

***KYK-OVER-AL***

**Volume 3**

**Issue 13**

**Year-End 1951**

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Year-End 1951.

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**THE GUYANA CLASSICS LIBRARY**

**Series Preface by the President of Guyana,  
H. E. Bharrat Jagdeo**

**General Editors:**

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## SERIES PREFACE

Modern Guyana came into being, in the Western imagination, through the travelogue of Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of Guiana* (1595). Raleigh was as beguiled by Guiana's landscape ("I never saw a more beautiful country...") as he was by the prospect of plunder ("every stone we stooped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion"). Raleigh's contemporaries, too, were doubly inspired, writing, as Thoreau says, of Guiana's "majestic forests", but also of its earth, "resplendent with gold." By the eighteenth century, when the trade in Africans was in full swing, writers cared less for Guiana's beauty than for its mineral wealth. Sugar was the poet's muse, hence the epic work by James Grainger *The Sugar Cane* (1764), a poem which deals with subjects such as how best to manure the sugar cane plant, the most effective diet for the African slaves, worming techniques, etc. As John Singleton confessed (in his *General Description of the West Indies*, 1776), there was no contradiction between the manufacture of odes and that of sugar: "...a fine exuberant plant, which clothes the fields with the richest verdure. There is, I believe, scarcely any cultivation which yields so lucrative a return per acre as under favourable circumstances, than that of the sugar cane. So bountiful a gift of Providence seems not only calculated to call forth the activity and enterprise of the agriculturalist and merchant, but to awaken also feelings of a higher and more refined enthusiasm." The refinement of art and that of sugar were one and the same process.

The nineteenth century saw the introduction of Indian indentureship, but as the sugar industry expanded, literary works contracted. Edward Jenkins' novel *Lutchmee and Dilloo* (1877) was the only substantial fiction on Guiana, and whilst it was broadly sympathetic to the plight of Indian labourers, it was certain of Britain's imperial destiny, and rights over mineral resources. It was not until the period leading up to

Guiana's Independence from Britain (1966) and the subsequent years, that our own writers of Amerindian, African, Asian and European ancestry (A. J. Seymour, Wilson Harris, Jan Carew, Edgar Mittelholzer, Martin Carter, Rajkumari Singh et al.) attempted to purify literature of its commercial taint, restoring to readers a vision of the complexity of the Guyanese character and the beauty of the Guyanese landscape.

The Guyana Classics Library will republish out-of-print poetry, novels and travelogues so as to remind us of our literary heritage, and it will also remind us of our reputation for scholarship in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology and politics, through the reprinting of seminal works in these subjects. The Series builds upon previous Guyanese endeavours, like the institution of CARIFESTA and the Guyana Prize. I am delighted that my government has originated the project and has pledged that every library in the land will be furnished with titles from the Series, so that all Guyanese can appreciate our monumental achievement in moving from Exploitation to Expression. If the Series becomes the foundation and inspiration for future literary and scholarly works, then my government will have moved towards fulfilling one of its primary tasks, which is the educational development of our people.

**President Bharrat Jagdeo**

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***KYK-OVER-AL***  
**Volume 3**  
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**The Caribbean Press**



## DEDICATION

This Volume is dedicated to the memory of A.J. Seymour, poet; editor; scholar and pioneer of Caribbean cultural production. He gave a lifetime of service to the literary arts of the region.



## INTRODUCTION

First published in Guyana in December 1945, *Kyk-Over-Al* was to become one of the most significant and long-running literary magazines in the Caribbean. Over the course of some 50 issues it has featured work by many of the leading writers from Guyana and the wider Caribbean, publishing the early poetry and fiction of such groundbreaking authors as Wilson Harris and Martin Carter, as well as important critical essays, histories, and reviews. Between 1945 and 1961, the journal was edited by the poet A. J. Seymour, a “committed literary figure and cultural architect” whose editorial notes and frequent essays for *Kyk-Over-Al* represent landmark contributions to the forging of a Guyanese literary culture.<sup>1</sup> Following Seymour’s departure from Guyana in 1962, the journal went into abeyance until a revival in 1984 under the editorship of Seymour and the poet and novelist Ian McDonald. With the death of Seymour in 1989, McDonald became sole editor. The magazine has continued to appear intermittently into the 2000s, with activist and writer Vanda Radzik joining McDonald on editorial duties.

*Kyk-Over-Al* was founded by the British Guiana Writers’ Association and the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs, of which Seymour was Honorary Secretary. Costing a shilling and with a cover design by Cecil E. Barker, the first edition of the journal declared its intention to “...cultivate among British Guiana’s writers the art of setting out a point of view persuasively even when wholly uncompromising; always giving short shrift to the brow-beating and the intolerant; that it will assist our readers with the enquiring and challenging mind; and that, in pointing the way to a clear appreciation of British Guiana’s problems, it will contribute towards the efforts of all our people to achieve full responsibility in personal and community decisions.”<sup>2</sup> The name *Kyk-Over-Al* (“see over all”), taken from the ruined Dutch fort at the confluence of the Essequibo, Mazaruni, and Cuyuni rivers, was meant to signify the need “for quick and wide vigilance and the expression of an alert people.”<sup>3</sup> As Seymour

made clear in his editorial notes, the magazine was to be actively engaged in the project of building the Guyanese nation and of shaping a unique culture. *Kyk-Over-Al*, he wrote, will be “an instrument to help forge a Guianese people, to make them conscious of their intellectual and spiritual possibilities.”<sup>4</sup>

Seymour’s ambitions for the magazine chime with the upsurge in nationalist sentiment and the increasing agitation for political sovereignty that spread like wildfire across the Caribbean in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Against this backdrop, as Nelini Persram has observed, what “raged in the debates and expositions of *Kyk-Over-Al* assisted in the conscious articulation and awareness of an emerging Guyanese culture, something unprecedented in the country’s history. For Seymour the central interest was how, with the historical influence and domination of the language of English, the Guyanese could take the old colonial world and remake it into their own nation.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Seymour stressed the need for Guyanese, and Caribbean peoples more generally, to “make an act of possession somehow of our environment and the faster the better.”<sup>6</sup> Many of the stories and poems that appeared in the early issues of the magazine can be read as a direct response to Seymour’s enjoiner. The first issue, for instance, carries a fascinating piece of short fiction by Wilson Harris, ‘**Tomorrow**’, which provides an early glimpse of some of the themes (if not yet the unique prose style) that he would explore over the course his long career. Intriguingly, the story gestures to what would become a central concern in Harris’s work – the necessity of developing an original aesthetic appropriate to the remarkable landscapes of Guyana:

*“There was only one picture in the room. A picture of the Kaieteur Fall. When he saw me looking at it, the old man said –*

*‘I like that.’ He seemed to be seeking words to express his thoughts. ‘It has power. Beauty. Mystery. It is a symbol for this land. The symbol of power waiting to be harnessed. Of beauty that goes hand in hand with terror and majesty. Of the mystery that lies in men’s hearts, waiting to be explored, given form and direction and purpose.’”<sup>7</sup>*

In a later piece of short fiction, '**Fences Upon the Earth**' (published in issue four of *Kyk-Over-Al*), Harris can be seen still struggling to find a form of narrative expression adequate to the environmental experience of Guyana. At the end of the story, the narrator declares: "*Yes. I know what you will say. The words I have used are inadequate. Forgive me. I know it was inevitable that it should be so. The whole thing had been secret and wordless.*"<sup>8</sup> As Reinhard Sander has observed, this "'secret and wordless' thing is an encounter with the Amerindian presence in the Guyanese interior, an encounter that provides some insight into the profound and disturbing impression that the Guyanese landscape and its ancestral inhabitants were to leave on the mind of the future novelist."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the description of this encounter seems to move us a step closer to a prose more familiarly 'Harrisian' in style and tone:

*"For the first time that I could remember I looked upon a human being standing upon the earth, not falsely, by force or subterfuge, or bravado, or by any sort of empty pretension, but very simply, as though to own the earth were to carry the most natural and easeful burden in the world . . . His limbs were powerful. They had the perfection of the young trees that stand rooted in the forests, breathing forth an ageless symmetry in their being".<sup>10</sup>*

That Harris, one of the Caribbean's most acclaimed and original authors, should first publish in *Kyk-Over-Al* is testament to the journal's significance. There is a real frisson to be had in browsing through the yellowing pages of early issues and seeing formative works by poets and novelists who would go on to play a defining role in the development of Caribbean letters. Fifteen years after '**Tomorrow**', for example, Harris would publish his first novel, *Palace of the Peacock* (1960), a visionary re-telling of the quest for El Dorado that sought not only to reanimate eclipsed historical perspectives, but also to imaginatively redeem a past that had never existed. In this novel, as he would do in the twenty-two that followed (the last being *The Ghost of Memory* in 2006, over 60 years since his first appearance in *Kyk-Over-Al*), Harris sifts through the ruins of history, searching for signs of its Utopian negation in the form of the unborn potential of cross-cultural

community. Harris's longstanding emphasis on the redemptive force of cross-cultural community can be seen in embryo in a number of the poems he published in *Kyk-Over-Al*. Many of these were later included in his collection *Eternity to Season* (1954), which seeks to weave together Homeric myth with the landscapes of Guyana and the lives of its people in a manner that foreshadows Derek Walcott's epic reworking of Greek legend in a Caribbean context in *Omeros* (1990).

Alongside Harris, Martin Carter was another consistent contributor to *Kyk-Over-Al*. Indeed, his first published piece of work – a 'fragment' from '**An Ode to Midnight**' – appeared in issue six of the journal. This poem, with its "*deliberate archaism*" which "*does little to distinguish it from the many pastiches in Kyk-Over-Al that cast back to classical and romantic structures of poetic expression*", represents, as Gemma Robinson puts it, something of a "*deceptive entrance*" by Carter into Guyanese literature.<sup>11</sup> It would not be long, however, before Carter's more familiar poetic voice – passionate, committed, protesting the squalor of colonialism in a language of lyrical beauty – would resound in the pages of the periodical. Here he is in '**Death of a Slave**', for example, excoriating the brutality of plantation labour in stanzas at once both savagely forthright and dense with the gravity of history:

"cane field is green dark green  
green with life of its own  
heart of slave is red deep red  
red with life of its own.

day passes like long whip  
over the back of slave  
day is burning whip  
biting the neck of slave".<sup>12</sup>

It is worth comparing this poem as it appeared in *Kyk-Over-Al* in 1952 with the version published two years later as part of the collection *Poems of Resistance from British Guiana*. In the latter, the same stanzas are rendered as follows:

“The cane field is green dark green  
green with a life of its own  
The heart of a slave is red deep red  
red with a life of its own.

Day passes like a long whip  
over the back of a slave  
Day is a burning whip  
Biting the neck of a slave”.<sup>13</sup>

The addition of a series of definite and indefinite articles (“The cane field”, “a slave”) to the 1954 version subtly alters the rhythm of the poem: the *Kyk-Over-Al* piece has a punchy ferocity, a clipped cadence that is softened in the later rendering. While the tone and metre of the latter is perhaps more successful at engaging the reader in the subject of the poem (Carter’s aim in his lyrics, observes Robinson, was always to “pursue the goal of collective feeling” and to challenge his readers to join him in making sense of the world<sup>14</sup>), there is something about the brute simplicity of the earlier construction – especially its undifferentiated evocation of the slave as simply “slave” (“neck of slave” / “back of slave”) – that speaks to the terrifying, dehumanizing violence of slavery.

Comparisons such as this highlight how immensely interesting are the contributions to *Kyk-Over-Al* for those looking to track not only the contours of Guyanese literary history, but also the fascinating genealogies of individual poems and prose pieces. The republication of the journal in the *Guyana Classics* series will make easier the task of throwing light on the literary development of Guyana’s most significant authors. In addition to Harris and Carter, *Kyk-Over-Al* included work by a range of other significant writers in the early stages of their careers. Edgar Mittelholzer, for instance, contributed a number of intriguing poems to the journal (see issues three and nineteen). The “first of his generation to emigrate to the UK to make a serious career of writing novels”, Mittelholzer was a pioneer, penning such important works as *Corentyne Thunder* (1941), *Shadows Move Among Them* (1951),

and the *Kaywana* trilogy of historical novels (1952-58), which cover over 300 years of Guyanese history.<sup>15</sup> The work of Jan Carew, whose novels *The Wild Coast* (1958) and *Black Midas* (1958) are compelling re-workings of the *Bildungsroman* in a Guyanese context, also features in the journal, as does that of Roy Heath, who contributed some rare early poetry to issues seventeen (1953) and nineteen (1954), some twenty years before his first novel, *A Man Come Home* (1974), was published.

Of equal interest when reading through early issues of *Kyk-Over-Al* is the vast array of literary pieces by contributors whose career did not subsequently flourish, or whose work has never received the same kind of attention as that of writers like Harris or Mittelholzer. The journal enables us to reconstruct an often overlooked portion of the literary field in which those more celebrated authors were working. The dynamics of literary consecration and canonization tend to produce relatively attenuated literary histories, marginalizing certain writers and obscuring the diverse range of work with which more well-known texts may well have been in dialogue; *Kyk-Over-Al* allows us to recover some of that rich tradition and to develop a more fine-grained understanding of the evolution of Guyanese literature.

This is especially so since in addition to fostering new literary talents, *Kyk-Over-Al* sought to preserve and bring to attention the work of earlier Guyanese writers, thereby not only “moulding a Guianese consciousness”, but also “recording its tradition”, as Seymour put it.<sup>16</sup> In illustration of Seymour’s point, the second issue selected the poet Walter MacArthur Lawrence (1896-1942) for “honour and commemoration”, republishing a selection of stanzas from his poem ‘**Ode to Kaieteur**’ and featuring a number of essays on his work.<sup>17</sup> This issue of the journal was notable, too, for what, as Petamber Persaud has observed, may be “the first recorded call for a local literary prize”, with James W. Smith, the Honorary Secretary of the British Guiana Writers’ Association, arguing for the establishment of a literary award in the form of the Leo Medal for poetry, The Webber Medal for fiction and The Clementi Medal for non-fiction and drama.<sup>18</sup>

In preserving the Guyanese literary heritage while also supporting and even launching the careers of some of Guyana's most well-known and critically lauded writers, *Kyk-Over-Al* not only helped to shape the contours of Guyanese literary culture, but also contributed more generally to the 'boom' in Caribbean writing in the 1950s. Indeed, the journal was one of a number of literary magazines that flourished across the region in the middle decades of the twentieth century. These included such periodicals as *The Beacon* in Trinidad (first published in 1931), *Tropiques* in Martinique (1941), *Bim* in Barbados (1942), *Focus* in Jamaica (1943), *Origenes* in Cuba (1944), *Asomante* in Puerto Rico (1945), and *Caribbean Quarterly*, which was launched by the University of the West Indies' Department of Extra Mural Studies in 1949. Alongside such outlets as the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* radio programme (which ran from 1943 to 1958 and featured readings of work by writers such as George Lamming, Una Marson, V. S. Naipaul, and Sam Selvon), these magazines provided a new forum for the circulation and discussion of Caribbean literature, encouraging into print a whole host of emerging literary talents.

In comparison with many of these other journals, *Kyk-Over-Al* was, as Laurence Breiner has observed, "*remarkable for the high quality of its poetry from the very beginning.*"<sup>19</sup> This was down in large part to the frequent contributions made by Harris, Carter, and Seymour himself (Harris contributed some 37 poems between 1945 and 1961, Carter some 24, and Seymour over 40). The journal also "*made pioneering efforts in literary criticism, and opened its pages to writers of the whole region, even publishing translations of works from the French Antilles.*"<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Breiner suggests that *Kyk-Over-Al*'s outlook was "*closely tied to the dream of the West Indian Federation.*"<sup>21</sup> In a similar vein, L. E. Braithwaite has argued that the magazine moved from a purely Guyanese to a West Indian position with the establishment of the University College of the West Indies in 1948.<sup>22</sup>

The pause in the journal's publication in 1961, occasioned by Seymour's departure from Guyana, occurred just as the country was entering into a period of intense ethno-political hostilities that rent the fabric of society. That *Kyk-Over-Al*

should fall silent at this time seems poignantly apt given its stated aim to help build the nation and its commitment to fostering a collective Guyanese consciousness. Against the backdrop of race riots that pitched communities against one another, the journal's *raison d'être* perhaps appeared hopelessly Utopian. And yet such Utopianism was, and remains, fundamental to thinking beyond the apparent impasses and entrenched divisions that mark the present; and to imagining the possibility of a radically different future. As Martin Carter put it in 'Looking at Your Hands', published in *Kyk-Over-Al* in 1952, "I do not sleep to dream, but dream to change the world".<sup>23</sup> The last word, however, should perhaps belong to Seymour, who expressed similar sentiments to Carter in a poem published in the third issue, and which in many ways encapsulates the ideals behind the founding of the journal:

"To-day they hope  
But to-morrow belongs to the people.  
To-morrow they will put power behind their brow  
And get the skill in their hands.

