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P o l i c y N o t e

RENAISSANCE is a dogmatic review which welcomes critical contributions in all the arts. It is designed to be a vehicle for the expression of aesthetic values, as nearly free from commercial considerations as is possible in an economics-minded century. It is the official organ of the Usher Society, the program of which may be found on the last page; and under the aegis of this organization, and through the mailings of the Vanguard Amateur Press Association, it is intended to provide a laboratory for experimental creative work of all kinds.

By Max H. R. Knoecklein

Since the war has isolated America so thoroughly from music on the Continent (and music has persisted, surprisingly enough, even in Russia, Germany, and Italy, where the artist is a State institution) we have come to depend more and more upon the memories of our foreign-born conductors for authentic interpretation of secondary masterpieces. For the purpose of this essay I am defining a "secondary masterpiece" as one which, in its own milieu is capable of holding its own with the best, but which lacks a certain universality, so that out of that milieu it sounds somewhat awkward, perhaps even a little esoteric. Such a work is Der Rosenkavalier; another, on a smaller scale, is The Bartered Bride. Strauss' great opera is certainly strong enough to hold its own on all the operatic stages of the world; but unless it is performed with a thorough understanding of the baroque implications of its background, it often sounds rather flat. In America we have recently heard the opera performed by Georg Szell, who understands rather thoroughly the importance of this background (it is rather odd to find this to be the case, considering the dreadful hash Dr. Szell can make of Mozart or of Die Meistersinger -- the latter in particular being a case of necessary understanding of tradition.)

If one is to accept this premise as valid, then a survey of existing recordings and comments of American critics upon them is likely to prove puzzling. The Heger version of Der Rosenkavalier comes from the Vienna State Opera, and seemingly Messrs Hall and Kolodin have accepted the great name for the fact of authenticity. When one breaks down the elements of the recording, three things strike the ear at once:

1. Richard Mayr, who sings Baron Ochs on the records, is a sad travesty of his former self. None of the gusto which used to mark his Vienna Ochs is evident on this album. What has happened to the Mayr who was unrestrained enough for a vulgar whistle in the letter scene, and gave the whole part a bounding vitality remote from the lumbering characterization we hear here? Yet American critics, remember (or, perhaps, have only been told) that Mayr was great in the part, and endorse this leaden reading throughout, ignoring a better Ochs right under their noses, Emmanuel List, whose handling of the language of the libretto is unparalleled. Mayr was great, as he was great in Arabella (also a Vienna specialty); but one would never know it from this recording.

2. And what about Heger himself? He too is Vienna, he must be good. But again the encyclopedists of Recordia are over-awed by the name of Vienna, and ignore the better conductor under their noses. Heger's conducting, regardless of where it was recorded, is entirely too scholarly. He does Strauss no credit by his straight-faced handling of the tongue-in-cheek waltzes, and by his soft-pedalling of a frank sexuality which was Strauss' own comment upon the baroque tradition.

3. One feature of most European performances of this opera is the Lesbian interpretation of the Marchallin's part, and interpretation for which there is ample justification in both libretto and music. Lehmann's own version of (P 7)

N O T E The opinions expressed herein are based upon the viewpoint of a listener, rather than that of a trained musician. The reviewer's bias leans toward what he considers interpretational fidelity, rather than sheer reproductive excellence. Since records are something one lives with, I feel that a moving interpretation that can be heard is better than a superb recording of a run-of-the-mill or poor reading.

The comments upon reproduction are based on listening to the records on a table-model machine with a rather small range, and little distortion, or upon a record-shop machine with a range not much wider. Readers are warned, therefore, that what I heard from playing these records may not be what they will hear on their own machines at home.

Thanks are due to Coyne's Music Shop, 58 Cortlandt Street New York, NY, for their courtesy and tolerance in letting me haunt them and play various sets of records against each other as new releases came out. (RWL)

B E E T H O V E N Symphony #7 in A Major. V-17, 5 12" records - ten sides. Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

This is a re-issue by Victor of a very old set, but I defy anyone not in the know to guess within five years the actual date of this set's initial release from the recorded sound. It's an amazing set in more ways than one, particularly for those who may be familiar only with the later recorded Stokowski performances. In contrast to present-day performances of this conductor, the interpretation is marvelously straightforward, still intense and rich in inspiration. Like Felix Weingartner (with the Vienna Philharmonic in C-260), Stokowski takes the trio of the scherzo at a slow pace. (Unlike the accelerated playing of Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic in V-317, or Ormandy and the Philadelphia in C-557.) The Philadelphia orchestra plays superbly, more than a match in this late '20 recording for the 1945 release from Columbia.

With other available sets, all are acceptably reproduced. That of Toscanini has a bit more clarity than V-17, and it is eminently exciting, but the volume range is very wide, so that if your player is set correctly for pianissimos the fortissimos are ear-shattering. The side breaks here are as awkward as in the Stokowski set, and there are blank grooves of considerable duration at the start of some sides. Weingartner's edi-

tion avoids these faults, and is entirely moving, but he misses the heights attained either by Toscanini or this old Stokowski performance. The reproduction has some hall-echo, but is not bad.

The new Ormandy set has some magnificent work in the finale, which he takes at an electrifying pace. (Beethoven himself once complained that he had never heard this final movement played as fast as he had intended it.) But the opening movement is uninspired; the exquisite allegretto undernourished -- Ormandy does not seem to get warmed up to this music until the third movement. And the string section has an unpleasant shrillness.

