd lived in the basement of the rooming house where Maury and his old woman live. I mean Maury and his *mother*, not his wife; Maury's not the marrying kind. Anyway, this old man apparently just came into town a few years before he died, and came and went. And bothered nobody, except when his toilet would overflow sometimes.

(continued on next page)

That always got a little action around the house, basement to attic. But aside from that, he didn't bother anyone. Then in the middle of summer, in July, people began to smell something. They figured that Jorden's toilet had done it again. This time they were wrong. It was Jorden, himself; and he was fairly decomposed by the time anyone went in to check. So there was a graveside service, a few people went, and Jorden was gone. Gone, I figured, without bothering anyone too much, and having done his job, come and gone, spoken in passing, and paid his bills—people set a lot of stock by that these days.

Of course I went over to Maury's the next night, after mulling over the thing all that day. Maury's a good guy, but he's been tied to his mother so long, he's stopped being a person. A personality-less person, I call him. At least that's what I called him in the story that I have in the files. It's really not that bad, but sometimes you have to improvise a little when you're writing.

Maury let me in the little side door that people somehow always mistake for the entrance to the house proper. His mother looked up at me and nodded and went back to watching "Perry Mason." She thinks he's a fine lawyer for some reason or other; I can't remember why, offhand, but her reason is damn funny. *She's* in the files, too; I won't say what as. So Maury and I went off into the kitchen and started talking.

"How's everything over your way?" Maury asked, peering at me across the tops of his glasses. Those glasses don't seem to have been made for Maury; they're too large and gawky. He's sort of pale, and the combination is classic. The anemic man. Sounds good.

Anyway, we talked over things for a minute or two, and I came to what I wanted. "Maury, do you remember the old man that died in the basement room about three years back? Mr. Jorden?"

"Sure," he said. "What about him?"

"Well, I'm back to writing again, and I was just sort of struck by him, after thinking about him awhile. I was wondering, could you tell me anything about him?"

"Well, he was a carpenter down here with Woodson, and he came in and went out, and you didn't see much of him."

"Came and went," I murmured. "What else? Where was he from, did he have any kin, stuff like that?"

"I'm not sure, but I think he came from up north somewhere, and no, he had a wife, once, but she left him, and there weren't any . . . any children." (Maury says "children" as though he didn't know what they are.) "And he came upstairs only a few times, once when his raincoat was missing, and he thought Mrs. Branch might know

THE INNOCUOUS MAN

something about it." (Mrs. Branch owns this old house that Maury lives in, and has most of its twenty-odd rooms rented out most of the time.) "And another time when something got in his room. It was a snake, a little green one, and he was just *terrified*. You know those ground-level windows. That's how the thing got in. And as far as I know, those were the only times he came up. He never seemed to bother anybody."

"Bothered no one," I whispered in ecstasy.

"Except when that toilet overflowed," Maury added, "But aside from that, it wasn't often that you even knew he was *around*. But I felt real sorry for him. What did he live for?"

"Exactly," I said. "Here's a man. He comes, he goes, he does his job, he pays his bill . . ."

"And he even mailed his check to Mrs. Branch, rather than go upstairs." Maury was caught up in the spirit of this. He knew what I was looking for, and he was anxious to help.

"Wasn't he a drunk?"

"Well, I never *saw* him drunk but once. He would go in and lock the door, then get drunk as he saw fit, and wouldn't come out 'til he was all right again."

"So he wouldn't bother anyone."

"I suppose so. But one time I was down at the washing machine, and he'd locked himself in somehow. I ended up having him hand the key out the window to me, and then I let him out. But he was just *frantic*, and a little drunk, too. But it was absolutely pitiful. Feel real sorry for him."

"So, no family, no friends, he does his job. What about this wife? Why'd she leave him?"

"Don't know. I guess that started him drinking. He must have loved her a lot. She left him and married some rich guy from up north."

"Can you imagine it?" I breathed. "Really battered by the winds of fate. No family or friends or purpose in life. What's the use there? The innocuous man, and he's so innocuous that he's not even alive."

"But he was a nice old thing. He would never start a conversation, but he made a point to speak to you."

"Well, he wouldn't have anything to talk about. Kind and gentle and harmless. This is going to be some story." I said the last part to myself, almost wishing to exclude Maury from all this now that he had served his purpose. But I realized that I needed more. "So what else, Maury?"

"Well, he died, and I guess you know all about *that*." I knew all

(continued on next page)



about *that*, and I could already see it in the last paragraph of my story in double-spaced manuscript form on onionskin.

I asked, "Do you know anyone who could get me some more on the man?"

"Jack could, I guess. I think he was one of the three or four at the funeral. Service, rather; it was a graveside deal."

It didn't take me long to get Maury out to the car and start over to Jack's. I took Maury along in hopes that he might be able to prod Jack's memory. Jack has enough trouble keeping track of things that happened a minute ago; that wife of his runs him ragged. As I swung into Alder off First, I was composing: The innocuous man who bothers nobody, who goes out of his *way* to bother nobody, and loses himself in the bargain. He lives without friends and family, his only love lost to a rich northerner. It drives him to drink, but he makes sure that this infirmity bothers no one. And he's afraid. The snake in his room and getting locked in. Even misplacing his raincoat showed some kind of fear of getting out of touch with the few things that were his own, probably like heirlooms. A lock of his wife's hair in a . . . no, that was too far out, but still the story was clear and this man was the one for it.

Jack was actually glad to see us; he had the house to himself, since his wife was off at some church meeting. He was still congratulating himself on getting out of going with her as he got himself and me a drink from the little cubbyhole behind the sink. Maury doesn't drink; influence of his mother again.

After I explained what I wanted, Jack sat thinking for a moment. I hurried him along. "Jack, the impression I get is of a man who comes and goes, does his job, speaks in passing, and bothers nobody. Bother-

THE INNOCUOUS MAN

ing nobody is the important part. Even when he is drinking, he goes off in his room and locks the door, then comes out when he's sober again."

"Hm?" Jack sat up straight. "What's all this? He got fired so many times for being drunk on the job that . . ." (groping for an appropriate proverb) "that I couldn't count the times on my fingers and toes." (Jack's prosaic that way.)

This dampened the effect a little, but it wasn't too bad. "Well," I explained, "It was his wife leaving him that started all this; and I don't guess it could have helped rubbing off a little on his outside life."

"Wait wait wait. His wife left him *because* he was a drunk." Jack would have made a very arrogant professor; when he's explaining things in the tone he would use for a child, his mustache loses its ridiculous look and takes on a scornful curl. "Married Bill Grumman's sister. I don't know where you get all your information." I wouldn't even look at Maury. I had a horrible premonition. Jack continued, "And he was a real good *spy*, too. He hissed the word "spy" through his drooping mustache. "When I was living over there, I had my eyes on that younger daughter of old Mrs. Branch. You know how it is. And be damned if he didn't tell my wife about seeing me talking to her. That was a bad night, let me tell you."

My premonition was coming true. "But did he mean any harm, really? Wasn't he a kindly sort?"

