

1st October 1993

The last issue (No 9) of *MARGINALIA* was dated 1st January 1993. I had hoped to prepare a new issue within three months or so, but contingent circumstances have made that difficult. After the flash floods which virtually gutted our house in October 1992 it was not possible to return till early February when the road leading to it was reopened. In June 1993 I compiled a new *MARGINALIA* in Italian and sent it out gradually in July. The printing and postage of that left me without funds to send out a new English language edition till now. This issue, and several more have been ready for months, but lack of financial support from the public, except for a dozen or so generous "old faithfuls" made it impossible to send out more issues to you. For these preliminary Notes (I can't call them an Editorial), I have accumulated over these nine months a pile of notes which fill a large orange box. These may well serve for several whole books for the future (if there is a future) but here and now I can only present a few brief pages of comment on problems that are eating me up these days. As *MARGINALIA* is something like a personal communication to a few hundred people who more or less know me, I shall speak here of the circumstances of our recent life at "La Turbina" (what's left of it) and of the present status of *MARGINALIA*. I had hoped to add something about the state of letters, and especially of poetry, in the world today, and finish with some notes on the impact of "theory" (so much vaunted today) on the literary world now. I've been shopping around quite a bit recently in the post-structuralist supermarket and am not sure whether to entitle my new notes "Portrait of the Editor as Blimp" or "Towards a praxis of dissidence". Either title will serve, each is equally pretentious.

Before I come to my intended Notes I might just mention that in July 1993 I sent out a circular to about forty organisations that deal primarily with poetry in U.K., announcing my intention of visiting England in January, February and March of 1994, and requesting information as to whom I might apply for engagements to read my poetry, give lectures, and otherwise disport myself. Particularly I was anxious to know about those Dogs' Homes that host writers for a month or two so that they can do a bit of writing instead of continuing in their normal menial services to our Big Brother the State, or alternatively starving in their basements. I knew of Hawthornden Castle, but of no others. My old friend William Cookson, editor of *AGENDA* immediately replied, offering me a sofa-bed in his office. The Poetry Society sent me a list of selected poetry "venues" etc., but regretted that they couldn't undertake to "find me accommodation". (which of course I didn't ask them to!). Kind Amy Wack of *POETRY WALES* referred me to The Welsh Arts Council. The Arts Council of Great Britain's Literary "officer", Mr. Alistair Niven, did not reply. My own publisher in U.K., the Anvil Press, have not replied to a letter from me for seven years. No one else replied, so I have called off my intended trip, the last I am likely to make to England the land of my cursed birth, as I am getting too senile and incompetent to envisage long-distance travel after next year. I originally decided to visit England again because Kathleen Raine had invited me to lecture at her *TEMENOS ACADEMY*. Unfortunately that would not solve the problem of finance in England

for several weeks. I may try again later, depending on my health, now that I have the list of 'venues', but I have a nasty feeling that most of them want "performance poetry" rather than my kind of lyric and elegiac.

The road to our house was opened up again in late January and we returned to a house that had been flooded with thick mud for three months and in which the FAX, washer, refrigerator, etc., were all irreparably damaged. With the damp and the mould and mildew proliferating everywhere and rain pouring through holes in the roof it was fiendishly cold and uncomfortable. The Comune and various well-placed Italians in the area promised me faithfully to find us a new house, but we heard no more of it! The long hot summer has been delightful though it is still so cold in the house even during a heatwave that we have to wear woollen sweaters (even in August!). A rain of plaster constantly falls from under the roof in the upstairs rooms. The landlord has done no repairs.

A further difficulty has been the non-arrival of very many items of my incoming mail. The police found some items on a garbage dump three hundred kilometres from here, but they have been unable to trace the malefactors. The editor of CHAPMAN (Edinburgh) had to send me a photocopy of Tom Scott's review of my *Theories* four times before I eventually saw it! Italy is decaying morally and spiritually week by week. There are plenty of good honest people here, but there is widespread corruption from the garbage-collectors right down to the members of the Government.

Now the autumn rains have started, and already minor landslides are starting again and our approach road has sunk in places as much as three to four inches. I anticipate a very difficult winter, and frankly just dread it, having in mind the very high cost of warming the house (roughly £25 per day just to keep the intense chill away). As for MARGINALIA ...

NON C'È PIZZE DI MUNNE

I sometimes wonder what it is that makes me 'tick'. The Death Watch Beetle maybe? But perhaps it's merely because I feel that there are "out there" many thousands of people who want poetry and a spiritual message which they simply don't find in the productions of the Establishment journals and the poetry that is "in" today.

Frankly, although I have good friends, I feel totally cut off from the great majority of people, whether "educated" or "uneducated". Sometimes I'm not sure

which are which! If you find something in MARGINALIA that appeals to you may I ask you to be very kind and photocopy it and send it to a few dozen friends. If you find it boring or stupid, well and good. Just do nothing. I accept that because it confirms my view of how the world has become. I have to face up to the sheer hopelessness of being a poet and publishing a one-man review like this. I am engaged at present on the extensive work of editing all my poetry from 1938 till now. This is an enormous task. I have just completed my *London Poems 1959-1963*. To judge by sales I have to conclude that I am the William McGonigall of our time! Posting out hundreds of MARGINALIA and also complete catalogues of my works, I receive little more than single figures of readers. And yet, when I appear in public, which, living in *l'Italia rintronata*, is rarely, I do sell large quantities of my writings. At a recent reading to a gathering of businessmen in Arezzo, they didn't pay me one sou, but the fifty people present bought £750 worth of my books. When I read at a small community college in New Jersey in 1985 they paid me \$2,000 and I sold a further \$1,000 worth of my books. Evidently it is personal contact that makes possible an economic reward for the artist. This suggests to me that the educated public has lost the ability to base its values on the art of reading. With all the dramatic press treatment of the Serbian (and Croatian) usurpation of Bosnia, you might have thought that people would have bought my "Kosovo as a Cosmic Symbol" (1989) in which I anticipate the whole situation, basing my paper on original Serbian documents. I have sold one copy in four years (I sent a dozen to the press and friends).

There is a sense in which I am living on the charity of a few friends and "admirers" but am not really a professional writer. This is galling for me. But I am determined to continue because I receive a very considerable volume of mail, often from total strangers, as well as a considerable number of extremely laudative book reviews, which persuade me that there are some people "out there" who esteem my work and my ideas. But is this all a will o' the wisp? I had hoped in this "editorial" to talk about the status of "literature" in the world today, and also about the relevance of "theory". Obviously there is insufficient space. This is a "double number", 32pp instead of my usual 16pp. Perhaps it is a last desperate fling. I have little hope that it will produce any real reaction, let alone something for me (and my son) to live on.

BEWARE THE CRITIC? SUPPORT THE CRITIC?

“Ultimately literary criticism is about politics and power...”

and again

“Literary criticism is thus revealed as a struggle for power among parties which are in a position to use only rational argument and rhetoric as a means of persuading sufficient numbers to support them in order to achieve a majority”.

Quoted from the Introduction to *Twentieth Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. K.M. Newton, London, Macmillan, 1988 (p. 16 & 17). When Dr. Newton says “literary critics” here, I wonder if he really meant “literary theorists” which the context would imply. Whatever he means, I recommend this collection of outstanding texts from Russian Formalism right through to the Post-Structuralists and after.

The late Ezra Pound wrote about seventy-five years ago that “Poetry is to do with beliefs”. I.A. Richards’ *Science and Poetry* took up this theme in a quite prophetic way which I would like to exhibit here. I must limit myself, however, to three quotations taken from Sibylle Bedford’s splendid life of Aldous Huxley, grandson on one side, of T.H. Huxley, and on the other, of Matthew Arnold.

