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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

EDMUND WILSON'S
DEVELOPMENT AS CRITIC

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
Of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Of Master of Arts

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by

W. E. Lensing

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 DEVELOPMENT AS CRITIC

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**EDMUND WILSON'S
DEVELOPMENT AS CRITIC**

"The real elements (of course, of any work of fiction,) are the elements of the author's personality: his imagination embodies in the images of characters, situations and scenes the fundamental conflicts of his nature or the cycle of phases through which it habitually passes. His personages are personifications of the author's various impulses and emotions and the relations between them in his stories are really the relations between these. One of the causes, in fact, of our feeling that certain works are more satisfactory than others is to be found in the superior thoroughness and candor with which the author has expressed these relations" ("The Personality of Proust." New Repub 61(F 12 '30)316-21).

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

When Edmund Wilson's name is mentioned we probably think immediately and only of a mass of essays in literary criticism which have appeared more or less regularly in various periodicals for the last so many years. Quite probably one book, and that also of literary criticism, will be pleasurably recalled, Axel's Castle. There may be other vague remembrances but their emergence from the background will doubtless be momentary at best. And we will also probably recall hearing someone say that Wilson is one of the most influential of the younger critics, i.e. one of those who came up since the war and were notably influenced by Freudianism and Marxism.

The present study will attempt to show Wilson's particular problem as he has himself become aware of it. What we have to start with, essentially, is a young man of fairly well-off middle class parentage who has had the classical education of preparatory school and Princeton.¹

1. Who's Who, '38-'39, gives the following: Born in Red Bank, New Jersey, May 8, 1895; preparatory education, Hill School, Pottstown, Pa., '09-'12; A.B., Princeton, '16; reporter, N.Y. Evening Sun, '16-'17; enlisted man with Base Hospital and Intelligence Corps, August '17-July '19; managing editor, Vanity Fair, '20-'21; associate editor, The New Republic, '26-'31; married three times, last in '38, one daughter.

He wants to write but what and how is a moot question. By the early 20's he is started as a periodical writer; thereafter articles appear regularly and many are published again in books or are a prelude to what appears in this form. In the present study both these sources will be laid under contribution. The books will be centered upon; the articles will form a supporting background.

The method of presentation will be developmental; Wilson's reactions and the analysis of his ideas will be formed by his own basis of awareness.

The presentation will have two main divisions: the text and the bibliography. The greater part of the former will be devoted to the three strands or phases which Wilson's development exhibits. The essential character of the first phase is one of comparative chaos and indetermination ending in Axel's Castle; the second is mainly social reportage; the third phase finds its basis in the superior insight or reaction of the artist in union with an interest in Marxism more thoroughgoing than that found necessary for a Marxist reporter. The three chapters on development will be followed by one on method and one drawing conclusions.

CHAPTER I

PSYCHOLOGICAL PHASE:
AXEL'S CASTLE

CHAPTER I

PSYCHOLOGICAL PHASE: AXEL'S CASTLE

The present chapter proposes covering that phase of development which culminates in Axel's Castle (1931). Four published works constitute the creative aspect: The Undertaker's Garland ('22), Discordant Encounters ('26), I Thought of Daisy ('29), and, Poets, Farewell! ('29).

As will be shown, Wilson, fresh from the World War, is here attempting to orient himself in his world; hence the concern over the contemporary, and the self-examination, the extensive variety of experiences, styles, and ideologies.

* * *

The first of the creative works, written with John Peale Bishop, is a series of fourteen short pieces (mostly poems and short stories) all of which have something to say about death; by author the pieces are arranged alternately.

In his "Preface," Wilson, not without bitterness and anger, well aware of the attitude reflected in such a subject as well as its historical significance, tells the Why? behind such a book: "our environment and age have at last proved too much for us, and, in a spirit

which we honestly hope is one of loyal Americanism, we have decided that we shall best interpret our country in a book devoted to death."¹ Only after college, he continues, were their thoughts turned away from life to death. Both were in France with the A.E.F.; when everything was over it was found impossible to enjoy the supposed triumph; people could only strike dully against the oppression of their respective states and wonder if the real fight had come to an end. Finally, on returning to America, it was the chimneys of factories and not the Statue of Liberty which greeted the heroes. The gloom of industrialism is thus juxtaposed to the gloom of the present theme from which most objections come. Wilson realizes that the breakdown following the war, the death throes, if we will, is responsible for the ignoring of death in life and literature.

While in France during the World War, Wilson goes on, they, who had seen little of America before, had thought of it as a place where life ran high, but on returning they found that, "life itself had become a sort of death."² Money in and for itself, not what makes

1. The Undertaker's Garland, p. 22.

Cf.: "When all the young were dying, I dwelt among the dead-" Poets, Farewell! p. 73.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

life amiable, was the thing to get; the death inflicted by exploitation gave no life.

Early fifteenth century France had the same preoccupation; it gave us the Dance of Death and made a farce of its propensities. But then death had more life in it than life today: "Can one wonder that we thought much of death? That it finally became an obsession with us?"¹

This, then, is the author's statement of what is now a familiar position, but in 1922 it was unusual for its self-awareness. Wilson's share of the imaginative pieces cover various aspects of this attitude, from the sterility and ultimate death imposed on us by our high speed industrialism ("The Death of an Efficiency Expert") and the inhuman position of the soldier, one in which he has absolutely no chance ("The Death of a Soldier"), to the value of physical sensation and the suggestion of what a life with everything else might be like without it ("Emily in Hades"); as the attitudes and materials vary, so too does the style of each piece: classical, Romantic, and modern are all there.

In "The Death of the Last Centaur," Eurytion, who was born in that "lost world" of gods and heroes

1. Ibid., p. 22.

tells of his life and race, how he came to America
(the scene is Greenwich Village) and found great
buildings and expenditure of energy but no heroes
and no gods and you, "Who would buy beauty back at
bitter cost,"¹ would get lost here. Now:

It is time for me to die: I have no
place among you

....
.... I, who am half divine!²

And as Eurytion says he forgot the admonitions
of his teacher Cherion (the greatest and wisest of all
gods and mortals, who had reared and taught lords and
kings), who foresaw his own murder at the hands of
drunken Heracles, "The calm and noble music of my mind
shall be lost for a jar of wine and a drunken brawl,"³
and only calmly waited, "Against Fate and the Furies,

1. The Undertaker's Garland, p. 28.

The respect and desire for beauty is found in Wilson's
first published writing. It is a short poem in which
he tells of himself sitting:

Among the silent books alone,
Fleet Beauty's follower, I press
To find but, where her feet have shone,
The beauty shaken from her dress.

An oboe bring faint notes of gold,
Like petals dropping quietly,-
So sweet, so sober and so old,-
'Eurydice, Eurydice!'

("Gluck in New York," New
Repub 22(Mr 31 '20)50)

2. Ibid., pp. 27-8.

3. Ibid., p. 36.

under the sky"-¹ so, too, we feel that we shall forget Eurytion and all he stands for.

But all is not so dark. "The Funeral of a Romantic Poet" though it takes place in the same atmosphere in which the life had been lived, where:

....the garish August sun betrays
A vulgar earth of drowsiness and dust.²

is the reflection of a world of money which locks out beauty and can leave only a glove or a fan. Some day men will see the hills again and break out in fury against the life that kills the best; then:

....shall our children's eyes behold:
The mountains and the morning and the storm!³

The "Epilogue: Apollo" completely renounces the death theme and gives a further hint at future direction:

Nay, Pluto! I have dwelt with death too long!
My spirit chafes; the darkness cannot hold me.
These lips were shaped to frame a freer song.