Jack snorted. "I couldn't say. I know that he was a *low* sort, though; that type of workman always is, and he was no exception."

I was grasping for straws now. "What about when he died? What'd he die of?"

"Well, he finally developed a heart condition from all the drinking. So he came home drunk and hemorrhaged somewhere and died. Then they found him a few days later and carted what was left off to the boneyard. And that was it."

"And no family to be at the funeral."

"Come on now, his sister is Bob Ander's wife, right in town."

I was lost. "If he was all that, why did you go to his funeral?"

"I didn't."

I still didn't look at Maury, but just talked a while longer and then left. I dropped Maury off at his house, and took the top down and drove around until eleven-thirty.

When I hit the house, I went straight to the icebox and fished a beer out of the back. And I pulled off the tab and sliced my thumb again. This time I let it drip; I had things to think about now. I'd lost my perfect innocuous man. For that matter, there never was one where I

(continued on page 30)

The Subjugate

A man in hellfire Red
came swinging into our town,
(which was Grey),
and demanded a certain proof-giving
of the first man he met.
“You assert you live,” he cried,
“yet I see on you neither incarnadine
nor scar nor soil-brown!
Where lies your life if it be?”
The townsman, grim, ungiving,
tapped twice upon his brow,
and gripped the stranger’s wrist.
He led him to an odd square house,
armored in granite-grey,
whereabout were small men,
(so seeming for their regimen),
filing out and in, and carrying
small squares of undetermined
stuffs—paperlike, but yet
not of that consistency—
in stiffly outstretched arms.
“Industry”, quoth the townsman.
None other spoke to the Red—
fading one, and his guide
hied unto a lofty tower,
wherein he might watch.
“Hullo!” shouted the stranger,
“Hear me, for I would speak
to you!” His voice pained his ear,
and silence swallowed up his pride.
He shrugged, and turned to go.
but on his way he found
that the Earth was of small men,
engaged in Industry.
There was no choice, there were no open ways;
So, he made a trade, his hellfire Red
for impervious Grey,
and became the meagrest bearer of them all.

Eleanor R. Kevan

Rivers Rise

I find there great beauty.

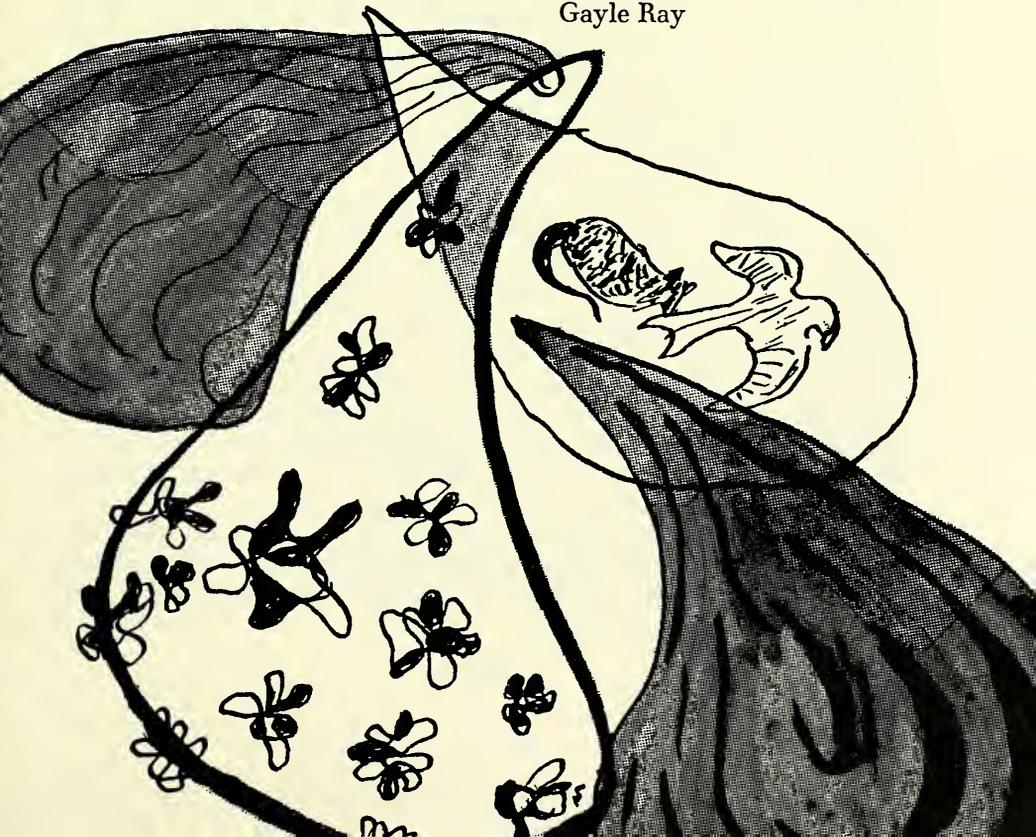
From the mountain there arises a great stream,
It flows in purest form
To find a human soul to touch,
It rests,
It fills,
It adds to life.

But the departing bird
Dropped dung in it today,
And a rat crawled in and drowned,
Self-gnawed and pity-scratched.

Stagnant gush of swamp algae-people,
You have submitted to your weakness,
There is nothing you can do to change.

Hush- - - the decaying gas-whisper falls,
Drip- - -
Drip- - -
Drip-drip.

Gayle Ray



QUIET GREATNESS

by Kaye Catron

HERE is an unusual orchestra which plays for the world. This orchestra is unusual because each musician is not only playing his own instrument, but also he is his own composer, the inventor of his instrument, and the originator of sounds which can never be imitated. This special orchestra is, in more specific terms, the whole body of literary works; the musicians are the authors of those famous contributions. Only when one can listen to each of these musicians individually can he truly appreciate the greatness of the entire symphony. No matter how often publicity fails to acknowledge each musician, he is still there, contributing his worthy sounds and offering the best that he has. If the latter statement were not true, he would not have been invited to join the orchestra, but would have played his music at home merely for his own enjoyment.

Sitting quietly in the string section of this orchestra is Andrew Marvell. The sounds of the other instruments stop and the spotlight turns upon him. One sees a heavy set figure which suggests that his music will be boisterous. Andrew Marvell begins to present his medley of songs. Contrary to the first impression, the sounds are sweet and soft, melodious and peaceful. One must listen very carefully to hear the greatness of the tone. His soft brown hair and clear hazel eyes are the only physical features which help one to be sure that he is the musician who produces the pastoral sounds.

As Marvell sits there and plays, one has the feeling that the musician is restraining himself. He reminds one of a flower that is going to bloom and, yet, prolongs the conversion just to entice the observer. Certainly Andrew Marvell would not be teasing his audience! But the sly look in his eye and the graceful sureness with which he moves seem playfully to deceive his audience.

As Andrew Marvell continues his medley, several comments are exchanged among the people in the audience. Certainly the music is important, but in addition to the performance, one must consider the comments about it. After all, it is the audience who contributes greatly to the musician's success or failure.

