

TUMBRILS

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3rd Mailing: Whokin(as Fr. Stanley says)tell? Maybe I am due to get the pitch in '46 as a known trouble-maker; I am on the carpet again, graduated from the more misdemeanor (for after all, Judy leans that way too, says Michel) of being a Fascist to the deadly sin of asking Vanguardists to write their best. Mr. Knight's embarrassment is understandable; so, for that matter, is his all-too-familiar talk about immaturity, a kind of talk greatly indulged by people who suspect their own. "Childish" was my favorite adjective when I was fifteen; but one must be grateful for small blessings - puberty is a marked advance upon his "Bobbysoy Twins on Grandpa's Farm" stage in the first mailing. On other counts a good distance remains to be travelled. Factually there is nothing in the essay that cannot be answered by a brief survey of the publishing history of Finnegans Wake, the career of transition and the statistics relevant to Henry Miller's first (mimeographed) Open Letter; but my desire to see good work in VAPA does not lead as far as doing a fellow-member's research for him.

Eissman seems to be aware that she has made something of a good thing of my phrasology rather than of my point, influenced perhaps by the fashionable contempt for the Little Magazine expressed even by people like Emden who do not actually subscribe to it; but as far as I am able to determine, there is no good reason for treating this antiphony separately.

It is obvious, then, that no pamphlet which appears in Vanguard alone is going to reinstate the baritone clef or swing a national election. Such a pamphlet, however, might (has) effect(ed) a change in one or two people's attitudes about Ezra Pound. The consequences of this simple small accomplishment bear no proportional relationship to the number of passive readers, 50 or 500, that the pamphlet originally had; for most Ameri-

cans, from Eric Johnson through the totalitarian democrats of PM to William Z. Foster, consider themselves automatically and categorically Pound's enemies, and the new opinion will be felt through out that sphere. A thread has been plucked from the tissue, which forthwith begins to unravel . . .

This is a concrete example. I do not expect Mr. Knight to greet the example itself with much sympathy; he is bored with the Pound case; indeed, he declared himself bored with it at the very beginning, before I had done much more than get the man's name down on paper. Nevertheless I have continued to beat against the barriers of his and the other closed minds in Vanguard, because it seemed to me to be a thing worth trying; my intent was not to entertain but to convince or at the least to unsettle. I have now reached the point where I am trying to determine exactly how successful I was; and therefore, I'm declaring the discussion closed in TUMBRILS. Whatever may be said about it now bids fair to be fruitlessly repetitious, and in order to avoid the accusation of trying to have the last word, I shall leave unanswered any points about it that are raised in the present mailing. I've said all I had to say, and said it as well as I am able. I am enclosing a postcard with this issue, on which I ask each member who feels competent to offer an opinion (I shall make no ruling on this; decide for yourself) to write either Yes or No depending on whether or not he finds himself on EP's side. I will tabulate the results in the next mailing. Will everyone receiving one of these cards please do me the favor of marking and returning it.

. . . but to get back to the point at issue. A different kind of activity upon this level is exemplified in RENAISSANCE; and it is here where "Pamphletting, Peoples, Politics and Puberty" shows ignorance. Mr. Knight makes the following absurd statement:

"....I think the chief reasons are experiment....and gratification of ego. ....Neither has any place beyond immaturity."

He defines "experiment" as "the initial trying-out of abilities which are felt to be too little developed to be worthy of a wider medium." This leaves the reader with two alternatives; he may assume either that Knight is really that ignorant of the nature and purpose of experimental writing, as he obviously is of its history; or else that he has relegated Joyce, Schwartz, Miller et al to some limbo of adolescence in which he himself is too "mature" to dwell! It is hard to say which of these is the kinder assumption. I refrain from choosing the first one because it is a clinical example of something I talked about in the essay under dispute, and I dislike finding myself falling into the Hegelian plaint of being persistently unread.

Nevertheless, the evidence indicates that the first alternative represents a rather general situation in Vanguard. I spoke of Widner's "imaginist" notion; Stanley has questioned my amusement. Surely it should be plain enough to him now that I was pleading for a broader frame of reference. The last mailing contains two examples of it, the first, of course, being Knight's willingness to talk about pamphleteering as puberty. The other, the Gansevoort Street in TEMPER, #2 is that same street which was named after the rich brewer who was paternal grandfather to Horner Melville; and from the old Customs House at its foot Melville set out upon the voyage he later described in Redburn; the spot where such things as White Jacket, Nardi and Moby Dick first entered into the realm of the possible. Judy, of course, was not writing about that aspect of the street; it could, she says, have been Jones Street; yet some knowledge of the dense tissue of associations of the street she did choose would have enriched her essay and changed it from a briefly pleasant wriggle of the more superficial social emotions into a tight and rewarding do-

cumment.