....
I would be borne by fire, as by a wind,
I would make dumb all voices with a note
That stops men's hearts- until mine eyes be blind
With splendor and till singing burst my throat!
Till those who cried in terror and in hate
Against the flame that brands my brow at last,
Finding my flesh so charred, so little great,
Shall hush to know that here a god has passed!⁴

1. Ibid., p. 37.

2. Ibid., p. 54.

3. Ibid., p. 58.

4. Ibid., p. 54.

Four dialogues and two plays make up Discordant Encounters; all operate on the principle of juxtaposition of contemporary incompatible approaches to life, just as The Undertaker's Garland had tried its diversified hand in other ways.

"The Poets' Return," for example, is a conversation between Paul Rosenfeld and Matthew Josephson. The former represents the cult of beauty in the broad sense which includes Bach, Goethe, Shakespeare, et al.; the latter is the result of commercialism and industrialism at their highest pitch as expressed in Dada, Ford, jazz, etc. Against the faster spinning of the wheels Rosenfeld is helpless to save himself but he sees that what Josephson advocates will finally destroy him also for he, too, is a poet, a critic. All he can say however is: "....if you choose to pretend to enjoy it, that is your own affair."¹

Another conversation ("In the Galapagos") is between a marine Iguana and William Beebe who desires that the Iguana should help him to understand his world and perhaps remake it. To this end he attempts to convey his vision of the universe to his basking friend, but without result. The Iguana is completely disinterested in the

1. Discordant Encounters, p. 127.

future, his own and man's, and is content to live as his instincts tell him. If he is interested in anything it is in the why?, not Beebe's scientific how?. His last words, as Beebe carries him off, are: "I go unwillingly!"¹

The remaining two have a like criticism and rejection of viewpoints: the conversation between Van Wyck Brooks and Scott Fitzgerald ("The Delegate from Great Neck") illustrates the ridiculous position in which the Noel Coward society of younger men find themselves in their going over to Brooks' humanism since neither party understands the other and since they really have nothing in common;² the talk between the professor of fifty and the journalist of twenty-five ("Mrs. Alving and Oedipus") gives two other possible angles of approach, and their rejection, as they are differentiated by varying generations and professions.

"Cronkhite's Clocks," the first of the two plays, is a dadaistic picture in pantomime, having a screen on a back wall by which explanatory captions keep the audience informed as is found necessary, of young Caspar's attempt to make himself a part of big business. The scene is the office of the Cronkhite Co., Eck-Leck-Tick Clocks, in the

1. Discordant Encounters, p. 127.

2. For the various American critical groups, and how they stack up with the French see: "Literary Politics," New Repub 53(F 1 '28)289-90.

Bedlam Building. All faces, except for the negro janitor's and Caspar's are clocks, typewriter keys, etc.; everything possible is made of steel and the dominant color is gray. Caspar applies for and attains a job as messenger. He works on the files and when everyone else goes to lunch at noon he is given something to deliver and told to be back in fifteen minutes. Alone, Caspar has a vision (it is flashed on a screen on the rear wall which has previously been used for explanatory captions) of being caught in the New York rush and finally landing on the top floor, which is the wrong one, of the building to which he is being sent, at 12:18. In despair he jumps off; the vision ends and we see Caspar in the office praying to "God" to sustain him and to help him get a job singing in a choir which is what he really wants. The answer, the voice of big business and big bosses, comes on over the radio; then stock market reports and finally music to which Caspar and the janitor dance. The workers and the boss return and join them. All dance until they collapse, Caspar and the boss being last. The music stops, doctors and nurses enter and carry out the boss, the time clock indicator on his face revolving hysterically, and Caspar, who has been watching, rises in supplication as they leave and falls

lifeless on the floor.¹

The second play included in Discordant Encounters, "The Crime in the Whistler Room," is also found to be the first of three which make up This Room and This Gin and These Sandwiches² (1937). A fly leaf note tells us: "These three variations on the same theme represent three successive stages of the artistic and moral revolt which had its headquarters in New York after the War."

What are these stages? The first, "The Crime in the Whistler Room," is a Freudian presentation of the conflict between American Victorianism at its best and

-
1. The trouble with the theatre comedy of the last few years, Wilson says, is that it has not removed itself far enough from the comedy that preceded it. That is, from the breezy business man with much money to satirizing business and contemporary people; it is still too much like the funny strips. ("American Comedy," New Repub 39(Ja 18 '24)103).

Another instance of the necessity of ridiculing business is found in his review of Benchley's Of All Things! Benchley doesn't let go completely but his doing so at all is Wilson's only reason for his review. ("Mr. Benchley's Message to His Age," New Repub 30(Mr 29 '22)150).

However, the first purpose of "Cronkhite's Clocks" is not to satirize business but to combine this criticism with that of Dada, one of the special developments of Symbolism, which, in its own way, is made as fruitless and sterile as what it opposes.

2. Though not published until 1937 they are to be treated now, since, like Wilson's poetry, they constitute a secondary line; furthermore, the period they cover does not extend beyond the crash.

"The Crime in the Whistler Room" was produced in New York, October 8, '24, by the Provincetown Players.

the vitality of the younger generation which, though it has been slapped down by the War, still believes, finally, that it can make a life for itself. But only entirely outside the old culture. This brings up the most important point for Wilson. The "crime" is double edged: American Victorianism had and still has value but it must not be allowed to murder contemporary life; conversely, however, the present vitality as here represented, has its own value but it is unable to extract what is worth while from that which has preceded it. Wilson would take the best from both.

The second stage, "A Winter in Beech Street," is given flesh in the "Noel Coward" story of Sally Voight's last winter in her attempt to make her own world. Sally is one of the leading women in the cooperative Beech Street Theatre. What she wants is seen through her three men: Arthur is a young middle class architect with good connections who is now highly successful in comparison with Sally and her friends, and you know that he will progressively become more so. He wants to marry Sally, removing her from her world which has no value for him, and put her in a modern apartment with a doorman to keep out bums, radicals, and bar-flies (her friends, that is). Next is Bugs, a labor reporter who has just found out that

his paper has distorted his stories. He has written one good play for Beech Street, has married since his first experience with Sally, and has children. He quits his job, leaves New York and soon returns as a successful advertising man; when he is told that he could only pretend without really wanting to be free he leaves for good. Dan, the director of Beech Street, is the third. He is a genuine artist but Sally turns him down when she realizes that he values her only as she passes through the conditioning factor of the theatre.

In the end Arthur is still around. In the beginning of the play he could not hear the hurdy-gurdy under Sally's window, he was too full of her; now she has consented to have him put her in the guarded apartment and she cannot hear it. The street and everything its music represents is gone, now Arthur can hear. Sally's position then, given her three possibilities, is one from which she cannot win, but before she lets herself admit this she says: "Well we may not have the whole of everything, but we've got something very precious at this moment - we've got this room and this gin and these sandwiches...."¹

1. This Room and This Gin and These Sandwiches, pp. 177-8.

The third is the story of "Beppo and Beth."

Beppo, when married to Beth, had been a successful satirical cartoonist, but now, the periodical which carried his stuff having folded, he is expecting to close his negotiations with a big newspaper chain publisher to the tune of \$30,000.00 a year. The consequence will be that his sour, skeptical tigers will have to become very sweet and be nice about prosperity - it is still before the crash - exploitation, etc. Beppo is now in the process of marrying June, who plays the piano in a night club and whose family waylay her every pay day - she doesn't mind since they once stole for her. Beth, Beppo's ex-second wife, is in the midst of decorating Beppo's apartment and pursuing Horseley, an Englishman looking for money in America. When Horseley finds out that Beth has none he throws her over and when Beppo and June find that their lack of common experience undermines them they call it off. Simultaneously Beppo and Beth realize that despite their fights they have more in common with each other than with anyone else and so they decide to try to make a go of it again - Beppo's tigers to remain the critics they were.

Though interesting for the way in which they are made conceptual vehicles, these four plays are creatively

unimportant. Their most interesting feature is the light they throw on Wilson's perception. Only "Cronk-hite's Clocks" has anything beyond these two points. As a dadaistic experiment it is extremely interesting. The Freudian influence in "The Crime in the Whistler Room" is, too, but it is only slightly developed in comparison.