Edmund Chambers leans near the person seated beside him and murmurs, ". . . For imaginative power, for decent melody, for that self-restraint of phrase which is the fair half of art, he must certainly hold high rank among his fellows."¹

QUIET GREATNESS

But A. C. Benson disagrees with Mr. Chambers. Mr. Benson has previously heard some of Andrew Marvell's more daring compositions, and he makes a most unfavorable comment. He says that Marvell's sounds suggest filthy and revolting images, that the soft and sweet tunes are forced, and that he is a coarse and foul artist.²

Immediately Andrew Marvell starts playing one of his sweetest songs as if intentionally to contradict Mr. Benson's biting words. The music is so clear and lovely that it forms distinct ringing words:

“And thus, ye meadows, which have been
Companions of my thoughts more green,
Shall now the heraldry become
With which I shall adorn my tomb;
For Juliana comes, and she,
What I do to the grass, does to my thoughts and me.”³

As Andrew Marvell finishes “The Mower's Song,” muffled whispers stir through the audience. Some comment about his light, playful overtones which contain a certain depth in unexpected places.⁴ Some recognize the wit that embraces intellectual qualities. Others can say nothing; they merely listen and think, seemingly enjoying the medley, and yet are not exactly able to express the precise qualities which make his music so enjoyable.

Hartley Coleridge is heard to say that no one could ever discover the strength of Andrew Marvell's compositions. He says that not all wits are remarkable for moral firmness and that Marvell does have integrity—the proof being in the fact that Marvell rejected previously a bribe from the king.⁵

Again, Andrew Marvell begins one of his greatest pieces, surprisingly enough, just after such a favorable comment:

“Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day. . .⁶

“Now that is simple enough,” thought one lady in the audience, “and, yet, it is truly beautiful. That's his secret-simple beauty—quiet greatness.”

Another fellow in the audience, Henry Rogers, comments that Marvell's contributions “(bear) the stamp of the revolution” which is now “passing on the language,” and that his sounds are simple and harmonious.⁷

(continued on next page)

A kind lady, Mary Mitford, who is sitting in the balcony, seems to be rather stunned by Mr. Marvell's performance. She acclaims him as a person whose mind is "a bright garden, such a garden as he (describes) so finely, and that a few gaudy weeds should mingle with the healthier plants does not but serve to prove the fertility of the soil."⁸ As Mary Mitford concludes her comment, Andrew Marvell's music seems to rush beneath her words, giving them support:

"How well the skillful gardener drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new,
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;
And as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we!
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?"⁹

Alexander Grosart, who sits beside Mary Mitford, readily adds his approval by saying that Marvell's sounds are "genuine as a bird's singing, or the singing of the brook on its gleaming way under the leafage."¹⁰

The sweet music stops, and the spotlight remains on Andrew Marvell only long enough for him to bow to the audience's applause. Certainly there are some members of the audience who sit quietly and show no physical approval, but, in general, Marvell's performance has been successful. The spotlight is turned off, but not before it catches the warm, sly look in Andrew Marvell's eyes. The performance was brief, but long enough to leave with the audience lingering music of quiet greatness.

FOOTNOTES

¹C. W. Moulton, *Library of Literary Criticism*, vol. II (New York: Moulton Publishing Co., 1935), p. 318.

²*Ibid.*, p. 319.

³Abrams, Donaldson, Smith, Adams, Monk, Ford, and Daiches (eds.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. I (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1962), p. 864.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 860.

⁵Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

⁶Abrams, and others (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 868.

⁷Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 317.

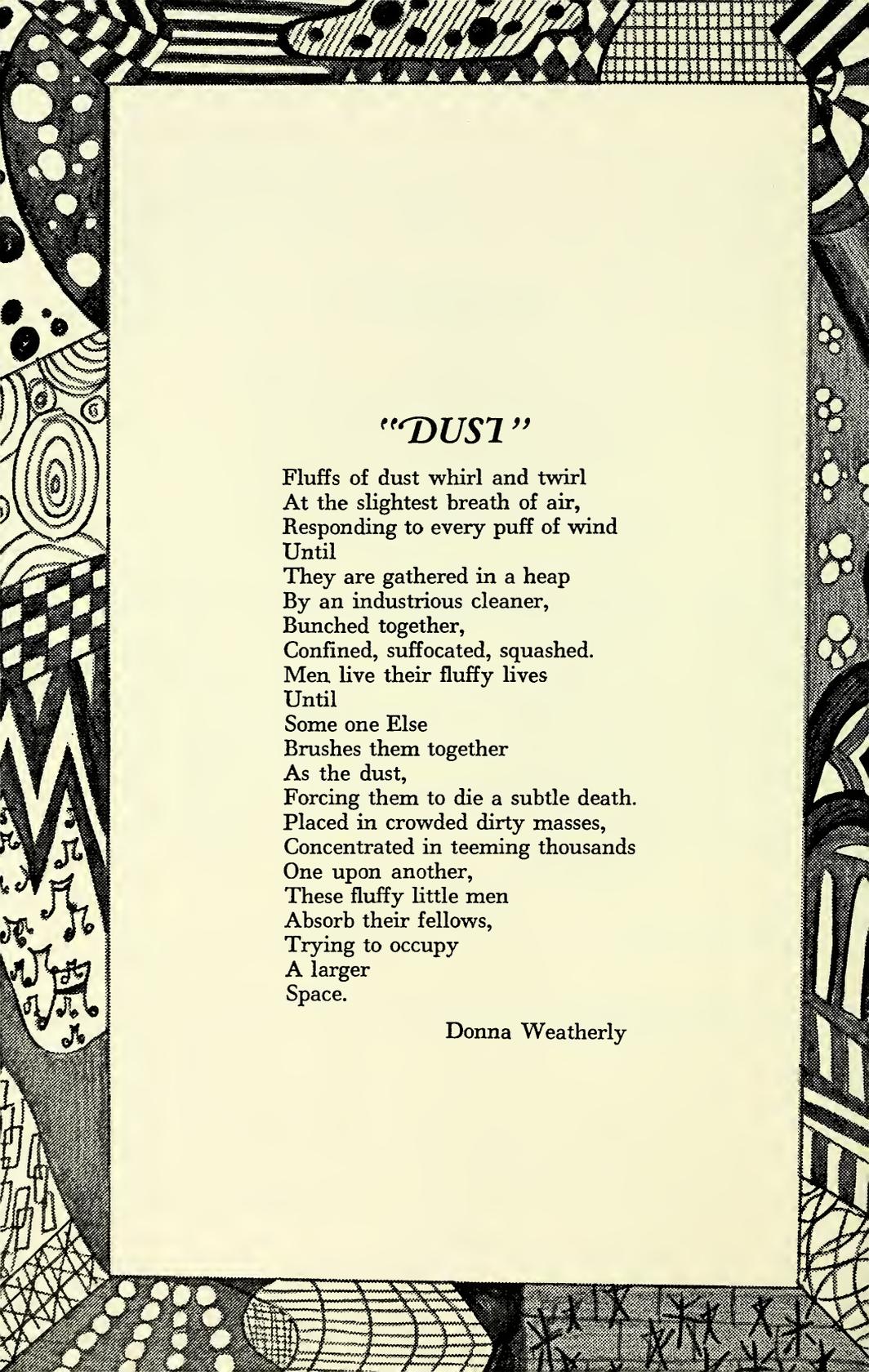
⁹Abrams, and others (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 862-863.