All in all, I recommend this re-issue of Stokowski's, but the Toscanini and Weingartner versions are both worth having.

B R A H M S Symphony #3 in F. V-42 5 12" records - ten sides. Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Here is another moment of Stokowski glory, with reproduction which sounds as fresh as many sets released in the last year or so -- and better than some! Even more than the Beethoven symphony listed above, it is a revelation of the remarkable musician that Stokowski was at the time. The treatment is tender and persuasive without appearing mannered.

Victor still has Bruno Walter's reading with the Vienna Philharmonic (V-341) and Hans Kindler's album (with the National Symphony in V-762) while Columbia lists Mengloborg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam (C-181), Weingartner and the London Philharmonic in C-353, and Stock and the Chicago Symphony in C-433.

Of those I have heard, the Walter and the Weingartner sets present such slight differentiations of desirability from all angles that I cannot make a clear choice. Reproduction on both is satisfactory. Kindler's album is much more full in reproduction, but cannot match the interpretive excellence of the two former.

Since V-42 is as well, if not better reproduced than the Walter or Weingartner sets, my own preference is for it; it is an astonishing achievement, and a performance which should wear increasingly well.

G E R S H W Y N Rhapsody in Blue
Oscar Levant (piano)
and the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. 2 12" records. Three sides. C-X251.

Josus Maria Sanroma (piano) and the Boston Pops Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Fiedler. 2 12" records, three sides. Victor SP-3.

Having heard the Levant-Ormandy version of the Rhapsody in Carnegie Hall, I greeted the present records as a new occasion for jubilee. Unfortunately, there is only one word to describe the rendition, on the part of the soloist and the conductor; repulsive. If you don't like your neighbors, this set can be recommended as an ideal vengeance weapon. From the opening clarinet solo, which flirts with a capital Bb, to the ex-cruciating conclusion, one can only regret that the agony has been reproduced so well.

The Sanroma-Fiedler combination was a notable one when V-358 first appeared (V-Sp-3 is merely a new issue of the same discs in a paper container a la Daphnis et Chloe) and its reappearance is thrice welcome, there being no notable competition. Templeton's account of the piano part in C-X196 (with Kos-

telanetz) is good, but the pace verges upon hysteria. The Whiteman-Bergy version in Decca Set 31 is atrociously abbreviated, as is Gershwin's own version on the old Victor disc 35822.

It should be noted that even the Sanroma-Fiedler set is not the complete Rhapsody score. I am told that there was a complete Rhapsody on Brunswick discs, covering six sides. Perhaps some reader of this column can supply details.

The odd side on the new Levant-Ormandy set contains two Gershwin preludes, while side 4 on the Sanroma-Fiedler version has a slicked-up account of "Strike Up the Band", and Kostelanetz devotes the final side in his set to "Love Walked In," another Gershwin tune.

An American in Paris
Rodzinski and the
Philharmonic-Symphony of New York. 2
12" records, 4 sides. C-X246.

In contrast with the unsatisfying aspects of the Rhapsody records, this new recording of American in Paris is very close to perfection. Finely played and well reproduced, this set finally displaced the commendable but old Gershwin-Shilkrit version on Victor discs 35963/4 and the abbreviated, though better performed and reproduced reading by Whiteman in Decca Set 31. I have nothing but praise for this release.

Porgy and Bess (A Symphonic Portrait) Arranged by Robert Russell Bennett

Fabien Sevitsky and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. 3 12" records; 6 sides. V-DM-999

Fritz Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. 3 12" records; 6 sides. C-MM-572

Symphonic syntheses of operas, in my opinion, should be reviewed under the general listing of Vico, but it must be admitted that some are better done than others. If you go for this sort of thing, however, then rest assured that these present atrocities are tastefully committed.

Getting down to cases, a choice between these two sets is somewhat difficult, as the contents of the albums, although bearing the same labels, are not identical. The selections "Summertime" "Pess, You Is My Woman Now," "I've Got Plenty of Nuthin'," "It Ain't Necessarily So," and "Oh Lawd, I'm On My Way," are in both. But the Victor album has "I Can't Sit Down," while the Columbia offers the "Requiem," more of the Storm Music than the Victor, and the Picnic Music. Both have snatches of other bits sandwiched in here and there between the main hits of the show.

On a basis of sheer reproduction, the Victor album would be a clear choice, but I find Reiner's conducting more penetrating and persuasive than Sevitsky's. The Columbia set suffers somewhat (although not badly) from spots where certain voices seem unduly prominent, and is a bit overloaded in the bass at times -- although, again, not enough to make the set a bust. But due to the superiority of interpretation by Reiner, my choice would be C-MM-572, if I had to have this music. If you don't mind the cavalier practice of telescoping an opera nearly as long as "Siegfried" into a voiceless "synthesis" of 6 record sides, this is better listening than most offerings of its nature.

L A L O Symphonie Espagnole for Violin and Orchestra. C-564. 3 12" records; 6 sides. Nathan Milstein (violin) and the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy.

It is difficult to pass judgment upon Milstein's interpretation of this work, because the reproduction of his violin is so shrill and edgy as to make listening somewhat painful. This is not the only deficiency of the set, for the tonal opulence which assails the listener's ears as the first record side begins is marred by very bad reproduction of the brasses -- they sound like something out of Minsky's.