“Faith ... is the choice of the nobler hypothesis. It is the resolve to place the highest meaning on the facts which we observe.”

GERALD HEARD

“... the product, I suppose, of a rationalist upbringing, I remain an agnostic who aspired to be a gnostic — but a gnostic only on the mystical level, a gnostic without symbols, cosmologies or a pantheon...”

ALDOUS HUXLEY, from a letter of 1962

“Ultimate reality cannot be understood except intuitively, through an act of will and the affections. *Plus diligitur quam intelligitur.*”

ALDOUS HUXLEY, *Grey Eminence*

PUTTING POETRY IN ITS PLACE

Late in the twentieth century, it is clear that science has not made the world a safer or less mysterious place — quite the contrary — and that its prospects of doing so are remote. Nonetheless, that was what its early enthusiasts expected of it, and in the course of the nineteenth century those expectations became widespread. In such a climate of opinion, poetry as an important interpreter of life came to seem not merely inefficient but, as Plato and Bacon had long before asserted, obsolete. In the 1870s and '80s Thomas Henry Huxley, Darwin's leading disciple, demanded that literary studies should yield their chief place in higher education to science. As we shall see, Matthew Arnold's answer to him made a weak case for the status quo, one that seemed to concede science's primacy as a bearer of reliable knowledge. Such a concession was perhaps inevitable for anyone who accepted the Romantic notion of poetry as emotional self-expression without also accepting the equally Romantic claim that the poetic imagination alone had access to transcendental truths. At a time when scientific discovery was proceeding at a rapid pace, such claims for poetry seemed unconvincing to most thinking people. Today we see science (and science sees itself) in a much less exaggerated light, yet the cultural position of the literary arts is lower than it was a century ago. Part of the reason lies in the ways in which poets and theorists of poetry have responded to the scientific revolution.

In his study of Romantic theory and practice, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, M.H. Abrams distinguishes five varieties of truth that nineteenth-century poets and critics attributed at various times to poetry. "A frequent dialectic procedure," he declares, "was to allow truth to science, but to bespeak a different, and usually an even more weighty and important kind of truth, to poetry." Of the five, three are entirely subjective and have little importance in the cultural debate I am concerned with; they may have helped to maintain the morale of some poets against a hostile environment, but they are too slight to function as arguments. The remaining two, however, go to the heart of poetry's claims to a significant place in modern culture. The

first is the proposition that "Poetry is true in that it corresponds to a Reality transcending the world of sense." The claim is an attractive one for poets to make in a time of spiritual uncertainty, but it did not wear well in the nineteenth century, and I am skeptical about its revival in any form that will convince a large or culturally influential audience. More significant for modern poetry and criticism is Abrams's fourth proposition: "Poetry is true in that it corresponds to concrete experience and integral objects, from which science abstracts qualities for purposes of classification and generalization."

Abrams's wording implies what is clearly true, that science offers a highly abstracted knowledge of the world and self that gives us little help in interpreting the endless ambiguities of life in general or our own choices in particular. Poetry, on such a view, remains an essential form of knowledge because of its unique ability to embody the particular in subtle and powerful form; its lack of generalization is in fact its main advantage. If we are after the truth of moments, situations, relationships, the case of art (and particularly poetry) to elucidate it is a strong one, for such truths are unique and cannot be the subject of theory without being generalized almost out of existence. In a world that takes its truths where it finds them, wishes to be liberated from stock intellectual and emotional responses, and despairs of or distrusts universal Truth (whether religious or scientific), this function of poetry ought to be supremely valued; that it is not so valued in our time may be a complicated accident of cultural history. The poetry of particulars has a long and distinguished history from Blake, who saw in abstraction the imagination's chief enemy, to Whitman, who catalogued the life he saw around him, to William Carlos Williams, who postulated "no ideas but in things." As an ideal, it seemed particularly congenial to democratic and visionary poets, though in lesser hands than Blake's and Whitman's the visionary contemplation of common particulars has often degenerated into the tedious notation of all life's trivia.

The above passage is from *The Place of Poetry: Two Centuries of an Art in Crisis* by CHRISTOPHER CLAUSEN, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1981. I highly recommend this perceptive, sane and balanced historical and sociological study of the causes of the progressive shrinkage of the audience for poetry over the past two centuries. Dr. Clausen is a literary scholar, not primarily a sociologist. His fine book should be read ideally beside Dana Gioia's *Can Poetry Matter?*, Graywolf Press, Saint Paul, Minnesota (1992), another sensible study which is innocent of what R.S. Crane used to call the *dialectical fallacy*.

THE SINGLE STATE

FOR MYSELF, convalescing (from "undernutrition")

"The Light is always travelling towards the Light"

Sufi Saying

"The Self is one. Unmoving, it moves faster than the mind. The senses lag, but Self runs ahead. Unmoving, it outruns pursuit. Out of Self comes the breath that is the life of all things"

Isâ Upanisad, (Yeats' paraphrase)

Force yourself to eat a beefsteak,
 Force yourself to take some sleep;
 If and when you chance to wake,
 Try to smile and not to weep.
 All the time lost seems a crime,
 Lost opportunity, sheer folly;
 Yet recall — you dream sometime, —
 Sleep is not all melancholy.
 A hundred thousand things to do!
 Each day is a Universe
 In which the whole comes into view;
 Briefly at best you focus, — worse, —
 You lose the image, are distressed,
 Torn 'twixt madness and despair, —
 All's elusive — *nil at rest...*

No one can be everywhere!
 Try to sleep, and in your dreams
 Pass the Bounds of Time and Light!
 Only then, on instant beams
 All is One, — not what it seems, —
 Infinitely multiplied.

Poet, write this in your book
 In crooked ink on straight straight lines,
 Every child then may look
 And rejoice in what confines,
 Knowing what the Astronomers
 And Physicists have never found, —
 All that's in the Universe,
 At your feet, upon the ground...

Sleep sound! Sleep sound!

Venice,
 29th December 1971

Not previously published

Note to THE SINGLE STATE

People's eating habits are very different. The above poem was written when I returned to my house on the Lido in Venice after visiting a private doctor (the State doctors are more or less useless save as clerks to write prescriptions, in my experience). In fact, in the course of 1970 I had for easily imaginable reasons, been eating very little or nothing. On the other hand my neighbour, Cesarina, supplied me with free red wine, abstracted illicitly, from the nearby military for whom she worked. This extremely coarse impure wine was what the Italian army generously gave to the conscript soldiers, but it was almost my only nourishment during that period. At a certain point, hardly surprisingly, I simply collapsed. My red-headed Bolognese girl-friend, Samantha, insisted that I consult a doctor. She was convinced that my liver was out of order. After a long and thorough examination the wise *hakim* shook his head and smiled rather whimsically and told me "Nothing wrong with you; you're simply suffering from undernutrition". He told me to eat beefsteaks and as much fresh fish as I could. I confess I wondered how I was going to pay for such luxuries, but I returned home feeling very sorry for myself and solemnly lit up by a sense of undeserved suffering. The good Samantha appeared post-haste from Bologna with a dozen or more large bloody beefsteaks and an immense *branzino*, which since it was hot and stuffy in my kitchen, I put out in the cold on the window-sill, forgetting that there are cats in Venice. I never saw any of that food again!

In fact I wrote this poem immediately on entering the house after seeing the doctor. But it's really about relativity, and the mental state of bliss on the other side of the "light-barrier". I had deduced from the General Theory of Einstein the idea that if you could pass the "light-barrier" you would enter a world in which the less energy you consumed the more work you could do. It was the period when the boffins were looking for sub-atomic particles called tachyons, which could travel faster than light. I knew of course that they could never find them, because no instrument could possibly perceive them. However this bizarre concept gave me the idea of a world in which the speed of light equals zero, ("nil at rest"), and I equated this metaphorically with the state of paradise. Of course, when the mind is working at its utmost it uses up practically no energy, or perhaps even generates more energy than it uses.