In short, deliberately to circumscribe the plenum in which one writes to that which one thinks is "normal" or usual for a) activity, immediately reduces one's writing to the truly-dead level which, in sober sooth, does characterize most spa mailings. We already have a plethora of that sort of thing in Vanguard, and I made my plea in the hope that some of us would have the personal pride to attempt something better.

I think the hostility of the reaction indicates that I have touched a very sore spot in our collective anatomy; and if anyone is really worried about immaturity, that is above and beyond disguising their own, nothing would be more salutary than to recognize this fact and try to correct it as an adult would. If you do not think the effort is worth it, or do not think you can, then kindly get off the air. There are plenty of other spas to blither in, and it was our hope that Vanguard was not to be one of them.

Remember?

( . . . )

If Stanley is still waiting for the punch line, there are things in the mailing to cheer him. "Basil and the Lion" should certainly provide him with a liberal helping of that leaven of humor he thought lacking in Mailing #2; Emden has provided us with a really memorable job. . . .It should also provide him with some fun in "Contrarivise." "...with a speed that the arc of their trajectory could not begin to equal." A little math, Herr Stonoleigh, to demonstrate why the verb understood in "How many seconds of arc... ..?" is "is," not "does"?

( . . . )

I planned to include in this issue a rather extended discussion of the poetry in SAPPHO, but I've decided to let it go for a while. There is a limit to the amount of self-righteousness a reader can stand, and this issue is already quite nasty enough. (Nice print job, anyhow.)

( . . . )

ØEPSETES

Since it is necessary to defy this  
to expect such answers to a market question  
(such an artful thing is modesty)  
let me undress the voice behind your voice -  
I'll clothe no triple saints in music  
nor in the gray asbestos of the virgin's pride  
insult G major scales upon my flute

I see this marketing as answer

leaning to bite into a scurer fruit  
than that which one would choose to culture  
in soft considered glee to offer penitence  
inverted on the table of response

the answer as the question you avoid  
while that the demon which has crept upon you  
abides no queries and encyphers danger;

has no acquaintance with the brewing dark.  
Damnation spews the bubbles through the thick  
slow malice, silted, of the broth

ensilage of the windy stale horizon  
so that the curling clouded sheets of you and I  
may be regardless wound about the corpse

unquestioned, being damned, prolifically.

- Marcus Lyons

(from "Trompe l'oeil")

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**BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL BAEDECKER**  
Tunbrils' Own Travelogue

**I. An Hour in the Gueux of Paris**

My friends tell me that French is not an irrational language, even tho, they admit, it does occasionally form plurals with soundless x's. This in the face of the plain evidence that the war in Europe would have been over years earlier if anyone had had the faintest idea of just what Maurice Chevalier (ay) was trying to tell us.

Feu instances:

Even a Frenchman, faced with the appalling newscasts of acres and acres of sweatshirted women all doing calce-thotics in the Olympic stadium, could not have resisted a mild "Hubba, hubba, hubba." The nearest American tourist, in a rational country, would have been constrained to agree, and right there an alliance might have been formed which would have nipped Munich in the bud.

But Frenchmen spell it "A bas, a bas, a bas;" and if we in America felt after that that no rapport was possible, small wonder.

Or consider, for a moment, the difficulties of an underground movement, in a country where even the cows say "moaux."

"Is it not so, that the Boches are approaching with all celerity?"

"But, my old one, it is of a certainty. We should, perhaps, run."

By the time this exchange is completed, both men have been captured, tried, and delivered to the axe.

The French tongue is one of the most effective non-fraternization bans ever inflicted upon an AEF. Any GI knows that a woman who sidles up to him and says, "Come on, fool porter-full, hosiered women blown monk scow?" is not looking for a date, regardless of what it says in the guidebook.

At last reports, Ackermanose was sweeping the country.