¹⁰Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

The Future

I look into the future
And I see the lost life—
The human mind
Tricked and formed by others;
I see the multitudes of
Machine people,
Created by those who
Search for the ultimate
End.
Now the answer is unknown,
But some day a theory
Will convince too many.
Then no life,
No truth,
No God will remain;
Space will be a welcomed conception
To the mind.
For although it is
Vast between the light years—
It is there,
And, is not
A void toy of
Man's nothingness.

Gayle Ray



“DUST”

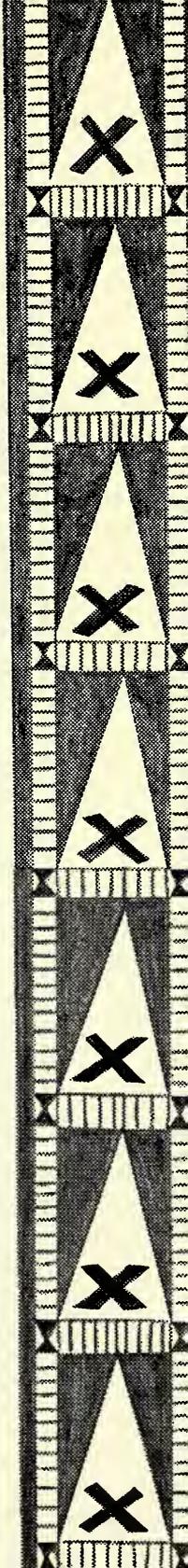
Fluffs of dust whirl and twirl
At the slightest breath of air,
Responding to every puff of wind
Until
They are gathered in a heap
By an industrious cleaner,
Bunched together,
Confined, suffocated, squashed.
Men live their fluffy lives
Until
Some one Else
Brushes them together
As the dust,
Forcing them to die a subtle death.
Placed in crowded dirty masses,
Concentrated in teeming thousands
One upon another,
These fluffy little men
Absorb their fellows,
Trying to occupy
A larger
Space.

Donna Weatherly

A Picture of Death

A mud-dry yard, rampant
With wild weeds;
A house pulled up by the nail-
 studs
Of its rusted roots;
Home of the dung-hued rat,
The shrieking outraged owl,
And shreds of decomposed clothing
Which once covered Bodies that
 wanted
Something . . .
Beyond the knotted post
Crudely carved, a horse's head atop,
Where someone left the rotted rope
Cut, and rode cleanly away,
The half-acre of forgottenness
Is gutted for a well.
Dry, droughth, the toad
Asleep. Poison sacs in his back;
A bucked, blistered and cracked,
Suspended 'til it fall.
Asleep, stone lips parched parted.
No rain.

Eleanor Kevan



MY FRIEND IGOR

by Carolyn B. Rice

The word "Russian" will always invoke for me the face of my friend Igor: large, bony, boldly molded features, heavy, black, overhanging brows, and strong lines of perplexity and suffering.

His life, properly recorded, would be a long, Russian novel full of dark, violent events, suffering, and ultimate tragedy. Both his parents were children of the intelligentsia, who early took up cudgels for reform but their backgrounds had so molded them that they were never able to go the whole mile; consequently they were never on any winning side. A portent: they met in prison, while both were students; some obscure reform had swept them to a rash act for which they were soon released. An engineer, Igor's father was stationed in Balkan cities where they associated with foreigners and traveled in social circles in which only French was spoken. World War I, the revolution, the counterattack by the White Russians; the victory of Bolshevism; and Igor and his family fled to the east. Igor soon learned to speak Russian in Siberia. Their steady progress east was measured by the steady advance of Bolshevism across Siberia. Vladivostok was a refuge until the Reds turned their attentions there. Across to Sakhalin and down into Japan went the little family. Later the opportunity arose for a good position for the father in a southern island of the Philippines. Again the family moved; again new languages. Here the family put down roots and prospered. Igor finally finished his pre-college education and was sent to America for college. From his account, Igor experienced little difficulty with America and the language.

I wonder if his college years were happy ones? Once I asked Igor if he was happy in a particular place in his past. His heavy forehead wrinkled with study. I never got a concrete answer. Did he know what happiness was?

In Igor's senior year at college his father became quite ill, and Igor left hurriedly for the Philippines. A few short weeks after his arrival the Japanese attacked. Because he had been a ROTC student in the United States, Igor was immediately sworn into the U. S. Army as an officer. His island fell after a short struggle, and Igor was a POW for the rest of World War II.

Why was he beaten so frequently? Was it some resistance in his character, or only the traditional hatred of Japanese and Russians for each other? I feel it was because of a small people's dislike of an enemy's immense height and the largeness and broadness of his gaunt, bony frame. He said he was never able to bow low enough to suit his

MY FRIEND IGOR

captors. He developed a permanent stoop in his attempt to appear less conspicuous and more subservient.

Liberation found Igor weak, wasted, disease ridden, and with a damaged spine. During recuperation in an Army hospital in the United States he met and married a young war widow with two small sons. His wife was a strikingly handsome woman, but she was to prove almost neurotic in her dissatisfaction with whatever her status. Her sons were handsome and well behaved—to all appearances a bond of friendship developed between them and their stepfather.

The War Crimes Trials brought this family to Japan. Igor said that he could only bring himself to testify about one of his captors; a Japanese officer who once attempted to make his prisoner's life less miserable.

The Army decided to keep the family in Japan because of Igor's proficiency in the Japanese and Russian languages. A few months later I joined the unit to which Igor was assigned: a small intelligence and counter-intelligence unit on the snow and ocean bound, northernmost island of Japan.

Activity was restricted by the weather, the lack of roads and cities, and the inaccessibility of our island. There was no air traffic and the only approach was by a four-hour trip from the northern tip of Honshu over open seas on a ferryboat which occasionally was swamped by the rough waters—consequently, there were few visitors and the only Americans were personnel of the Division and their attached units, of which we were one. Social life revolved around and around the same faces, the same club, and the same bar.

Whether the lack lay in Igor's slow, methodical ways, in their physical marriage, or in his wife's inability to lead a normal life—whatever the lack, she turned impatiently and contemptuously to other men. Was Igor deceived? Her lovers were so indiscreet of tongue that it is doubtful. Yet there was a gentleness, a goodness, and a simplicity about the man that made me think he would not be suspicious by nature. Certainly, with his politeness, he would never question her word.