* * *

I Thought of Daisy¹ is an autobiographical novel covering, approximately, the '20's, the time of Wilson's finding himself. The title is derived from the closing recapitulation in which Wilson thinks back over this part of his growth and realizes that his various views of Daisy have been merely reflections of himself, in different times and places, as he has been troubled by his relation to other people, to art, and to the life which America exhibits. These categories are, in turn, mutually connected with the problems which they raise, individually and collectively, and are colored by the viewpoints of the finite and infinite, the beautiful and the ugly, the social and the individual, etc. Thus we have the neo-romantic poetess, Rita; the bashful young novelist, Hugo,

1. In "The Literary Class War: I" Wilson speaks of it as: "....a novel not unflavored by fumes of the cork-lined chamber." (New Repub 70(My 4 '32)319-23).

who unites the concern for society with the romance of running away; Professor Grosbeake, the critical realist; and, Daisy, the great American girl. Similarly there is the division of life in Greenwich Village: the nuts and the exploiters.

The story itself is merely a vehicle for carrying Wilson's attempts to find himself; his retrospective conclusions are of most importance. The assumption basic to them all is the belief, a realization deducible from experience Wilson would say, in a common ground upon which all men meet:

What a relief and what a rebirth, our only real birth into this world, when from the fears and snobberies of youth, from all our preconceived ideas, from all those foolish abstractions we learn, all those things that we think we think, we find at last in these beings who have crowded, offended, disgusted or fought us, that interest and that value which we have found only in a few or in one - when, youth's passion and anguish spent, we see rising about us that reality of those we have looked on as strangers, and know that it is our reality - that what hurts them hurts us, that what is good for them is good for us - when we no longer dread the fool nor hate the one who wounds us, but can sleep in our beds in peace and in peace face the waking world!¹

On this basis what are the answers to the special

1. I Thought of Daisy, p. 310.

problems mentioned above? Literature becomes as necessary and no different in kind from such a thing as carpentry¹ and, in opposition to the isolation of the artist which had had great effect on him as he had seen it in two of his friends, by putting down in words the different reflections of Daisy she will be saved from the fluidity of life (and literature will thus become a means of breaking through into the real world); especially of American life which is much more fluid along class lines than is that found in Europe.² And, since the individual members of the classes in America change constantly, attempts to fix social differences become ludicrous and futile. It is possible for Americans to become almost anything.³ The satisfactory solution of one problem, therefore, requires the resolution of them all on an equal level.

* * *

Poets, Farewell! is Wilson's only book of poetry though we might have been led to believe from his earlier

-
1. And again: "And as every sort of good literature, so every sort of good art, provided an aliment, a stimulant as natural and necessary as food and drink themselves" (I Thought of Daisy, p. 294).
 2. Cf. "Night Thoughts in Paris: A Rhapsody," New Repub 30(Mr 15 '22)75.
 3. It is not quite clear here just how much Wilson believes in the great American dream. There is an interesting, though not original, passage on the necessity of exploitation: "...if we have the instinct to admire what is admirable, we must also have the courage and must not rate against - not even try to minimize - that which makes it possible and mars it" (I Thought of Daisy, p.88).

writings that this particular form was especially attractive. On the contrary, however, there is probably less poetry than anything else. Wilson himself, and quite correctly, I believe, tells us the answer to our question in the second of the five sections which give him his title:

-Poets, farewell! - O subtle and O strong! -
Voices, farewell! - the silver and the brass - ¹
I leave that speech to you who have the tongue.

Besides this renunciation, in the sense that there is the self-awareness that he will never be this particular kind of great poet, we find what we have seen before: the sensual pleasure of copulation with women ("Three Women Remembered in Absence") and nature ("Swimming") and the macrocosm ("State of Maine Express"). There is an echo of something suggesting the same note of ultimate understanding which was found before (I Thought of Daisy²) in "To an Actress" and "Infection":

Five days in fever thus I lay-....
Not fogs had stretched me there to sprawl,
Not all seen said, read, written, drunk,
But the bad heart that poisons all.³

And there is the new romantic irony ("Americanization") as

-
1. Poets, Farewell! p. 75.
 2. See the quotation p. 14 above.
 3. Poets, Farewell! pp. 7-8.

I

When all the dead were dying, I dwelt
 among the dead-
 But you- when all the years of honor
 and success-
 Skill, courage, learning, and their
 fullest scope
 Had brought but darkness, brooding,
 loneliness;
 The solitary walk, the muffled door;
 Scorn of that public life which once had
 been your hope-
 When dead I saw you

....
 I knew at last that I had seen

 Youth by age and honor left behind,

 Rejoined in death at last.

- I blamed the day, the place,

 Bred to one world and wearied by this other
 From which youth's straight backbone still
 kept you out,
 You had earned but isolation and decay.

- Now I, more arrogant in a wiser day,
 But half my life behind me, son of that father,
 Know what blind life, what tomb of solitude,
 What doubt, what draining of the spirit's blood,
 Were ended where you lay.

II

Poets, farewell!

 We have rhymed under gray skies in the stubble
 grass-

 I leave that speech to you who have the tongue.

III

Here where your blue bay's book is half begun,
 I find you fled on those mad rounds you make

 I have seen that shape-
 As once I smelt it through the smothered night.

IV

- And you who faint at either's hard expense;

....
Almost persuaded by your own pretense-
Bred to one world and baffled by this other,

....
Did you and I once frame a late defiance
Against that world of bargaining, together?
- Old friend, fine poet - these romantic skies
Have fallen - shall we harvest ray or flake? -
The very language of that vision lies.
Yet who for doubt, for danger, may not quake -
Though all the darkness throng behind his eyes -
Imagining a world his words must make?¹

V

Dim screens obscure the dawn,
....
Yet there the pale bright sun,
....
I shall stare round and see
That black receding brink -
Let breath and arms rise free
And all the body sink.²

Thus, through the examination of living death and equally sterile discord of the world about him together with self-searching and questioning, Wilson throws in his lot with those who find the most valuable solution in the most complete rejection.

* * * *

1. Though Wilson often cries out against the bad luck of being born at a certain time he is not so naive as we might imagine. We can see what he means from his "Books and Things" (New Repub 26(Ap 20 '21)240-1) in which he says that he has often wished that he had lived in eighteenth century France before the revolution for then one could have had the exhilaration of advocating democracy without any of the disadvantages of living in a democratic society. However, he continues, this is all nonsense for we would have been no happier then for there would still be those frustrations and wrongs which we still could not have set right.
2. Poets, Farewell! pp. 73-8.

Axel's Castle is probably Wilson's most widely known and most highly thought of book.¹ It will be worth while to examine it at some length (that is with reference to the opening essay, "Symbolism," and the last one, "Axel and Rimbaud," for it is here that we find the principles of Symbolism and its place in literature and the world expounded. The intervening chapters are an elaboration on six other members of the school and show Wilson at his best, but in as much as we are not here interested in starting critical controversy and since we will find what we want, Wilson's understanding of Symbolism, by the limitation I have indicated there will be practically no mention of Yeats, et al.) for it is in literary criticism particularly that we must take account of Wilson today and if we can indicate in general how the Symbolists got that way we may better understand how Wilson got his way.

The stated purpose of Axel's Castle is to trace the origins of Symbolism in contemporary literature and to illustrate their growth in seven contemporary writers--² Yeats, Valery, Eliot, Proust, Joyce, Stein, and Rimbaud--who have been selected because they embody some tendency or school in its purest or most highly developed form.³

-
1. The original New Republic articles, according to Wilson (introduutory note to "Axel and Rimbaud," New Repub 62 (F 26 - Mr 5 '30)34-40, 69-73), appeared in the issues of March 20, September 25, October 9, November 13, December 18 '29, and February 12 '30.
 2. Axel's Castle, p. 1.
 3. Ibid., p. 11.