**II. My Life Among the Cat-People**

I don't want anyone to get the notion that I dislike cats, or harbor any sort of grudge. My friends all have heard me say I refuse to marry until I can find a woman who will bear me kittens, and this is only partly due to my dislike for children. No; my whole intention in setting down these events is to correct the misinformed people who always answer "Well, I like kittens, until they grow up."

A mature cat, usually, has lost the salacious curiosity which makes living with a kitten a somewhat dangerous process. This nosiness takes peculiar forms, especially when linked with the feline interest in fishing and running water generally; I once owned a small black Tom who was perpetually climbing up my trouser-leg to peer in and see what that noise was. There was a time when I thought this trick charming, if somewhat morbid; but that was before Spats was replaced by Curfew, whose curiosities led her up the inside of the trouser-leg.

This latter climb took place one evening while I was sitting in the front room listening to some records. The kitten was quite small, and once seated on my thigh in the darkness, could not figure out how she had gotten there, why she had wanted to be there in the first place, or how to get out. Attempts to ease her back down the way she had come resulted merely in scars on my leg. I was forced finally to let the beast out via my fly.

Had this been the end of the matter all would have been well; however, as Curfew blinked forth into the light, I looked up and discovered that I had forgotten to pull down the windowshade, and that the woman in the next apartment was watching the whole proceeding across the airshaft. The expression on her face

could not have been wilder had she been confronted with a shuggoth; and for months afterwards we could not meet her on the stairs without her muttering to herself;

"My God! Ears!"

It is true that possession of a grown cat has its own dangers. Blackout (who belongs to Lowndes) is a beautiful but neurotic animal given to making peculiar associations, most of which involve his claiming somebody, which he thinks is a way of showing esteem. He is also given to frolicking on the fire-escape; eventually invading other people's apartments in the dead of night and leaping silently over the cribs of small children, who scream for hours afterwards. His most baffling assumption is his profound belief that Lowndes is God; if he ventures out onto the fire-escape and discovers that it is raining, he forthwith comes back in and bites Doc.

Though this sounds like about as extreme an assumption as a cat could make, the normal kitten's belief that it is a tiger makes more trouble in the long run. They will attack any moving object, from flies to toes beneath the bedclothes. This attitude once resulted in an assault upon a delicate portion of my anatomy, in the middle of the night, at the precise moment in a man's life when he is least interested in pets. I pitched her (I mean Curfew) out so hard it sounded as if she had been thrown onto a bass drum, but by that time the damage to my reputation had been done.

It is, as Doc says, a troublesome thing to be a father.  
Prrrrrow!

III. Right Little, Tight Little Islo

And so we come at last to lovely old Comrado Islo. Truly, as we look upon these small villages and pretty cities, we wonder if, after all, our bustling urban life is not too nervous and complex. Here all is serene, the vote-free natives lolling in their communistic or collecting securitics in the security-paddies.

Here there are no modern conveniences, no party lines, no hot and cold running arguments; no corner toy-boos or noisy, smelly nordaus, no bright and glaring spenglers to disturb the noonday siesta, nor a single hot bruno to disturb the digestion. These islands are truly exclusive. See the peace-face people, clad only in a single wrap-around marxism woven from the simplest materialisms (not for them the colored shirt, the old school tie, the tight kants or the flowered hogel - oh my no!), loll about under the Burgor tree, plucking the masses as they mature.

But we envious moderns have time for only a short stay in this pravdivise, and so we must say farewell. As we look back from our ship at Comrado Islo, silhouetted in the sunset, the gentle breeze brings us the tuneful farewell of the natives, strumming mournfully on their izvestias.

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Supplemental to Three-Dots;

If I were asked (as is highly unlikely) to compile a required-reading list for fantasy-fans who are wont to gas endlessly about society and social systems, one of the first books I'd include would be James Fenimore Cooper's The Monikins, a Swiftian satire upon the democracy-versus-aristocracy arguments of the time. One particularly delicious sequence deals with the law passed by the democratic senate to have the monikins' tails (the seat, as it were, of their intolligence) all lopped off to an equal length. The snippets are boiled down in a big vat and the resultant stew is served up to the press as public opinion . . . Mardi, of course, would belong high on the list; so would The Riso of Silas Lapham; and about twenty other volumes, written by Americans in criticism of their country as they found it. This seems to me to be the indeluctable prerequisite to understanding of Marxism or any other theory of history which draws on scenes and events abroad, where most Americans have never been.