To-morrow  
They will make a hammer to smash the slums  
And build the schools.

Like a River, the people hold history in their hands  
And To-morrow belongs to them".<sup>24</sup>

**Michael Niblett**  
**University of Warwick**

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Nalini Persam, 'The Importance of Being Cultural: Nationalist Thought and Jagan's Colonial World', in *Small Axe*, 15 (March 2004): 86.

<sup>2</sup> H. R. Harewood, 'A Message', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.1 (1945): 26.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'Editorial Notes', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.1 (1945): 7

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Persam, 'The Importance of Being Cultural', 86-87.

<sup>6</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'Editor's Note', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 2.7 (1948): 2.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson Harris, 'Tomorrow', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.1 (1945): 30.

- <sup>8</sup> Wilson Harris, 'Fences Upon the Earth', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.4 (1947): 21.
- <sup>9</sup> Reinhard W. Sander, 'The Quest for Form: Wilson Harris' Contributions to *Kyk-Over-Al*', in *World Literature Written in English*, 22.1 (1983): 20.
- <sup>10</sup> Harris, 'Fences Upon the Earth', 21.
- <sup>11</sup> Gemma Robinson, 'Introduction', in *University of Hunger: Collected Poems and Selected Prose*, by Martin Carter and ed. Gemma Robinson (Tarsset, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2006), 17.
- <sup>12</sup> Martin Carter, 'Death of a Slave', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 4.14 (1952): 53.
- <sup>13</sup> Martin Carter, 'Death of a Slave', in *University of Hunger*, 88.
- <sup>14</sup> Robinson, 'Introduction', in *University of Hunger*, 31.
- <sup>15</sup> Michael Gilkes, 'Edgar Mittelholzer', in *West Indian Literature*, 2nd edition, ed. Bruce King (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1995), 127.
- <sup>16</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'Editorial Notes', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.2 (1946): 3-4.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Petamber Persaud, 'Preserving Our Literary Heritage: *Kyk-Over-Al*, Part 1 – 1945-1961', in *Guyana Chronicle* 30th July (2006). Web. 1 March. <http://www.landofsixpeoples.com/gytodaysixevenjs.htm>
- <sup>19</sup> Laurence A. Breiner, *An Introduction to West Indian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). 78.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> See A. J. Seymour, 'Kyk at 50', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 46/47 (1995): 19.
- <sup>23</sup> Martin Carter, 'Looking at Your Hands', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 4.14 (1952): 52.
- <sup>24</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'To-Morrow Belongs to the People', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.3 (1946): 11.



# ISSUE 13



## EDITORIAL NOTE

As Aristotle would say, each age has its own entelechy, each region has its own drive from within to realise the unique characteristics it possesses, and perhaps a note of warning is necessary for the leading spirits of the British Caribbean. Communications have sharpened, policies have become hemispheric and the Caribbean has been, on economic grounds, integrated with the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, while on strategic considerations, we are part of the lake between the Americas.

But it cannot too often be said that we are basically an agricultural region, however industrialised our diversified economy may become within the next half century; we are not an industrial country with the spiritual unease and frustration that the factory can bring in its shadow upon sprawling towns; our norm is the field, not the factory. So we must choose carefully what we want from England and Europe and from America. We need their products of Science for our material comfort and our economic well being, but we do not want to import their despair and anxiety neuroses and their unconscious death wishes.

The dangers are concealed, more often than not; with the Hollywood film, we receive much that is undesirable in the American way of life, and on them our relatively unlettered people base their standards of sex life and public conduct. There is also a pictorial and visual literature of violence now making its impact upon the young people of the Caribbean.

*Kyk-Over-Al*, as far as it can, is a diet for the intellectual life of the region so that we can grow our leaders, and contributors write for the purposeful half hour rather than the aimless minute. There can be no watering down of standards, as we have to keep mentally athletic and point to what will best help us to build our new nation from its infancy to manhood. Culture has her crests as well as her troughs and *Kyk-Over-Al* should be out in advance of the wave with the flung spray and the blown spume.

So far as this issue is concerned, we begin an enquiry into the calypso by means of an exchange of letters which we hope to continue in another issue if we can coax musicians to continue the comments made here on the impact of this incipient West Indian art-form. There are two short stories and we print a selection from an unpublished historical novel on British Guiana by P. H. Daly, which portrays the arrest of the Demerara Martyr, Rev. John Smith.

There is a fair quantity of criticism. Wilson Harris writes in a philosophical vein on the function of art and criticism; Basil McFarlane compares Tom Redcam with George Campbell in a note on these Jamaican poets; from a group of young people who have been meeting once a month at the Public Free Library to read and discuss the poets of the West Indies comes a short account of the lively give-and-take that takes place at their meetings. Andrew Pearse, Resident Tutor in Trinidad, investigates a Trinidad custom, and his colleague in British Guiana, A. A. Thompson, discusses the methods of adults learning together.

Poets printed here are Peggy Luck of British Guiana, Keane, Campbell, Laborde, and Williams of St. Vincent, and Forde of Grenada. There is so much good poetry lying in the pages of the Little Reviews in the West Indies and being released monthly in the *Miniature Poets Series*, (published by the British Guiana Writers Association), that we are seriously thinking of devoting half, or even the whole of the Mid-Year 1952 issue to a selection of West Indian poetry which we hope readers will welcome and put on their shelves.

—A. J. S.

# ADVENT

by Peggy Luck

In a stable, mean and lowly,  
To a maiden, poor, but holy  
Came the Everlasting King.  
Ox and ass stood by the manger —  
“’Tis our Lord, He is no stranger.  
Listen how the angels sing.”

Next time when He comes with Glory,  
It shall be a different story —  
Worship, Love, and Joy divine,  
When He comes all sin shall vanish,  
Sorrow, hatred, tears He’ll banish  
Then, Advent Eternal, shine.

# PEACE OF GOD

by Peggy Luck

From beds of yellow daffodils  
I lift mine eyes unto the hills,  
And thus receive from Golden Heights.  
From smiling skies and Holy lights,  
The peace of Heaven's outstretched hand  
That men could never understand,  
The peace that God alone supplies,  
That in the Cross of Jesus lies.

## II

Within green pastures blossoms still  
The green and golden daffodil,  
Beside the meadows flow the streams  
Of comfort bearing silver dreams.  
The breeze of patience whispers near  
Across a little brooklet clear,  
This is the heaven and abode  
Of those who find the Peace of God.

Extract From An Unpublished Novel:

**THE ARREST**

by P. H. Daly

*“Black terror stalked a muddy land. Black fear prowled among a few hundred Whites huddled on a plantation — Le Ressonvenir — afire. Black fear tore at their dry throats, commanding ‘Shout now! Shout now! Shout now, with all your power! For it is your last voice!’ Panic tugged at their palpitating hearts, urging, ‘Beat now! Beat now! Beat now! For soon you will be still and cold!’ Slave vengeance was tramping the land. Vengeance blistered red from every savage eye. Vengeance glowed from burning cotton fields, billowing like a river afire under the wind’s force. Vengeance leaped from rifle barrels, shovels, picks, sugar knives, cutlasses, and old chains which formerly shackled the slaves. Vengeance had seized the slave drivers, managers, and all the white people and packed them into the stocks. In the compound, the body of a white man who had tried to resist the rebels lay sprawled in the mud, blood fountaining from his holed forehead. For on this day of revolution and rape, Monday, August 18, 1823, slave vengeance was abroad at Le Ressonvenir, as it had been at Haiti in 1804...”*

The Le Ressonvenir Rebellion, has been for the first time fictionalised in an 80,000-word novel by P. H. Daly, who, having already made considerable contribution to the historical literature of Guiana, breaks new ground in this first novel.

The climate of the novel is Guianese. The story begins with the French occupation in the late eighteenth century, takes the history of Revolutionary Haiti in its stride, and ends with the first general elections in Guiana under the secret ballot. Because this novel has not been published, it would not be fair either way to reveal much of the plot and first part of the novel is dominated by the sadist — the Sinner. The middle and closing stages spotlight the tragic figure of John Smith, a descendant of a Negro slave and named after the famous London Missionary; while the Rev. John Smith himself is the central character of the novel’s early stages.

## EXTRACT

After the Rebellion, the Rev. John Smith is accused of conspiring with the slaves. A party of garrison officers, led by the Sinner, arrive at his house. The door is locked.

*"Open the damn door!"* yelled the Sinner, kicking it violently,  
*"Open there!"* snapped Simpson.

Silence.

*"Bejesuchrist! You won't open this damn door! I'll break it".*

*"Open there!"* Simpson shouted.

No answer.

*"Bejesuchrist! Open this damn door! The last time!"*

*"Open!"* Simpson banged on the door.

Silence again.

*"Bejesuchrist! Put the hammer on it!"*

The blacksmith swung his sledge-hammer and the door splintered. The Sinner led the rush.

*"Arrest you, John Smith!"* he yelled, dragging Smith by his coat collar to his feet. With elaborate care Smith, who had been kneeling reading from the Bible, continued to read. The words were spoken slowly, distinctly, Smith's eyes moving from the Bible to the Sinner's face in an effort to personalise his points:

*"Be not afraid of their presence: for I will make thee not to fear their countenance. For behold I have made thee this day a fortified city, and a pillar of iron, and a wall of brass over all the land to the kings of Judea, to the princes thereof, and to the priests and the people of the land'."*

Then he put the Bible into his pocket and asked: *"Why arrest me? What have I done?"*

*"Bejesuchrist! You'll soon know".*

*"Where's your warrant and what's your charge?"*

*"Warrant Bejesuchrist! It you want your death warrant I've got it. This is martial law. Don't you know what martial law is? Didn't you read the notice in the Royal Gazette?"*

*"What notice?"*

*"Ordering all white men to enlist for military service."*

*"As a clergyman I claim exemption from military service."*

*"Exemption! Damn your eyes. Want me to exempt your head from your body! If you give me any of your bloody logic I'll sabre you in a minute. If you don't know what martial law is, Bejesuchrist,*

*I'll show you."*

He drew his sabre half way out, but Simpson stayed his hand, saying. *"Not that way."*

*"Put the bitch in irons"*, the Sinner shouted to a militiaman. Then he asked Smith:

*"Hey, parson! Where's your wife? Praying again?"*

*"My wife has nothing to do with this."*

*"Answer straightway. Where's your wife?"*

*"What do you want with her?"*

He bawled out another *'Bejesuchrist'* and felt for his sabre, advancing nearer Smith and yelling into his face:

*"Damn your eyes! Where's that wife of yours?"*

*"Upstairs."*

He rattled upstairs and, belowstairs, they heard his favourite swearword *'Bejesuchrist'*.

Then he yelled:

*"Come straightway!"*

*"Like this!"* a woman's voice asked in scandalised horror.

*"With only my petticoat on!"*

*"With your pettiskin on! Come straightway!"*

Belowstairs Simpson was calling, telling him to hurry up. He rattled down, dragging the parson's wife by her petticoat.

*"What have we done?"* she cried.

*"That!"* he barked, pointing to the smoky sky. *"That's the estate afire. Out it with your Bible."*

She cried again.

*"Don't cry, dear. If God be for us who can be against us"*, Smith consoled".

*"Bejesuchrist! One word more of your theology, parson, and I'll take you straightway."* Then, pointing to Mrs. Smith, he shouted to a militiaman:

*"Put this jezebel in irons."*

*"No need for that"*, interposed Simpson. *"She's harmless."*

*"Ah, Derek! You English are soft. Come on! Whips! Twelve hot ones to keep her skin-and-bone bottom cool."*

*"You know you can't beat her,"* Simpson interposed again. *"There's no law now for beating women, black or white."*

*"But there's a law for white women to plot with niggerwomen to burn down the estate."*

*"We must go into that."*

The Sinner sucked his teeth.

Pale and trembling, Smith moved across to his wife, but the Sinner struck him sharply on his shoulder with his sabre, leering derisively:

*"Get back, St. Peter; get back St. Paul,"* every 'back' being accompanied by a lash with the sabre on his bottom.

The words cut into Smith's heart deeper than the blow, and he stood trembling with shame and passion. For a few minutes his past life flashed before him. This was what he had come to, he thought. This was what he had left England for. He, John Smith, whose brilliant intellect had brought him from the obscurity of baker's boy in Clerkenwell, to recognition as one of England's most electrifying preachers. He recalled how he had joined the London Missionary Society, and had been ordained at Somers Town with such imposing ritual. Why he had decided on missionary work in slave-ridden Demerara, he did not know, He tried to think back, now. Whether it was the spirit of Christ that had inspired him, or the spirit of curiosity he had never been able to find out. Whether it was a love of English liberties, as such, or a love of negro slaves as such, he had never been quite certain. But there he was. He, an Englishman — abused, humiliated, struck by a mulatto; a man whose very complexion would have branded him a social outcast even in Liverpool among the docks.

He stood there shaking his head after receiving the blow, and looking through misty eyes at his wife, Jane. She had loyally insisted on coming with him, to share in his work. *"My God! My God! My God! My wife! My wife! My home! England."* He shook his head as the thoughts tumbled painfully through his bruised memory.

*"Bejesuchrist! Hey, parson! What's all this head-shaking? You're sending signals to God Almighty! And what's all this praying hands? You're saying your Rosary."*

He rapped Smith's clasped hands sharply with his sabre, saying:

*"Praying! Praying- Praying! You pray master general, you."* He slapped on the shoulder with his sabre, laughing mockingly:

*"Pray master general! Bejesuchrist."*

With sudden spirit Smith threw back his head, his frail, consumptive figure seemed to have grown tauter. He looked at the mocking mulatto before him, and shouted back:

*"Do you think you're speaking to negroes like yourself, sir? I have you know you've the pleasure of being rude to your better."* His body shook with emotion.

*"Bejuschrist!"*

Out came the sabre completely this time, but Simpson interposed again, saying, *"Easy, there, Sinney. Form up, there."*

The procession formed up with Smith leading, the Sinner next, the blacksmith and burgher militiaman following, and Simpson and Mrs. Smith trailing in the rear. They marched through the sweltering heat, from the missionary quarters to Colony House where Smith was thrown into a basement by the Sinner to await trial by court martial,

Exchange of Letters  
**CORRESPONDENCE ON THE CALYPSO**  
**From A.J. Seymour to W. H. L. Allsopp**

Dear Bertie Allsopp,

It is rather a long time since you were good enough as to let me hear at your home, your collection of calypso records; and although belatedly, I want to say thank you. But if you don't mind, I would like also to "*redeem the time*" as some writer or other puts it, although in one of the best secular senses of that phrase, preserve in literary amber shall I say the rhythms that I heard then and at the risk of being called a would-be-expert at one sitting, (or is it hearing, in this instance) I want to record one or two impressions I got at that time.

You were very patient with my lack of knowledge—I remember that well—and also with my desire to place the calypsos in categories. I can see now that it was an unconscionable desire, but I wonder if you would check this and see if I have got the record right.

The two earliest, you remember, are '**Matilda**' and '**Sly Mongoose**'. The first of these classics deals with money and an unfaithful woman, I think, who went to Venezuela, and the second—I seem to see it as an extension of the tradition of the creole proverb which Rev. Alfred Hardy describes for us in British Guiana and which Mr. Lewis O. Inniss has collected in Trinidad. Sly Mongoose, the animal type which is metaphoric for the human, is preoccupied with the chicken in the kitchen and so on. Would it be true to say that these two are more folk songs than calypsos, or at least that they are on the boundary line?

And yet you know that raises the question—what is the difference between a calypso and a folk song? Are they not the same thing? This is a digression I know but perhaps we'd better tackle it here because it's fundamental to get our bases right.

Espinete of the *Guardian*, has written a little book on the calypso that I read some years ago and I think he made the following points. The Calypso began with the slaves singing in the canefields in the early days when Trinidad was

Spanish. Then in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the French families came and added their influence upon this impromptu folk song, to those of the Spanish musical modes and the African rhythm. They still sing in the fields in Trinidad, I'm told. When Newnham and Anderson, the script writer and photographer team from the Central Office of Information, were in Trinidad two years ago they went to take photographs of peasants working on the land and to their surprise they heard the singing change from group songs to lines like this: — "So they gwine take we picture, yes...we gwine see we faces in the *Guardian*, oui" and so on.

Vivian Comma is a young composer in Trinidad who has written words and music for Beryl McBurnie Shows at The Little Carib. He tells me that the American "occupation" of Trinidad has not had a good influence on the artistic development of the Calypso; they made demands upon it as a form of entertainment — they wanted to hear more and more.

Composers were forced to turn out calypsos one after the other, using it is said, different words upon the same rhythms, and paying less attention to the elaboration and development of the musical side. It appears further — and I haven't got this from Comma — that most Americans were satisfied, nationally and aesthetically, with the words and rhythms of '**Rum and Coca Cola**'.