Around the same time, an American friend of mine, a composer who had studied at Yale under Elliott Carter, had a somewhat different experience with a medical doctor, over his diet. Fettberg was very fond of his stomach and would eat in the best restaurants in Venice twice or more every day. One day after a Gargantuan lunch, he felt hungry as he walked the 100 meters back to his apartment, and he turned into a grocer's and bought a kilo or so of excellent ripe Gorgonzola cheese. On attacking this delicious mass at home, he was horrified to discern numerous small worms pullulating in it. He panicked and rushed off to his *medico*, certain that immediate death was to be his fate. The *medico* stared at him, callously ignoring his state of extreme agitation, and asked him which grocer had this wonderful cheese as he would like to buy some himself. My friend didn't die, but when I met him years later in New York, he admitted that he had never eaten cheese again since that day.

AVE ATQUE VALE

A sickly child in creaking cradle,
 They fed me syrop from a ladle.
 In infancy I lived in dreams,
 Was never shown the sun's bright beams.
 At three or four I gathered force,
 I mounted on my rocking horse.
 I rocked and galloped all the day
 Till soon they took my horse away.
 I grieved and grieved till nine or ten —
 I've never been the same since then.
 My kindly elders gave me rope —
 It's strange that that should rhyme with hope.
 I did my best. I gave each child
 Strict instructions, to run wild.
 There is a sadness in our lives
 Which is infectious, kills our wives.
 Something, it seems, all sweetness banishes
 When childhood's bitter sorrow vanishes.
 I'm glad now, near the House of Murk —
 For all they talk of here is *work*.

Pratomagno,
 30th May 1993

SPRING SPATE

The stream is swollen up today
 King Cobra on the Tuscan hills
 Yellow and purple pools dilating
 On jagged bars of black
 Like sunlight on the sea-trout's back

Image of light angelic mills
 Churning clear sky and mating
 Flowers of earth and golden sack
 Dusting the Milky Way
 In trickling honey's dappled ray

Like new spread gravel softly waiting
 For the first cart to crunch and pack
 Loose stones into a close array
 Yet breathing like a fish's gills
 Whose rainy branches sunlight fills

You hear the scraping and the clack
 Of rocks upheaving where they lay
 You see gray mosses' tattered frills
 Turn green with envy baiting
 And dance above the unseen grating

The dripping alders upright stay
 The savage wren defiance trills
 At the crazed torrent feebly prating
 You ride the serpent's back
 Tossed till the hostile tides go slack

Pratomagno,
 14th April 1993

Note on "Spring Spate": In the torrential rains of 12th April 1993 the river Resco which flows past "La Turbina" rose some two meters and broke its banks, carrying away hundreds of tons of earth and rocks and the series of steps that led down from the house to the river, where the children and I often used to swim. Now there is a sudden drop of 5 meters between the level of the garden and that of the river, and it is no longer possible to negotiate it unless with a ladder and ropes.

ADAM AND EVE

(The Painting by Lucas Cranach
now in the Cathedral, Strasburg)

*'So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat.
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost.'*

John Milton

*'At chorus aequalis Dryadum clamore supremos
Implerunt montis; flerunt Rhodopeia arces
Altaque Pangaea at Rhysia Mavortia tellus
Atque Getae atque Hebrus et Actias Orithyia.'*

P. Virgilius Maro

'Before feeling was falling'

James Joyce

The decorative leaves, seven succulent
Bulging apples in the sky like lamps,
The winding branches of a great tree — here
Pausing they stand as on a threshing-floor.
He in his brawny hand holds a small leaf,
She, with her long tresses hanging down
Golden and oiled like corn about her loins,
An apple. Coiled in the tree the serpent lurks
Lovelorn and ruthless. He will dare
Any iniquity so he have his way.

A great stag with his towering antlers
Crouches in fear and turns a bloodshot eye
From his dim jungle and its ignorance,
On two mild naked figures senseless then
That with the mere taste of fruit

All sensuality begins.

London,
April 1949

The above poem has not been published before — it appears now in *The Duller Olive — Early Poems Uncollected or Previously Unpublished 1942-1959* by Peter Russell (University of Salzburg 1993).

SONG

*'Beau chevalier,
qui partez pour la guerre'*

de Musset

In the first May when all the trees are green
And in the wide meadows bright flowers are seen,
The brown nightingale that is the woods' queen
Calls on the day never to end its dream.

When the first buds of March are all in flower
Yet soon to die, surviving April's shower
But a space, the grey cuckoo every hour
Calls on the day never to end its dream.

When the low grass at the tall woodland's edge
Grows long, and blooms appear beneath the hedge,
The small brown warbler chattering in the sedge
Calls on the day never to end its dream.

O dear sweet friend, returning from the war
In flower-garlands, tell us what you saw!
In song pass all the night, and drinking, or
Call on the day never to end its dream.

O dear sweet friend, when you have drunk your fill
And lie beneath the leaf and long tendril,
And fill your ears with birds' far song, you will
Call on the day never to end its dream.

London,

1948

FOR MARIANNE MOORE'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

America, country of the Blues!
A gay sharp wit like a bright bird
Twittered, and animated all your views
With fable, rhetoric and sprightly word —
And you *heard!*
America, country of the Blues!

Plaza Hotel,
Manhattan, New York,
13th April 1967

These two poems, previously unpublished, appear in Peter Russell's *The Pound Connection* (University of Salzburg 1992).

IN DESERT PLACES

*I spend much of my time in the desert looking for lions
Generally they are old and mangey with ticks round their nipples
Bald patches and growths round their balls and matter
Seeping out from their eyes*

*The days are long and the nights rather cold
But the stars shine out of the sky's royal robe
Like pomegranates — indigo, scarlet and gold
Summer lightning's shaping a dome lobe by lobe
And the jackals chatter running to crunch up the bones*

*And the zigzag cry of Antony saws through the stones
Like a cracked gem, and the lamias
Arranging their ivory combs
Softly laugh at his groans*

*But sometimes I see a great gold lion
With snakes at his feet and a bright crown on his mane
Sprouting wings, and a scorpion clutching his tail*

*He roars, and doves fly from his mouth — He
Sports his right paw on a smooth round stone
And the cliffs re-echo his voice like a storm*

*And the quarter moon in the peacock sky
Lowers her horns as he lifts up his head
And the gates open into a strange compound
Where there is wine and honey and bread
And milk flowing out of a horn —
And no sound, as though it were the country of the dead*

*And Antony falls back on the rock in his swoon of bliss
And I wonder where this strange place is*

*Berlin,
18th July 1964*

SIX SONNETS

I have built my house. I have sown my seed.
 My walls are firm: containing they exclude.
 My windows let in light to work and read,
 Yet, being small, leave darkness there, to brood.
 The earth I till is rich in various crops —
 Such tares as grow there have their proper uses.
 This strict economy no season stops,
 No phantom or ideal or vice seduces.

I own the freehold of my small estate.
 I am my sole and only mortgagee.
 Stranger! Look carefully at the well-hung gate
 That's closed between us — I have the only key.
 My walls are skull and skin, my earth's my mind —
 My gate, the eyes you never see behind.

Dragons are mental states! I like to think
 My dragons year by year are getting tamer, —
 Their fiery nostrils belching far less stink
 As I myself, fall after fall, get lamer,
 The contrary appears to be the case,
 For with the years I seem to be possessed
 By more, not less, adventures of disgrace,
 As I pursue my lifetime's knightly Quest.