This will be of value, Wilson believes, since the products of the Symbolists and their principles of operation, important as they are for the discussion they have aroused and the influence they have wielded since the War,¹ are but slightly understood.² It seems likely, furthermore, that the worthlessness of much English and American criticism is due to the ignorance of the critics in regard to the literary revolution which has taken place mainly outside English literature; this seems to be the case despite the fact that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to understand much of recent English literature without knowledge of the Symbolist movement.³

What, then, is Symbolism; particularly with reference to the social picture of the time? By the eighties and nineties the bourgeois world produced by the industrial revolution was so strong that it seemed a hopeless matter to the poet who could not interest himself in remolding society for him to attempt to oppose it.⁴ What happened, therefore, was that those poets we now know as Symbolists turned in upon themselves to

-
1. In "The Last Phase of Anatole France" (New Repub 41 (F 11 '25)308-10), Wilson, in speaking of the attacks of the French on Anatole France says that all the French are Symbolists now.
 2. Axel's Castle, p. 1.
 3. Ibid., p. 23.
 4. Ibid., p. 285.

create a world more to their liking.¹ They proposed-
on the bases of confusion between the imaginary and the
real, between sensations and fancies and reality--² that
since:

Every feeling or sensation we have, every moment of consciousness is different from every other; and it is, in consequence, impossible to render our sensations as we actually experience them through the conventional and universal language of ordinary literature. Each poet has his unique personality; each of his moments has its special tone, its special combination of elements.

Therefore it is the poet's task to find, to invent, the special language which will alone be capable of expressing his personality and feelings. Such a language must make use of symbols which will serve to suggest it to the reader³ Symbolism may be defined as an attempt by carefully studied means to communicate unique personal feelings.⁴

This, says Wilson, following A. N. Whitehead's lead,⁵

1. In "Notes on Modern Literature, II" (New Repub 41(D 24 '24) 118), Wilson says that their complaints are our literature.
2. Axel's Castle, p. 19.
3. Of Gertrude Stein's latest work we find: "She has out-distanced any of the Symbolists in using words for pure purposes of suggestion- she has gone so far that she no longer even suggests. We see the ripples expanding in her consciousness, but we are no longer supplied with any clew as to what kind of object has sunk there." (Ibid., pp. 243-4).
4. Ibid., pp. 21-2.
5. See also "Modern Literature: Between the Whirlpool and the Rock," New Repub 48(N 3 '26)296-7. For Wilson's respect for Whitehead and his suggested relation to the Symbolists see "A. N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell," New Repub 45 (D 30 '25)161-2, and "A. N. Whitehead: Physicist and Prophet," New Repub 51(Je 15 '27)91-6.

is a philosophical revolution¹ comparable to that of the Romantic reaction against Classicism: "Literature is rebounding again from the scientific- classical pole to the poetic- romantic one."²

In the juxtaposition of Villiers de l'Isle - Adam's Axel and the career of Arthur Rimbaud in the concluding essay we are provided with a touchstone for understanding the Symbolist. Axel is the super-dreamer, of the type of all Symbolist heroes, who holds the entire world in his hands as dreams and who has exhausted the world through them; the consequence is that he makes no attempt to give them reality but commits suicide.³

In comparison to Axel we have one of the earliest Symbolist masters, Rimbaud, whom Wilson believes to be in some ways one of the most impressive figures of the nineteenth century;⁴ for he not only escaped, in a sense the oppression of his century against which his brother poets could only indraw but he also expressed with more

1. Axel's Castle, pp. 5-6.

2. Ibid., p. 10. In the same place Wilson, well aware of the limitations of analogies, says: "Now in attempting to write literary history, one must guard against giving the impression that these movements and counter-movements necessarily follow one another in a punctual and well-generated fashion...." In using Rimbaud's life to point the moral of a general social situation he also warns against oversimplification (Ibid., p. 282).

3. Ibid., pp. 259-64.

4. "Notes on Modern Literature, II," New Repub 41(D 24 '24) 118.

intensity than any other the predicament of the human soul in modern civilization.¹ His career as Symbolist and later, following his rejection of nineteenth century Europe even beyond the extent of the sensibility in conflict with it,² in Africa:

.... leaves us feeling that we have watched the human spirit breaking itself in the effort to escape whereas even the masterpieces of Symbolist literature oppress us with a sullenness, a lethargy, a sense of energies ingrown and sometimes festering a leaden acquiescence in defeat.³

When we examine Wilson's speculations on the future of Symbolism we find once more the note so often reiterated before. In our present society, Wilson believes, the same two courses are now open for those unable to interest themselves in social writing: Axel's or Rimbaud's. The first ends in mistaking one's chimeras for realities, usually in some monstrosity or absurdity; the second tries to leave the present behind, but unsuccessfully for one must always return.⁴ The weakness of the Symbolist heroes

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1. In "Anti-Literature," however, there is the suggestion that Rimbaud, the only master, among the anti-literature prophets, doubtless had other causes of maladjustment than those traceable to European culture (New Repub 48(0 13 '26)219-20).
 2. Axel's Castle, pp. 282-3.
 3. Ibid., p. 283. In "Anti-Literature," Wilson says that the greatest triumphs have always come from grappling with unliterary material (New Repub 48(0 13 '26)219-20).
 4. Ibid., pp. 287-9.

as well as of their creators is that they have so lost the world that they don't know exactly what it is like¹ and while this has given us great masters they will probably no longer serve us as guides.² The tremendous prestige which Symbolism gathered to itself by holding steadfastly to its course during the War³ is slowly decreasing as Europe recovers and America grows uneasy, and both Europe and America are becoming continually more aware of Russia's attempt to build a world to its liking, and this makes us ask again:

.... whether it is possible to make a practical success of human society, and whether, if we continue to fail, a few masterpieces, however profound or noble, will be able to make life worth living even for the few people in a position to enjoy them.⁴

Nevertheless the Symbolists' new flexibility and freedom has saved them from the death of the present and thus make us aware of the possibilities of the future⁵ regardless of their personal preference, if any, for some

1. Ibid., pp. 266-7.

2. Ibid., p. 292.

3. Ibid., p. 286. Wilson puts the period of their greatest domination from 1920-30. (Ibid., p. 292).

4. Ibid., p. 293. Compare this with the quotation in Footnote 3, p. 15 above.

5. Ibid., p. 298.

society of the past¹ and it is now quite probable that our obviously false dualisms will succumb (as that between Symbolism and Naturalism already has in Joyce's Ulysses²) to "....a way of thinking, a technique of dealing with our perceptions, which perhaps as Russia is now able to inspire both artist and engineer?³ will make art and science one."⁴

* * *

Out of his concern for himself and his world Wilson has thus reached the study of one form of the most valuable solution to the problems which a particular age has imposed, but even while he has been thus occupied that position has become increasingly untenable. One cannot now run away, and to build dreams lacking a basis in reality is to sentence them to remain dreams. One course, already repeatedly suggested, remains open: to recreate a world we never made.

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1. Ibid., p. 290. The weakness for falling back on the past ("One of the symptoms which is least reassuring in some of the finest of modern literature") is found elsewhere than in Symbolism. It is in Flaubert, Anatole France, etc. ("Notes on Modern Literature, III." New Repub 42(Mr 4 '25)39-40).
 2. Ibid., pp. 204 & 294.
 3. Ibid., p. 293.
 4. Ibid., p. 297. The drive toward the unity of one system is found continually, for example in the essay on T. S. Eliot, Wilson objects to Eliot's system of literary criticism on the grounds that its effect, "....is to impose upon us a conception of poetry as some sort of pure and rare aesthetic essence with no

relation to any of the practical human uses for which, for some reason never explained, only the technique of prose is appropriate.