The reproduction in Set V-134 (Menuhin, with Georges Enesco and the Paris Symphony Orchestra) is a great deal better, and Menuhin's eloquent rendition of the solo part almost makes me like the

work. Incidentally, the Victor set contains the complete symphony; this new Columbia album omits the third movement. Don't ask me why; maybe because that is the best one.

M E N D E L S S O H N Overture to The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave.) 1 12" record -- 2 sides. Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra. V-11-8745.

There are three other recordings of this joyful music, one by Adrian Boult and the BBC on V-11886; one by Beecham and the London Philharmonic on C-69400, and one by Bodansky and an unidentified orchestra on Decca 25941/2 (which I have been unable to hear.)

For my money, there is the most musical sophistication in the suave interpretation of Boult, and though the record is old, now, it is well reproduced. The Beecham version, though, surely has the most excitement, is magnificently poetic in interpretation, and is finely played by his splendid orchestra. The reproduction ranks with Columbia's best. Listing the new Fiedler job last is not a condemnation; it is well done and efficiently reproduced -- certainly a satisfactory choice if neither of the elder versions can be found -- but I merely find it less excellent than the Boult or the Beecham reading.

O F F E N B A C H Overture to Orpheus in Hades 1 12" record -- 2 sides. Karl Krueger and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. V-11-8761.

Only a very fine enthusiasm-micrometer could measure my appreciation of this dated work, so I advise readers to hear it for themselves. My responsibility ends with the counsel that the playing of the Detroit Symphony sounds reasonably competent, but not nearly as much can be said for the coarse recording, which includes a sizable amount of surface noise.

M O U S S O R G S K Y Boris Goudonov (Excerpts)

Alexander Kipnis and Victor Symphony Orchestra (with chorus) conducted by Nico-

Igor Stravinsky. (General director, Robert Shaw) 5 12" records, 10 sides, V-MM-1000

Ezio Pinza with chorus of the Metropolitan Opera, and orchestra, conducted by Emil Giebler. 5 12" records, 10 sides, C-MM-563

Here again are two sets bearing similar labels, but with contents which are not exactly alike. Both contain sections of the Prelude, the Coronation Scene, "I have attained the highest power," the Clock Scene, the Farewell of Boris, and his death. The Victor album has Varlaam's tale "In the town of Kazan," and the dialogue between Boris and Prince Shouisky; while the Columbia album offers the Poisoning and Pimpa's Tale. Each album, further, has orchestral passages (preceding vocal parts) not contained in the other.

The Victor set is virtually a ninety-day marvel; magnificently performed, and excellently reproduced, it is a fitting album for the label: Number 1000. It features several pages, on glossy paper the same size as the album itself, containing biographical notes upon the composer, the basso, and the conductor, as well as photographs of scenes and personages in the opera. Kipnis is superb as Boris, far better than the Chaliapin to be heard on records.

It is unfortunate that the Columbia set had to face such competition, for it is a good job and Pinza's voice and interpretation are both very good. But it cannot stack up against the Victor set as a recording, it suffers from having the parts sung in Italian - which, though effective at times, is a far cry from the authentic barbarity and splendour of the Russian - and the reproduction, though good, isn't in the same class with that of V-MM-1000.

And while I have nothing but enthusiasm for Pinza, I don't find Don Giovanni too convincing in Boris.

RACHMANINOFF Symphony #2 in E Minor.

Rodzinski and the Philharmonic-Symphony of New York, 6 12" records -- 12 sides, C-MM-559.

While I've never been particularly fond of this work, (it always struck me

as being prolix and lacking both the impact and charm of the Symphony #3) it has its moments, and these were brought forth with uncommon vigor by Ormandy and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in the old Victor set, MM-239. The flaws in this album were mainly those of coarse recording and an occasional loss of balance, coupled with lack of control over the abundant sentiment.

It's a pleasure to report that this new reading by Rodzinski has all the merits of the older version, retaining the sweep and vigor, and is better controlled to boot. The surfaces are not all that could be asked for, but the reproduction has a fine clarity, bringing out a number of details which were somewhat muffled in the Victor offering. In addition, Rodzinski offers a more restrained reading, which does much to offset those places where I find my interest flagging. If this work appeals to you, C-MM-559 is your buy.

RAVEL Daphnis et Chloe Suite #2
Sergo Koussevitsky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. 2 12" records; 4 sides, V-Sp-1.

Victor is going in for a bit of fluff these days with the Showpiece Albums -- a mass of paint and fiction containing pockets for records. They look nice and shiny but do not offer any protection to the records, and are as durable as a dust jacket.

The Daphnis et Chloe Suite #2 has long been a specialty with the Boston Symphony, and Dr. Koussevitsky's reading is virtually unassailable. Originally released on two Victor discs (V-7143/4) it was a marvel of interpretation, even if the recording is hardly adequate by present day standards. Victor tried to bring this factor up to date in their set number 667, featuring a marvelous sounding performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra, but an unfeeling interpretation by Ormandy.

A very fine interpretation by Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra in C-X 230 was done in by the Rain Barrel Squad which massacred more excellent performances by fine conductor-orchestra combinations than this department has room to list.

Now we have a full-bodied, tonally

excellent reproduction of Koussevitsky's magnificent reading. The surfaces on the discs I heard were not all they should have been in spots, and there was an occasional roughness, but, all things considered, this is the copy of this music to own.

STRAVINSKY Scenes de Ballet
CX-245 2 12" records. Igor Stravinsky and the Philharmonic-Symphony of New York.