I have many mental pictures of them: his coldly beautiful and well-groomed wife charming a visiting general and Igor confounding him with his ponderous humor; a happy time for the whole family at a Japanese hot springs resort hotel with his wife relaxed and laughing and the whole family laughing with her; Igor, the essence of dignity and protocol at a dinner for touring Chinese and Russian dignitaries; and his singularly discordant display of rudeness to one group of people—our unit's disguised guests, Russian defectors. Their motives, as are the

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motives of all turncoats, were suspect; but the rest of our unit, composed of Nisei, first generation Russian-Americans, and English stock Americans, accepted these defectors from across the two miles of water that separated us from Russian territory and shielded them, sometimes for months, hidden from Americans and Japanese alike. Igor, however, all but spat on them. It wasn't that they were just defectors; no one in an intelligence unit, really, in his heart, has any respect for a defector—temporary use, yes; pity, yes; respect, no. It was just that they were the spawn of Communism, I think. Now, there he had Russian officers and enlisted men representing many levels of intelligence and education—some as ignorant of the principles of Communism as any American of the same mental capacity and poverty-stricken background. To Igor, all of them were potential mad dogs. Try as he might, he couldn't conceal his feelings. One night a young Russian pilot stole and drank a quart of gin and all but tore the place apart in his drunken exuberance. All the Russian-speaking personnel were at their wits end attempting to reason him out of his wildness. Then Igor walked in. He surveyed the situation and simply slugged the pilot just before he was starting on his second tour around the outside of the building on the coping that ran around the fourth floor. Such action from so gentle a person as Igor stunned everyone. "That," he muttered grimly, first in Russian and then in English, "is the only thing *they* understand—force."

Igor had a very traumatic experience about that time. He told me the whole story without any glint of humor while I choked down hysterical laughter. His back, injured by his guards while he was a POW, troubled him from time to time, but he bore it bravely and silently. At length he was in such pain and so physically incapacitated he was put to bed to await the monthly hospital train to any Army hospital in Tokyo. When the train arrived it had only one car and that for the accumulated neuro-psychiatric patients. Under the never-failing guidance of Igor's unlucky star, the car unloaded in Tokyo at the NP hospital. Igor was one month escaping from the NP hospital to the general hospital where he spent another month in casts and traction. The eager psychiatrists and psychologists at the NP hospital had converged on Igor with ill-concealed delight. His orders, his explanations were ignored as only medical officers can succeed in doing in the Army. At last, they all but chortled, a patient with real psychosomatic symptoms who obviously was suffering from a deep-seated hatred of the Japanese as a result of his wartime imprisonment. Igor slowly found out he was the only POW they had ever met professionally, and they tackled him with obvious relish. No matter Igor's protestations that he

MY FRIEND IGOR

didn't hate Japanese, he just hated Communists; no matter his obvious courtesy to everyone in the hospital, American and Japanese alike. At length, driven by the torture of his injuries, Igor with superhuman effort straightened his back, declared he hated the very guts of every yellow-bellied bastard on the face of the earth, and the next day walked out of the NP hospital—and stumbled into the general hospital.

Eventually the family received their orders to return to the States. On a Thursday night we put them on the train to the seacoast. They would arrive in Tokyo Saturday morning and sail Sunday from Yokohama at 10 a.m. Early that Sunday morning, the North Koreans invaded and attacked South Korea. All orders were cancelled for military personnel, but their families sailed.

Igor and I found ourselves both in Tokyo, I recalled to the Air Force, he reassigned to GHQ. I joined my unit in southern Honshu. Soon I heard from Igor that he was escort officer on "The Widow's Special," a train that brought back from Kyushu, for shipment to the United States, the wives and families of Armed Forces personnel reported or presumed dead or missing in action. At the Tokyo layover of this run my husband and I once had dinner with him in a White Russian sector which we had never dreamed existed. We visited with him in the home of a boyhood Russian friend. I saw a relaxed, witty (judging by the host's laughter; we could not understand the language), and gay Igor—as I had never seen him before: in his own environment.

The last time I saw Igor was when I got a message to meet his train which passed my station at 2 a.m. There we paced and stamped away the twenty-minute station stop in the driving snow, sleet, and cutting wind. He showed me the slim, strong nylon rope he carried with him at all times. "Never," he said violently, "*never* will I be a POW again. This," dangling the rope, "will prevent it."

"But, Igor, your .45," I said. "It's more certain."

He shook his head and set his jaws grimly for a moment. "No, you don't know what sudden capture is. *This* is more certain."

The war dragged on. Then peace negotiations dragged on. I was finally posted back to America. My first trip that took me to an Army intelligence unit was a long time in the waiting. No one there knew at the moment where Igor was. After my return to my own base I received a letter from one of the friends I'd seen. It told me sadly what a transient officer reportedly had heard: soon after Igor's return to the United States he had hanged himself.

My poor, tortured, kind, friend Igor. Was it sudden capture or sudden surrender?



To Those Who Crawl

Gash-worn belly creature,
You can have your ulcered sores of success;
You can whine and whimper and tell your half-truths
To dumb ears;
They will listen.
Such agony they see in you is real,
But not from what they suspect;
They see it from your extra strength in effort,
Overload, and lack of time,
But, others see it for what it is,
Crying stupidity and gradual-spent self respect.

Gayle Ray

AS ATOMS FALL

A Study of Stream of Consciousness Fiction

by Mary Anne Lipford

“Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearances, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.”

—Virginia Woolf

“Stream of consciousness”—at the mention of the term, the English student’s mind emits groans of distaste based on misunderstanding. “Psychological chaos,” . . . “rambling confessions,” . . . “plotted confusion,” . . . “unnecessary complexity” are his mind’s labels for the genre, one he wastes little time in abandoning. Indeed, for this English student, too, stream of consciousness writing has been a hard nut to crack. But by careful chewing on a few basic kernels of thought, a clearer understanding is possible—with the added probability of a better digestion of the assigned novels by Joyce and Faulkner when they are perused for the second time.

Though Lawrence E. Bowling may have a few advocates of his terminology, “stream of consciousness technique,” it is more generally agreed that “stream of consciousness” refers not to a technique, but to a subject matter rendered via a technique. In his *Stream of Consciousness: A Study in Literary Method*, Melvin Friedman observes that “stream of consciousness” designates a type of novel in the same way as “ode” or “sonnet” designates a type of poem; the ode and sonnet use different techniques which distinguish each from the other, as do the narrative and stream of consciousness novel.¹

The technical difference between the narrative and stream of consciousness novel is based on the two different forms of thinking: directed and dream-like thinking. While the thinking of characters in the traditional narrative novel is dictated by the author, the stream of consciousness writer steps aside, even as he attempts to describe the flowing stream of his thought of his characters, and permits them to express themselves in words of their own mentality.

The depiction of the inner state of a human being is a brave undertaking! Using Robert Humphrey’s analogy of the consciousness to an

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iceberg,² it should be acknowledged that the stream of consciousness writer abandons the conventional, obvious, and small subject area of external actions and recognizes the forceful drama of the much larger area beneath the surface. He deals mainly with the pre-speech level of the consciousness. His unique subject presents a unique problem: that of presenting a picture of mental chaos that is unchaotic enough for the reader to grasp.