Now this point of view seems to me absolutely unhistorical- an impossible attempt to make aesthetic values independent of all other values" (*Ibid.*, p. 119).

Wilson's suggestions on the relation of Symbolism to science and philosophy are extremely interesting and apparently very well founded. We have, for example, this statement on Proust's A la Recherche du Temps Perdu: "He has recreated the world of the novel from the point of view of relativity; he has supplied for the first time in literature an equivalent on the full scale for the new theory of modern physics" (*Ibid.*, p. 189); of Joyce he says that he, "...is indeed really the great poet of a new phase of the human consciousness." (*Ibid.*, p. 221).

And again, with broader implications, we find Wilson saying that the parallel between the development of modern art and modern science though produced independently are the result of the same complex of conditions and there is no reason to believe that they do not represent some fundamental change in the European mind ("Boswell and Others." New Repub 43(Jl 1 '25)153-4); in "Taking the Marxist Dialectic Apart" (New Repub 91 (Ag 4 '37)366-8): "Mathematics and physics have been following closely in their recent development such developments as Symbolism in literature and Cubism in the plastic arts?"

CHAPTER II

SOCIOLOGICAL PHASE: TRAVELS IN TWO DEMOCRACIES

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The publication of Axel's Castle ('31) marks Wilson's definite embroilment with literary criticism as one of his main lines, but, even while this direction drew to a head, other things were happening which pointed other lines of criticism, already foreshadowed, as being now ripe for use. Three years after the beginning of the depression saw the publication of The American Jitters-A Year of the Slump ('32); four more years brought Travels in Two Democracies; between these two an unnamed "series of eight" (really nine) articles was published in The New Republic which definitely mark the beginning of Wilson's third, that is following, phase. Both books are almost entirely collections of social reportage, most of which originally appeared in periodicals and both are highly critical of contemporary life, so much so that Wilson concludes The American Jitters, except for an imaginative piece, with "The Case of the Author." Let us look at this article closely that we may more clearly experience Wilson's dissatisfaction when we come to it in detail.

"The Case of the Author" has three sections which we may designate as: Marx and the present crisis in America,

Marx's formula in relation to Wilson, and, Wilson's assumption (Wilson's order).

What is the assumption? It is the belief in a progressive human evolution which gradually tends to level out class distinctions in society.¹ It seems necessary to believe this or else to accept the creed of a church, but religion is only possible on a basis of ignorance--the churches of the Western world are obsolete.² Any meaning, therefore, which the human situation can have must be given to it here by ourselves.³

Throwing out religion, then, and taking the concept of a leveling progress, what formula is of greatest value for us now? The answer is found in Marxism in conjunction with the present, for Marx's predictions, Wilson says, are in process of realization:

What we have at the present time is an economic crisis due to capitalist contradictions and beginning to produce actual conflicts; a general collapse of morale due

1. The machine is important here as a means but it has been made a monster by private profit; for this reason Wilson would be glad to see this class abolished.
2. Cf., "T. S. Eliot and the Church of England." (New Repub 58(Ap 24 '29)283-4). In the same place Wilson says that our new social and moral ideals must spring from contemporary reality and our own imaginations and not from church or Kind; the movement back to Aquinas is even more sadly symptomatic of the feeble condition of literary people.
3. The American Jitters, p. 312.

to the deflation of capitalist ideals; but at the same time a general persistence of what the Communists would call the bourgeois "ideology" which makes people value bourgeois social position.¹

"....beginning to produce actual class conflicts" only for it is in this

One phenomenon predicted by Marx that we have not yet developed in America to the degree of acuteness that Marx contemplated; we have not even after two years of depression seen the general cleavage of society into a conscious bourgeoisie and a conscious proletariat--we have not yet seen a general conflict between classes. [Instead] The aims and ideals of the bourgeoisie in America have seemed to be absorbing the working class and this has made us scoff at the Marxist bogies.²

And as to the question on the possibility of a genuine American middle-class revolution Wilson says that he has tried hard to think so, being a bourgeois himself, but that since the War he has had serious doubts which find their basis in the strong bourgeois class psychology now visible, especially as this comes out in their dependence on an assurance of superiority.³

Thirdly, since, as Wilson writes, Marx showed, probably for the first time, how social and economic tenets,

1. Ibid., pp. 304ff.

2. Ibid., pp. 298-9.

3. Ibid., p. 304.

no matter how well reasoned or sober, turn out to be defenses of peoples' social position and financial interests we must ask: what is the relation between Marx and Wilson (a specimen of the current American bourgeoisie)?¹ His family on both sides and for several generations has belonged to the "learned professions;" they have always been at least comfortably well off but not rich by American standards. Wilson's father's generation did not seem at home in money making America and was indifferent to it beyond having enough for good food, private schools for the children and occasional travel. Furthermore, Wilson continues, his family has never really departed very far from the old American life of the countryside and the provincial cities and has never really been broken to the life of machinery and enormous profits. Nevertheless, Wilson knows and states that he has inhabited the territory of machines and profits and has gone through about the same thing as all other young bourgeois Americans of his generation. Dissatisfaction with boarding school and college brought the expression of heretical opinions but no real revolt; there was a real satisfaction found in school from "culture," then believed to be the possession of the best people and one reason for their superiority.

1. Ibid., p. 304.

One soon found, however, that the best were superficially satisfied and didn't follow or approve of creative work or the exploration of "the cause of things." Then came life in New York, but it merely seemed to be college all over again, and soon America's entrance into the World War brought Wilson's joining the army as an enlisted man- going to an officers' training school would have meant no escape from the old life. Even the Army, however, did not greatly remove him for he says that officers who had been friends of his family for years, etc., were always around. The army was disliked but it satisfied in seeming real in a way that school and college relations never had.

While sick in France during the World War he promised himself to stand outside society and do without the conventional comforts and, "...devote myself to the great human interests which transcend standards of living and conventions: Literature, History, the Creation of Beauty, the Discovery of Truth."¹

After the War he returned to New York and is in practically the same spot today.

1. Ibid., p. 307.

I know that I have found out something about that world that most of the inhabitants do not know I know from having shifted at the time of the War out of the group with whom I should have been supposed to function that class antagonisms, conflicts, and injustices are real, that they rarely get any publicity, that the class on top virtually controls the organs of publicity, that the capacities of human nature for remaining blind to the consequences of its actions where its comfort and prestige are concerned are so great that it cannot usually be induced even to notice what it is up to without a violent jolt from below, and that there is no hope for general decency and fair play except from a society where classes are abolished. And so when I hear the Communists today rousing the working class on the basis of assumptions of Marx's which are thus confirmed by my own experience, I pay a good deal more serious attention to them than most of my bourgeois confreres do.¹

1. Ibid., p. 307. "An Appeal to Progressives" (New Repub 65 (Ja 14 '31)234-8) is worth quoting at length: ".... the present depression may be nothing less than one of the turning points in our history, our first real crisis since the Civil War I believe that if the American radicals and progressives who repudiate the Marxist dogma that capitalism must give rise to class warfare and end in a wreck and the strategy of the Communist party in the U.S. who do not believe American business or government can ally or imitate themselves with the Soviets and that a war against Russia is inevitable and that they constitute a small, trained, compact minority that will be able to step in and run things when American capitalism breaks down hope to accomplish anything valuable, they must take Communism away from the Communists without ambiguity or reservations, asserting emphatically that their ultimate goal is the ownership of the means of production by the government and an industrial rather than a regional representation If we want to prove that the Marxist Communists are wrong and that there is still some virtue in American democracy, if we want to confute the Marxist cynicism, the catastrophic outcome of whose "economic laws" is predicated, after all, only

He has never been "uncomfortable" -- has worked mostly for "highbrow" magazines one of which paid him his top salary, \$7,500 a year (which, he adds, did not last very long)-- and he has always lived slightly over his income but is always rescued by small inheritances which also give him a margin for liquor, classical reading, and general irresponsibility. Being used to these things, he continues, he shrinks from the idea of having to earn all he gets. All the attitudes have been tried -- Mencken's old-American-stock smugness, liberalism betting on American capitalism, proud withdrawal and self-cultivation, letting oneself go--in the attempt to make a go of money America. But all the possibilities are compromises which have lost any validity they may have once had and none of them were very profound in the first place.