Let it be said just once at the outset that this is not great music, and then be done; for it is good Stravinsky and highly enjoyable music within its framework. The Philharmonic Symphony continues the impression of rejuvenation received from the recent release of the Mozart Symphony #41 (reviewed in V-R's last issue) and since the conductor is the composer himself, there can be no question about the authenticity of the interpretation. (Particularly in consideration of the stature to which Stravinsky has attained as an interpreter of his own work; vide his albums of *Secret du Printemps* and *Petrushka* - C-

417 and CX-177 respectively.) The reproduction is in all ways excellent.

WAGNER Prelude to "Lohengrin"
Toscanini and the NBC Orchestra. 1 12" record, 2 sides. V-11-8807.

Toscanini's reading of this score needs no recommendation for anyone who has heard it, or who owns a copy of the old Victor disc 14006 (included in V-11-308). It is a magnificent achievement, and is finely reproduced on the old record. This new version is no let-down and the reproduction is even better; the NBC Orchestra is fully up to the high playing standards that the old Philharmonic attained at the time V-14006 was recorded.

There are three very old discs containing this music which I have been unable to hear. Performance is good and reproduction fair on C-11644 (Reiner and the Pittsburg Symphony), but there's simply no comparison between it and either of the Toscanini triumphs.

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PERFORMANCE AND THE BAROQUE TRADITION

Continued from Page 3

the part is admittedly magnificent, but it is as wholesome as a cabbage -- she accepts wholeheartedly the convention of the mezzo Octavian's maleness - and as such it is strictly an extra-baroque treatment; a recording out of Vienna is definitely unauthentic unless it features a Marschallin as Margit Tesemacher sang her--a version of which American critics have apparently never heard.

If there were a recorded version of the Metropolitan performance of last season, a comparison with the Viennese job would be more in order. As it is, all we can hope for is a Szell, List, Stevens version on discs; for these people understand the tradition, and are not slaves to the name of the city wherein the action takes place. One may only hope that the record-buying public has the sense to take the disc-authorities with the requisite grain of salt; for on this question, at least, they have shown an amazing insensitivity to everything but reputation.*

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*Of the tribe, Hall seems to have the thickest skin. What is one to say of his objection to Ralf's "German tenor" in the Victor album of *Otello* excerpts, that the music itself does not say?
(MHRK)

JAMES JOYCE AND PÉCUCHET

By Ezra Pound (Mercure de France, 1 June, 1922)

(Translated from the French by V. K. Emden)

JAMES JOYCE, born in Dublin around 1882, received a catholic education, studied at the University of Dublin, spent some years or some weeks at Paris and Padua, made for himself in Dublin the reputation of an "eccentric", made his first appearance in 1908 with Chamber Music, thirty pages of conventional and delicate verse which shows the soul and the true personality of this author who is today so formidable.

This first book in no way dissipated the silence; his second book, a series of tales entitled Dubliners, was burned by an unidentified hand, and his native city continued to show itself insensible to the merits of the author. In London, The Egoist, an advanced literary review, protested and undertook the publication of his novel: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, now translated into Swedish, Spanish, and French. (The volume is going to appear under the title Daedalus.)

His drama Exiles was played at Munich, and the Italian translation appeared in Convegno. But the acclaim of Joyce by his compatriots still delayed its coming.

THE YEAR of the centenary of Flaubert, the first of a new era, sees also the edition of a new volume of Joyce, Ulysses, which, from certain points of view, can be considered as the first which, in the line of Flaubert, continues the development of the Flaubertian art, such as he left it in his last, unfinished book.

Although Bouvard et Pécuchet does not pass for the "best thing" of the master, one can make the claim that Bovary and the Education are the apogee of an anterior form only; and that the Trois Contes give a sort of summary of all that Flaubert had acquired in writing his other novels, Salammbô, Bovary, the Education, and the first versions of Saint Antoine. The three tableaux, pagan, middle ages, modern, make a whole which balances itself on the phrase: "And the idea came to him of employing his existence in the service of others", which can be found in the middle of Saint Julien, the first of the three tales which he wrote.

Bouvard et Pécuchet continues the Flaubertian thought and art, but does not continue this tradition of romance or tale. One can regard "L'Encyclopédie en farce" which carries the sub-title: "Défaut de méthode dans les sciences", as the inauguration of a new form, a form which did not have a precedent. Neither Gargantua, nor Don Quixote, nor Sterne's Tristram Shandy had produced its archetype.

If one considers the broad lines of universal literature since 1880, one can say that the best writers have exploited Flaubert rather than developed his art. The absolute rule for an instantaneous success, is that it is necessary never to give your reader an instant or even half an instant of cerebral activity. Maupassant has done Flaubert more lightly; others have followed him. Anatole France makes use of Flaubert as a sort of parasol, and withdraws into his 18th Century. Galdos, in Spain, does some good Flaubert; Hueffer, in England, writes a lucid prose; Joyce, himself, in Dub-

liners and in The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, does some Flaubert, but does not go beyond the Trois Contes or the Education. In the heritage of Flaubert there are some good works and a sort of decadence; the best disciples employ the same procedures, the same techniques are brought to bear in order to represent different scenes; in order to describe India, Kipling writes an inferior Maupassant. In France, Flaubert retains the "record"; there is no one who develops his art.