That is quite a digression, isn't it? But it does show the influence of entertainment demands upon a young art form and so illustrates the evolution — would disintegration be the better word? — of the impromptu folk song that people sang to keep their spirits bubbling, into the calypso that we know nowadays. I haven't plotted into the picture, the part played by the healthy stimulation of the calypsos by the annual carnival competitions, and that must have been considerable. But I want to come back to our afternoon together.

You remember, don't you, that I asked you to place the calypsos into categories and you suggested — this is where I particularly need your help — that there were straight narrative calypsos, such as the well known '**Victory Test Match**', which has become a kind of National Anthem for the West Indies, based as it is on the test match victory at Lords in 1950; then there were the sensuous ones, based on incidents

with women, '**Norah**' is the modern day classic in this field. I think, you know, '**Norah**' is the first calypso that I ever really listened to. I had heard others before of course, but '**Norah**' was played when I was staying in the same household with Vivian Comma and he rushed out of his room and said "*wait, a minute please, I want you to hear this song by Kitchener*", and so we all listened and afterwards embarked upon general discussion.

The rhythms in '**Norah**' are very attractive even when you haven't heard the words and I like the way in which the rhythms allow an uninhibited West Indian shouting forth of the name at three rising levels of appeal. But won't you agree that the words in this song flatter the West Indian's sexual ego, suggesting as they do, that this English girl is dying of love for him and he shamelessly gives her flimsy excuses about wanting to go home to see his grandmother in Trinidad? Like '**Victory Test Match**', this calypso assumes a certain equality of West Indian with Englishman on the human and personal levels:—one in the realm of cricket, the game we have learned from England and the other in the realm of love, where human being meets human being, without imperial or colonial associations making the contact conventional. What unconsciously seems to give West Indian hearers the feeling of equality is that the man is treating the girl as he would treat any girl he is tired of, back in Trinidad.

We're still talking of the second category of calypso, that based on incidents with women. This is by far the largest class. Take for example, '**Tongue-tied Baby**', which generally arouses a smile because the Jover is amazed and intrigued by the tongue-tied accent of his girl friend. She has something there that the others can't give him, which is a kind of mustard to the dish.

The calypso is a Trinidadian product and the texts of the songs never allow you to forget that it is a product of the lower middle classes, as they pillory the women of this class for their greed and selfishness, the ease with which they are reputed to desert their common-law husbands for other suitors with more money to offer them. There is a calypso about "*dying a bachelor*" — incidentally it has some very attractive male singing rhythms coming from a distance which seems to

convey to me at least, the idea of men in a boat singing across the water and the song coming to people on the riverbank — well, this points out the advantages of never mixing matrimony with love affairs.

So far the men have it all their own way. They rationalise on their unfortunate experiences and compose their songs. I wonder if this male monopoly will be broken. Wouldn't it be interesting to see one or two women calypso singers arise from the lower middle class, who will exploit all the charms of their sex as they sing and then give the men back all they — shall we say deserve? — and accuse them of being lazy, of being gigolos and the like.

There is a third class. In some of these calypsos, the Trinidadian accuses the "*small islander*" who comes to Trinidad, of being an uppish person. I daresay some of the island wide support of the prohibited — immigrant — expulsion drive, is based on the fear of Trinidadians seeing Barbadians, St. Lucians etc., with initiative coming into their wealthy country and so they desire to perform the role of the angel with the flaming sword. Put them out of Eden, they agree.

The calypso is now gaining a middle class audience which revels in the rhythms and considers that the growing national feeling in the West Indies makes it right to accept the words. One or two people I know have an uneasy feeling that as a result of this acceptance, there is the beginning of an attack on the moral standards of the middle class. Of course they agree that the standard of education generally reached by middle class adults acts as a barrier to any insidious attack of this kind but they fear the effect which the words may have on the minds of middle class children. The calypso '**Kitch**' is a case in point, they claim, the acceptance of '**Norah**' has opened the door for '**Kitch**' which they say is merely a rather lewd song, composed by a calypso singer, encouraged by success and so attempting to force it on the taste of a community.

What a long sentence that was! Anyway, the process of mixing has already taken place and it is likely that we shall see some progress towards cleaner and more subtle type of calypso.

One of the things that intrigued me in this calypso business, was the names the singers gave themselves. They have created a new aristocracy in the entertainment world, and say, ordinary John Smith adds inches to his social prestige and to his confidence when he calls himself Lord this or the other. It reminds me a little of the titles such as the la Duke of Marmalade, Baron Lemonade etc., which were created by Henri Christophe when Haiti became a monarchy, is it? — anyway it's all nicely laid out by Sir Harry Luke in his '**Caribbean Circuit**'. Well in the same way, I seem to discern — remember I'm a one-hearing expert — these aristocrats of the West Indian entertainment world who have carved out kingdoms for themselves in exile. Lord Kitchener seems at present to have an undisputed supremacy at the BBC. In Canada, Lord Caresser has been doing excellent work, popularising the West Indies on the CBC and singing the calypso '**The West Indies is my happy home**'. The USA as befits the richest country in the world, has two ambassadors settled in it, Sir Lancelot, that rather conscious artist with the refined voice and his equal, Lord Beginner. I can only mention other figures like the Duke of Iron and the Growler, and of course there is Edmundo Ross in New York, whom we associate with the songs which probably fall into a fourth category that of social comment such as '**Society**', and '**Is it Yes or Is it No?**' I am told that each one has his individual style of approach, and the calypso fan can unerringly recognise his master's voice.

I have no music and the cold bare words, however analytical of the social background, can give no idea of the music itself, and that is where the real contribution to entertainment and art and civilisation lies. But it is not a West Indian gift. It is an African one.

Rev. A. M. Jones (in the *Journal on African Affairs*, October 1949 p. 291) in an article on African music, refers to the communal music that the African makes to "*relieve the drudgery of repetition tasks (which) turns hard labour into an aesthetic and creative experience. There is the regular swish of canoe paddles; the thump-thump of the pestles in the mortar as women pound their grain,...while even such a prosaic and dull job as drilling the hole in the rocky face of a mine, is at once turned by*

*the African into a rhythm to be embellished by a communal song*". I am going to include another passage from Rev. Jones' excellent article because it shows the close relation between the calypso and the African music: Rev. Jones says of African Melodies:

*"it is quite wrong to think that the tunes are repeated over and over again with no variation at all...there is variation: it is frequent but it is subtle, a slight change here, an extra note there, make all the difference to those who know what they are listening to. The African is not anything, if not subtle...he has a subtle genius for suggestion and variance...the music itself, in Kaffir Piano (Kalimba) playing, consists of a fairly short melody repeated many times, but accompanied by an astonishing number of variations. The melody may remain on the Kalimba or be left to the voice of the singer. The accompaniment may be in block fourths and fifths, with an occasional octave: it may be in duple or triple time, or a mixture of both; it may be spread out in arpeggio style, it may be sprinkled with rests and subtle rhythmic variations of all kinds emphasising certain notes at certain points of the melody—and these notes will vary from verse to verse"*.

To realize the way this description of Rev. Jones's fits calypso music is to realise in the words of a musician, the infinite gradations of sound that calypso singers achieve in their music against simple and sometimes rather unsubtle words.

Oh, I should stop here. This letter has been dragging its Alexandrine length along for quite a while and there is much more I would like to say, but I shall rest your eyes after I merely mention two other things. In spite of his wonderful memory, Homer was a singer like these men, coming at the end of a tradition which supplied him with the Trojan war and the return home of a captain who loved adventure. Will calypso singers embark on stylised tales of the rise of Haiti and the cunning of Touissant L'Ouverture and his defeat and death? (I'm tempted to try a hand myself at an easy-to-say-and-to-remember type of narrative, especially as Touissant seems to provide the framework of a ready made epic, but I halt at the thought of the music). With Homer, the calypso

singer is cousin also to the troubadours of 18th century France. Homer was a historian and poet, the troubadours peddled in love, the calypso singers are satirising their own and other local classes.

Now what have I left out that should go on the record?

Sincerely Yours,  
**A.J.S**

## From W.H.L. Allsopp to A.J. Seymour

Dear A. J. Seymour,

I have been going through your very interesting letter on our afternoon of calypsos. I repeat now as then that I am by no means an authority on them, merely a whimsical collector who just sits and listens. True I attempted to put them into categories but we soon realised that my categories were not as absolute and definitive as they perhaps can be. Alternatively the categories may be further subdivided into classes or groups, but I should leave that to someone less incompetent than I.

I cannot entirely agree that '**Matilda**' and '**Sly Mongoose**' are more folk songs than calypsos. I have always heard them as a little boy as typical calypsos complete with chorus or refrain and with what I regard as the typical type of rhythm, but I should not go into the musical side of this subject as there you will find that I know even less.

You mentioned '**Norah**' as being the modern day classic among the sensuous calypsos. It has long been superseded by '**Kitch**' which has been brought much unto the public ear after being banned by ZFY. It is very flattering to the West Indian sexual ego as you have said of '**Norah**', and in fact all that you have said there is true in a greater degree of '**Kitch**' with its suggestive, somewhat nebulous, but definitely provocative lines. Its saving grace is that it is excellent music to which to dance conventionally, or uninhibitedly as may so easily be witnessed outside many "*parlours*" which give their jukebox music a nightly public hearing.

I think that the new aristocracy created by the calypsonian, Dukes, Lords, etc. is a further attempt at elevating their ego to a level of equality, a parody on the English aristocracy and at the same time, by virtue of the exploits recounted by the singers, a direct "*attack*" on that class of society.

I am told that it was reported in the *Guardian* that the wife of a former British Foreign Secretary entered a Calypso camp in Trinidad during Carnival. The singer was extolling

the unusual ability of '**Mary's Little lamb**' when he courteously swung to a spontaneous description of the Foreign Service. After the applause had quelled, the lady on being asked for a request, perhaps for want of knowledge and yet not wanting to be nonplussed, said that she desired to hear in full '**Mary's little Lamb**'. There was a howl of astonishment, then the singer rendered the song with all its lewdness while the lady, unaware of the *double entendres* which so tickled the crowd and not understanding all the words, smiled appreciatively, made a handsome contribution and said it was "*the best of its kind she had heard*"

I agree that the lewd calypsos are an insidious attack on the morality, not so much of adults, as of children. I have heard a 12-year-old singing '**Kitch**' and when his Grannie asked him what were the words he expressed, he indulgently replied that "*they were not for big people to hear*". Then again on the Corentyne, I am sure that the two little children were not more than 7 years old but they were flouncing and saying "*Wamadin and Valentine*". I was with the Headmaster of the school of the district and he immediately glanced at the parent who promptly gave the kids a shout. They desisted for a while then started with "*Norah ! Norah Norah.*" We all were amused and amidst a snigger, the mother explained that "*they know the ABC good, but next door is the dance hall*". But that is quite a digression and you asked what you left out. I would say that it would be interesting to trace the history of the calypsos in the various islands. I think that they stem from slightly different sources. Some African students out here had mentioned that the Trinidadian calypsos were the same type of songs which they called "*High Life*" in West Africa. The plantation songs of the islands and the boat shanties of B.G. are I think quite different. The question of music is most important for classifying into categories and I think that if you classified separately on the basis of types of music, subject, audience, appeal, then cross grouped, it would be possible to get the absolute and definitive categories which you are after.

Apart from the above, I would say let a musician try with both our comments, as such a person being more knowledgeable in the subject than either of us can collate our thoughts and explain things better.

Cordially yours,  
**W. H. L. ALLSOPP**

# LETTERS TO MARGARET

by Basil McFarlane

Yet how live, if not by love  
giver and gift of life

Faith, stern chisel of our fortunes  
roots in love,  
is free, is flame, is not  
to be confused with wishing,  
Faith is learnt

Wishing, mere reaction  
to dull circumstance, projection  
into infinite regions of the possible  
of an infinite will

So often a thoughtless rebel

We have invented Fate,  
the turning world, but not the mind  
that sponsors its existence,  
feeble mind

oh, yet our single pride, our one  
and true inheritance  
possesses in its turn, the earth and sky,  
invests dull earth with wonder,  
aims its noose  
at the remotest of the glittering worlds.

Yet not without prayer is light,  
no light not song  
and the song sacred

A song is love, the pure  
emergent crystal of creative motion  
is God, who lays waste with terrible pity  
our bright dark towers.

# ART AND CRITICISM

by Wilson Harris

A very important contribution to criticism of art was made by Engels, and later reaffirmed by George Lukacs, the great marxist critic whom Thomas Mann describes as "*the most important literary critic of today.*"

This contribution, which to my mind reacts with poetic justice on many of the theories, of Lukacs himself, is that creative work may, and often does have, entirely different meanings to what the author hopes, and may be the exact opposite of his subjective idealism or the mechanical idealism of his time. This method has been used brilliantly in a study of the works of Balzac and Tolstoy.

And it becomes certain when one considers the principles closely that many are the pitfalls presenting themselves in a work of art, and it is not to be wondered at therefore that so many blunders have been made in criticism. I recall a few instances—Shakespeare, Francis Thompson, El Greco, primitive art (facilely pigeon-holed as the "*by-products of savages*" until quite recently).

The problem then clearly is that an objective process exists, a secret form or tradition, which yields itself, fragmentarily perhaps, but decisively as time goes on. And that this process has been given so limited a recognition has been grasped so very insecurely, that the sensuous phenomenon (if we may describe art and life in this way) has been little understood.

What may we conclude from all this? What points may we develop? It appears at the outset that a gulf exists between the idealism of the world, its optimism and illusion, and the actual state of the world, its processes, its changes, its needs. This is a legacy handed down to us by older generations. The wide difference between human passion and destiny on the one hand, and order and morality on the other, was reflected with all the force of imagination in the works of Dostoevsky. The efforts made to bridge that gap, to find an architectural principle that would solve the problem, have been many.

Two notable attempts are marxism and existentialism, the first concerning itself with necessity, the second with fate (that is with the human being, the subjective/objective contradictions of his life). Clearly then both of these are in the final analysis concerned with the same thing, though the identity slips constantly from our grasp. We limit ourselves within a purely subjective idealism, or a purely mechanical idealism and therefore cannot understand what is happening.

The contradiction in marxism and existentialism lies in our creative approach to life. We still live within a changeless mould : school or church or parliament We envisage attempts by the classical authorities, in the best sense, to extend a hand to human necessity and human fate. The significant thing is that in the end our hopes are shattered and we find how very inadequate is a contract with necessity or fate, how weak is the classical architecture of the world, and how terrible is the necessity for a new architecture.

Very clearly that new architecture is not something novel in the nineteenth-century optimistic sense. It is rather a profound rediscovery of that deep organism that presently moves away from and eludes our grasp — that objective process that reveals the true state of the classical world, however horrible, as a prerequisite of change.

I hope I have managed to suggest from the foregoing that the schools of our time, however radical, have been limited to a statistical function than a creative form so that the situation of the genuine creative mind in art or in criticism becomes increasingly difficult since in the very nature of things its work is a disruption of the subjective and mechanical platforms of the world. The identity that it discovers in the association of life and environment is a deep process immensely altering or breaking the shape of things in "*the domain of the specific and esoteric*" (Malraux) or in the "*archetype of the collective unconscious*" (Jung). And no mechanism has interior validity, otherwise, nor can society or culture trace its origin from spiritual or so-called higher powers. To put it in other words the impact of the human mind and body on the hard world, in constructing something and destroying something, has a unity or combination that is both secret and plain, immaterial and material, showing forth the power of passion, the limits

and order of being. What is truly particular is not isolated or static but is an association of numerous factors. Value or spirit is the illumination of dark energies. The new architecture of the world must be a profound understanding and revelation of all factors that combine into the phenomenon of effort, and achievement not for one race of men but for all mankind together. Not simply for a glorious name or tradition in the historical sense but for an identity that is purposive and vital in a universal and manifestly human sense.

We may well ask ourselves — can the creative artist overcome the changeless spirit and mechanical institutions of his world ruthlessly enforced upon him? Let us glance at this problem in American literature.

I choose American literature for a special reason. American creative literature has displayed a wonderful energy and spirit, which speak well for the potentialities of a new world, and which have a natural daring beyond the statistical rectitude of exhausted or bloodless passions. Yet energy, while essential for change or creation in art may be self-destructive.

It may be —

“a wish to be again  
threatened alive, in agonies of decision,  
part of our nation, of a fanatic sun.”

This reminds me that there is a school of West Indian art which idealizes the sun. And it has always struck me that this is an American attitude, American idealism. I have lived for long periods in savannahs so much exposed to heat and fire, that the sun has become an adversary — one of two antagonistic principles — night and day — and only an association of these two principles provides release. The architecture of release which would bring the forms that are bound in a principle of subjection, genuinely into the light of day, without cruel suffering, must find truly that the sun has no stationary hold over its subjects like a feudal lord over his serfs.

The sun therefore is indeed a great reality in the West Indian world in a more terrible sense than the poet realises when he exclaims

“Sun’s in my blood.”