Finally, we ask, what is it possible to hope for? The answer here is revolution; Wilson thinks the emergency

on an assumption of the incurable swinishness and inertia of human nature, an American opposition must not be afraid to dynamite the old shibboleths and conceptions and to substitute new ones as shocking as possible they may not seem less shocking to other people than to us shibboleth experts ourselves What we need in this country is a genuine opposition, and it is a long time since the liberals have been one who knows, however, that if we spoke out now with confidence and boldness, we might not find our public at last?" For the inability to "speak out boldly" see "What Do the Liberals Hope For?" New Repub 69(F 10 '32)345-8.

may produce leaders out of American labor. The new generation of radicals are starting as convinced and cool-headed revolutionaries with a clear idea of their relation to American society and of America to the rest of the world; they have no illusions about prosperity on the present economic basis and the longer hard times continue the more convinced of their position they will become and the larger will be their following. These men look to Russia since it is the only example of a communist state we have and Wilson shares their admiration for Lenin and Tretsky:¹

.... because they are men of superior brains who have triumphed over the ignorance, the stupidity and the short-sighted selfishness of the mass, who have imposed on them better methods and ideas than they ever could have arrived at by themselves.²

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1. The leaders are Lenin and Trotsky. Of Stalin Wilson writes that he cares nothing for the theory of permanent revolution; instead, he identifies himself with socialism in one country and he, "...is uneducated, a philistine, a bureaucrat, a mediocrity, a ridiculously poor Marxist whom Marxism has merely rendered cynical without giving him a philosophic outlook thoroughly thought out and mentally assimilated" ("Trotsky:II", New Repub 73(Ja 11 '33)235-8). And in "Complaints I", New Repub 89(Ja 20 '37)345-8: "It is therefore now, it seems to me, pretty difficult to hope that any intellectual health will ever come out of Stalinist Communism." See also the footnote to "Origins of Socialism: Babeuf's Defense," New Repub 91(Je 9 '37)121-4. For some of Stalin's assets see Travels in Two Democracies, p. 224.
 2. The American Jitters, pp. 310-11.

And if the world were run in a like manner Wilson does not feel that he would lose by it; furthermore, since art and science have always tried to deal with the whole of human life and, "....true satisfaction of their impulses comes only in proportion as they succeed,"¹ it behooves other artists and writers to take cognizance of the fact that it might be bad for them when they try to adapt themselves to a system which is the enemy of theory and art.

So much for Wilson's stated position; for the rest The American Jitters consists of twenty-eight additional pieces, most of which ".... are straight reporting of actual happenings"² The exceptions are "Red Cross and County Agent" (IX) -- a composite and partly invented -- in which we are served a description of the work of the Red Cross and the county agent in Clayville, Kentucky; the people at the "Indian Corn Dance" (XIX) are mostly invented and pure caricature -- here Wilson tries to show what the Hopi Indians are up against, from the whites, every time they hold one of their open dances; and "The Fourth of July" (XX) -- in which we are told of the exploitation of the tourists who want to see the cave by the townspeople of Carlsbad

1. Ibid., p. 311.

2. Ibid., p. x.

and of the accidental setting off of the fireworks at the big Fourth celebration there this year -- this one Wilson knows only by hearsay. The last pieces, finally, "The Best People" (XXVII) and "A Man in the Street" (XXIX), are imaginative sketches.

The rest of the chapters cover a variety of subjects (there are twenty-nine chapters in all) from contemporary American life, all of which are roundly condemned. Let us glance at some of them quickly. "Dwight Morrow in New Jersey" ridicules the Senator's campaign. Despite what we read and hear of him he is just another nice little man using the voice of American capitalism without knowing what he is doing. "Aladdin's Lecture Palace" refers to the New School for Social Research: its building is anything but the functional one it is supposed to be; it has never undertaken any social research; and, if you want to take a course, the prices are prohibitive. "Foster and Fish" is an account of Wm. Z. Foster before the House Committee headed by Hamilton Fish. Foster is nervous and almost excessively sensitive but does well, while the committee members, in contrast, appear to be jackasses and though they have supposedly been investigating the Communists for six months their ignorance of everything connected with

Communism is evident. "Small Depositors of Bank of United States" is an account of their committee trying to see Jimmy Walker; after a little shuttling around you realize they don't stand a chance. "Progress and Poverty" has two parts: the first, the formal opening of the Empire State Building in which the only thing worth while found is a workman's mural on the fifty-fifth floor which, according to the article as it appeared in The New Republic,¹ ".... has done something to take the curse off the opening" Part two is the account of a mill worker killing himself and his three sons, after being out of work for so long, and leaving his wife four corpses; Mrs. Berelli who lives downstairs and has been having a tougher and tougher time doesn't think she would do anything similar. "Two Protests" tells of the failure of the People's Lobby to see the President after having been told they would be received and then being kept waiting, etc.; the second protest is the story of a Sicilian who has lost everything, has no work, and owes two months' rent to an insistent landlord; now he is being taken to jail after killing the landlord. "The Freight-Car Case" refers to the Scottsboro boys up to the time of the appeal to the supreme court of Alabama.

1. New Repub 57(May 20 '31)13-16.

"Hoover Dam" gives the conditions leading up to the strike -- the use of private companies by the government to exploit the workers -- and the evacuation of the workers by the government. "Lawrence, Mass." tells of one of many strikes there; "The Best People" is a satirical imaginary portrait of those who go by that name. The last piece is an imaginary portrait of "A Man in the Street." He is of the "pure Nordic type," looks able-bodied and self-dependent, but is pale and seems soiled and though he doesn't look demoralized he looks as though he thought of himself as not being a part of the world in which he walks. He wanders past smart restaurants and half empty apartment houses guarded by liveried doormen.

* * *

Travels in Two Democracies ('36) juxtaposes the American scene, "U.S.A., November, 1932 - May, 1934" -- which differs here from that found in The American Jitters in that a few things of worth are given -- and the Russian, "U.S.S.R., May-October 1935." The two are divided by "Lieutenant Franklin," a flashback to the occupation of Germany after the War which is the root of the contrasting parts.

Lieutenant Franklin left college via its president's

pleas, enlisted in the A.E.F., spent fourteen months training for the artillery, and two days before the Armistice had gone into action. He is just a nice boy with a bit of education who is now going into borderland Germany, apparently through a mistake involving another officer named Frankel who does speak German -- Lieutenant Franklin only knows French. He doesn't hate the Germans and is all for the Fourteen Points, etc. He is met by two other types of officer: Liggett, a major of engineers and something of a more mature Franklin, and Captain Scudder, one of the arrogant, "We'll show them," violently hateful kind who is ambitious to use his opportunity in the Army of Occupation.

In Germany Franklin is uncomfortable because of the civilians' anxiety toward him. He wants to break through and cannot. The censors, excepting Franklin and Liggett, go beyond their orders and suppress material really favorable to their side because they cannot understand the position of Germany -- even if they had tried.

Soon Lieutenant Franklin is moved down the Moselle to near Treves where he is to act as assistant district defense commander. He is to disarm the people, but the

burgomaster has already done so, and billet new troops, of which there are none. Consequently he does nothing but try to enjoy himself: lives at the burgomaster's and becomes intimate with everyone there and finally asks himself about the burgomaster's daughter, who was married just before her husband was killed in the War: "What if he should marry her?"