The development of Henry James and Marcel Proust comes rather from the Goncourts, not even from their novels, but from a preface:

"The day when the cruel analysis which my friend Zola and perhaps I myself have brought to the depiction of the scum of society will be taken up by a writer of talent, and employed in the reproduction of men and women of the world, in milieus of education and distinction, on that day only will classicism and what has followed in its train be killed.

"Realism has not, indeed, the sole mission of describing what is low, what is repugnant. ... We ourselves have begun with the canaille, because the woman and man of the people, closer to nature and to savagery, are simple creatures and little complicated, while the Parisian and the Parisienne of society, those creatures excessively civilized, whose attenuated originality is made up wholly of nuances, entirely of half-shades, completely intangible nothings (very like to those coquettish and indefinable inconsequentialities with which a lady fashions a distinguished toilet) demand years in order that one should penetrate them, that one should know them, that one should capture them, and the storyteller of the greatest genius, take my word for it, shall never divine them, these people of the drawing-room, with these prattlings of friends which pass with him for the delineation of the world. ..."

In this way Henry James has created the better part of his work, very exact, very realistic; and in James' wake Marcel Proust has clarified his intentions, that is to say that he has begun by reading Balzac, Dostoevsky, H. James, or works of an analogous tendency. He saw that "sex interest" dominated and impoverished contemporary French novels. He understood that there was an empty corner in French literature. He ran into it, and glazed a varnish of symbolistic mother-of-pearl on his pastiche. Later on, he purified his style, and in the Guermantian feast, nothing remains but the element that resembles James. In fact, James has done nothing better.

But these tableaux of high society are a specialization, an arabesque, as charming, as interesting as you please to consider them, rather than a radical advance in method. And all that corresponds in the work of Flaubert to Bovary, to the Education, and to Coeur Simple.

As for historical novels, they have never been revived since Laforgue struck his blow in their solar plexus: Salomé.

The true critics are not sterile judges, makers of phrases. The efficacious critic is the artist who comes thereafter, in order to slay or to inherit; in order to go beyond, to augment, or in order to diminish the form and to lay the corpse away. Since the telescopic exactitudes of Salomé, they no longer launch themselves upon historical details.

"There is even," writes Remy de Gourmont, "in mid-Lent, the historical costume."

Alongside all this there is Russia, the somewhat alcoholic or epileptic and amorphous profundity of Dostoevsky, his disciples and his inferiors; there is Strindbergism, and the subjectivism which perhaps has nothing more successful to offer than Adolphe.

But what is Bouvard et Pecuchet? Luckily, the book of your solidest Flaubertian, Rene Descharmes, and the words of Flaubert himself, obviate for me too "amateur", too "foreign" a definition; "Encyclopedie mise en farce." (Flaubert favors, or has favored for five minutes, another irreverent attitude; he calls La Tentation an "ancient caprice" [ancienne toquade], but let us get on.)

Autor de Bouvard et Pecuchet is charming like every definitive work which dares to be "too" meticulous in order to close a question once and for all, to put a stop to quibbles, to vague perambulations. M. Descharmes' arguments are so solid, the facts he brings to bear so incontestable, that I am almost afraid to propose certain divergences in view. But from time to time he employs phrases which, lifted from context, can become fallacious or occasion misapprehensions. I find:

Page 44. . . "certain aspects of Frederic's passion do not clothe themselves with their full psychological importance unless one links them with the passion experienced by Flaubert for Mme. Schlesinger."

Farther on, I ask myself what he means to convey by "the complete comprehension of a work."

He has, perhaps, employed exact terms. But it must be emphasized that if one does not understand a work solely by the reading of that work and nothing but that work, one never will understand it; even with all the mass of documents, citations, biological or biographical details you may pile up. All that which is not part of the work belongs in a biography of the author; which is another subject, the subject of another realistic book, but which does not in any way appertain to the "comprehension of the work," complete or otherwise. (I exaggerate.)

There was a Delamarre rubric; there were a thousand other headings as diverse. Flaubert had chosen one of them. There was a window-pane on Reims, on Rouen, a painting by Breughel at Genes; all this is very interesting when one takes enormous interest in that being, interesting above all others, who was Gustave Flaubert; but the reader of Saint Julien and of Bovary can quite happily shrug it off. M. Descharmes is almost of my opinion, but he sticks to that imbecile of a Sainte-Beuve*, and then one would like to yell "Watch out!"

Descharmes demonstrates that the action of Bouvard et Pecuchet is impossible within the given time. He poses the question of knowing whether Flaubert had the intention of going beyond his habitual realism and of presenting these two characters as a sort of prodigy endowed with the eternal faculty of staving off senescence. It is a detail which a last revision could easily have set straight; a detail, I believe, of the sort that is left for the final going-over.

*Sainte-Beuve; I ask pardon for treating thus a Gentleman who has his monument in the Luxembourg Gardens with those of Clemence Isidore, Scheurer-Kestner (1835-1899), Pifine de Medicis, Adam, Eve, Rucher Ecole, and so many other glories of the French race; with that of Flaubert himself; but his great-grand-bastards, that is to say, the great-grand-sons of Sainte-Beuve, have so infested the Anglo-Saxon world, where each dolt who has no aptitude whatsoever for the understanding of a work sets himself to writing "literary" criticism by vomiting forth little theses on Whitman's laundry bills, Geo. Eliot's correspondence with her hairdresser, etc, etc. . . that. . . that Roussac remains the Eagle of Meaux.