So in the American world energy is the sun of life. America has produced a group of poets in modern times whose energy has been indeed remarkable and unbroken but yet no distinctive movement in the arts has arisen to cope with the divided heritage of the world, since one may only point to the symbol of an overwhelming ordeal without release.

Hart Crane, Ezra Pound, Robinson Jeffers, Muriel Rukeyser, Wallace Stevens, Archibald MacLeish, Delmore Schwartz, Kenneth Patchett, Carl Sandburg.

Hart Crane, perhaps the most gifted of all, became a “*chronic alcoholic, purposely blunting his sensibilities, driving himself to disintegration*”.

“Daemon, demurring and eventful yawn!  
Whose hideous laughter is the bellows mirth  
— Or the muffled slaughter of a day in birth —  
O cruelly to inoculate the brinking dawn  
With antennae toward worlds that spark and sink —  
To spoon us out more liquid than the dim  
Locution of the oldest star.”

Archibald MacLeish, poet and critic, has given us  
**‘Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller’s’**

“Everything sticks to the grease of a gold note —  
Even a continent — even a new sky!”

In his verse play **‘The Fall of the City’** MacLeish supplies the conqueror clad in ancient armour. When the visor opens it is found that the armour is only a shell. No one is within. But the people refuse to understand. They shout as though they had won a victory: masterless men have found a master.

Let us compare Robinson Jeffers, poet of despair, commenting on the social scene and on civilisation.

“While this America settles in the mold of its vulgarity,  
heavily thickening to empire,  
shine, perishing  
republic”

with Wallace Stevens, poet of refinement and reticence:

“The prologues are over. It is a question, now,  
Of final belief. So, say that final belief  
Must be in a fiction. It is time to choose.  
That obsolete fiction of the wide river in  
An empty land; the gods that Boucher killed;  
And the metal heroes that time granulates —  
The philosopher’s man alone still walks in dew.  
Still by the seaside mutters milky lines  
Concerning an immaculate imagery.

...we heard  
Him chanting for those buried in their blood”,

and the very crude light of Robinson Jeffers seems to generate a priestly glow of beauty above a human sacrifice.

American poets and poetry cannot be adequately dealt with here, even if I were qualified or able to do so. It is one of the arts where America has consciously and unconsciously held a mirror to the contradictions of society and the individual that appears is burdened by the continuation of classic idealisms. One wonders how lasting will be the product of American classicism:

“the man of glass,  
who in a million diamonds sums us up.”

Still all the generations of power and energy are actively present to maintain that conception, beautiful in opulence and fury, purposive and purposeless, silting slowly over the objective identity of the human person.

A great deal of thought and probing become necessary to plumb the real meanings of creative literature or art. And on this essential appraisal and dialogue the survival of the artist must depend. Whatever happens will always be — since life in its essential contradiction is art: it is the deep unconscious humour of carnival.

# OUT OF THE SHADOWS

by Ernest Laborde

## I

We lay for aeons

in the shadow of a mighty will...

dull, eyeless lengths of soft steel

needling northern certainty at the call of the Pole;

powerless index of points of circled space

unblessed with the lodestone's charging touch...

obedient marionettes imagining trance-like

life's actions at their originals' promptings;

inanimate dolls staring unseeing at the snapped strings

in the hands of the minds supernal.

We see our similitudes in the mirroring blue —

sand racing before the driving wind

dying in glassy sheets at the foot of the contemptuous sea

when it goes home...

shot arrows of steel striking the faultless marks;

useless rusts of iron under the covering wave

outside the radar's reach.

Our sick wills

live without volition

robotting over the world's furrows

without contrition.

## II

But not ever thus...  
says a Voice as grey as Time:

“The seeds of your stunted wills  
upturning the rocking weights  
will loom into mighty forest trees  
overshadowing none but sheltering all  
and the strength of their voltage  
will be patterned full percentaged  
in the clear green  
on the Measurer’s global screen.”

# ON JAMAICAN POETRY

by Basil McFarlane

The claim for Tom Redcam (Thomas Henry MacDermot) as the father of a literary expression peculiarly Jamaican is not recent and dates officially from the evening of October 26, 1933 when the Poetry League met to do him honour and to extend to him the title of Poet Laureate. The occasion was lent pathos by the fact of Redcam's death in London only eighteen days previously.

In those days the lecture hall of the Institute occupied the upper floor of the main building, the present position of the West India Reference Library, and one remembers well the atmosphere of the room which was the scene of so many meetings of the League with its heavy dark furnishings and portrait of Baron Olivier. In these days of catastrophe external and private it is next to impossible to enter into the spirit of that time which preceded the Second World War with its consequent alteration of the principles of behaviour; or to understand the motives of the League in this gesture towards a poet of hardly more than ordinary endowment. Since, however, it is my conviction that the effort is worth making if only because it helps to clarify contemporary issues I offer it as my only justification for the present article.

The Pioneer Press publication *Orange Valley and other Poems* may be considered a further extension of the gesture beforementioned. It represents the culmination of the labours of those who knew and loved Redcam and appreciated the main enthusiasm of his life which was, simply, for the Jamaican environment and its preservation in literature. Of the poems in this volume this enthusiasm remains the most captivating feature. Redcam's lyric gift has been praised, notably by Mr. Clare McFarlane in his introduction to this first and only published collection of the verse; but I beg to point out that the woeful pedestrianism of:

"Misfortune may smite me, the stranger oppress me  
As I toil for my bread on an alien shore;  
Though they rob me of all, they can never bereave me  
Of the brown mountain village I see ever more."

is only justifiable on the ground that in the last two or one-and-a-half lines is sounded the exquisite moral which to those who love this country, or who indeed have ever loved any country, requires no exposition. This was his sincere and unique contribution and it seems only fair to acknowledge it as it is no more than fair to admit that, sentiment and intention to one side, the large majority of his poetic work was derivative and uninteresting.

Mr. W. Adolphe Roberts has written in superlatives of '**San Gloria**', the verse-drama of Christopher Columbus' enforced sojourn at St. Ann's Bay. The drama is non-existent since the characters remain the tentative lay figures of the student. Feeling is sustained through the consistent evocation of tropical mood and atmosphere, at once abundant and enervating. Columbus':

"A dark foreboding haunts me lest I die  
Amid the careless beauty of this isle,  
And these great heights, blue, forest-garmented,  
That wave slow signals to the mighty deep,  
Callous to smaller things, across my grave  
Stare; while the green things tangle on the plain;  
While the soft waters lip the sandy shore;  
While dawns, arriving, spread their crimson flags;  
And passing day gives all her tents to fire,  
Seeking a new encampment; doves will coo  
When, into deep oblivion sunk, my grave  
Lies in the flood of life that blots out all,  
While the great hills stare on, o'er shrub and vine,"

is thematic. As will be seen there is danger here of meaning being sacrificed to the mere conjuring of atmosphere; also, as was perhaps inevitable in a piece of this length, it becomes evident that what was the controlling impulse behind Redcam's verse could easily have developed into a turgid

obsession. The drama does not develop because there is too little detachment and not enough interest in people for their own sake. The verse suffers similar propagandistic limitations. For all that the subject is probably the ideal one for a Jamaican poet and remains to tempt any who may be disposed to try his hand at it.

Of the patriotic songs then, the most effective are the earlier '**Song of 1891**' which has a kind of innocent rhetoric, and '**Dry Harbour**'; nor is it easy to resist the impression that, among the passages in his book, the most felicitous are those which occur during periods of the poet's temporary estrangement from his "*overmastering passion*". There are lines like these in '**Killed**', written for MacDermot's cousin, a casualty of the First World War, and in the light-hearted '**I am in love with Life**', composed shortly before his own death. In the closing lines of '**Dry Harbour**' occurs as eloquent a deposition as any I could give on the strange limitation of Tom Redcam:

"Whose sad, clear, steadfast gaze sees but the past".

\*\*\*

It is not enough to say that since the days when Redcam first wrote, in the first decade of this century, or since even that evening eighteen years ago when an officer of the Poetry League in all good faith placed in the hands of his widow a *lignum vitae* wreath, that tenets of what constitutes good poetry have changed. Fashions have altered as fashions will; but on that evening Redcam was being honoured for his faith in a country and by those to whom in some sense he had managed to transmit that faith. Their recognition and his deserving of it took each the forms they best knew and it is perhaps our tragedy that today we are virtually incapable of understanding either.

In 1946 George Campbell published *First Poems*, a book that was hailed in some quarters as embodying the first representation in verse of the national spirit. Any consideration of these two poets together must promote sociological reverberations. Campbell's activity as a poet goes back to the year of Redcam's

death and the public's earliest acquaintance with him probably dates from about the period to which many Jamaicans look back as the beginning of a new era in the political and industrial life of the island. With Trade Unionism and party politics, with universal suffrage came the songs of this natural rhetorician in an idiom that owed very little to external influences.

*First Poems* was produced after a dozen or so years of preparation, while its author was still a young man and with a formal dedication which showed both consciousness of a certain purpose in its creation and awareness of an audience. Redcam's book, compiled and edited by friends nearly eighteen years after his death, is made up of pieces composed largely as a relaxation from strenuous journalistic activity (he was editor of the *Jamaica Times*) and represents the work of not less than twenty years. We need go no further in the matter of comparison since the main differences should be clear. As to their respective merits as poets these may be considered irrelevant for the time being. The significance surely is in the varying times during which both men lived; though it would not be inaccurate to describe them as contemporaries. Both, I contend, have been true to the pattern of their times and the astonishing thing is not that one should have been bad and the other good but that writing within the same generation they managed to produce verse that in the corresponding European scale is at least a century apart.

One thing unites them: a patriotism that is neither vulgar nor aggressive but, at best, mystical. It is possible that this may continue to be a characteristic of Jamaican poetry, however startlingly diverse are the forms which future manifestations take. Today, with Federation in the offing, the nationalist fervour which sparked Campbell's Muse is like a candle in daylight. In another twenty years many of his premises and conclusions, omissions and acceptances, will very likely be as incomprehensible as are so many of Tom Redcam's today. But, whatever happens to the factions, it is unlikely that any poet deserving to be called Jamaican will be unable to partake of the spirit behind the lines:

“Wind, where cometh  
the fine technique of rule passing through me, my hands  
wet with the soil and I, knowing my world?”

# HUNTING FOR HISTORY

by Andrew Pearse

One of the lasting pleasures of a country with a history is to walk about in its towns and villages with one's eyes open, allowing one's self to be reminded constantly of a many coloured history by the associations which cling to old buildings, markets, monuments, the road one is travelling and the shadows left in the fields by agricultural processes of an age gone by. In a new country without recorded history these pleasures are missing. But as soon as one delves into the past, even in a comparatively new country, the encounters and experiences of every day life begin to take a new meaning. In the West Indies, though there is a considerable amount of recorded history dealing with naval, military and political matters, the life of the common people is only now beginning to be studied. Popular customs and pastimes in the West Indies are extremely varied and the would-be student is often bewildered by the diversity of the scene.

In Trinidad a group of us have recently undertaken the study of a single aspect of the folk tradition with the intention of collecting facts about it and ordering and illustrating these facts in such a way as to give a general picture of the subject, which is a form of stick fighting known as Kalenda.

The name Kalenda has been widely known in many parts of the new world for at least 200 years, and it has come to mean different things in different places. Pere Labat claims that the dance was brought from the kingdom of Allada in West Africa and he says that it fascinated the French West Indies to such an extent, that even the nuns could not restrain themselves and danced it behind locked doors in the convents. The Kalenda in Trinidad is not significant as a dance but for the fact that it has become associated with a form of stick-fighting. We are studying this phenomenon. The subject is suitable because Kalenda as stick-fighting seems to be a unique product of Trinidad, or at least it has reached a unique form in Trinidad. A fair amount of information is available from

old people living today and there are one or two places in Trinidad where even the young still fight with enthusiasm. It is a pastime in which not only the creole population, but also the East Indians have participated and won great reputations. Our team consists of persons with musical knowledge able to write the Kalenda songs in sol-fa and staff notation, others who understand the Creole Patois, a painter whose strongest impulse is a desire to describe in paint the scenes and customs of popular life, and an expert in photography and sound recording. If we can find the resources it may even be possible for us to make a very brief film of stick-fighting.

Perhaps the main problem we have to tackle is that of organising our cooperative study effectively. We find it so easy to enjoy to the full our outings, interviews and our rummy musical sessions, that we sometimes forget to pursue with sufficient strictness and application the information we are seeking. Even the classification of the little pink cards we use for notes becomes a problem, and calls for a card index system.

In addition to noting songs, and the typical drum beats which accompany them, we are trying to write down biographies of outstanding stick-men, as well as some of the interesting myths and legends of apocryphal events which we come across. We are studying the technique of stick-fighting, its ethics, its geographical and racial distribution, and the attitude of the various classes of society to it. We find certain interesting superstitions and magical practices associated with it. For instance in Port of Spain and elsewhere it was usual to have a blood hole of "*tou sang*" into which the wounded fighter would let his blood drop. One of the reasons given for this is that if my blood falls on the ground and is dried by the sun, then the blood in my veins will dry up, and I shall sicken. Personally I expect to hear another explanation, but no one has given it yet.

Another interesting aspect of the study is that stick-fighting was also a part of the gang warfare which has played so significant a role in local life. The festival of Canboulé (Cannes Brulées), which used to take place at 12 o'clock midnight before the first day of Carnival, consisted of open warfare between the warriors of adjacent regions. Canboulé

was outlawed in the '80s of the last century, but the bands have remained, and the basic formation of the steel bands of today, and their form of warfare, has carried on the same tradition. A study of the nature of leadership in these bands or gangs has interesting implications for understanding of many current social phenomena in politics, and in certain indigenous religious groups.

I hope that the efforts of our team will be able to produce something of interest to Trinidadians, and if we can get them printed, to others as well. But whether we succeed or not, the undertaking is quite fascinating, and is something which to my mind could well be done elsewhere. There are a large variety of fetes, customs, dances, etc., which one can still see and hear on occasions, or at least hear tell of. They will be extinct before long unless plenty of interested amateurs get down to the job of recording them systematically.

# MUSIC

by Peggy Luck

A strain of music can lift the heart  
Into a world of light,  
Into the arms of angels by  
The waters of pure delight,  
Over the rainbow, above the moon,  
Where the sunbeams danced quite near,  
And stars, like a train of tears of joy  
At eventide appear.

# DAY BEFORE ASH WEDNESDAY

by A.N. Forde

There is a bee  
this morning  
feeding on the pollen  
of my breast  
as the sun  
with professional touch  
brings colour to the limbs  
a warm flood to the warm blood.

Pain is  
impanelled  
in the clenched heart:  
for this day is gay  
and warm with music-weather  
and air-rhyme.

There is a heat  
in my temples  
and in the stream  
of mad pounding  
my pulse leaps  
with its message  
to the waiting lips.

The limbs take  
power and triumph  
from the beating hands  
and the bands  
of trivial maids  
tie their modesty in a fling.

No more here  
the pull of gravity  
but the soul steeped  
in the stimulant  
of a tune.

And after all  
the wine and wandering  
through hectic streets  
and sun  
night comes  
and the moon sheds  
grains of silver  
from the sheaves  
in the clouds

And on the seashore  
the artistic waves  
ply their brushwork  
on the sands  
and memory nods  
to wake on the shoulder  
of Ash Wednesday.

Letter to the Editor  
**THREE EVENINGS WITH SIX POETS**

Dear You,

We have delightful whispers for literary ears. We are meeting a variety of West Indian writers— poets, poetesses and prophets. Up to now we have met only one poetess; the others were masculine and oh, on the second evening there was the lone figure of a man standing on an intellectual promontory in the ocean of time. A solitary figure, gesticulating and expressing himself in a curiously fascinating manner which seemed foreign to most of us. And though he spoke English he made the language seem different and exciting and new to us; for we being fresh from the sixth are accustomed to Shelley's and Tennyson's and Eliot's in not-too-strong doses. He may be the prophet, we think. In fact, we feel it in our bones

Well, we are really running out of order and if we must begin at the beginning you must hear of the three Jamaican writers who were introduced to the group on the first evening.

Una Marson came first. As soon as she was ushered in we were disarmed by her simple, unassuming manner. In a moment we were being lured '**TOWARDS THE STARS**'. It was her soft-toned voice that did it. Some day you must see for yourself how the nature world of hibiscus:

"Of Jessamine  
Myrtle  
Tulips  
And Honeysuckle"

dance rhythmically to the tune of her miraculous lyre; some day you must be touched as we were, by the sweet sad notes that love drew forth from her delightful instrument. Someday you must eavesdrop as we did that evening when she was whispering :

“Listen, little wild violet.  
Your heart beats wildly as mine  
When you hear the feet of your lover  
Stop by the Celandine.”

And she will arouse your sympathy too in ‘**THE STRIFE**’ which we cannot help but lift wholesale on to this page, being glad of it :

“All day long  
And all night long  
The salt waves dash  
Against the rocks.  
Do they never grow weary  
Of dashing themselves against the rocks ?