Meanwhile, however, Scudder has visited and warned him against fraternization -- the American soldiers have been going with the Germans against the French. The next day orders come to return to France, Franklin goes to the chief of staff in an attempt to stay, but apparently Scudder has been there first, and the colonel, who also takes himself too seriously, violently refuses. Franklin leaves after seeing Scudder, now a major, and Liggett, who prefers the Germans to the French and can only think of going home.

This is the story of "Lieutenant Franklin;" as such we might have been spared but it is important on several counts. The World War ushered in the Russian Revolution and called the tune for these past twenty years. And just as we have Lieutenant Franklin being removed by the arrogant bureaucratic Scudder who must act as he does in order to pull himself up, so we have

(the analogy is poor) Trotsky being removed by Stalin's agents¹ and the incongruency of the workman's mural and the tomb in which it is found.²

Lieutenant Franklin and Babchen cannot be allowed to create life in their own way; they are respected neither as individuals nor as part of the machine. They cannot be left on their own or something worthwhile may come of it.

As in The American Jitters many of the articles were originally printed in periodicals. Twelve are on the U.S. -- not all of them totally condemnatory as before: the social workers in "Hull House in 1932," for example, do not come off badly and Wilson has a real respect for Jane Addams, but the total effect is uncompromisingly damning. What can be praised in a society that makes reclamation necessary? What can you say to the woman who removes her glasses, when picking up meat from the dump, in order not to see the maggots? Hull-House has an air about it which proceeds from

.... the pride of the imagination and moral sense for which the little world of social groupings -- and of intellectual grouping as well -- are too small; the humility of one who, seeing so far, sees beyond herself, too, and feels herself

1. "Trotsky." New Repub 73(Ja 4 '33)207-9.

2. See p. 38 above.

lost amid the same uncertainties,
thwarted by the same cross-purposes,
as the rest.¹

The remaining articles on the United States give the contrast: Roosevelt's "Inaugural Parade" in 1933 is dignified at first but it then becomes increasingly silly and fantastic and dreary; you are glad when it is over, its America, boom America, has burst. But it has realized itself, among others, in "A Great Dream Come True." The real fantasy is Roxy's Radio City Music Hall which is so large, has so many gadgets, etc., etc., that it is impossible to give anything in it. It is merely a source of canalized entertainment and is an immediate flop on an unprecedented scale. The only person pleased: a financier trimmed by Rockefeller: "Think of that Rockefeller losing \$100,000 a week."²

Laboring under the same contradictions are: the members of the "Illinois Household" who wonder what there is between John L. Lewis and the operators; (G.B.) "Shaw at the Metropolitan" where he finds himself unable to give up talking to the bourgeoisie and address the few radicals; those who are dissatisfied with their work and

1. Travels in Two Democracies, p. 21.

2. Ibid., p. 43.

know their social role is not serious and who have, as a consequence seized upon the Oxford Group (Buchman's triumph has been to put a dinner jacket on the Christ of the missions) as an anchor ("Saving the Right People and Their Butlers"); the Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, spring, '34, included many army units and a float depicting Perry arriving in Uraga Bay, but all efforts to include propaganda for peace were refused by the parade chairman ("Japanese Cherry Blossoms"); and out of "The Second Battle of Oriskany"--the first was in 1777, this one was between farmers on a milk strike and state troops--comes the appointment of the man who led the troops to conduct an investigation and to pass judgment on himself and his men behind closed doors. And so on for several more chapters, but "The Old Stone House" adds something.

It tells of a man's revisiting his family's home in upper New York. The place is only open now for a month or so during the summer, but the house itself, much of the old furnishings, and what it stands for--a dream of a past time which had a certain dignity and prestige--remain intact. But times have changed, the family has scattered and now supports what was once called "money interests" without knowing what this means. And the eyes

through which we see this are depressed for, in the end as he walks up the steps of his house in New York, he realizes that even what would have been enjoyable in big business America has passed him by, the luxury and prestige of life among the best. Instead, he lives uncomfortably among the worst. Not, however, that he would return to the past world: it was too lonely, too poor, too provincial. This man, unidentified though he may be, we recognize as Wilson.

So much for the U. S. A. The Russian half is introduced by Wilson's first sight of "Old England" since the War. It repeats the note of having grown up in one world and living to inhabit another: contemporary England is not much different from America. The transition is completed on board ship ("London to Leningrad") in the contrast between the Russian ship and sailors and passengers and the travellers who are not a part of new Russia. The Russian section really resembles travel notes, loose and occasional jottings, incidents, random observations, etc. But they have the unity of unbounded enthusiasm which, though tending toward the maudlin, is sustained by the belief that the Soviet Union is at

....the moral top of the world where the light really never goes out The central fact, from which one can never

escape is the relationship of the Russian people to the tomb under the Kremlin wall It is a beautiful face it is an aristocrat who is not specialized as an aristocrat, a poet who is not specialized as a poet, a scientist who is not specialized as a scientist. Nor is it in the least the face of a saint. Except for the slightly slanting eyes, it seems today hardly even the face of a Russian. For here humanity has produced, independent of all the old disciplines, the scientist whose study is humanity, the poet whose material is not images but the water and salt of human beings- the superior man who has burst out of the classes and claimed all that man has done which is superior for the refinement of mankind as a whole....this bone and skin still keeping the stamp of that intellect, that passion, that will, whose emergence has stunned the world almost with more embarrassment at being made to extend its conception of man, as man alone, can accomplish, than admiration at the achievement of genius. And these countrymen of his are amazed when they look down on him and know that he was one of them, and that he evoked from their loose and sluggish plasm all those triumphs to which life must rise and to which he thought himself the casual guidepost.¹

This is the promise of the New Russia you see when looking at Lenin. There are defects, meanwhile, which range from mere overdone severity² and uncleanness³ in

1. Ibid., pp. 321-2.

2. Ibid., p. 151.

3. Ibid., p. 291.

living conditions to an inability in the people to be punctual, final, precise, or to say anything disappointing,¹ to the actual suppression of historical sources and the practice of systematic falsification,² to the lack of democratic procedure, the suppression of political opposition, and the constraint of the official terror.³ And though Wilson quite often points these things out the total effect is to submerge them completely. One reason for this, of course, is his attitude toward them which is the recognition of the tremendously raw quality of the raw material of the October Revolution. This brings up the comparison of Russia with the United States; here there is an interesting situation: going to Russia via England an American finds that in some basic respects he has more in common with the Russians than with the English who, on some counts, are furthest from him. The present Russia is more like pioneering America than anything else ever in Europe; and, both have a natural sympathy for one another through having kicked over the old system. "The Soviet Union stands in relation to the rest of the world today very much as the United States stood for a century after the Revolution."⁴

1. Ibid., p. 170.

2. Ibid., p. 235.

3. Ibid., p. 320.

4. Ibid., pp. 161-2.

The only trouble with this statement is that Wilson does not point directly, in any detail, to those elements which would resolve the disparate periods of time beyond a reference to industrial and natural exploitation. America, that is, would not experience Russia's agony in technics of jumping from a semi-feudal to a communist society.