This search for Beauty leads me to the Fiend —
 Enchantresses like Circe and Armida,
 Thais and Semiramis, Comus' crew.
 My soaring spirit, falling, is demeaned.
 "Ridiculous!" exclaims the moral reader.
 But all my dragons think of now is *you*.

Only in silence and in solitude
 Can love appalled confront this bestial war —
 The infant corpses on the nursery floor,
 The sea birds dying, their wings clogged up with crude,
 The hollow pleas for peace (daily renewed)
 As more marines, more guns, more missiles pour
 On to the beaches of the Arabian shore,
 And on the screen the insentient eyes are glued.

Harden your hearts or how will you survive
 The electric twilight of the age of iron?
 Small fingers clutch their gas masks — how not fear?
 Israel waits Babylon, old feuds are still alive.
 Blind forces, or the priorate of Sion?
 Sincerity itself is insincere?

I ask, is it the music of the pines?
 Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?
 Is it the waterfowl's blood-curdling call,
 Or simply wind shaking the rain-soaked vines?
 This sound at once rings sharp and dully whines
 Like a struck shuttlecock or tennis ball
 Resounding from the blow, a silken shawl
 Ripping still air and striking as it twines

With a thin drawl, enveloping motionless air.
 Pines, lake or waterfall? Or waterfowl?
 It is the birth of something beautiful, —
 Something beyond stark nature, something rare,
 Something from other worlds, not ghost or ghoul, —
 There's something wraith-like rising from the pool.

A tree of stone beneath the ocean grows.
 It's red as blood and sprang from ocean-floor
 When Perseus slew Medusa by the shore.
 The Oceanides call it their rose —
 It gleams in darkness like vermilion snows
 At dawn on slatey mountain-tops before
 The flinty Libyan sands are tinged to gore
 And the dark waters round its foliage close.

The dragon once swam here with dark-blue scales
 Breathing red fire into the brine-fed deep
 Beneath the floating heavens' vitreous lamp,
 But now a blood-red tree braves deep sea gales
 And waves its branches where the Nereids sleep —
 A Tree of Life where all is cold and damp.

Prior to creatures, in the eternal now,
 In everlasting stillness unbegun,
 I played before the audience of one.
 Thou wast the only eye and I was Thou,
 Acting all causes so as to endow
 The theatre of the world with stars and sun
 And everything beneath them that is done,
 And all our play was not to say just *how*.

This hide-and-peek of everything from all,
 A wingless soaring up to endless heights,
 A sudden plunging down in endless fall,
 A kindling of the stage's myriad lights,
 Or blackest darkness in the crowded hall
 Enacting solitude the soul's loud call.

Note: "The Gulf War" was printed a few years ago in *Temenos* (with the usual misprints and unaccountably, without title, at the end of a series of fine poems by Kathleen Raine, so that it appeared to be by her, which by the longest stretch of imagination it could not have been). I really only reprint it here to set the record straight. The Gulf War is stale news now, and I can't think that it will appeal to anyone at a time when Catholic and Orthodox Christians, full of hatred for each other, are combining to eliminate Muslims in Bosnia, and an incipient civil war has broken out in Moscow.

ANNOUNCEMENT from University of Salzburg (Austria),
Department of English.

Widespread recognition has come to Peter Russell late. After a life of devoted service to the Muse, his published works are legion. Many of them can be obtained directly from the poet: Peter Russell, La Turbina, I-52026 Pian di Scò (Arezzo), Italy (Tel. & Fax: 055/960674). As the poet lives exclusively from the sale of his books and pamphlets, he is totally dependent on public support.

The TIMES described Peter Russell in his collection ALL FOR THE WOLVES (1984) as "a poet of the high romantic tradition" and the creator of a "supreme fiction" .

The Milanese poet, Franco Loi, wrote of his latest volume of poems THEORIES (TEORIE - bilingual edition in English and Italian, Rome 1991) in IL SOLE 24 ORE (31 July 1991): "In these poems of Russell, I recognise the style of that highest tradition which unites intensity of thought, simplicity of language, musical quality and the sacrality of imagery, with a profound general culture. He seems to continue that ancient dialogue, the troubled terrible discoursing of poetry which spans the generations and reaches out to the peoples of the world in the mirror of human folly and of renewed hope ... and like Homer, wrings from the darkness of the self and of the world, greater realities and hidden truths." The volume was also reviewed at length by Thomas Fleming in CHRONICLES: A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE, published by The Rockford Institute, Chicago, in November 1991. Fleming called him "the last of the great modernists".

Peter Russell also edits an occasional review MARGINALIA "combining lyric and satiric poetry with acerbic observations on the anti-poetic scene", which he distributes gratis against a contribution towards the printing and mailing costs.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG:

The Pound Connection, 1992.

The Image of Woman as a Figure of the Spirit, 1992.

Poetic Asides, 2 vols., 1992, 1993. Lectures and addresses

The Duller Olive: Poems 1942-1958 previously uncollected or unpublished, 1992

A False Start: London Poems 1959-63, 1993.

Glyn Pursglove, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Peter Russell*, 1994.

Each volume, post free \$15.00

Order from PETER RUSSELL, La Turbina, I-52026 Pian di Scò (Arezzo), Italy (Tel. & Fax: 055/960674).

OTHER TITLES BY OR ABOUT THE SAME AUTHOR, PUBLISHED BY UNIVERSITY
OF SALZBURG

Elemental Discourses: 40 philosophical poems, 1981.

Malice Aforethought: Satirical Poems, 1981.

Africa: A Dream, 1981.

PETER RUSSELL: The Muses' Servant by James Hogg. A bio-bibliographical Study, 1981.

A Garland for Peter Russell on his Sixtieth Birthday, 1981.

The Salzburg Peter Russell Seminar 1981 -82.

The Vitalist Reader, 1982.

On Poets and Poetry. Fifth Series, 1983.

A Vitalist Seminar, 1984.

Vitalism and Celebration, 1987.

The Pound Connection, 1992.

The Image of Woman as a Figure of the Spirit in Christian and Islamic Medieval Poetry, 1992.

Poetic Asides: Essays & Addresses on Poetry, incl. "Dante e l'Islam", 1992. Two volumes.

A False Start: London Poems 1959-1963, 1992.

The Duller Olive: Poems 1942-1958 previously uncollected, 1992 (Portrait by Wyndham Lewis).

A Bibliography of the Writings of Peter Russell. 1938-1993. by GLYN PURSGLOVE.

ANVIL PRESS (London) have also published:

The Elegies of Quintilius, 1974

All for the Wolves: Selected Poems 1947-1974, 1983.

ENITHARMON PRESS:

Paysages Légendaires (1971)

NEW DIRECTIONS:

An Examination of Ezra Pound (1950)

Revised edition, Gordian Press, New York, 1973.

THREE TRANSLATIONS FROM RUSSIAN

87

“I have lost a delicate cameo
 By the Neva’s bank, I don’t know where.
 I’m grieving for my lovely Roman girl”.
 Almost in tears you came and said to me.

But why, beautiful Georgian,
 Disturb the dust of godlike tombs?
 Another downy snowflake now
 Has melted on your lashes’ fan.

And then you bowed your gentle head:
 Alas, the Roman girl, the cameo has gone.
 I grieve for dark skinned Tintin —
 A maiden Rome upon the Neva’s bank.