All day long  
And all night long  
My spirit strives  
Against my flesh.  
Spirit of mine, do you never weary  
Of mightily striving against adamant flesh?”

Perhaps, before we dismiss Una Marson you would like to share a portion of her ‘**BLACK BURDEN**’:

“I must not laugh too much.  
They say black folk can only laugh;  
I must not weep too much,  
They say black folk weep always  
I must not pray too much,  
They say that black folk can only pray.”

Well...we must not write too much, for this black burden is thought-provoking and our second poet from Jamaica is due any time now.

One of us, when asked in the presence of P. M. Sherlock himself what she thought about P. M. Sherlock’s poetry, had replied that she did not think of it at all. Well, we all thought of ‘**POCOMANIA**’ that evening, and very highly too. Most of

us decided that this poem and 'A BEAUTY TOO OF TWISTED TREES' (by the same poet) should be placed on the list of favourites of the evening.

In both these poems one could not help but notice the deeply religious feeling which pervaded his writings. This feeling was as strong as ever in the poem called 'MY FATHER WALKED BESIDE ME'. After reading these and some others to us, our reader paused to comment on the living quality in Sherlock's work which greatly impressed her "...for I find," she said, "that while reading the works of some other poets I am merely a spectator, one of the audience, but not so with Sherlock...his work is throbbing with life and as usual, simply packed with reference." And again: "The main characteristic of Sherlock's poetry is, in my opinion its pulsing metre forms, but chiefly, I think, of his choice of words and of images which communicate so exactly, so graphically, the ideas behind the written verse. Here, for instance, is the final stanza of his famous 'Pocomania' with its refrain which has been called "sinister", but which I prefer to deem "hypnotic":

"Black of night and white of gown  
White of altar black of trees.  
Swing the circle wide again  
Fall and cry me sister now  
Let de spirit come again  
Fling away de flesh and bone  
Let de spirit have a home  
Grunting low and in the dark  
White of gown and circling dance  
Gone today and all control  
Power of the past returns  
Africa among the trees  
Asia with her mysteries"

and the refrain :

"Black the stars, hide the sky  
Lift you shoulder, blot the moon  
Long mountain rise."

Some members of the group (the very ones, it is rumoured, who had come with the intention of being bored, and if necessary, picking the tropical bones of their poor fellow natives to pieces), looked as if the mountain-spirit had crept into them; they kept wondering to themselves why the public in B.G. did not hear more of these West Indian writers, whereupon the amused audience, overhearing what was really meant to be heard, begged them to be silent, for the hour of Pocomania's passing had come and Walter Adolphe Roberts was at hand.

W. A. Roberts in our opinion was the least West Indian of our guest-writers that evening (if we dare use this word West Indian without impunity!) What we mean, is that of all his works read that night, in not one was there found abandon and vivacity, the "*sun's-in-my-blood*" feeling that is the natural dowry of the Caribbean. There was no chance phrase to betray the West Indian environment or influence, no references to remind the reader of Caribbean surroundings. To put it in a nutshell, there was absence of the local bias, the local colour.

W. A. Roberts was easily the most detached of our three visitors. Yet, he was not hostile in his aloofness. In fact, it is this aloofness which made us examine him more keenly; only to discover that here before us was one who had not only chosen a new field for ploughing, but was a master of this chosen field.

You must have heard of the Villanelle, that delightful verse-form imported by the English from France. It was mainly used for light poetry...you know. Well, this Roberts fellow introduced the Villanelle form to Jamaica as a vehicle for serious poetry. He managed to achieve a melody and rhythm hitherto entirely unknown to earlier examples of the verse so that he is a kind of pioneer in his own right.

His work is said to exhibit a high degree of technical excellence. This was certainly apparent in '**THE CAT**' who was so royally presented to our group. She is a queenly, majestic figure, and we, the listeners, are almost transformed into a group of admirers in regal surroundings. Even so with the peacock. Here is pride, disdain and beauty all in one, parading itself before us.

Before we permitted the conservative W. A. R. to withdraw from our semicircle, the spotlight was focused on her royal highness, The Cat, which, we have no doubt, appeals to him as a subject because they have the same majestic air in common :

“No one of all the women I have known  
Has been so beautiful, or proud, or wise  
As this angora with her amber eyes.  
She makes her chosen cushion seem a throne,  
And wears the same voluptuous, slow smile  
She wore when she was worshipped by the Nile.”

A touch of gossip...the fairer section of the group has accepted this as a challenge. Daily they are ever watching cats. It is even likely that the greater part of the leisure hours of the extremist may be devoted to rigorous exercises in order to achieve the grace and stateliness of...**‘THE CAT’**.

We think after all, that you may as well have the first verse:

“Pleasures that I most enviously sense  
Pass in long ripples down her flanks and stir  
The plume that is her tail. She deigns to purr  
And take caresses. But her paws would tense  
To flashing weapons at the least offence.  
Humbly, I bend to stroke her silken fur,  
I am content to be a slave to her  
I am enchanted by her insolence.”

The technique of W. A. Roberts is apparent in all of his pieces. It drew forth admiration from our lips and though we were not as enthusiastic over him as with the other visitors, we had to admit that as a craftsman he was unsurpassed that evening.

Of all the people that had to be presented to us on the second evening...Derek Walcott !

One can imagine the fracas this young poet from St. Lucia created. It was a storm in the semicircle that was our group. Confidentially speaking we were nearly all blown and scattered into a disorderly rabble and we barely missed

being arrested by a mental police. But this is strictly *tête-a-tête*. Don't tell Derek Walcott himself, because we want him to have a good opinion of us, or none at all, before we meet him in person, if we ever do.

Frankly speaking, we don't know quite what to say about Derek (yes, we got to calling each other by first name by the middle of the evening) and though we devoted a whole evening to him we still have our decisions reserved. Derek Walcott is not the sort of person one can get to know in one evening. He is one who does not take to you immediately, however much you may admire him: like Mascagni's '**Intermezzo**', he grows upon you.

However, we can tell you this much: First we all know he is a prophet. We feel it instinctively. Secondly, several lady members emphasised this conviction. We do not know yet what he is prophesying but time will tell. Thirdly we knew he does not know — yet.

One thing was clear, the semicircle was fascinated by his manner of speech. Though it did not understand quite clearly exactly what Derek was saying in certain passages, and though a mathematically-minded member all but extracted paper and pencil to deduce Derek's message by a Reduction System all his own; in spite of all these things, we definitely liked him.

What most of us liked about his poetry was the jewels he chose to pin on paper with his precious pen. His poetry is forever pregnant with delightfully original metaphors, dazzling similes, photographic phrases that baffle with suggestion. Here is a gem from '**HENRI CHRISTOPHE**', which, in one reader's opinion, is the most original metaphor in all the world:

"This world is like a teardrop poised  
In the eyelid of Eternity, then dropping down to dark  
Round as a bubble, pricked by accident."

More than one person confesses that on the first reading of '**HENRI CHRISTOPHE**' one is so busy being impressed by the way Walcott's characters express themselves that one is likely to lose the trend of the story. Originality of expression satisfies our restless desire for something different. One is haunted by such a picture as:

“...the steep pass below the sea, knocking  
Like a madman on the screaming sand  
And the wind howling down the precipices like a lunatic  
Searching a letter he never wrote —against these rocks.”

And here we have the old opinion that “*in death are all equal*”, expressed in a new way: In death are all honourable.

Derek Walcott does not conceal his feelings about the race problem in the West Indies. We suppose the classicist, W. A. Roberts must raise his eyebrows in disapproval, for Derek knows nothing of poetic detachment from contemporary problems. In all of the poems we have read there lurks the personality of Derek himself, and in several of them there are such references (sometimes bordering on bitterness) which make us conclude that this poet is not a little bothered by the race question. It is quite clear that he believes the races to be like the piano keys—indispensable to one another. This is summed up in two lines:

“As when the nigger Night has laid his head  
To sleep on Day’s blond arm.”

Somebody remarked that Derek is too young to be so old; too young to carry such a weight on his shoulders; far too young to adopt such a European attitude of fatalism in the sunny climes of the Caribbean. Somebody retorted that he was only passing through a phase and it was likely that the bitter edge of his poetry would be filed off by the years.

Derek Walcott. We instinctively felt that we were listening to a genius that night. Yes, this was the mysterious figure on the promontory, and he is still there as far as we are concerned. We promised to return to him again another evening. But before we did we expressed our concern over his fatalistic attitude and wished sincerely that he be rescued from the waste land of European fatalism which is nowhere on the map of the West Indies. Only then, we think, will he find his medium.

The two poets who came on the third evening did not stay very long. Frank Collymore came first.

Unlike Derek Walcott's, Frank Collymore's poetry as seen in *Flotsam*, will appeal to young and old, at home and abroad. The poetry in this book is easy to follow, for the poet does not, clothe expression in elaborate and complicated diction; moreover, his themes are universal. He speaks of the beauty of Nature, of:

"The sun's heat distilled by the wind  
Into a thousand kisses,  
    and lithe figures.  
Naked girls, still breastless, mahogany and ebony,  
    shouting and laughing, their bodies etched  
In sunbright darkness along the glittering sand.  
He speaks of Music, of Life and Death."

A poem which appealed to the entire group is 'HYMN TO THE SEA':

"Like all who live on small islands  
I must always be remembering the sea.  
Being always cognizant of her presence; viewing  
Her through apertures in the foliage; hearing  
When the wind is from the south, her music, and smelling  
The warm rankness of her; tasting  
And feeling her kisses on bright sunbathed days:  
I must always be remembering the sea."

Like all his other pieces in *Flotsam* it is written in a free conversational style. His manner of approaching us was so direct, so deliberately casual. Collymore was most entertaining when he spoke of people — of the callous Chippy Joe and the late Officer of H.M. Customs. We enjoyed listening to his 'PORTRAIT OF MR. X'.

"I should like to paint you a portrait of Mr. X", he said in his easy manner. And so we listened with varying reactions to his original sketch. It was a very clever portrait. What you would call modern art. Of course, if there were conservative members of our group, they would have been taken aback; for, instead of being presented with "such a portrait as might be effected by camera or brush, pencil or pen," we were confronted

with the unknown quantity "Mr. X himself, X — as always, the unknown". To boot...his viscera !

"And, first and foremost, his viscera would have to  
be presented  
All the tremendous implications  
Of that unseen, improbable metropolis —  
Its remarkable storehouses of energy,  
Its sewerage system, its marvels of communication,  
Its workers busy on repair, its slum areas,  
Its police courts, its chemical laboratories  
Its alternating periods of inflation and depression  
Its longwave stations—all these the background."

There was a mild protest from the group. Somebody asked if this was modern poetry, and, if so, it was dreadfully realistic: some wondered how high W.A.R. would raise his eyebrows in protest.

Next came Collymore's views '**CONCERNING PHOTOGRAPHS**'.

Some members of the group decided that the poet's views on this subject were not worth a poem or a page in *Flotsam*. They much preferred to hear Collymore tell the touching story of '**AMANDA**', the old nurse, the Negress who:

"...yielded her tenderness  
To the children of an alien race, bestowing  
The sweets of her spirit upon those who  
Demanded all thanklessly, receiving only  
A smile, a casual hug, a few shillings a week.  
And half a crown at Christmas."

We suppose Amanda was popular with us because we all must have met Amanda's in our lives, or who knows, we may be Amanda's ourselves

H. A. Vaughan came to us through '**SANDY LANE**'. He was much concerned about the social condition of Barbados, and he has every right to be — he is a magistrate! His profession is plainly seen in his poetry. We wondered if W.A.R. would approve of him. He spoke of '**THE INQUEST**'

and of juvenile delinquency and of the mob in the street. We were moved by his sympathy with those who had gone astray and we especially appreciated the lines that read thus :

“Then turn again and smile and be  
The perfect answer to those fools  
Who always prate of Greece and Rome,  
“The face that launched a thousand ships”  
And such like things, but keep tight lips  
For burnished beauty nearer home.  
Turn in the sun my love, my love!  
What palm-like grace! What poise! I swear  
I prize those dusky limbs above  
My life.”

Though he is not the only poet who wears the love and pride of his race in his poems, he is one of the few who have struck resonant chords in our emotion. Equally appealing to us was ‘**DARK VOICES**’:

“There’s beauty in these voices. Do not base  
Your judgment purely on the affrighted street  
The howling mob, the quarrel, or repeat  
Your scathing strictures on the market place  
There’s beauty always urgent in this race  
That baffles bondage from its sure retreat  
Of song and laughter.”

This is the last we heard of Vaughan.

Three evenings. Six poets. And a promise of new acquaintances and renewed friendships. Until then — *Au revoir!* And as we West Indians would say, “*It was nice knowing them!*”

We an dem is company.  
Yours sincerely,  
**ALL OF US.**

Let's Talk It Out  
**LEARNING AND ACTING TOGETHER**

by A.A. Thompson

(BEING PART I OF A PAPER ON ACTIVE METHODS IN  
THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND  
FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION OF ADULTS)

**THE BRITISH GUIANA CHRISTIAN SOCIAL COUNCIL WAY:**

If adults do not understand the purpose, nature and application of group discussion, their programmes of social action cannot completely succeed. On the 13th of October, in Georgetown, the British Guiana Christian Social Council opened a highly significant programme of Economic, Social and Political education. Called a '**Discussion Week on Social Questions**', it is the perfect example of the most realistic and modern form of Adult Education. Organised in four commissions, the participants will study certain urgent social problems of British Guiana, make plans about them and seek ways and means of carrying out the plans. In opening the programme, the Archbishop of the West Indies and the Rev. Father Fenn, after him, emphasised the futility of individual action and the effectiveness of social action. This point of view cannot be overstressed at the present time. Programmes of adult education need to be seen as programmes of cooperative learning and action.

There are so many problems in a country, the nation, the world...but what can an individual do about them? Since only organised action by the group can be effective under present circumstances, one of the most rewarding educational experiences which can come to adults, and one of the most socially significant contributions of adult education, is teaching adults how to organise groups and use them effectively. This however, is one of the many things which can only be learnt. It cannot be taught.

The key to method in adult education is to help people to develop group organisation in terms of real problems and assist them to study their problems and work out plans

for action, and then carry them through. By this method, the Christian Social Council has attacked the problems of the Christian in (a) politics; (b) Business Ethics; (c) Cooperation in Industry; and (d) the family.

#### **THE BRITISH GUIANA TRADES UNION COUNCIL WAY:**

Similarly, two days before the opening of the Christian Social Council discussion week, the British Guiana Trades Union Council carried through a programme of Economic Education to find a way out of the problem of the high cost of living. At a discussion meeting of representatives of the Trades Union Council and the Legislature, the participants had before them a document which the Trades Union Council had prepared, analysing the factors in the high cost of living and suggesting solutions to the problem. The preparation of this document and the holding of this discussion meeting of the Trade Union Leaders and Political Leaders, is another example of the active method in social, economic and political education.

#### **THE BRITISH GUIANA CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION WAY:**

In the same week the British Guiana Civil Service Association circulated a questionnaire among its members in an attempt to survey the financial conditions of Civil Servants and explain the factors contributing to these conditions and to recommend solutions of the problems to the Government.

#### **THE WAY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE GOLD COAST:**

Writing from the United Nations on the 10th October, Daniel Chapman, the Gold Coaster who is Area Specialist for the West African Colonies said: *"In the Gold Coast, the Extra-Mural Department is doing extremely well. It seems to get all the money it needs. While I was at home (January 1951 to April 1951) I had the opportunity of attending one of the conferences organised by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies for the members of the Legislative Assembly. It was on the budget. It appears that every*

*session of the Assembly is going to be preceded by a conference dealing with the most important items on the Agenda."*

### THE UNITED NATIONS WAY:

The prevailing practices, methods and problems involved in obtaining financial assistance for economic development in undeveloped countries were the main themes of a meeting of experts from six countries (Chile, Egypt, Mexico, Philippines, Puerto Rico, and United Kingdom), held at Lake Success from 24th October to 2nd November, 1949. The meeting was called by the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs and was the first of a series of Seminars on special problems of economic development to be held under a General Assembly resolution relating to technical assistance. Each of the participants attended in an individual capacity and had prepared a paper on the subject with special reference to the experience of his own country in the field of financing. Sr. Sol Luis Descartes, Treasurer of Puerto Rico, attended the meeting and prepared a paper on '**Financing Economic Development in Puerto Rico, 1941-1949**'. This is the way of the United Nations in finding solutions to problems.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council is responsible to the General Assembly for promoting:

- (1) Higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development:
- (2) solutions of international, economic, social, health and related problems:
- (3) international, cultural and educational cooperation and
- (4) universal respect for, and observance of human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

The Council is assigned the following specific functions:

- (1) It makes or initiates studies and reports on international, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters and makes recommendations on such matters

to the General Assembly, to the members of the United Nation, and to the specialised agencies concerned (UNESCO, FAO, WHO, and so on).