Dostoevsky could well have been mapping the course of work for stream of consciousness writers when he wrote: "Whole trains of thought sometimes pass through our brains instantaneously as though they were sensations without being translated into human speech, still less into literary language. But we will try to translate these sensations of our hero's, and present . . . at least what was most essential."³ Dostoevsky warns his map followers, however, that many of the sensations they will translate into ordinary language will seem absolutely unreal. "That," he says, "is why they never find expression." (p. 338).

Hesitant to venture into the lengthy psychological discussion that the study of the consciousness merits, this writer will limit her remarks to the stream of consciousness in literature, and leave more scientific speculation to Freud, Jung, and Bergson.

The description of the stream of consciousness is not the newborn literary babe of our twentieth century. Socrates and Plato recognized it; in the latter's *Dialogues* he describes thought as a dialogue of the soul within itself. Shakespeare allows Lady Macbeth's free association of ideas to be interrupted by other speakers, but it is an example of the stream of consciousness as presented via the soliloquy technique.

Yet here's a spot. Out damned spot! Out,
I say! One, two: why, then 'tis time to
do't. . . . Who would have thought the old
man to have so much blood in him? The
Thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?⁴

We see, then, that writers were describing their characters' consciousness long before William James coined the metaphorical phrase "stream of consciousness" in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1884. His allusion to the mind's workings as a stream seems apropos, for both are characterized by wanderings and changes of course. James contends that consciousness is not fragmented; hence, "train" or "chain" of thought would be misleading. "Thought," he says, "is nothing jointed. It flows."⁵ James' influence on the development of poetry and the novel cannot be overemphasized. His *Principles* appeared during a transitional period which could have led back to traditional forms or ahead

AS ATOMS FALL

to the new tradition of Proust, Joyce, Richardson, and Faulkner. The work of Henri Bergson, who gives a mathematical space-time twist to James' ideas, was extended by Sigmund Freud, whose study of dreams regards the unconscious as the true psychic reality which embraces the smaller realm of the conscious.

Coupled with the groundwork laid by James, Bergson, and Freud, romanticism's emphasis on introspection and feeling made a mild epidemic of stream of consciousness writing inevitable. As America's factories produced weapons in preparation for World War I, the pens of three widely separated novelists, Proust, Joyce, and Richardson, were producing works that would launch the attack on the traditional narrative novel. And in more recent years, others have turned to the stream of consciousness genre.

Why have they elected to abandon dramas of external action for internal character analysis? They recognize the opportunity for more complete objectivity in presenting their view of life offered by the stream of consciousness genre. In *Ulysses*, James Joyce, hailed by some as the most skillful of the stream of consciousness writers, presents life with its shortcomings and contradictions. The result: a satire on life, probably more acceptable to the reader because he feels, and rightly, that he is reading the thoughts of the characters and not of a dictatorial, omniscient author. Virginia Woolf uses the internal analysis subject because of her conviction that the important thing in life is the individual's search for reality and that this search is not a dramatic external action. Faulkner's use of the stream of consciousness genre can be traced to his combination of the world view of Joyce and Woolf.

We note Granville Hick's accusation in the Autumn, 1948, issue of *The Kenyon Review*, that Faulkner's stream of consciousness novels have an overly calculated complexity: "One can almost imagine Mr. Faulkner inventing his stories in regular chronological order and then recasting them in some distorted form."⁶ But a cursory reading of Faulkner's lectures given at the University of Virginia has convinced this writer that in the first three sections of *The Sound and the Fury*, the author's primary concern is not to present the facts of a story, but to present the reactions of certain characters to these facts, and, accordingly, the stream of consciousness genre was the best tool on the workman's shelf for this purpose. Faulkner admitted in more than one question-answer session that he had planned to write the novel only from Benjy's point of view. Feeling that section had failed, he added the interpretation of events of another brother, and yet another.

Just as Joyce's desire to satirize life dictates the use of the stream of consciousness genre in *Ulysses*, Faulkner's story about disorder, dis-

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intergration, and the lack of perspective of the Compson family dictates his employment of Benjy's perspectiveless mind. Subsequent examples in this paper will show the genre's adaptability to this story of a degenerating South that refuses to acknowledge the passing of time by tearing the hands off the clock.

Having discovered, then, why some writers have turned to the description of their characters' streams of thought, let us consider the problems these novelists face. Faulkner acknowledges the sense of failure that assails him concerning his "most magnificent failure," *The Sound and the Fury*. Virginia Woolf's early novels succumb to the pitfall of an overabundance of technique. There is a danger, too, of a studied incoherence in stream of consciousness writing. The nature of consciousness itself is the well-spring of most problems, however. The trick of invading the privacy of a character's mind without disturbing the fluidity of its processes is no snap.

James recognizes the problematic limitations of language when he says that "no existing language is capable of doing justice to all the shades of the mind."⁷ Bergson prescribes a panacea—idealistic though it is: the writer simply must make us forget he uses words.⁸ This is not to grant the stream of consciousness writer license for uncalculated spontaneity. Paradoxically, he is subject to the most rigid technical methods of literature.

The choice of four basic techniques by which to reveal the flow of consciousness of a character awaits him. The interior monologue, first employed by Edouard Dujardin in *Les Lauriers sont coupés*, is frequently—and erroneously—used interchangeably with "stream of consciousness." Robert Humphrey tells us that Dujardin's "monologue interieur" is the technique used in fiction for representing the psychic content and processes of character, partly or entirely unuttered, as they exist at various levels of conscious control.⁹ The difference between interior monologue and soliloquy, another technique, is clearly denoted by the "partly or entirely unuttered" of the monologue's definition.

Two types of interior monologue exist; direct interior monologue achieves the minimum of author interference and uses none of the "he says," and occasional descriptive passages of indirect interior monologue. Benjy's section is a juxtaposition of direct and indirect monologue because his mind is incapable of thoughts prerequisite for a soliloquy.

The most familiar technique for conveying a character's stream of consciousness is description by an omniscient author. Dorothy Richard-

AS ATOMS FALL

son uses the conventional methods of narration that characterize this technique in *Pilgrimage*, more easily understood than the mixture of techniques in *The Sound and the Fury*:

The little shock sent her mind feeling out along the road they had just left. She considered its unbroken length, its shops, its treelessness. . . . The people passing along were . . . she could find no word for the strange impression they made.¹⁰

In comparison, Benjy's thoughts are presented by interior monologue and bear no evidence of editorial liberties save the author's use of italics. And so, as Bowling points out, we find ourselves completely alone with the idiot Benjy, trying to get the necessary information from him. An excerpt from the scene in which Benjy's hand is seared by the fire shows the highly objective impressions his mind renders. Its calm would almost lead one to believe that he is reporting someone else's burn rather than his own:

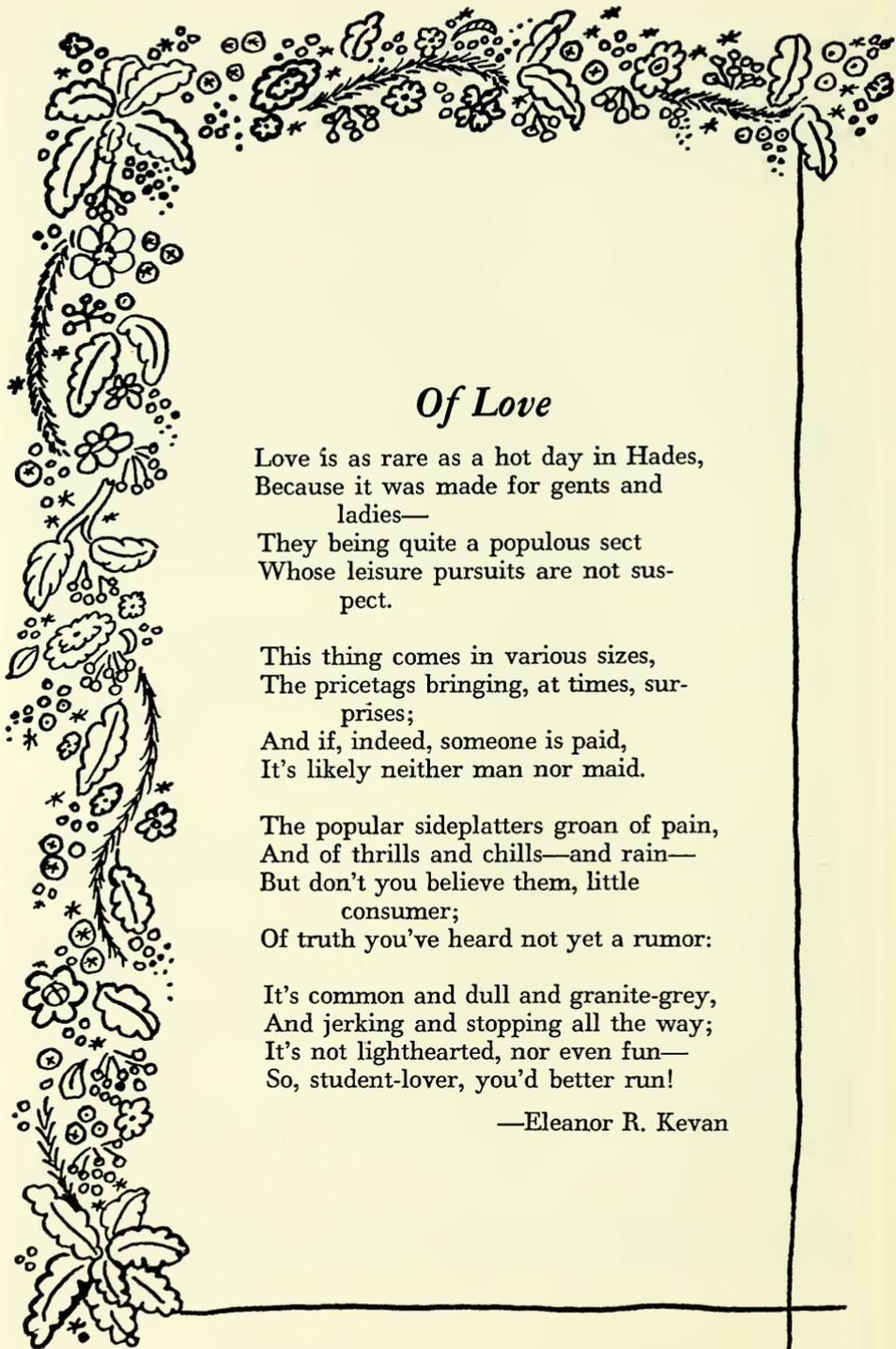
I put my hand out to where the fire had been. "Catch him." Dilsey said. "Catch him back." My hand jerked back and I put it in my mouth and Dilsey caught me. . . . "Get the soda." Dilsey said . . . My voice went loud. She sprinkled soda on my hand.¹¹

The fourth of the techniques, the prose soliloquy, assumes the presence of an immediate audience and serves as an information center for that audience. Naturally, a greater coherence is found in the soliloquy, but it sacrifices depth in its description of the consciousness.

The four basic techniques have, of course, variations which have resulted from experimentation within the genre. One of the most interesting variations is the technique of employing verse to depict a character's thoughts. Freudian psychology tends indirectly to make poetry indigenous to the constitution of the conscious mind; dreaming and poetry-making, with their mutual dependence on sensory impressions, are close kin. Friedman suggest that every stream of consciousness writer should, theoretically, be a poet as well as novelist.

Nor is poetry the sole art to which the stream of consciousness genre is related. Stream of consciousness fiction owes as much to music as it does to James and Freud. Fiction's structure has been musicalized, and discussion of counterpoint and leitmotif is frequent in stream of consci-

(continued on page 31)



Of Love

Love is as rare as a hot day in Hades,
Because it was made for gents and
ladies—

They being quite a populous sect
Whose leisure pursuits are not sus-
pect.

This thing comes in various sizes,
The pricetags bringing, at times, sur-
prises;
And if, indeed, someone is paid,
It's likely neither man nor maid.

The popular sideplatters groan of pain,
And of thrills and chills—and rain—
But don't you believe them, little
consumer;
Of truth you've heard not yet a rumor:

It's common and dull and granite-grey,
And jerking and stopping all the way;
It's not lighthearted, nor even fun—
So, student-lover, you'd better run!

—Eleanor R. Kevan

THE FRUIT OF THE SABRA

by Carole Ann Dawson

A Kind of Magic. By Edna Ferber. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963. 335 pp. \$5.75.

THE sabra, a type of cactus which grows in Israel, bears fruit that has extremely sharp prickles on the outside but is succulently sweet on the inside. However, one rarely penetrates beyond the spears that surround the fruit. An analogy may be drawn between the fruit and life in that the sweetness and happiness of life is often covered by the prickles of despair and hopelessness. When this occurs, many of us retreat and cease trying to reach life's sweetness. Edna Ferber is one person who has courageously stood fast and has not retreated when she has felt discouraged. Although Edna Ferber's autobiography, *A Kind of Magic*, is an inventory of only the past twenty-five years, the reader learns of Miss Ferber's life since childhood and witnesses her triumphs and defeats as the years pass by.

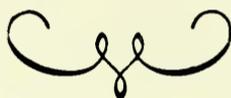
While one reads this fascinating personal account, he is transferred back to the sleepy little Mid-western town of Appleton, Wisconsin. Edna Ferber's mother, who runs a general store and supports her blind husband and two children, is a symbol of indomitability to her daughter. At seventeen, Edna is a young woman filled with an avidity for learning and writing. Then she turns from journalism to writing novels, plays, and short stories and begins the career that transports her down the road of fame and wealth, sorrow and happiness. There is the happiness of planning and building her New England estate, the joy of doing research and writing a novel, and of knowing that she has completed her endeavors to the best of her ability. There is the warm feeling Miss Ferber has when she helps a small group of Jews to escape the fanatic madness of Hitler's Germany. Then there is the tragedy felt when one of the boys, a brilliant scholar, escapes and comes to this country, only to die beneath the wheels of a bus.