1916

translated from the Russian
 of Osip Emilievich Mandelshtam
 (originally published in *The London Magazine*, 1959)

I’ve never been happy with my version of the last line of this charming poem. After I first translated it I visited, in the company of the late Erich Heller, the distinguished author of *The Disinherited Mind*, a lady who had known Mandelshtam. This lady whom I knew as Mrs. Halpern, was in fact a Georgian princess, with whom the young Mandelshtam had been in love. I asked her who was who was Tintina and she told me that it was an Italian girl whom the poet had also been attracted to. I was confused. Since the poem was addressed to the Georgian lady who had lost her cameo, I couldn’t see where an Italian girl could come in. Some time later I realised that Tintin was the heroine of the chivalrous twelfth century romance *The Knight in the Tiger’s Skin* and represented the Christian queen of Georgia, Thamar, who was a model of goodness and generosity and of just rule in contrast to the Asiatic tyrants who had exerted their power over Georgia till then. Her father, King George III, had exhorted her “What you give to the people remains yours, what you hoard up for yourself will be lost”.

The fact that Mrs. Halpern, who at about eighty was still a strikingly beautiful woman, did not know that Tintin was the heroine of the Georgian national epic, just amazes me. It would be a bit like an Italian who had never heard of the Beatrice of Dante. Maybe some expert on Mandelshtam will enlighten me. The Russian text is unequivocal. It says “A girlish (or maidenly) Rome upon the Neva’s bank”. This can’t refer to some extraneous Italian girl. It must either be Tintin, which doesn’t make much sense, or the lost cameo, or our ‘Georgian’ lady. I seem to remember having translated it originally as “a Roman maid (or girl) upon the Neva’s shore” but this simply is wrong according to the Russian, but at least it would make some sense.

Perhaps I have been very dense. Because she was a Georgian in St. Petersburg, Mandelshtam playfully calls her Tintin, and because she was a student of Latin and Greek (I recall three or four long shelves in her Chelsea house filled with the Loeb classics), he calls her “a girlish” Rome.

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When the urban moon comes out on the squares
 And slowly the teeming city shines with its light,
 And night comes down, full of despair and darkness
 And the melodious wax yields to harsh time:

Then also the cuckoo cries from his stony height,
 And the pale reaper-girl comes down to the stifling world,
 Silently turns the huge spokes of the shadows,
 And flings herself down on the ground with the yellow straw...

1920

translated from the Russian
 of Osip Emilievich Mandelshtam
 (originally published in AGENDA, London, 1959)

PETER RUSSELL'S *Selected Poems* (1947-1974), *All for the Wolves*, Anvil Press, London 1984, was reported "out of print" to me in 1989, but they have now found a few extra copies.

I can now offer
 the original paperback edition
 post free in jiffy bag £10.00 or U.S.\$15.00

It's certainly the best introduction to my work for new readers, and is a very handsome production (156 pages).

THE AGE

My time, my monster, who will be able
 To glance into your eyes
 And with his own blood glue together
 The vertebrae of these two centuries?
 The life-building blood is gushing out
 At the throat of earthly things.
 Only your backbone trembles
 On the threshold of new days.

Each creature has to hold its spine up
 As long as life is beating in it
 And the surge of blood is trickling
 In the unseen spinal chord
 Like the tender limbs of a child —
 This age of the young earth
 Offers up once more like a lamb
 The crown of life as a sacrifice.

To deliver life out of captivity,
 To begin a new world,
 The gnarled knees of the days
 Must be bound to a flute.
 This century whips up the waves
 Of humanity's yearning,
 And in the grass a viper hisses
 To the golden tune of the age.

Once more the buds are swelling
 And the green shoot pushes forth.
 But your backbone is broken
 My beautiful, pitiful age.
 And with a meaningless smile
 You look back, cruel and weak,
 Like a once-nimble beast
 On the tracks of your own paws.

1923

translated from the Russian
 of Osip Emilievich Mandelshtam
 (originally published in DELTA,
 Montreal, 1959)

Note: I translated these poems of Mandelshtam in 1957-58 together with fifty or sixty more. The versions were made from the 1955 Chekhov Publishing House edition but I have renumbered them according to the 1967 edition, which is now the standard text. They appear again now in my LONDON POEMS recently published by University of Salzburg.

TWO POEMS BY PIER-FRANCO DONOVAN

A USELESS SONG

I

The days follow each other lazily,
 Jupiter Pluvius spills his tears
 on the world that does not want to be cleansed,
 and cries his sorrow from the edge of the cosmos
 where man, amorphous, has banished him.

With logic and science men have chained themselves
 to the pole of the transient, they listen to the harpies
 that insist that this is good,
 that man is on the right track,
 while demons destroy his mind.

So let's go to the beach, let's go on vacation,
 burdened with suitcases and misunderstood resentment
 towards the fathers lost in the coils of time
 without even the right to exist,
 replaced by an ordered electron beam.

II

A child, I dreamed of having a magic wand
 to punish the bad and to reward the good;
 a boy, I dreamed of finding a magic ring
 to become the hero that saved the world;
 an adult, I write poems to touch men's hearts.

But for the State Homer is just part of a syllabus,
 for the Church Dante exists only since 1921,
 for Greenaway Shakespeare is a frightening nightmare,
 for society Ezra is still a Nazi-Fascist:
 I am nobody in search of a withered flower.

I have only found an odd beast,
 perhaps a benevolent spirit, perhaps a demon,
 an animal that speaks with strange sounds,

who has escaped the pitfalls of time and men,
exiled in a gully, but free in the universe.

Down there the fathers go to visit and comfort him,
crowds of nymphs, dormice and beavers keep him company,
abandoned children, at night, find shelter there
and tell him their stories, their sorrows,
leaving at dawn to return among men.

III

Tomorrow will be another rainy day, sunless,
for our hearts full of money and ready profits,
where mine is mine and yours should be mine,
where freedom is just a vain appearance,
not a legitimate human aspiration.

6th July 1992

CONDENSATION

Thoughts take on images,
a few, sharp, in motion,
they strike the screen
of my heedless mind,
and language takes form,
it joins syllables, words,
many small quanta of nothingness
rotating in improbable orbits,

each one with its story,
each one with its poetry.

27th September 1992

Note: These poems appear in my collection *Condensations* (University of Salzburg 1993). Very recently (Nov. '94) three poems from this same collection have been awarded "the special prize of the jury" of the *Premio Nazionale di Poesia "Parole"* in Florence. These are some of the results of three and a half years of intense work with Peter Russell as a translator (into Italian), as an assistant and, most of all, as a very close friend.

PETER GEORGE RUSSELL

TRAVELLING

I walk the streets of life
 In search of bliss and fervour
 I am full of peace inside
 Even though my people have vanished,

My house has fallen and is in ruins,
 I admire the silence of my hours
 Every minute has its own significance
 Every star will soon grow faint.

I migrate from coast to coast a stranger
 Like a bird lost in the wind
 Who hides its head beneath its wings

Following the path without repose;
 Of the slow-paced wandering man
 I leave my footsteps to this land.

Neumarkt, Austria
 17th March 1993

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Peter George Russell
 Pian di Scò, Italy
 14th August 1993

from his original Italian sonnet.