- (2) It makes recommendations for promoting respect for and observance of human and fundamental freedoms for all.
- (3) It prepares draft conventions for submission to the General Assembly on matters within its competence,
- (4) It calls international conferences on matters within its competence.

Subsidiary organs reporting to the Council are of four types: Commissions, Standing Committees, Ad hoc Committees, Special Bodies. Of these organs this paper will only mention the two types of commissions : (1) functional and (2) regional. Of these two types of commissions, only functional commissions need concern us.

The functional commissions are (1) Economic and Employment (15 members), with sub-commissions on Employment, (7 members) on Economic Stability (7 members) and Economic Development (7 members); (2) Transport and Communications (15 members); (3) Statistical (12 members, with sub-commissions on Statistical Sampling (5 members), and a Committee on Statistical Classification (8 members); (4) Human Rights (18 members), with sub-commissions on Freedom of the Press (12 members), Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (12 members); (5) Social (18 members): (6) Status of Women (15 members): (7) Narcotic Drugs (15 members); (8) Fiscal (15 members) and Population (12 members). The programmes of the Functional Commissions are programmes of cooperative learning and action. The actions they recommend are taken by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. This United Nations way of attacking problems by means of cooperative learning and action is also the method of the Caribbean Commission.

## **ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION:**

And now a word about the nature of economic, political and functional education. In a programme of functional education, initiation into the economic, social and political life of adults is linked with the social functions devolving upon top and middle management men in industry and commerce; the representatives of the industrial and agricultural workers, the secretaries of Trade Unions, central and Local Government officers, and so on. Education is then centred on training for well-defined responsibilities, education, before becoming general, is functional.

The aim of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies is to discover and satisfy the educational interest of adults. The Department has discovered a need for Adult Education in this group of social sciences in all the Islands, the Windward Islands, Jamaica and Trinidad). In the present calendar year two programmes of functional education have been provided by the University College in British Guiana : (I) a course in Public Administration for 55 Government and business employees at Easter; (2) a training course in Trade Union work for 46 Trade Union officials in September.

Economic, Social and Political education enables the adult to see his work in its true perspective, to understand the organisation of society and to choose or orientate his civic activities. In emphasising the need for this type of education, adult educators have now adopted new expressions — economic literacy, social literacy and political literacy.

## **THE NEED FOR MORE ACTIVE METHODS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES:**

Research for more active methods in this economic, social, political and functional education is now regarded as indispensable by leading adult educators. The experience of social or Trade Union Circles in the United Kingdom, in the United States, in France and in other advanced countries has shown that economic and social instruction, even when linked with the training for a social function, often produces men

who are cleverer at repeating formulas and handling ideas than at analysing a situation or at distinguishing what is true and what is false.

Therefore, exercises in observation and analysis tend to become more frequent as an introduction to political economy, and the survey is the means which is being more and more often employed. The laws of political economy are made known by discussions on salaries, the market and rents, or by visits to workshops, post offices, factories, and so on. When, as in the recent actions of the British Guiana Trade Union Council and the British Guiana Civil Service Association, the active method of the survey and analysis is adopted in economic, social and political education, as the principal means of education, adults are not given formal lectures. They themselves carry out surveys in their own environments; they acquire a method of observation and explanation: they learn how to use technical literature for the preparation of surveys and how to express the results of research work; they become acquainted with a method of introduction to the various social and human sciences by starting from observation of everyday life, and acquire a general training which makes the study of environment part of their everyday life.

Opening of Christian Social Council week of discussion, the Archbishop of the West Indies said that the world needs a Christian revolution since it is so upside down. This then is the motivation for the Week of Discussion. The purposes of the Week of Discussion which grow out of this motivation, emerge from the stream of experience of life in British Guiana and in the world by of certain problems which adults are unable to solve without help through educational experience.

### **THE STUDY GROUP:**

The form of educational experience which the Christian Social Council has arranged, is the Study Group. General intellectual education tends to dispense more and more with the teaching of branches of learning, and takes place more and more in study groups relating to everyday problems. Certainly, references to History, Sociology and Literature are not lacking, but they are made afterwards to illustrate

positive questions raised by each participant. In this way, the members of each group learn to raise a problem, to define it, to seek the why and the wherefore (introduction to Philosophy), to distinguish its elements, to situate it in time and in space (introduction to History and Geography), to explain it (introduction to the Sciences).

The study group method is often unreliable. It may give rise to idle talk and create a confusion of ideas instead of elucidating the problem or stimulating interest. In the aforementioned programmes of the Christian Social Council, the Trades Union Council and the Civil Service Association and the current programme of adult education in the social sciences of the University College of the West Indies, the Study Group approach is adopted as being essentially an exercise in the art of thinking and of expressing one's self. Exercises in the art of thinking aim at developing to the highest degree the ability of every individual to think and to express himself. They make the Study Group more effective. Mental training has varied forms, which can arouse as passionate an interest as athletic training. What is the principle? To give each individual confidence in his ability and to reveal to him the intellectual power which he has in him and of which he is frequently unaware. The study group method of mental training is far from perfect, but its development has given the most encouraging results. It represents the advanced form of general tendency of intellectual adult education, with a view to a more positive, a more effective training of the mind.

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**NOTE:** Part II of this paper on active methods in economic, social, political and functional education of adults will describe the programmes with which the University College will attempt to satisfy this need in the academic year, September 1951 to August 1952.

## PROPOSALS FOR A CONGRESS OF WRITERS

There have been made tentative proposals to hold a Congress of Writers in the British Caribbean, to take place during Holy Week 1952, — viz., April 6 to April 11 with the purpose of discussing the problems of writers in this part of the world. Writers have been cordially invited to give us their advice on its feasibility and an assurance of their help.

It was considered that a Congress of this nature would be most practicable if it were held in Trinidad and operated under the blessing and sponsorship of bodies such as the Caribbean Commission, UNESCO, and the University College of the West Indies. Trinidad was provisionally considered because it enjoys all the advantages of being central and on world routes; and it was felt that for the Congress to have a practical outcome in stimulating the production of literary work and therefore providing a stock of publications which convey the ethos of the British Caribbean for UNESCO and University alike, it would be necessary for these organisations to sponsor the Congress, give it financial aid, and send personnel and technical organising assistance.

It is proposed that the major topics of the Congress should include—

- (1) the cultural relationships existing between the British Caribbean territories and their neighbours in the region,
- (2) the technical disabilities facing the writer and his work in the Caribbean.
- (3) the national tradition, the creative writer and the journalist.

Other ideas that have been mooted include the publication, in connection with the Congress, possibly undertaken by the Pioneer Press in Jamaica, of a West Indian anthology covering all possible aspects of the history and culture of the region. Linked with this idea are the names of such writers as

W. Adolphe Roberts, Dr. Eric Williams and Philip Sherlock as joint editors. The publication could include messages from Dr. Bodet, the Director General of UNESCO, the President of the International Pen Club, eminent writers of the British Commonwealth and of the non-British Caribbean.

These so far are only proposals and will need advice and cooperation before they can be translated into the reality of a Congress of Writers, so the Editor and the Resident Tutor in British Guiana, would be grateful if all interested would give them earnest consideration and comment as early as possible on every aspect of these general proposals.

## OVER HERE

by Daniel Williams

Over here where our islands  
Puncture the leaden sea into a chain,  
And our wish inconstant like the pilloried  
Sun fatigued by clouds, here where pain  
Is narcotic, blunt and dull, frenzied  
We have hoped.

Not for the nurturing of a million  
Varied wish or the relish of a lotus  
Pleasure; not for the temporary brazen  
Triumph the coin has taught or the sick  
Culture which understands only the voice  
Of duped builders.

Rather the ubiquitous call of the river  
For the salt panting of the sea, rather  
The proud turn of the leaf's neck  
For the hot kiss of the sun and the weak  
Reach of the hand for the strong grasp  
Of the comrade.

For here we have loved  
The wet mud clinging the hoemen's feet.  
Here in the soil our blood is green and  
In our wine the vine is parched with the  
Heat of our hope; yet untamed is the spark  
Of desire, strong in young strength.

Time reaches for the harp  
Of history, and in the east dawn brings  
Her dower of light and flings it to her  
Husband day; glance in the west, the golden  
Egg will break into a myriad suns and people  
Our horizon.

Look at the land, the psalms,  
Singing for our sons beyond the fever of the years ;  
Look at the trees, the prayers,  
Curtseying before the sacred scribbling of the wind,  
And the clouds the white precipitate of the sky  
Like incense on the altar.

**UBI GENTIUM**  
by Owen Campbell

After the flood, lightning,  
And no dove, no olive leaf.  
The raven of despair goeth forth without returning.

After blood, after the march,  
Sacrifice and the burnt offering, yet where is Moses ?

Lost in the mist, gone,  
Lost in the cloud on the mount.  
Let us break from our faith, build us a calf to lead us on.

**II**

Here is no hope now,  
Here are all bleak faces.  
Here all dreams are cracked in the ground under the sun,  
Here all heart runs purple in rivers under the rain.

**III**

But we have found out  
All about mirages,  
And in our seasons of drear no flash could fake us;  
In our deserts of wandering, we expect no pools.

And this one who dared,  
Who dared hope, suffers now,  
Utters his last wish fainting, — the Columbus cry:  
“Give me my men but three days, give me time my masters”.

**IV**

...Wait! There are birds now bearing  
The tell-tale bush, and on the sea  
The token, the bough floating  
And fresh-green.

Under the wet of waiting  
May be ground, may be Ararat;  
And some wait, not with knowing  
But despair.

Just beyond our trust, beyond  
The edge of the dwindling acre  
May be land, may be the fat land,  
Few have faith.

Only time now while we wait on the wind  
To find what only the sun and the wave  
Knew and whispered about.  
After doubt and drifting  
Had broken our hearts.

# RHAPSODY ON A HILL

by E. McG. Keane

Come go  
Scan the cut  
Of the jig-saw clouds  
Repatterning the sky

Watch knuckled showers  
Bruising the light into rainbow

Catch the sun  
Making eyes at the sea  
The wind running  
Blindfold over the mountains  
Catching its breadth  
In the deep valleys...

God is a child  
And today I celebrate him

For not least in ecstasy  
This life I walk that knifes me  
This sun I love that slays me  
    Beyond these green Ararats  
Must breathe a dove  
That does not need my sins  
Nor search for  
Perching on my callous limbs

For I am as young as heaven and Noah  
With a new world to furnish  
    I will build beauty like bird  
And the bird will write his wing  
Against the sun  
    I will explain truth to the young sea  
Sucking at the river's nipple

For here only I find  
Mercy that has no mockery  
And the sun intimate as a child's eye

What if here I dare kiss hands with time  
Call God by his first name!  
I have found God young and a fellow in these hills  
And in this hour I do not bother with bleatings  
My God the Father  
Rather  
    I turn and sing  
    God the Child

For today I have walked  
This nursery time  
    And I have stumbled upon  
    All the world's wheels and engines  
    ...and someone came running to me  
    With the universe  
    Like a top spinning in his hands...

Short Story  
**BURIED TREASURES**

by Eugene Bartrum

Hearing footsteps in the drawing room, David Johnson called out *"Is that you Marjorie?"*

*"Yes, darling. It is me,"* his wife answered. *"Who else could it be?"* Her tone became wistful. *"Aren't you back rather early today? Not expecting a visitor I hope?"*

Pushing the door of the bedroom open, she stopped in surprise to see her husband seated on the floor before an open canister in the midst of a pile of dust and old papers.

*"What on earth are you doing?"* she asked, *"Looking for your grandfather's will?"*

*"Possibly,"* David said smiling faintly. *"I'm glad you've come. Your knowledge of Dutch may help me to find it easier."*

*"Find what, darling?"* Marjorie asked *"Scorpions or Tuberculosis. Those two monsters usually hide themselves in dust and old papers. Didn't your mother ever tell you so?"*

*"Marjorie, darling, please don't be funny. This is important. We may be able to pay off the mortgage on our estate. We may even become rich. If I succeed in finding this, it will be our first canter. Then we start looking for the canister. In that canister lies our fortune."*

He got up suddenly and took his wife in his arms *"Then I'll be able to give my charming little princess all that I always wanted too. Lovely dresses, picnics all over the country, a beautiful house, a new car. Why! We could even think of that youngster we've been postponing."*

He stopped and held her at arm's length *"Say. You're stunning. By damn! Isn't David Johnson married to the cutest little vixen any man ever laid an eye upon."*

He took her in his arms again and pecked her lightly on her lips. *"Dangerous to take all in one gulp. Intoxication may set in."*

Amused at her husband's unusual display of affection, Marjorie sat on the edge of the bed and laughed *"Not bad"* she said *"Not bad at all. Quite refreshing. Already I feel intoxication setting in. What have you been reading, Browning or Byron?"*

David frowned slightly. *"Tchah Tchah"* he muttered. *"Not on my life. You know my aversion to such sentimentalists."*

Opening a liquor cabinet, he took out a large bottle of wine and two glasses.

*"My rice wine!"* Marjorie accused. *"So that's it. You've been drinking my rice wine."*

*"Sure, my sweet"* David said. *"Before rummaging this haunt of scorpions and tuberculosis, your poor husband needed a bracer. And here's a secret. This stuff is darned good. Where did you get the recipe from?"*

*"My grandmother. She willed it to me,"* she grinned. *"But, darling, you shouldn't have opened it. Not yet, at least. It was..."*

*"Don't tell me,"* David interrupted *"I know. It was for my birthday."*

*"Um hum"* Marjorie nodded, her colour rising.

*"You're sweet"* David said- *"But as far as I can remember that silly anniversary is about two weeks off and by then we'll have our canister of gold."*

He poured wine into the glasses and handing her one he said *"And now, my princess, may we toast to our fortune?"*

Marjorie took the wine and sipping it lightly she asked *"What's all this crazy talk, David, about fortune and a canister of gold? Don't tell me you're serious?"*

David's countenance fell. *"As you know, Marjorie, there's a heavy mortgage on this place and the merchants are importing coffee from Brazil which sells in the street for less than it costs us to produce our coffee. We can't blame them. It's their business. Until today it seemed very probable that we'd lose this estate."*

*"I know, darling"* Marjorie said. *"And it is terrible that people in this colony who put their best into productive industries should have such heart rending odds to face. But, darling, we're young. And..."* She smiled helpfully. *"That youngster, you spoke about just now is not there yet. You'll get a job and we'll get by. If it comes to a push I could get a job and we'll get by. If it comes to a push I could get a job myself."*

*"No. You wouldn't."* David said *"Not as long as you're my wife. And darling it is not only we who are involved. Most of the men on this estate were born here. Their families were reared here. They know nothing else but growing coffee. Preparing the soil for cultivation, planting the seeds, nurturing the young plants,*

ridding them of pests, reaping the berries and preparing the coffee for commercial use." He smiled and sighed simultaneously. "That has been their work and that has been their play. They love it as much as I do. After my father died they taught me the rudiments of the industry. They are faithful men and this place is as much their's as mine. So, darling I could not even think of giving up. And today old Johan Vandenburg told me that there was a canister of Dutch Money buried somewhere in this estate."

Marjorie got up and put her arms around her husband's waist. "Please David" she said. "What has gone over you? You've always hated superstition and sentiment. You have always been so practical." There was a twinkle in her eyes. "So ruggedly practical. How could you ever believe such superstitious nonsense. You know old Johan has a reputation for his tall tales. If we're to believe all such stories, Dutch money is buried in every backyard in British Guiana. It's an old, old story, dating back to when the British acquired this country from the Dutch. It was said that those wily old Dutch men buried their treasure with the hope that they would come back some day to reclaim it." She kissed him almost tenderly.

"No David, it isn't like you. And isn't there some law or other which says that such money belongs to the state? Whoever finds it is bound to hand it over to the Government."

She smiled wickedly. "How could a sensible law abiding citizen like my husband even think of breaking the law?"

"Yes," David said. "All that is true. But, sweetheart, a law which states that anything found on a man's own property does not belong to him does not sound reasonable. And there are actually a few men in British Guiana who found these elusive canisters and became rich without the intervention of the law. Old Johan's story did seem tall to me at first, but when he told me about the papers my father had in this canister, I got wary. How did he know about these papers? He told me that among these papers there would be documents written in Dutch and one of them would be a plan showing where the money was buried. I have found a few plans and some of them are written in Dutch. So old Johan may be right after all. Would you mind checking on them for me?"

To satisfy her husband, Marjorie started going through the plans and papers.

After a long search she said *"Seems as though that old devil has spoken the truth for once. Here's your plan. And the directions state very clearly that a canister containing valuables is buried here."* She pointed to the spot on the age-worn bit of paper.

*"Didn't I tell you!"* David said. *"There seems to be no harm in making a search even if I have to hand over my fortune to Government."*

*"Come to think of it,"* Marjorie said, *"I think I'll help you search. There seems to be something mysterious about these documents. Something which arouses my woman's curiosity. They are over a hundred years old and written in perfect Holland Dutch."*

For several days David and Marjorie dug deep into the ground around a spreading short specie of cabbage palm which was mentioned on the plan as marking the vicinity of the buried fortune. The broad branches of the palm afforded them shelter when the sun was overbearingly hot and under them they lazed when they were not digging.