While taking inventory of her emotions and convictions, Edna Ferber tells of the places she has visited. Texas, Alaska, and Israel are among the many. The most memorable trip Miss Ferber has made was her spring in war-torn Europe as a correspondent. This has remained locked in her memory and has affected her emotions greatly because she will never be able to erase from her mind the horror felt when viewing the staggering damage done. Miss Ferber also tells of people who have affected her life and writing.

(continued on next page)

THE FRUIT OF THE SABRA (continued from page 29)

After completing *A Kind of Magic*, Edna Ferber comes to the conclusion that although the world has not always been kind to her, she is still able to say, "World, I love you. I have always loved you . . . or almost always." Upon reading this survey of incidents in the life of Edna Ferber, one immediately realizes that the author of this intimate, spiritual autobiography is a person of great value. Edna Ferber's philosophy of life may be compared to that of Sara Teasdale in the first line of one of her loveliest poems, "Barter": "Life has loveliness to sell." In *A Kind of Magic* it is evident that life had loveliness to sell to Miss Ferber, and she bought all she could.



THE INNOCUOUS MAN (continued from page 9)

was looking. So I was left up against a brick wall. I polished off the beer and went to bed. The next morning, I got up and almost burned the files. But I reconsidered. After all, there were hundreds of hours of work and a hell of a lot of onionskin invested in these files. Then again, I wondered: Was there a perfect innocuous man? It took a few hours of deep thought, but the answer suddenly came up in bright lights and technicolor. I had the perfect innocuous man. Or close enough to perfect for me. It was Jack, and I'd never noticed him. That was just it. I'd never noticed him. He was quiet enough, except when his wife was at a church meeting; even then he would sneak a look out the window to see if she was coming. His innocuousness was a result of his environment, namely that wife. But he was really innocuous. He doesn't know which end's up, what with that wife, and under those circumstances, how can you *help* being innocuous?

But I'm encouraged. I thought I was losing my touch there for a while. Anyway, don't call me for a few days. I won't answer. I'm writing again.

ousness criticism. The Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury* proceeds through counterpoint: the andante movement of his mind is evident as his consciousness slowly unfolds. As a matter of fact, the entire novel could be said to be constructed on an analogy to a musical form. Its four variations on one theme make it not unlike the fugue. The sonata form, in which there is the statement of a first subject, a contrasting second subject, and a closing statement is the other most oft-used form when novelists attempt musical analogies. Indeed, Wagner's famous simile seems to have been fulfilled by the stream of consciousness writer: ". . . two travelers, a poet and a musician, began their journey round the world in opposite directions, until the poet finally came upon the musician's ship and embraced his artistic will."¹²

Several controls act as gears for the techniques and variations discussed above, and it is these controls which actually achieve the texture of the private consciousness. The principle of free association of ideas is chief among these controls and is exemplified in this passage from Benjy's fence scene:

"Wait a minute." Luster said. "Can't you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail."
Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through . . .
Keep your hands in your pocket, Caddy said.
Or they'll get froze. . . .
"It's too cold out here." Versh said. . . .¹³

The association of ideas in this passage is clear enough, but in other stream of consciousness work when there seems to be no logical connection between the gamut of ideas represented, it must be remembered that egocentricity accompanies each character's psychic processes.

Figurative language and rhetorical devices like repetition are two more gears for the techniques of a stream of consciousness writer:

"Aren't you even going to open it Mr and Mrs Jason
Richmond Compson announce the . . .
Aren't you even going to open it marriage of their
daughter. . . ."¹⁴

It is not surprising that another of the gears is that of symbol and imagery; for in attempting to present the private consciousness for which there is no language, stream of consciousness that concocts and gives meaning to all the world's symbols, mental functioning is symbol-making. Probably symbols are used with the least calculation by writers. Asked about some symbolization in *The Sound and the Fury*,

(continued on next page)

Faulkner confided that though some people derive a certain amount of pleasure from hunting around in a writer's work for symbols, the writer himself is too busy writing about people to worry about whether he uses symbols or not. (He admitted, incidentally, that symbol-hunting is completely valid and worthwhile).

The symbolism in *The Sound and the Fury*, is present and powerful, whether created by the minds of Faulkner or his critics. Firelight could be a symbol of the idiot's insight, Caddy's soiled drawers could be a symbol of her honor that is later stained, and the Compsons' degeneration is most likely a symbol of the degeneration of the entire South.

The last set of gears to be considered is that of mechanics, especially punctuation. *The Sound and the Fury* exhibits constantly occurring examples of punctuation's importance in stream of consciousness writing. To show Benjy's inability to distinguish between the past and present, Faulkner uses the same capitalization and punctuation for both. The absence of exclamation points and question marks reflects Benjy's flat thoughts. Quentin's section communicates the recognition of a higher intelligence and so, with the exception of his recounting of the Dalton Ames fight, the speeches and descriptive passages are paragraphed separately. The absence of orthodox punctuation and capitalization characterizes the Dalton Ames episode. In the last part of Quentin's section, Faulkner begins to omit capitals on names and on "I." The dying Quentin is becoming less and less interested in these things that were so important in life.

The most interesting—and often the most perplexing—of Faulkner's uses of punctuation is that of italics. Humphrey explains their presence by saying that they herald the beginning of each direct interior monologue. Bowling suggests that the italics indicate every shift in Benjy's thought. Faulkner himself told a class on one occasion that he used the italics to indicate that the idiot has no sense of time. Faulkner had wanted to print the flashbacks in different colored inks, but the costs put some halting "gears" to that plan!

"Stream of consciousness"—at the mention of the term, the English student's mind is brightened by a flash of recognition. He knows that the setting of a novel written in this genre is the character's mind, the time covers the span of the character's memory, the setting is wherever the mind wanders, and the action is whatever the mind perceives, recalls, or imagines. The nut has not been impenetrable, and inside there is sweet understanding of an exciting dimension in literature.

AS ATOMS FALL

FOOTNOTES

¹Melvin Friedman, "Preliminary Considerations," *Stream of Consciousness: A Study in Literary Method* (New Haven, 1955), p. 4.

²Robert Humphrey, "The Functions," *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* (Los Angeles, 1954), p. 4.

³Dostoevsky, "An Unpleasant Predicament," as quoted in "What is the Stream of Consciousness Technique?" *PMLA*, June, 1950, p. 334.

⁴Leon Edel, "Atmosphere of the Mind," *The Psychological Novel* (New York, 1955), p. 23.

⁵Friedman, p. 2.

⁶Granville Hicks, "The Past and Future of William Faulkner," as quoted in "Faulkner: Technique of Sound and the Fury," *The Kenyon Review* (Autumn, 1948), p. 552.

⁷William James, *Principles of Psychology*, as quoted by Friedman, p. 78.

⁸Henri Bergson, *L'Energie Spirituelle*, as quoted in Friedman, p. 87.

⁹Humphrey, p. 24.

¹⁰Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage*, as quoted by Humphrey, pp. 34-35.

¹¹William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York, 1929), p. 51.

¹²Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, as quoted in Friedman, p. 121.

¹³Faulkner, p. 24.

¹⁴Faulkner, p. 124.



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