PETER GEORGE PARVIZ RUSSELL was born on 3rd December 1977 in Tehran. After a peaceful year on Kouché Parvaneh (Butterly Lane) undistinguished by any signs of budding genius, he then removed to Kouché Zibâ (Beauty Lane) whence he watched with fascination, from his playpen, the Holy Warriors blowing up every private car on our beautiful street. He moved to peaceful Venice in April 1979 where he learned to speak the Venetian Vulgar Eloquence. In July 1983 he moved to the Tuscan Hills, namely Pian di Scò, Province of Arezzo. Here he became a fanatical fan of Inter. From 1989-1992 he attended Junior High School in the gambling town of Jackpot, Nevada, where most of the residents are Mexican (illegal) immigrants and he learnt some strange sort of Spanish. In the course of a devoted study of geography he seems to have taken over the teaching of that subject in schools where he had been taught that the longest river in the world is the "Iberia", in the Soviet Union, a fact which he vigorously oppugned. In March 1992 he returned to Italy, and just before his fifteenth birthday started to write poetry. Realising that this was not going to earn him a living he took a job as a dish-washer in a large hotel, but was dismissed after half an hour's service. Since then he has continued to write, but almost exclusively in Italian. He has published *Pensieri e Sonetti* (Arezzo, De Filippis) and *Ungarettiane*, and a translation into Italian of his father's *AFRICA: a dream*. He has translated the *Selected Poems* of Kathleen Raine into Italian, as well as several hundred pages of his father's poetry, and a number of medieval and renaissance sonnets from French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and English, either into English or Italian. He has also rendered into English the book *Memoria* by the distinguished Milanese dialect poet Franco Loi.

reprinted from CHAPMAN (Edinburgh), Winter 1991, No. 67

Born in 1921 in Bristol, Peter Russell left England in 1964 and has lived abroad ever since, mostly in Italy and Canada where he was professor of poetry. Therefore he has not had the recognition in this country his exceptional gifts and dedication should have earned him. In the 50s in London, among much other work, he ran the magazine *Nine*, one of the best poetry reviews of this century. He was a friend of Eliot and Pound, publishing an anthology of Pound's saws on poetry. He knew everybody then writing, and was admired by most, including MacDiarmid, who rated him highly. His output is large, and the present book of *Teorie* (simply "musin(g)s": visions, prophecies, revelations, meditations) e *Altre Liriche*, is a hardback collection of some sixty lyrical poems in English with Italian translations, introduction and notes: a small group from his total output, published in 1990.

Most of the poems here are in simple ballad metre, strictly and carefully crafted. But only the form is simple. The content of the poems is as complex and intricate as one would expect from an erudite polyglot poly-math, ranging through history and European literature with the ease of a native. They are full of intellectual struggle, emotional conflict, lyrical beauty, the sense of nature and creature life, spiritual and philosophical questions and the great mysteries. Perhaps the outstanding poem is the one celebrating his own marriage '*Epithalamium*'. This sustains a paralleling of arithmetic and philosophic thought which challenges comparison with the great "metaphysical" canzone of Cavalcanti, '*Donna mi prega*'. I don't fully understand it myself, but recommend readers new to Russell to begin with it and work out to the rest of the book from that. You will then be left wondering how much could be packed into the simple form of these poems so masterfully and, often, with such beauty. Now in the 72nd year of a heroic life of running at life and riding its punches, there can be no doubt this is one of the best poets of our time.

Tom Scott

From CRONACHE in POESIA No. 61 (Milan, Crocetti, April 1993)

After running a Dickensian bookshop in London, directing poetry reviews, teaching literature from the Rocky Mountains to the Ararat, translating the Italian writings of Pound and editing the first anthology of essays by and about Pound (1950), at 72 years old Peter Russell, independent and prolific poet, lives in a flooded farmhouse in the province of Arezzo ("*La Turbina*", 52026 Pian di Scò), from which he writes us telegraphically: "No heating, no water but plenty of whiskey". These days Russell has composed and sends to whoever requests it "*Marginalia*", a news-letter of comments, poems and epigrams in English and Italian. Some poetry reviews have written about his bilingual volume, *Teorie e altre liriche* (Carlo Mancosu Editore, Rome, pp. 240, L. 36000), but Russell, a monument-like character with a great white beard, remains amiably marginal and deserving attention.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY PETER RUSSELL (July 1993)

THE IMAGE OF WOMAN AS A FIGURE OF THE SPIRIT. Four lectures originally given at the Carl Gustav Jung Institute, Zurich 1991. "The Muses" and three lectures on "Woman in Islamic and Christian Love Poetry of the Middle Ages". pp. 100; **post free U.S. \$15.00**

THE POUND CONNECTION, in some poems mainly uncollected or unpublished, by Peter Russell. (Records of an apprenticeship to Ezra Pound). pp. 80; **post free U.S. \$15.00**

POETIC ASIDES. Vols I & II. Lectures and Addresses. pp. 236; Incl. "Vision in the Poetry of Ezra Pound", "Ezra Pound and the Cantos", "Ezra Pound: grande poeta, grande amico", "Dante e Islam", "Kosovo as a Cosmic Symbol", "Tolkien and the Imagination", shorter addresses on poetry & imagination, "Vitalism or Abdication", "In the Tradition: A British Writer Living in Italy" and "Campagna, verde campagna". **post free U.S. \$30.00**

The four above volumes are printed by the University of Salzburg and The Edwin Mellen Press, New York. You may order from this address or direct from the publishers.

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L'ESILIO ("Nel solco di Dante: l'esilio e gli scrittori del Novecento". Relazione per il 1° Congresso Internazionale Dantesco, Poppi 1992). L'esilio come tema nella vita di Dante, Ezra Pound e Peter Russell in Italia. **post free U.S. \$12.50**

AFRICA: A DREAM. (long poem) Bilingual edition Italian/English **post free U.S. \$15.00**
Translated by Peter George Russell.

Other titles recently reprinted include PAYSAGES LEGENDAIRES, ELEMENTAL DISCOURSES, PICNIC TO THE MOON (1944), IMAGES OF DESIRE, DREAMLAND & DRUNKENNESS, EPHEMERON. Enquiries welcome.

Easiest way of payment is by cash in U.S. dollars or European currency or International Money Order. Checks should include \$3.00 for Bank negotiation.

Peter Russell, "La Turbina", 52026 Pian di Scò (Arezzo), Italy.

PAGAN IDIOMS

by Peter Levi

Peter Russell:

The Elegies of Quintilius

62pp. Anvil Press. £1.95 (paperback, 90p.)

Peter Russell's *The Elegies of Quintilius* are in their own way funny and witty, they put a well-disposed reviewer in a difficult position, since the obvious first thing to be said about them in some way spoils a brilliantly executed joke for readers of the review. Mr. Russell, backing up his text with a marvellously learned and extremely funny set of footnotes, has simply invented these poems. How boring a pedant one feels to say so, and how much better a review one could have written if one pretended to be taken in. He goes so well into Latin, and one might have done textual criticism of the non-existent originals. But this being said, it is an interesting exercise to take Quintilius at face value, as if he did exist.

Mr. Russell tells us he lived at Sfax, that is Hadrumet, from 390 to 427 AD, and he died, according to Flavianus Adeodatus, of a surfeit of lentils. Guarino in his famous shipwreck lost Book 2 of the *Odes*, recovered from a Mandaean transcript, and Savonarola said, "The Church can afford the loss." His papyrus was found by a Nicaraguan engineer digging for potish at ancient Aphrodisiapolis, and was bought by the University of Texas. "It has not yet been catalogued, and access is unlikely before the twenty-first century, as what is left of the Classics Department is editing the papyrus," it includes a "mock-heroic work, *The Apotheosis of the Dildo*", and "an anonymous 'epyllion', *Achilles among the Women*". I have avoided the more esoteric jokes in the footnotes, but there they run riot, and a Classical scholar or a scholar of Eliot and Pound who understands them will have an unusually happy time with Mr Russell's Quintilius. We should look forward in fact to the fuller publication of the Texas papyrus.

For the rest of us there are the poems. They are readable, excellent poems, and it would be crazy to dismiss them as pastiche. There is a certain touch of

Ezra Pound about them. There is even, in an appendix, a revised version of one poem "based on suggestions by Mr Ezra Pound in 1956". It may for all I know be real, but it is the only poem in the book that looks like pastiche. If I am right, it is the best parody of Pound I have ever seen. But the poems themselves are serious. They would deserve their place in an anthology of the good poems of the third quarter of this century. The Classical, sometimes the simply Italophile colour of their language is acceptable as modern English. I must confess for the sake of what I want to say now that I have not liked all of Peter Russell's work in the past; he therefore seems now an English writer who can run without ever having been observed to have walked.