Descharnes presents us with some very amusing researches on the unimproved technique of Feinagle, and on Amoros' gymnastics. He performs there a new and realistic service. And he proves that Flaubert has exaggerated nothing.

For Bouvard et Fécuchet he does not find any rubric; but it seems to me that there were two men at Croisset, of whom at least one had a boundless curiosity. If Flaubert, who satirises all, had not satirised a certain M. Laporte and a certain M. Flaubert (well-known and little-esteemed among the people of Rouen), it is certain that he spent his life always with someone else; with Le Poittevin, with the wanderer Du Camp, with Bouilhet; nothing more natural than this conception of two men who perform researches. The researches of Flaubert outside of literature could never have been able to satisfy him; whence his sympathy for his two old fellows; the vanity of his own struggle against the general imbecility gives strength to the portraits of these other victims of circumstances. The supposition is easily as likely as others which are made in the chemical and clinical analyses of works of art. Descharnes touches upon this, on page 236.

But it is above all in the chapter on the "ideas received" where he interests us, and it is there that one sees a rapport between Flaubert and Joyce. Between 1880 and the year when Ulysses was begun, no one had had the courage to make up the gigantic compendium of stupidity, nor the patience to search out the "typical man," the most general of generalizations.

Descharnes establishes the difference between the "dictionary" and the Album which "was intended to make up by itself the second part of Bouvard et Fécuchet." He indicates in what manner the dictionary had already entered into the books of Flaubert. But it is by a single trait that he proves himself the profound Flaubertian, and distinguishes himself from all the dry philologues. He shows his deep understanding of his hero, when he decalres:

"....since the day when as a little child he already took note of the stupidities of an old dame who came for a visit with his mother."

As a criticism that is well worth all the elaborate arguments.

WHAT IS James Joyce's Ulysses?* This novel belongs to the great class of novels in sonata form, that is to say, in the form: theme, countertheme, reprise, development, finale. And in the subdivision: father-and-son novels. It follows the broad line of the Odyssey, and presents a great many more or less exact correspondences with the incidents of Homer's poem. We find here Telemachus, his father, the sirens, the Cyclops, in unexpected guises, baroque, slangy, veridical, and gigantic.

Novelists only like to spend a mere three or six months for a book. Joyce put fifteen years into this one. And Ulysses is more condensed (732 large pages) than no matter what entire work of Flaubert; one discovers here more architecture.

There are incomparable pages in Bovary, certain paragraphs incomparably condensed in Bouvard (refer to the section where they purchase the sacrés-coeurs, pious pictures, etc.). There are pages of Flaubert which expose their matter as rapidly as pages of Joyce, but Joyce has completed the great sottisier. In one single chapter he lets fly all the clichés of the English language, in an uninter-

*Shakespeare at 01c, [first] publishers, 12, rue de l'Odéon, Paris.

nupted stream. In another chapter he sums up the whole history of English verbal expression since the first alliterative verse (this is the chapter in the hospital where they await Mrs. Purefoy's parturition.) In another he has the headlines of the Freeman's Journal since 1760, that is to say the history of journalism; and he does that without interrupting the flow of his book.

He expresses himself differently in different parts of his book (as even Aristotle permits), but this does not mean that he abandons unity of style, as the distinguished Larbaud has said. Each character not only talks in his own idiom, but thinks in his own idiom; this is no more the abandoning of unity of style than when the various characters of a novel considered to be in a uniform style speak in different manners; one omits the quotation marks, that's all.

Bloom, an advertising agent, the Ulysses of the book, a man of average sensuality, the base (as were Bouvard and Pécuchet) of democracy, a man who believes what he reads in the daily papers, suffers *κατὰ ἐπιβούην*. He takes an interest in everything, wants to explain everything to impress everybody. Not only is this a very rapid literary intermediary, well-suited to the re-statement of what is thought and said everywhere, what the *hoi polloi* jaw and rejaw a hundred times a week, but the other characters as well are chosen to implement the medium, in order to sum up the vanities of other milieus than his own.

Bouvard and Pécuchet are men withdrawn from the world, in a sort of backwater. Bloom, on the contrary, has his being in a milieu very much more contagious.

Joyce employs a working method taken from Homer, and others taken from the allegorical mediaeval culture; this is of little import, it is an aspect of the manufacture which neither restrains the action nor incommodes it, which harms neither his realism nor the contemporaneity of his action. It is a means of arranging the form. The book is more formal than any of the books of Flaubert.

Telemachus, Stephen, the spiritual son of Bloom, begins by reflecting upon a mediaeval vanity cherished in a Catholic school; he prolongs a scholastic conceit, the rapport between Hamlet and Shakespeare. Always realistic in the strictest Flaubertian sense, always documented, documented by life itself, Joyce never goes beyond his medium. Realism seeks a generalization which does not hang solely on number, on multiplicity, but is a matter of permanence. Joyce combines the middle ages, classic eras, even Jewish antiquity, in a present-day action; Flaubert elechons epochs.

In his implacable elimination of quotation marks, Joyce presents the episode of the Cyclops with ordinary words, but alongside he places grandiloquence, as parody and as measure of the difference between realism and a romanticism with fanfaron. I have said that the true criticism comes from authors; thus Joyce à propos of Saint Anthony: "One could believe it if he (Flaubert) presented us with Anthony at Alexandria wallowing in women and luxurious surroundings."