Somehow, although so far their quest was unsuccessful, still they found it comforting under this century old tree which seemed to evoke a peculiar peaceful atmosphere.

*"To think,"* David whispered in Marjorie's ear one day *"that my great grandfather may have courted my great grandmother under this very palm"*.

*"And your grandfather and father after them"* Marjorie enjoined. *"Yes, darling. There's a sacredness in the air here that is more beautiful than I ever experienced. It seems to link us beautifully with the past. I know now why you hate to lose this place. Somehow, I think you won't"*.

After a week Johan Vandenburg intruded on their picnic. He glanced at the work they had done and he said *"Like yo' digging fo' Dutch Gole maas David, but ah don't tink you gon' fin' it so. Yo' gat fo' mek a sacrifice fus'."*

David exchanged glances with his wife. Both of them had overlooked that important proviso of the legend of buried Dutch treasure.

*"Ah blood sacrifice,"* Johan continued *"ah'redy yo' stawt fo' distu'b de peacefulness ah dem Dutch Jumbie, dat guardin' dis trespure. One ah dem come an' tell me so in me dream laas' night. Dat's why ah come hey fo' warn yo'."*

*"Look here, Johan," David said sternly. "Everyone in the district knows you are a confounded liar. You don't think you could scare either my wife or myself with your yarns about Dutch jumbies and sacrifices. If you know where this mysterious canisters is hidden just tell me and I'd get it without any sacrifice."*

*"I'll give you a third of whatever is worth, if it's worth anything at all."*

*"Me! Maas' David," Johan said. "Me gon' soon tu'n jumbie me'self. Me caan' spile me futah happiness. You dun say Johan lie, but Johan still tell you how fo' look fo' dis treasure."*

His bizarre laughter echoed eerily from the trunk of the cabbage palm.

*"You' bettah ca'ful whah you' say maas David. An' befo' yo' do any mo' digin' you' bettah tink bout de sacrifice."*

Saying that Johan tried to laugh again, but suddenly he became short of breath and opened his mouth and gasped painfully.

David knew it was one of Johan's heart seizures and immediately he had Marjorie were by his side.

They took him under the shade of the cabbage tree and when they made him as comfortable as they could, David said *"Marjorie, if you stay with old Johan I'll go and fetch his mixture. I shan't be long."*

There was a trace of anger in David's voice, but Johan said feebly, *"No, maas David. Don't go. Ah don't need de mixture now. Ah gon' be alright jes now. Don' go ah wan' to tell yo' someting'."*

He stopped gasping and smiled with that old air of mystery so familiar to him.

*"De gole yo' lookin' fo' maas David ain' dey hey no' mo' it moove out. I moove it, not because ah want it maas David, but because it won't do yo' no good 'till yo' get mo' sense. If you' pramise to tek me advice an' stap usin' dis high class manure pan de caffee. Res' de lan' maas David, res' it ah tell yo' an if you don' wan' to clear de whole estate clear hawf ah it an' plant yam an' eddah an' cassava. Me tell yo' so always but yo' nah wan' fo' hayre. Oh Gawd boy if yo' nah hayre me yo' go laas dis place."*

Johan stopped and gasped a bit and he continued more feebly. *"Do dat maas David, plant eddah an' yam. Stawt right now pon dis lan' whah yo' fawk up hey."*

He looked imploringly at David then he smiled weakly with Marjorie and closed his eyes.

*"Kno' Johan nan kno', only Gawd kno'..."*

A peaceful smile displaced the mystery of the old farmer's face.

*"Dear, dear old Johan,"* Marjorie said as David folded his hands across his chest.

After Johan's funeral Marjorie said, *"David, don't you think old Johan's advice worth trying?"*

*"I don't know,"* David knit his brows, *"and even if it was, where would I get the money to pay the men while the estate was cleared and besides, if the interest on the mortgage isn't paid within a few months they'd foreclose. They told me that."*

He let his hands fall to his side, in utter dejection.

*"Oh Marjorie, it's all my fault. Not only Johan but several of the others advised me, but I was so headstrong. It's too late now."*

Marjorie took a large envelope from her bosom.

*"No, David,"* she said *"It isn't, dear old Johan has left us enough here to pay the interest on the mortgage and all other expenses on the estate for two years. Mr. Watts the solicitor sent for me this morning and gave me this. It's Johan's will."*

After a year of David's new method of coffee cultivation the Johnson's coffee estate produced twice as much coffee as it ever produced in one crop.

*"Darling,"* David said to his wife, *"we've found that treasure. By the end of the next two years it seems as if our estate will be free of debt."*

*"Darling,"* Marjorie whispered in his ear. *"Mummy has news too. That elusive youngster is on his way."*

*"Why didn't you tell me before?"* David asked in assumed anger.

*"Because,"* Marjorie said with a knowing smile, *"I didn't know whether daddy could afford such news."*

## A NOTE ON THOMAS MANN

by A. J. Seymour

One of the fascinations of being alive at the same time that a profound writer is putting his pen to paper, is that one is perpetually seeking self discovery in his pages and relying on him to put the mirror up to the world so that one can see the times in his wiser and all-compelling perspective. He writes for all time, and his work, by a magic of style and personality is contemporary not only with every reader, but he also reveals to themselves the readers of his own age. Some of the question marks that surround a great work of art lead us to ask *"to what degree has a particular novel unity? How great is the complexity of parts and elements which that unity embraces and organises? Does it create a new world where the drowsy everyday gives place to an intense wakefulness, with the imagination glowing and filled, and the emotions stirred?"*

Judged by these or any other standards, Thomas Mann is one of the greatest of living novelists and as Yeats would put it, he will *"sit down at Journey's end"* with Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and Cervantes and Proust. Like them, he has tremendous breadth of vision and it is safe to say that his four Joseph books, *Joseph and His Brethren*, *The Young Joseph*, *Joseph in Egypt* and *Joseph the Provider* have taken their place beside the *Brothers Karamazov*, *War and Peace*, *Don Quixote*, and *The Remembrance of Things Past*, as one of the great novels of the world. It is an achievement to take out of the Old Testament, a score of pages which tell a story that is part of the Christian heritage and with patient scholarship, immense psychological insight and narrative skill to compose the tetralogy of the Joseph books, some 2,000 pages long. Having read them, one is unlikely ever to forget the opening of the first book with its analysis of time and the cycles of nature; or the description of Joseph's state of mind when he was in the pit; or that Prelude in the Upper Circles which opens the last volume, where up in heaven the great Shemmael, rather delicately upbraids the Throne of nepotism to this favourite of his, now in an Egyptian prison; or the illuminating

discussion, between Pharaoh and Joseph in the Cretan loggia, on the one God whom Pharaoh described, upon Joseph's gentle prompting, not as Aton, but rather the Lord of the Aton, who is not in the world at all but in heaven — to have read these passages is to have permanently enriched oneself.

As a reader, however, I have been both fascinated and repelled by two other books from this great writer. *The Magic Mountain* which is a novel that contains a summary of the knowledge of the modern sciences, and that account of the life story of a great creative musician, *Doctor Faustus*. I can trace my disturbance in the *Magic Mountain* to a particular sentence where it dawns on Hans Castorp, lying on his back in the Tuberculosis Sanatorium, high up in the Swiss mountains, and reading in that stimulating atmosphere, books which bring home to his hitherto unawakened mind the range of biological and chemical processes. And on Hans Castorp it dawns that life is a fever of matter.

The ideas which feed the mind of Hans Castorp as he reads, as he listens to the brilliant conversation of his friends, and experiences, like Prometheus bound, strange floodtides of emotion become in effect a summary of the resources and achievements of the modern world, in so far as they can pass into the minds of man. But this sentence persists with its overtones of civilisation being a disease, and the effect is reinforced by small incidents such as the emphasis placed upon the glass diapositive of Claudia Chauchat's X-ray portrait; and the harrowing seance where the cousin of Hans Castorp is summoned from the dead, and not even the brilliant talk of the philosophers Settembrini and Naphta can conjure it away, nor the strange end, where we are shown the former patient, now a German soldier, running through the exploding shells of the 1914 war, his bayonet swinging in his hand.

*Doctor Faustus* disturbs, in somewhat the same way, but more deeply. The great creative musician Adrian Leverkühn has sold his soul to the devil for 24 years of musical genius and incessantly welling composition, but this restatement of the Faust legend has at its physical base a venereal infection contracted in a most unusual manner. Like the Inferno of

Dante, the novels of Thomas Mann always have a succession of structural depths and in *Doctor Faustus*, one is stirred to the consciousness that perhaps one type of genius is the result and even the fruit of an arrested physical corruption.

Mann is retelling the Faust legend in the modern manner and so the devil closes his bargain with a paralytic stroke that wipes away from the brain of this fertile composer the 24 years of genius that had been his, and returns him to his aged mother as an old man who is a child in his fears and who must sit hand in hand with his mother, for the soothing of her presence. Mann here captures the essence of the allegory for us as we remember the dark pride of the composer who chose theology, the highest study of all, out of a condescending facility and as a means of showing to himself and to all, the ease with which his mind could master its abstruse arguments, and then forsook it for his music, one is tempted to murmur "*This is how God punishes for sins of pride.*"

The novel abounds in reflections of the deepest insight on the nature of art in general and music in particular, and as in the other novels, the author crowds his canvas with a profusion of characters, all alive and in the round and tells his story with the deliberate suspense to which readers of Mann are accustomed.

This inadequate note on two of the novels of Thomas Mann is presented here in order that I may introduce the question "*can these works be put among the really great novels, as willingly as one would put the Joseph books?*" *The Iliad* of Homer, the *Inferno*, and to take novels themselves the Joseph books, *War and Peace*, and the *Brothers Karamazov* are books that help readers to turn back to life, refreshed, spiritually strengthened and willing once more to battle against material things and circumstances.

Short Story  
**DAWN OF THE FUTURE**  
by Prasad Sukhndan

The fleecy flecked clouds grew into a golden shimmer as the sun rose out across the Atlantic, flooding the Suddie Beach with its gleaming rays. A young man but barely twenty-two sat enraptured by this spectacle. He seemed lost in deep reverie, for he did not hear the two women talking loudly as they walked along.

*"Eh! Eh! gal Effie is who dah?"*

*"You don' know dah is Tim Robinson de magistrate clerk son."*

*"Is wah he doin' deh so early lookin' at de sky, deh 'ent no stars foh he count now."*

*"Like you nevva heard dat he in love wid Grace Magnus nuh?"*

*"Nah Gal."*

*"Well fuh make a lang story shart leh me tell you. De two of dem grow up to-geddah from lil-boy days, deh went to Sea View School and uses to go home every day by de beach, 'till dem lef and went to high school in town, 'till deh fall in love wid one annadah. Mean time Tim fadah a Civil Sarvoant wid big name and lil salary, got lef behin' by Grace fadah. Mistah Magnus business expan', he got plenty store and moto car. Well he still uses to mek love rite weh you see he sittin' down, 'till she fada gie she a car an' den she start foh play a differen' tune. She start gwine out wid dem adah big shat son, to dance an' ting, den bam! she get engage to Harry Simon de Diamon' merchant son, and lef Tim weh he deh."*

*"Well ah tell you wah, money does get up in some people head."*

*"Yuh rite gal Fan-fan."*

Tim Robinson never heard that part of his life story. Even then he was thinking of Grace Magnus, planning to make her come back to him. He thought of many plans. Of taking a course in accountancy, but that would hardly interest her now. "Flick", went his fingers. "I've got it", he said aloud to himself. "I'll open a Commercial Agency, the first of its kind on the Coast." Yet the \$1,500 he had saved from his salary as a Clerk in the District Administration Office could do very little.

As the months went by he gave it serious thought, and set about studying the markets, demand and supply, and

possible Agencies. It was at Christmas that he decided to resign and get his Agency on foot. His first venture in dry goods, mainly woollens, silks, and cotton piece goods gradually blossomed out successfully. By the end of the year he had covered the coast and made customers all along. His honesty and square dealing brought him worthy returns. He was able to take over an Agency for Radios offered him. Grace Magnus had by then found Harry Simon 'too boyish', and broke off her engagement, but she showed no signs of renewing her old love.

John Magnus sat in his spring-filled Morris, puffing at a Churchillian cigar, scanning the morning papers. "Mmmm!" he murmured as Grace was coming downstairs. "Hello! little one, have you noticed that young Robinson, quite a lot of push in him. That boy has a sense of business. "

*"Coming from you Dad I could believe it, but after all he must work to earn a livelihood. I am driving out to Hampton Court, the McTurks are throwing a party this evening. Bye-bye."*

*"Bye-bye dear."*

Tim Robinson lived in that haze of happiness known to the ardent worker. He could be seen every morning at sunrise at his Sanctum on the Suddie beach, and at sunset. It was as if he came to welcome the dawn of day and see the shadow of night steal across the ocean.

Tim had just acquired an agency for small cars, of good mileage, and low cost to meet the demand for cheaper transportation. It was then that he found himself in direct competition with Magnus Cooperation. His cars took the market from the first week of their arrival. His business was posing a problem to John Magnus. Robinson Agencies Ltd., now had its head office in Georgetown. Tim Robinson had made his name, but to what avail. He had not succeeded in interesting Grace in the least.

*"A letter for you Sir,"* said the servant handing it over.

*"Thank you,"* said Tim looking wistfully at the neat characters on the shell-blue envelope. It was from Grace. He read her invitation to her birthday party on the 22nd instant. His eyes contracted for a second. "No!" he said aloud. Grace received Tim's note regretting his inability to attend. Robinson Agencies Ltd. now meant something, and at year end breasted

the tape with Magnus Cooperation for best business. John Magnus called a hurried meeting of his Directors and planned the coming year's policy, and they all agreed to an all-out campaign against Robinson Agencies Ltd.

Tim Robinson's name was never mentioned in the Magnus home. Tim, now master of the situation, spent his holidays rapt in thought. He smoked a pipe and listened to the waves scurrying up and down the beach. Grace Magnus had ceased to worry him, and the love of his childhood days seemed dead.

Then came a slump in the markets, prices skied, and his success trembled under its blow. He called in all his bonds, reduced his long term orders, and felt his way in all his investments. Fate mocked at Magnus Cooperation. Tied up with a contract to purchase American cars, Magnus Cooperation profits dwindled. They were hard hit and one by one the shutters of their doors went up. John Magnus, not wanting to invest from his reserves wisely announced his retirement and sold out. Grace had had another short-lived engagement, for the dandy this time thought it best to elope with her bosom friend.

*"Hello! Hello! Tim", called his father coming up the driveway. "How are you, still making the money eh?"*

*"Hello! dad come in."*

Father and son sat to a trolley of refreshments just rolled in by the servant. *"Well, no answer to that money question?"*

*"Sure Dad you know I am."*

*"What about the future—your future son. Haven't you seen the fair lady yet?"*

*"This is a surprise, really I haven't given her much thought lately."*

*"And why not?"*

*"Just nothing."*

*"Don't tell me you're still sore about that Magnus incident?"*

*"Oh! no Pop, but just yet I don't feel that way."*

*"I see. Well to your continued success."*

It was but a few days from another of Grace's birthdays and she was preparing her invitations. When she came to Tim Robinson's name on her list she drew a line through it.

Tim's grey sedan sped along the road. As he slowed up to cross the Taymouth Manor bridge, he saw a car, bonnet-down

on the parapet. As he neared he could hear the accelerated motor going. He pulled up aside, jumped out and went over to the car. Addressing the driver with, *"Good evening, can I help?"* then in the half-light recognising Grace Magnus, said *"Good evening Miss Magnus"*.

Her reply was tart. *"No thank you."* She dug her foot on the accelerator. With a second's decision he jumped on to the rear bumper, and with a lurch the car jerked up the parapet. He jumped off as the car did not stop, and for a moment watched the fading rear lights. With a shrug of his shoulders he got into his car and drove on.

It was Monday morning, the sun was but a red halo on the distant horizon. Tim at his favourite rendezvous awaited the dawning day. His thoughts were running over the event of two days ago.

*"Good morning Mr. Robinson,"* a pleasant voice greeted him. Looking up he saw Grace Magnus, as she continued, *"May I have a few words with you?"*

*"Good morning,"* he replied somewhat shakily. *"Of course you could."*

*"It was nice of you to help me so kindly last Saturday. I would have been stuck on the mud for goodness knows how long. It was you who really solved the problem."*

*"Not at all It was only by accident that I thought of jumping on the bumper."*

*"Still, thank you, I'm sorry I was so short."*

His gaze returned to the horizon, but she did not move.

*"Beautiful, isn't it?"* she said as the sun peeped out, and its first rays splashed across the waves.

*"Yes, it is",* he said, slowly getting up. Their eyes met for a moment as if seeking to find in their depths that flame that was theirs. *"Good morning Miss Magnus",* he said. *"It was nice of you to come."* But there was reluctance in the way he walked off.