There is a certain seriousness after all, available in this old idiom of paganism, which is not otherwise encountered in our world. With every change in history, whether inevitable or not, a limb is chopped off. We need paganism as much as Shakespeare needed it; why else his Roman plays? In *The Elegies of Quintilius* the mask, if it is one, fits so closely to Mr. Russell, as the mask should in a perfect translation, that there is no useful distinction between persona and personality. That is surely something that in the end we owe to Pound. The jokes are good ones, the sensory lines are exact, and Norman Douglas among others would have envied them, but the lines about death, and the jet-black shadow that death casts on other lines, make this the work of a good and even an important poet. There is a controlled looseness about his verse which is very attractive. He ought to be reviewed by the best English critics, not as a Classical joke. It is not easy to quote from Quintilius, he has to be read complete.

(reprinted from *Times Literary Supplement*, Feb. 6, 1976)

VITAM REDDERE AD ASSES

A late poem of Quintilius from the Etruscan residence

I look out from my solipsistic world
 On the solecisms of the others
 Who are non-existent. The sky rains
 Showers of poetry from the said-to-be living,
 Asses from Heaven, little comfort, no joy.
 Alone in my old age I write my Solitudes,
 Peopled with an innumerable company
 Who give me comfort, energy, and joy.
 Asses are enough for the burden of my subsistence
 And I shall sink into the carrion earth serene
 With a great wealth on my tongue...

translated from a Latin gloss
 under a table in the Buca di S. Francesco, Arezzo
 26th May 1993

QUINTILIUS FROM INDIA

ANCIENT VOICE

Pure sound, fine speech, great poetry,
 Vâchas, the Goddess Voice, Saraswatî
 The river, giving the Hymns their ancient fluid rhythm,
 In the time of the Veda from snow-capped Himavant
 Dropping by slow degrees to Brahmavartta's plains,
 Joining immense Ocean's secret currents, — who now
 Is but a muddy stream lost in the desert sands...

tr. 29th January 1989
 inscribed in a Prakrit on a banana leaf,
 c. A.D. 1100.

EZRA POUND: AN OBJECTIVE EXAMINATION OF HIS POLITICAL ALLEGIANCES

I've no intention of publishing critical book reviews in MARGINALIA. But I do intend to record the recent books (some of them) which are important to me at this moment. *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* by TIM REDMAN (Cambridge University Press 1991) is by far the best documented and authentic review yet of this vexed subject. As we all know, Pound's support for Mussolini and Fascism in Italy has been almost universally condemned. The hordes of 'intellectuals' who supported Stalin's and Brezhnev's Soviet tyranny got away scot free. This is more like the luck of the draw than anything resembling a settling of a moral account. The serious intellectual has the alternative of committing himself to some actual program or political organisation, or of standing back, safely but ineffectively, on the margins. Pound, unwisely perhaps, but honestly, committed himself. He was genuinely concerned with the amelioration of the human condition. For almost fifty years now 90% of Italian intellectuals have adhered to the Communist Party, but I see this as an association aiming at power, a sort of *Massoneria* or *mafia*, rather than as anything resembling an aspiration to better the lot of people in general.

Dr. Redman's book examines Pound's whole history from the beginnings till his arrest in 1945 and shows how he was essentially an idealistic socialist drawing his main political inspiration from A.R. Orage, and the progressive circle of *The New Age*. Dr. Redman's book is about as near as we shall get to an objective presentation of all the facts and problems involved, and I strongly recommend it to all who want to have an informed and balanced view of Pound's history.

I'd rather let Dr. Redman's text speak for itself, than pronounce my own personal judgements. Here are the last few paragraphs of this invaluable book:

"Pound had written to Mezzasoma on 28 March (1944): 'I am still, in some senses, to the left of the Verona manifesto' (tr). This late attempt at a rapprochement with Marxism is not surprising from Pound, who had always had sympathy for Marx and Lenin, nor is it surprising for the Republic of Salò, which had attempted to reclaim some of the socialist roots of fascism. It is difficult to imagine, though, what possible effect Pound thought it would have. Presumably, as always before, he wanted to educate people about the underlying causes of war.

His idea was to be put into practice through the publication of a new series of books, consisting of the following: '1. Upton Sinclair: Letters to Judd. 2. Lenin: The Teachings of Karl Marx. 3. Lenin: Imperialism. 4. Stalin: Leninism. 5. Stalin: Response to American Union Members. 6. Karl Marx: The England That We Fight (Chapter X of Kapital),' as well as works by Kitson, Overholser, Gesell, and Douglas. He proposed to call the series 'Library of Political Culture, 2nd Series, Parties of the Opposition' (tr). Certainly this was a remarkable proposal to come at that time (though there is no question about its sincerity), but, as noted, Pound may have been one of the last people to continue work for the Republic of Salò. By that time the Germans were in disorderly retreat and the Republican government had all but fallen. On the same day of this letter, Mussolini left Salò for Milan. The Allied army was approaching Bologna and the Russian army was close to Berlin. Mussolini was executed by Italian partisans on 28 April.

Kenner's account of Pound's final days of freedom is convincingly detailed. On 1 May, 'Pound, formally dressed, went down from Sant' Ambrogio into the town to make his knowledge of modern Italy available.'¹ The one GI whom he met did not know what he was talking about. Partisans with machine guns came to arrest Pound on 2 May. They took

their prisoner to their HQ in Chiavari, where he was soon released as possessing no interest. He had then demanded to be taken to the Americans, and was driven to the U.S. command post in Lavagna to turn himself in.²

On 3 May 1945, Pound was taken into American custody."

¹ Kenner, *The Pound Era*, 470.

² *Ibid.*, 471.

TEMENOS

A REVIEW DEVOTED TO THE ARTS OF THE IMAGINATION

TEMENOS 13 is the last issue of a work we undertook in the year 1980 — a re-affirmation of the true task of the arts, that is, to embody and communicate, in every time and place, a vision of timeless wisdom. If every poet must have, in Edwin Muir's words, 'One foot in Eden' so also every artist's work must possess the quality (the word is David Jones's) of 'nowness'. Without the continual mirroring, in every present, of eternal things — that is to say whatever belongs to the ever-living Imagination — we are no longer fully human. In a decade in which Western (and Westernized) civilization, in its adherence to materialist ideologies and material values, has all but lost this vision, the few who in any country have 'kept the divine vision in time of trouble' have suffered from a sense of isolation; and our 'temenos' (the word means a sacred enclosure surrounding a temple) has provided a meeting-place for the like-minded, contributors and readers alike. Temenos has become more like a family of kindred spirits than a literary venture; a family whose bonds were strengthened by our two memorable conferences at Dartington Hall in October 1986 and November 1988. In this work we have brought together contributions from the four quarters of the world — not because our interests are 'international' but because the values we hold are universal. We have published work by, or on, artists whose names will, I venture to predict, be remembered when many fashionable favourites of the literary world are forgotten; for we look not for talent but rather, in however modest a degree, for imaginative vision and commitment to a sacred task.

We could, without difficulty, continue to find material of equal excellence from contributors already known to us, or discover others not yet known; but with the same certainty with which twelve years ago we felt that the work had to be undertaken, so now we feel that work has been done — to continue would be to repeat ourselves,

For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.

Our work, modest as it may be, will be remembered as a statement of enduring values in a dark time; we have made history. Or rather, we have affirmed, against the current of history, the abiding values.