A single chapter of Ulysses (157 pages) corresponds to the Tentation de saint Antoine. Stephen, Bloom and Lynch are in a brothel, drunk; everything of the grotesque in their thoughts is stripped bare, for the first time since Dante one finds harpies, furies, living, symbols taken from the real, the present; nothing depends on mythology nor on dogmatic faith. The proportions reaffirm themselves.

The lack of Bouvard et Pécuchet, a fault which even M. Deschannes points out, is that the incidents do not succeed themselves with a necessity sufficiently imperious; the plan does not lack logic, but another would have sufficed. One can advance a thesis more complimentary to Flaubert, but brief, clear, condensed though Bouvard et Pécuchet may be, the whole lacks somewhat in continuity.

Joyce has remedied that; at each moment the reader is held ready for anything, at each moment the unexpected occurs; through the longest and most detailed tirades the reader is held on pins and needles.

The action takes place in one day, (732 pages), in a single spot, Dublin. Telemachus wanders *παρὰ θύρα πολυφλοίσβου*

ἁλιόσσης; he sees the midwives with their little professional bags. Ulysses breakfasts and makes his rounds; mass, a funeral, the bath house, business of races; the other characters make their rounds; the soap makes its rounds; he looks for advertisements, the "ad" of the House of Keyes, he visits the national library in order to verify an anatomical detail from mythology, he comes to the office of Aeolus (the office of a newspaper), all the noises break forth, streetcars, trucks, postal cars, etc.; Nausikaa shows herself, they eat at the hospital; the encounter of Ulysses and Telemachus, brothel, combat, the return to Bloom's house, and then the author presents Penelope, symbol of earth, whose night-thoughts end the recital, balancing the male ingeniousnesses.

Cervantes parodied a single literary folly, the folly of knight-hood. Rabelais and Flaubert alone attacked a whole age, opposed themselves to the whole imbecilic encyclopedia, - under the form of fiction. We are not discussing here Voltaire and Bayle's Dictionaries. To enter into the Rabelais-Voltaire class is no small thing.

As most bitterly effective pages, one can cite the scene of the executioner, the most biting of any satire since Swift proposed his remedy for the famine in Ireland: to eat up all the children. Everywhere in the litanies; in the genealogy of Bloom, in the paraphrases of eloquence, the work is charged with meaning; there is not a line, not half a line which does not receive an intellectual intensity incomparable in a book of so large a scope; or it can be compared only to pages from Flaubert and the Goncourts.

This will give an idea of the enormous labor of those fifteen years beset by poverty, bad health, war; the whole first edition of the book Dubliners burned, the flight from Trieste, an operation on his eye; so many facts which have nothing to do with the book, all the action of which takes place the 16th of June 1904 in Dublin. One can find characters dissected on one page, as in Bovary (see Father Connee, the lovable Dignam, etc.). One can examine the encyclopedic descriptions, the house dreamed by Bloom, with text of imaginary lease; all the pseudo-intellectual bouillabaisse of the proletariat is presented, all balanced by Penelope, the woman, who has not a jot of respect for that amassing of nomenclatures, she the vaginal, symbol of earth, bitter sea into which the male intelligence falls once more.

It is a novel of realism par excellence, each character speaks in his own guise, and presented under the British yoke, the world under the yoke of inordinate and excessive usury. Deschannes asks (page 267):

"Who then has succeeded in the almost superhuman attempt to show, under the form of a novel and of a work of art, the universal stupidity?"

I offer the answer; if it is not James Joyce, it is an author for whom we must still wait: but putting forward this Irishman's name merits an extended examination. Ulysses is not a book which everyone is going to like, any more than everyone admires Bouvard et Pécuchet, but it is a book which every serious writer needs to read, that he is constrained to read in order to have a clear idea of the point at which our art has arrived, in our line of business as writers.

It is not so astonishing that the books of Joyce were not hailed in Ireland in 1908; the rustic public and the Dublin provincials were then in the act of manifesting against Synge's dramas, finding them an insult to the national dignity. The same dramas have just been presented this year in Paris as propaganda and as proof of the culture of the Irish race. Ibsen, if I recall, could not live in Norway; Galdos, in Doña Perfecta shows us the dangers in a provincial city (which one takes to be Sargossa) of possessing a culture, not even an international culture, but simply that of Madrid. As for those earlier romantics of Ireland, I believe them simply incapable of understanding what realism is. For George Moore and for Shaw, it is human nature not to wish to see themselves eclipsed by a writer of greater importance than themselves. It is known that in Dublin they read Joyce behind locked doors. This lack of cordiality is not astonishing. But the American law, under which the Little Review was suppressed four times for fragments of Ulysses, is a curiosity so very curious, such a demonstration of the mentality of barbarous legislators, of unlettered specialists, that it really deserves the attention of European psychologists, or rather of specialists in meningitis. No, my dear friends, democracy (which it is so necessary to safeguard, according to our calamity-howler Wilson) has nothing in common with personal liberty, nor with the brotherly deference of Koung-fu-Tseu.