As if prompted by some ultra force Grace ran up to him, and touched his sleeve. *"Tim! Tim!"* He turned around and looked at her again, and before he could decide what to do or say, she was in his arms. He found them pressing her closer to him. *"Oh Grace! Why did you keep me waiting so long?"*

*"I never knew how much it meant until Saturday gone," she whispered almost inaudibly. "We both have waited so long."*

The sun's rays felt its way between her curly hair. Their engagement and subsequent marriage was announced at the beginning and end of her birthday party that evening.

Drama  
**'WORM'S EYE VIEW'**

This play was produced in September by the Linden Players of Berbice, in the new Y.W.C.A. Hall, Brickdam. Those who had seen the Linden Players in action when they gave their memorable performance of '**Arsenic and Old Lace**', in 1948, anticipated an excellent production, and truly they were not disappointed.

Written by R. F. Delderfield, the play is clearly intended for British audiences, with its cockney phrases such as "*plates of meat*" for feet, its reference to the Englishman's love of gardening, the black market in scarce goods, and the Button B on the telephone call box, which duly yielded its store of coppers to the enterprising Porter.

It appears disarmingly simple in construction and dialogue, yet it achieves its purpose of exposing the resentful and unfriendly attitude of a section of the British to servicemen billeted in their homes.

R.A.F. men have been billeted in the home of Mrs. Bounty, whose pretentious son, Sydney Spooner, on being appointed assistant to the Town Clerk had promptly made his stepfather, Mr. Bounty, relinquish his job as Sanitary Inspector of the town drains. Sydney is the apple of Mrs. Bounty's eye, so his least word is law to her. He decrees that there shall be no sociability between the family and the R.A.F. men. So Mrs. Bounty's daughter, Bella Bounty, is charged never to speak to them, but to devote herself to practising her singing with a view to becoming a concert performer. Mrs. Bounty only addresses the men to lay down the law or to find fault.

So long as Pop, a veteran of the first world war, the "*affair*" hunting Duke, and sober, intellectual Mark are alone in the house, life is very humdrum for them. But when they are joined by the Cockney Porter, and the Welshman Taffy, things begin to hum, gingered up by Porter. He opens the locked piano with a hairpin, gets the gas fire going with a filed two franc piece, which he regularly recovers from the meter for further use. He is wholeheartedly in the black market trade, and is an

expert at cleaning windows with a little spit and at scrounging extra nourishment from Thelma, the maid.

Bella is tempted into the sitting room by the sound of the piano and the singing of the men. She and Mark shyly become companions and with Pop's understanding help their romance ends happily, after a fight between Mark and the pompous Sydney.

The Linden Players acquitted themselves with credit in this play. Each one knew the lines of his or her part, and delivered them with good timing and expression.

Their actions and facial expressions, their movements and positions had been well rehearsed, and appeared quite natural and spontaneous in the performance.

As Pop, Gerald Wood gave a fine characterisation. His every word, glance and action were entirely in keeping with the part.

Alan Bywater, as Mr. Bounty, made an excellent character study of the husband who rebels at long last and becomes top dog in the end.

Donald Branston had a small part as Squadron Leader Briarley, but what a fine performance he turned in.

As the Cockney, Porter, Robert Gray had a part to revel in, and that is just what he did. He had the audience convulsed time and time again.

Keith Hart as the Duke of the many "*affairs*" with the ladies, Edward Butler as the scholarly Mark, and Lawson Hunter as the Welsh Taffy, each gave a good rendering of his part.

Jack Larkin as the pretentious Sydney had the correct attitude and diction but was a bit inclined to aimless movement at times.

The three actresses did not display the same poise as the actors, no doubt due to lack of stage experience.

Jean Gordon gave a creditable impression as a shy, inexperienced girl, very difficult to convince that Mark's attentions were entirely sincere.

Nora McLean, as Mrs. Bounty, had a shrewish part, which she endeavoured to portray wholeheartedly.

Barbara Dimblebee made a lively maid, Thelma.

The stage setting was very good indeed. It showed a living room with a moveable window, a staircase to an upper

storey, a hail entrance and a fireplace with a gas fire which came alight.

The Linden Players had done it again, or rather, as there was only one member of the cast who had appeared in '**Arsenic and Old Lace**', the producer, Mr. Arnold, had done it again,—had brought a well-prepared play to entertain Georgetown—We hope their next production will come to town at a shorter interval than three years.

— SARA VEECOCK

## Art

### THE KOKERS OF ALVIN BOWMAN

I met Alvin Bowman in one of those unconventional ways which people always associate with artists. I was cycling back to work one midday in the hot sun, along Robb Street, when someone drew up alongside and rode with me. Would I come and see his paintings, he said. His name was Bowman. Of course I would, and before we had gone two city blocks, we fixed the date, time and place to see his work.

I work in words myself, the interminable struggle with rhythm, and meaning and rhetoric, but the problem of wrestling with a medium of expression until it yields like the angel in the Jacob story and allows expression to the general personality of the artist and his particular vision of the moment, that is true of all the arts. So my interest kindled, I saw a few of the smaller pieces first, one was a painting in oil showing a Portuguese boy asleep on the pavement. You know, I am more partial to large landscapes where every prospect pleases and even the human elements of cottage and working farmer are proportioned into their proper relations as parts of nature. But I liked the way the masses of colour were arranged, and the sleeping boy in the painting. Then there was a little watercolour showing a koker at Pln. Ogle with which I literally fell in love.

After that, of a sudden I noticed that Bowman had a special feeling for kokers. There were four or five large paintings of these watergates, looking for all the world like French guillotines, the sluices that we have in Guiana, as part of our heritage from the Dutch who lived and toiled here centuries ago. All the historical associations rose in me as I looked and so I turned and asked Bowman—do you like kokers?

Bowman told me that whenever he saw a koker, it gave him the desire to paint it. Well, he has certainly created a massive beauty and brought out the power of the concrete in the paintings he has done. You know they say that the Egyptians had a love for the monumental in art, with their

pyramids; well, it seems that Bowman has something of the Egyptian in him and has painted the Fish koker at Albouystown, the Kingston koker, and the koker at Meadow Bank. All except one, are in the sunlight, and this oddfellow shows a koker in the romantic light of the moon. What is interesting to me is the way Bowman seems to have discovered himself in the Guianese symbol of protection against flood and drought, almost a national symbol where we are concerned.

Broadcasting  
**DO YOU REMEMBER, DEARIE?**  
(Then You're Much Older Than I)

Do you remember when the cat's whiskers was the plural of wireless sets and not a term of high praise? If you do, you probably think that radio programmes have changed a lot since then. The surprising thing is that they haven't.

Of course, there have been vast technical improvements and ever so often we do get something new on the radio. Yet, in the very beginning years of broadcasting your clumsy manipulating of earphones and volume controls would have brought you just these:—

The kiddies hour (with uncle Charlie and uncle Johnny instead of uncle Vivian and uncle Ulric,) reading out lists of birthday names...Olga Lopes (radio sweetheart of 1935)...Randolph Proffit on Bookers Drug store programme...the news.

The only thing that seems to have changed is the dance music. Dance bands were a prominent radio feature from the word "go", and they still are. But, somehow, the change in style and tempo, in personalities and presentation, gives the strongest indication of how radio entertainment has progressed. "*Do you remember*" one of the first dance bands to broadcast? No, it wasn't the Luckies, the Syncopators or the Rhythm-Stompers. It was the Fleischman's Hit Parade orchestra directed by bandleader S. W. Henwood. The year was 1936 and the hit tune was '**Little old lady**'.

1937...the year when the "*Girl Pat*" and her sensational voyage made big news. "*Do you remember*" '**red sails in the sunset**' and "*do you remember*" what radio programmes made good listening that year? Fleischman's Hit parade...under the Baton of bandmaster Henwood, with Olga Lopes (British Guiana's mistress of Sentimental songs). Bookers Drug Store Orchestra led by Bert Rogers...Cooperative Motor Sales Pageant of Youth...The Meat Company's Hit Parade...The Empire Bar's programme...The musical programme of the house of Fogarty and the Crown Rum programme.

*"Do you remember"* the big names of 1938 and 1939, remember the Duchess (Winifred Woolford)...Mrs. Dorothy Taitt (leader and organiser of the Woodbiners Club)...Gwen Kellman, Iris Grimes, Thelma Rego, Serena Callender, Angela Martins, Randolph Proffit, and Phillip Waddell? Popular radio announcers were...Tommy Wheating, Ulric Gouveia and Uncle Johnny. The hit tune of that year was **'I've got a pocketful of dreams'** remember?

1940...and with World War II came a few changes. Programme directors began to make greater use of gramophone records; thereby producing a greater variety of programmes. That was the year that Jack Cashmir introduced his 'Music Lovers' orchestra and the Harry Mayers orchestra and the Washboards were THE bands. Popular recorded dance music during the war years was by Vincent Lopez, Artie Shaw, and Jimmy Dorsey and Tommy Dorsey. The songs of the war years **'I'll be seeing you'...****'When the lights go on again'...****'Only and forever'...****'A lovely way to spend an evening'** and **'White Christmas'**, were plugged, played and well aired. And do you know what one of the hit tunes of 1951 is? **'DEARIE, DO YOU REMEMBER'!**

— LILLIAN FRASER

Review  
**THE ENGLAND OF ELIZABETH**  
by A. L. Rowse

Raw material for the Elizabethan genius—that, in short, is the substance of this first volume of a pair in which Mr. Rowse analyses the structure of the vigorous Society of 5 million people who owned Elizabeth as Queen. In the second volume, he will deal with the Elizabethan achievement. Patiently, layer by layer, throughout his 550 pages, Rowse builds up his picture. First, there is the land and the steady growth of farming improvement as a conscious aim; there is the economic advance under Burghley's husbandry, taking advantage of the rise in Western European prices, a rise based on the importation of treasure from the Spanish mines in America; there is the enrichment of the upper classes, and the rise of the gentry and the impulse given to art and architecture. Integrated in this agrarian community, are the towns and London, "*the flower of towns all*" where the great companies regulate the industrial and trading life of the nation. Craftsmen are being encouraged to bring their skills from an impoverished Europe, under the Queen's watchful eye, the lands released by the dissolution of the monasteries are being bought up by the lawyers. The Queen, in Rowse's phrase, (he claims she was one of the best educated persons in the country) "*attuned to passive, defensive, insinuating action...was more fitted for her position and time than any other monarch in our history*". In these pages she plays off the opposing elements in the Privy Council and nurses the growing powers of Parliament. The law, with its common law vitality reflects the vitality of the people, the church goes in the middle of the road between Papist and Puritan and gives a rule of life to the country and education provides the dynamic for the society to meet the demands of the times.

That is the book in little, but Rowse expresses the vitality and confusion of the age in the jostling events chronicled in his sentences. He is concerned "*with the difference in the slow working out of free institutions and the negative constitutional*

*safeguards of liberties between England and the rest of Europe...England was small enough to be governable".* Rowse tells us that he is looking for *"the life beneath the documents and forgoes the indulgence of contemporary political prejudice in the form of moral indignation"*. However, every now and then, the indignation and the prejudice find expression and always the national pride shines through the pages.

To one who is not a historian and who cannot therefore check the minutiae of scholarship, but who is always seeking to relate the Society background to the triumphs of individual art and intellect, there can be only a suspended judgment, to be resolved when the second volume brings its complement of achievement in action and the life of the mind to this background study. This much can however be said. Richard Livingstone has put us all in his debt with that initial push-off in Magpie Lane when he suggested to Rowse that he should attempt a portrait of the Elizabethan Age.

There is one further point. A West Indian reviewer reading the volume, as an outsider reads another people's story, and alive to the social and political ferment of his own region, cannot but be struck by the innumerable lessons his region may learn from this analysis of the expansion of a vigorous community. The lessons rise to the surface like dolphins playing around a voyaging ship. There is for instance, the benefit England derived from immigration with the consequent importation of skills against the natural antagonism of the local craftsmen. There is the encouragement of enterprise by freedom from excessive regulation and by fixing rent (of coal mines) enticingly low. There is the appreciation that the foundation of industrial development lay in cheap power. There is the readiness of the merchants and the gentry and the landowners to invest and speculate, and the passion to learn new arts. There is the growth of capital (based on advantageous trade transactions) which is then invested in industry, there are the large amounts of new land made available by the dissolution of the monasteries, the ceaseless voyaging with new markets in mind, the discouragement of non-productive consumption (West Indies, please note), the spread of population increase in a diversified economy, the keen competition for survival in every social class and

the instinctive consolidation of property holdings. It is mainly because the yeomen of England thrived that England thrived.

There are many lessons to be taken to heart by a West Indian reviewer, but the most important is probably that of the fundamental identification of the middle classes with the country and the nation's prosperity. Rowse makes it appear that a creative majority lived in England in this Age and that they were found in all social strata. One of the greatest of Elizabethans has described it as "*this happy breed of men, this little world, this land of such dear souls*".

West Indies, please note!

—A.J.S.

Review  
**FETISH**

by Kona Waruk (Wilson Harris)

The poetry of Wilson Harris finds its first booklet publication in No. 3 of the Miniature Poets — *Fetish*, over the pen name of Kona Waruk.

Wilson Harris's booklet is the September issue of poetry published under the auspices of the British Guiana Writers' Association, and follows my own *Leaves from the Tree* (July) and J. W. Harper Smith's *Musings* (August).

The title 'Fetish' is important as the poet believes that modern literature suffers from certain false beliefs and that many people today possess the psychology of magic worshippers. This artificial system of attitudes and conventions is one which the poet feels should be broken. The pen name is significant also as Kona Waruk is the Amerindian name of a river in Guiana and is used here as a symbol that in the Americas, the Amerindians have made a nameless and sometimes neglected contribution to our civilisation just as centuries ago the craftsmen and cathedral builders of the Middle Ages made their anonymous contribution to the beauty and history of Europe.

The poems themselves seem like a restless, seething sea where every now and then a vivid and unusual image breaks surface and then submerges again. Herbert Read will say that a poem has a meaning of its own and that is not necessarily a logical meaning: so long as the reader is conscious of the way in which his emotions are affected the process of "meaning" is taking place at an infra-logical level. Images occur like these:

"Beneath the footfall of a tiger the feet of a hungry boy  
pacing walls or pavements of destruction"

or

"The world slowly tumbles shadow of other crucifixions  
upon domestic beauty as if to ask an intimate question  
of a poodle."

The poem '**These are the words of an Old Man**' is the simplest in the book, with its message against our "*travesty of civilisation*" that "*it is better to be homeless tonight*", but in all the others, one can see a pessimistic outlook when the poet can say that "*the image of beauty is the torture and mechanism of the soul. The needle of pain records voices.*" Some passages are savage and bitter. One poem carries at its beginning a quotation from Ezra Pound, that poet of broken mirrors, but there is also the desire of the poet to find a new world and a new point of view. It is significant that the figures which pass through this flux of emotions are those of Lazarus and Orpheus (both from the world of the dead), Ulysses going home, and Columbus.

Some of the overtones may resemble those of an Old Testament prophet and perhaps the mood may be funereal to some, especially as we live in our young Caribbean situation, but this is a voice to listen to, although one cannot predict how the poet will develop, and these are poems to be read and re-read.

—A.J.S.

## **THE CARIBBEAN AT MID-CENTURY**

Edited by A. Curtis Wilgus

(University of Florida Press)

The University of Florida held its first annual Conference on the Caribbean, on December 7 to December 9, 1950, and reviewed the first half of the 20th century. Both roll call and agenda were impressive. Present were Edward G. Miller, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs and six other US Government Officials, forty-four delegates from US universities, nine from Latin American Republics, and US possessions, three Latin American Consuls and nine representatives of various institutions. Conference addresses included Edward G. Miller's '**Survey of Inter-American Relations**' and papers by experts on the problems of the Caribbean area, which was defined as "*Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, the Island Republics, and other parts of the West Indies*".

This reviewer read first the four papers on the language and literature of the area — '**Literary Homogeneity**', '**An interpretation of society through Literature**', '**Literary Themes in the past fifty years**', '**Magic in the Caribbean**', but he went back to the problems set up in economics and geography, agriculture, sociology and anthropology, and politics and history. Concerned as he has been with the comparatively small compass of the British West Indies he felt like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims within his ken. This was a view of the Caribbean habitual to America, because of ties of trade and diplomacy. Here was a discussion on the question "*Is there a modern Caribbean culture*", parting the region into the Latin American and Caribbean African Cultural types. Here is a sentence which reads "*Columbus began the literature of the Caribbean in 1493 when he sent back to Spain his famous letter on the discovery 'It is a land to be desired' he said 'and once seen never to be abandoned...'*".

The reviewer's reflection as he read the last pages was "*The British West Indies are now stirring into full watchfulness but we must know how we fit into the larger pattern of the Caribbean. We must know a lot more about our neighbours*".

—A. J. S.