The Temenos Academy of Integral Studies is the outcome and natural successor to the *Review Temenos*. From raising the standard, we have advanced to offering a programme of education — the only true education, based on the age-old Platonic trinity of the True, the Good and the Beautiful, the sacred ground of every civilization.

We are, once more, in this last issue of *Temenos*, publishing a statement by HRH the Prince of Wales which might stand as an affirmation of all that *Temenos* also stands for. This is the full text (not published elsewhere) of His Royal Highness' address on the occasion of the inauguration of his Institute of

Architecture; in which the Prince has offered us an office and the use of rooms for our seminars and lectures, besides inviting the Temenos Academy to contribute towards a 'foundation course' for the students of the Institute itself. We hope to repay this gesture of confidence in the quality and nature of the work of *Temenos* towards a re-awakening in this country of the age-old vision of a living and sacred universe.

Kathleen Raine

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Philip Sherrard *Extracts from a Journal written in Southern Spain*

Poetry by *Wendell Berry, Edmond Jabès, Harold Morland, Arseny Tarkovsky, Jack Herbert, Peter Russell, Kathleen Raine, Joy Hendry, Tom Scott, Jeremy Reed*

Reviews by *Kathleen Raine, Joseph Milne, Noel Cobb, S.H. Nasr, John Allitt, Peter Malekin, Eva Loewe, Grevel Lindop, Jean MacVean, Caitlin Matthews, Eleanor Allitt*

Illustrations Reproductions in colour of paintings by K Khosa; and drawings by Thetis Blacker

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and the Sacred; Kathleen Raine, *Nature: House of the Soul*. **Poetry:** Olive Fraser, Anne Ridler, Grevel Lindop, James McGonigal, Keshav Malik, Jeremy Reed, Yánnis Ifandis, James Merrill, Peter Russell, Peter Redgrove. **Reviews:** Thetis Blacker, Martin Lings, Jeremy Reed, Brian Keeble, Kathleen Raine, John Allitt, Stratford Caldecott, Caitlin and John Matthews, Mary Casey. **Illustrations:** 8 pages of colour reproductions of paintings by Biren De; drawings by Peter Pelz.

TEMENOS 8. Contents include: **Prose:** Peter Pelz, *Andrei Tarkovsky*; Andrei Tarkovsky, *The Apocalypse*; Basarab Nicolescu, *Peter Brook and Traditional Thought*; Jean Mambrino, *A Story about Humanity*; V. S. Yanovsky, from *Flagman, what of the Road?*; Roberto Sanesi, *Vernon Watkins*; Vernon Watkins, *Letters to Michael Hamburger*, and to *Francis Dufau-Labeyrie*; Jan le Witt, *Aphorisms*; Kathleen Raine and John Lane on *Winifred Nicholson*; John Carey, *Medusa and the Arts*; E.W.F. Tomlin, *Some Concepts of the Secular*; Henry Corbin, *The Theory of Visionary Knowledge*. **Poetry:** Wendell Berry, Östen Sjöstrand, Vernon Watkins, Tom Scott, George Mackay Brown, Rayne MacKinnon, John Allison, Neill Curry, Andrew Staniland. **Reviews by:** Philip Sherrard, Peter Lamborn Wilson, Brian Keeble, Jeremy Reed, Michael Loewe, John Allitt, Jean MacVean, Kathleen Raine, John Matthews. **Illustrations:** colour plates of flower paintings by Winifred Nicholson; Templum Drawings by David McLagan.

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SALINAE

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Poetry today
is all performance
And no
Competence

All its syntagmata
Aren't worth a para-dime

TWO LIMERICKS

That excellent bard Seamus Heaney
Flies from Tara to Harvard like Suibhne;
He's no Angus Og
Nor a corpse from a bog,
But a somewhat bottled-up genie.

A Florentine girl, Beatrice,
In Paradise got rather screechy.
She gave Dante some lessons
On Being and Essence,
Far sounder than Sartre or than Nietzsche.

TV POET

This "poet" is a hairy ape
Who bares his breast on video-tape

A "visionary" he say he's been, —
But he's no seer, he's only last year's *scene*.

CEREMONIALS

The ceremonies of innocence all are drowned.
No one now for them would give a penny.
I ask though, from post-modern vantage-ground,
Apart from those invented to confound,
If ever there were any.

DISASTER

People often say to me
"Disasters seem to seek you out"

That's hardly surprising
Seeing I am myself

A disaster

ART INTERNATIONAL

Pedestrian critics, analysing Art,
Like Scientists, put parts for gaping wholes;
Myself, I put the whole before the part, —
Then in I go! — to my material, — *Souls!*
Bootleather critics, creep back into your holes!

ON A CERTAIN "DIALECTICAL MATERIALIST" "POP"
ARTIST AND HIS "PRODUCTIONS"

(who has "sailed" nothing less than "meteor" into the public eye)

This "avant gardist" like Chaucer's farting Miller,
Makes a loud noise from somewhere near the stern;
He thinks he's steering forward, paws on tiller.—
He's moving backwards, cowlike to the churn.
It is the sea that's moving— *he* could not be stiller —
All milk-teeth, wind and raw, he's slow to learn!
BLOW as he may, he only sucks the udder!
He no more *navigates* than fuming bulls who turn,
Blind, when the red rag shifts, that is his rudder.

This clod-hoofed ungulate thinks he can *sail!*
His roar, like Bottom's, ass-like, — even fainter.
Short-winded, pooped, he'll bungle it and fail.
Young calf, no cougar, calls himself a *painter*, —
Dull *bark*, his only painter's at his tail.
Moored to dry land, his mudder — does but taint her,
Like the thin trail of scum behind a snail.

IN RE, "POETS ON STREET CORNERS"

Foreword, p. 13.

Dear Miss Carlisle, the fount of Russian Poetry!
Why can't you spell Osip's Ossetian right?
"*i kratkoye*" for "yay"! — What's left for me
But judge your Russian, like Lowell's, a little "slight"?

A POSTCARD TO SAINT FRANCIS
for Gershom Scholem

How blest must that poor beggar be
To find a creed and then believe it!
Rich Christians preach of Poverty —
The Communists achieve it!

DIRGE FOR COUPLINGS

No way does the male
Accord with the female.
At a pinch, woman
Rhymes with human.

ON MY ONLY DEARLY BELOVED DISCIPLE,
Mr R.B., M.A., CANTAB.

Drunk upon Helicon sucked through the Cambridge filter,
I found him *dense*, — but little more than wood,
(like the Eternal City when tyrant wolf-cubs built her), —
I left him stoned, — at least the best I could.

BOSNIA

When they have eaten all the corpses in Bosnia
 And we are eating our apple-pie,
 Will they have learned not to hate and to domineer,
 And we not to steal and lie?

Should we not ask who give the Slavs
 Their bombs and guns and oil,
 And who divide each land in halves,
 And bringing gifts, the earth despoil, —
 A lethal industry that starves,
 A phantom leisure, nightmare toil?

LANGUAGE POET DEMONSTRATES

He starts his discourse dogmatically at A,
 Then drowns us in a lengthy paragraph called B.
 Quicker than him — before he's had his say,
 Already I'm at C

AFTER THE LANDSLIDES

There's nothing in my garden now
 But sage and rosemary;
 Sage in blue blooms that glow, glow
 Illuminating absent rue.
 Absent you, absent you...

ELDER BURIES

A bible-belt elder, Sam Buco,
 Said "Black berries are best to make you go,
 — To the bathroom, I mean,
 Not the eternal serene,
 That place in the skies to which few go.

Two poets see a third
 One says: "He's a turd,
and a flower most likely."
 The other asks: "What species?
 Speak precisely!"

"Anenome."

C.H.S.

Having given up the attempt
 To clap with one hand
 He negates the divine grace

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