Section 211 of the penal code of the United States of America:

"Every obscene, shameless, lascivious, and every filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character, and every article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral use; and every article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing which is advertised or described in a manner calculated to lead another to use or apply it for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral purpose; and every written or printed card, letter, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind giving information, directly or indirectly, when, how, or from whom, or by what means any of the hereinbefore mentioned matters, articles or things may be obtained or made, or where or by whom any act or operation of any kind for the procuring or producing of abortion will be done or performed, or how or by what means conception may be prevented or abortion produced, whether sealed or unsealed; and every letter, packet, or package, or other mail matter containing any filthy, vile, or indecent thing, device, or substance; and every paper, writing, advertisement, or representation that any instrument, article, substance, drug, medicine or thing may, or can, be used or applied for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral purpose; and every description calculated to induce or incite a person to so use any such article, instrument, substance, or thing, is hereby declared to be non-mailable matter and shall not be conveyed in the mails or delivered from any post office or by any letter carrier. Whoever shall knowingly deposit

or cause to be deposited, for mailing or delivery, anything declared by this section to be non-mailable, or shall knowingly take, or cause the same to be taken, from the mails for the purpose of circulating or disposing thereof, shall be fined not more than \$5,000, or imprisoned not more than 5 years; or both.*"

It is the twentieth century: paganism; christianity, idiocy, boorishness; if any doubt remains in the mind of the reader, it can be dispelled by the decision of an American judge, handed down at the occasion of the third suppression of the Little Review. That great advocate, collector of modern art, chevalier of your Legion d'Honneur, John Quinn, made the plea in defense of literature; the classics even, he said, can not escape from such imbecilities.

The voice of a U. S. Goddess of Justice answers him (the quotation from Judge Hand):

"I hardly doubt that very many truly great works which would fall into this class if one submitted them to the proofs currently and often employed do escape from time to time solely because they enter into the category of 'classics'; it is understood for the enforcement of this law that they are ordinarily immune from intervention because they have the sanction of antiquity and of fame, and make their appeal, ordinarily, to a relatively restricted number of readers."

DON'T WE have here two jewels upon which the great Flaubert would have siezed for his album, and wouldn't these quotations have surpassed even his expectations?

As for the last two pages of Descharmes, I regret them a little; I reserve for myself the privilege of believing that Spinoza had a more solid head than M. Paul Bourget. And if thought in itself is an evil detrimental to humanity, I thank M. Descharmes just the same for having been the cause of so much of it.

*Apparently one of the many disadvantages of exile lies in inability to detect the out-of-date in the laws of one's own country; at least, no other explanation serves for Pound's omission of the delightful addendum of March 4, 1922; "The term 'indecent' within the intendment of this section shall include matter of a character tending to incite arson, murder, or assassination." Possibly the forthcoming treason trial will include a side-charge based on EP's proposal to shoot Nicholas Murray Butler? . . . Nevertheless, let no one assume that the legal side of "James Joyce et Pecuchot" was made a dead issue by Judge Woolsey's decision (Opinion No. 110-59, U. S. District Court): "I have been informed by eminent jurists, who are sympathetic toward my work," writes Henry Miller, "that the decision in the Ulysses case does not establish a precedent for my work. Why? Because Ulysses will be read only by an elite few and is therefore unlikely to undermine the morals of the great community."

This would be reason enough for the publication of this essay, which to the best of our knowledge has never been translated into English before. RENAISSANCE counts it significant also, even at this late date, in several other ways; first because the very strange team of oxen which Joyce and Flaubert make before most people's literary carts seems to us to be most powerful and (to mix the metaphor) suggestive; and secondly, because this essay was the first, and is still one of the best, to give Frenchmen a solid survey of a book they are never likely to read in their own language. (There is an apocryphal legend that someone retired onto an island in the Seine to make a translation of Joyce's recodito English, and has not been seen since.) And finally, because it seemed auspicious to start off a Little Magazine with a memory of the Twenties. [Editors' note.]

THE USHER SOCIETY was formally established at the Organization Conference of 17-22 February, 1945, the result of a year's concerted planning by six people in widely scattered spots on the Eastern seaboard. It is a foundation for the practising artist, whatever the specific nature of his endeavors; its purpose is to encourage, through study, publication, practice, and (whenever possible) endowment, the proliferation of all serious artists. It is especially interested in a program of State support for the worthy artist; in the words of the Conference prospectus in campaigning "actively for any method, movement, legislation, or other active principle which proposes to guarantee that the serious artist shall be paid adequately for work well done, but for no other work." The Society's organ, RENASCENCE, provides a laboratory for experimental creative work, a fixed circulation among a hundred writers, editors, and other professionals in the artistic field who may be able to offer contributing members critical help. Among other things RENASCENCE is completely uncensored by its editors, who will accept work of the most radical kind providing that it seems to have been worth doing; and if there is any question whether or not a particular item might be questioned by the Post Office, that issue of the magazine will be sent out by other means. The club also has facilities for the reproduction of pictures and the recording of new music on the same experimental basis.

Regular membership, including all privileges, costs \$1 yearly, and places upon the member a small activity requirement, which may be satisfied by representation in the magazine or by service on a Society committee of the member's selection.

James Blish
Robert W. Lowndes
(Editorial)

Marshall P. Grassly
William Harris Hooks
Max H. R. Knocklein
(Conference)

ERRATUM: Fill line 52, page 14, to read: "in his own guise, and corresponds to an exterior reality. Ireland is"

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Vanguard Records announces the discontinuance of the project known as Vanguard Society Set Number One. The response of the Fantasy Group for which the project was being run has shown clearly that there is virtually no interest in these records or the music upon them; the subscription total for four months was nine. The Company wishes to thank the composers involved for their cooperation; their works, in most cases, are being returned to them, except for a few compositions for whose recording rights the Company will ask permission to retain, for later issue on a nation-wide scale. Subscribers' money will, of course, be refunded.