Along with this there is the difference in the people which, as I have mentioned before, in another respect, comes out in the inability to be punctual, precise, etc.; this points to what I consider¹ the second great divergence of Russians and Americans:

It seems to me obviously impossible that a socialist government in the United States should resemble the state of things in Russia the naivetes of a Stalin Regime. We have in the United States some miserable and illiterate groups; but we have in general no such feudal peasantry and no such primitive proletariat as in Russia This relationship of the people to the dictatorship is the core of the whole Russian question and must

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1. According to Wilson, that is, but by my own analysis of his notes which are nothing more than that in comparison with the much more thorough form and unity of the section on the United States and The American Jitters. Actually, of course, the differences between the two peoples is only expressible by such categories as broad as "culture." Here I am limiting myself, as this broadest basis comes out in technics and behavior, in order to point a particular relation to present-day America. I merely second Wilson, of course, in remarking on the limits of the necessary categories.

be faced and honestly dealt with by any advocate of socialism in America Those who would have to put over socialism in America would no more resemble the Stalinist Communists and their Stalin-adoring constituents than they would be holding culture parades¹

Stalin as ikon is disliked by both Stalin and the Russians² but, "The dictatorship of such a proletariat inevitably results in a state of things where the proletarians, though the favored class, are dictated to by a governing group."³ The wisdom of allowing such a deification is doubtful.⁴

However, just as America is close to Russia it is also apart and on the same count closer to socialism:

.... being an American did mean something unique Americanism was a solid social entity which stood quite apart from Europe, belonging to a separate category rather than differing from it as the characters of the various European peoples differed from one another; and in some basic respects just as unlike what one finds in the Soviet Union as what one finds in the Western nations (though the Soviet Union has already succeeded in establishing a category of its own). The prime factor that sets us apart is the fact that we haven't got the past. And the American attitude, the

1. Travels in Two Democracies, p. 226.

2. Ibid., p. 222.

3. Ibid., p. 223.

4. Ibid., pp. 224-5. It is interesting to note this, from the same place: "One cannot imagine Lenin, for all the popular devotion he commanded, playing a role like that of Stalin."

American character, are more than rhetorical ideals; they are things which actually exist and which political thinking must reckon with.

....

Of course, terms like "Americanism" are dangerous because they can be and already have been used to cover up and justify all kinds of interests and aims But certainly the case for socialism, which is merely the case for a high general standard of living secured by guaranteeing that people shall get the benefit of everything they produce, could be made out in the United States on the basis of American tradition and commonly accepted American conceptions. From this point of view, the socialist ideal is more natural to us than to the Russians.¹

Finally,

When one travelled in the early years of the century, the European countries which one visited loomed as immense entities, with impregnable national virtues, luminous and civilizing cultures, solemn traditions, majestic histories. At the time of the War, they seemed like Titans colliding. Today, when one has been in the United States and then in Soviet Russia, they seem a pack of little quarrelsome states, maintaining artificial barriers and suffering from morbid distempers. How the map has changed since our youth!²

Meanwhile, "The Man in the Mirror" grips the whole book. It is a short creative episode in two parts, the

1. Ibid., pp. 250-2.

2. Ibid., p. 319.

"Prologue"- with its scene laid in a hotel restaurant almost anywhere in the world in which a traveler, a waiter, and a couple who have been married for seven years all suspect each other and everyone else they see or know of being provocateurs- and the "Epilogue"- in which the traveler returns and, as our first glimpse of him had ended in his seeing himself in a mirror and taking himself to be a man in a soft hat whom he believes is following him, we hear Wilson say once again:

He who said, "In His will is our peace"- it was with his own will that he was reconciled And so he who first saw and said that man advanced on his belly- he himself had risen upright.... The states slip; the people cringe.... Still we think in terms of mythologies in this day when, if God cannot help us, the People or the Masses can do no better- when accuracy of insight, when courage of judgment, are worth all the names in all the books.¹

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If it were possible to erect comparable standards in literary criticism and social reporting we would probably find The American Jitters and Travels in Two Democracies, except for the latter's Russian section,² resting on an equal level with Axel's Castle. The reportage

1. Ibid., p. 325.

2. For at least a partial explanation of the inability to write on Russia see: Ibid., pp. 208-9.

unquestionably makes a better showing than everything else tried other than literary criticism. The most important result for Wilson would seem to be that the experience at the basis of this entire phase provided him with the bitterness and anger and the hope and necessity which compel men to remake their worlds. For this new tools and understanding were found necessary, but even then they were being formed.

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHICAL PHASE: THE TRIPLE THINKERS

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The American Jitters and Travels in Two Democracies form one unit of sociological reporting with hints of something beyond, particularly in the latter. This something is again caught sight of in the "series of eight" articles in The New Republic, which appeared from August '32 - January '33, and since this in turn forms the prelude of "To the Finland Station" and The Triple Thinkers of the present phase, it deserves mention here.

The eight, by actual count nine, cover some particular aspect of the following figures: Casanova, Joseph de Maistre, Michelet, Anatole France, John Morley, Lytton Strachey, Lincoln Steffens and Upton Sinclair, and Trotsky, and there is an article preceeding the one on Trotsky on Marxist History. All these are very loosely connected, being as yet but specific vantage points for limited views of a landscape which we realize is, as yet, not totally visible. But we do see enough to realize that we have passed from the social reporting of the two books just treated to the beginnings of more thorough and more solidly founded sociological research and interpretation. Axel's Castle had, among other things, fitted sociological

criteria to a literary movement and had then measured certain individuals involved. In the present case, however, we have seven articles on men whom we usually think of as being closer to literature than anything else and one article on Trotsky whom we think of first as a professional revolutionary and secondly as a revolutionary-artist, we do not think, perhaps, of the union of these two categories. The remaining article is divorced from particular figures as such and is concerned with a broadly based, highly developed historical movement; it is a counterpart, we might say, of the introductory essay in Axel's Castle, the article on Trotsky is the mate to Rimbaud, and (the entire series, later it will become "To the Finland Station") is the supplement to Axel's Castle.

The distinguishing feature is found in the reference points. The one uses the sociological to point up literary criticism; the other draws upon literature, and not as it is limited by belles lettres, and its figures to paint a picture of society, and always with reference to the present.

Thus: Casanova is pursued much less today than Rousseau for he could not look beyond his masters, but Rousseau brought from his discomfort a hammering at the

lever of the Revolution;¹ Joseph de Maistre is likely to be a present guide to literary people when they drift to reaction;² Michelet makes us feel that he is the human spirit fighting its way through the ages and if the present official account of French literature were overthrown he might eclipse his disciples, Renan and Taine;³ Anatole France sums up a culture and announces its death, the end of the bourgeois revolution;⁴ the present liberal, as found in John Morley, is only half a revolutionist;⁵ Lytton Strachey is an example of the French nineteenth century tradition writing in English;⁶ and, Lincoln Steffens and Upton Sinclair are the obverse and reverse of a particular brand of American radicalism.⁷

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1. "Casanova." New Repub 72(Ag 17 '37)10-3.
 2. "Joseph de Maistre." New Repub 72(Ag 24 '32)35-9.
This is worth quoting: "In the name of what power can the American reactionary today defend his support of the present system? where the privileged class are the millionaires of the moment? Substitute for de Maistre's executioner with his wheel the chair in which Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted and in the name of what divine right will any of our alleged Tories dare assert that "all grandeur, all power, all discipline" depend on these?"
 3. "Michelet." New Repub 72(Ag 31 '32)64-6.
 4. "Anatole France." New Repub 72(S 7 '32)90-2.
 5. "John Morley." New Repub 72(S 14 '32)119-20.
 6. "Lytton Strachey." New Repub 72(S 21 '32)146-8.
 7. "Lincoln Steffens and Upton Sinclair." New Repub 72(S 28 '32)173-5.

This brings us to a curious cleavage in Western culture: Marxism is now at the stage where it has become an international culture just reaching full maturity and apparently the only really vital intellectual movement in the Western World, and yet all the rest of our literature and learning erect barriers against it with the result that it has grown up separately from modern thought.

Nothing seems to me to bear out more convincingly the Marxists' own contention as to the influence of class interests on people's opinions than the way in which the bourgeois writers on history, economics, politics, literature, and art refuse to read the Marxist books even for the purpose of condemning them, will not discuss the Marxist ideas even to point out their fallacies and manage to leave the great Marxists out of their cosmoeses in spite of the fact that, however much they may disapprove of them, they must certainly be recognized as among the greatest geniuses and leaders of their time.¹

This despite the fact that the American and French revolutions and the enlightenment of the eighteenth century are understood, appreciated, and accepted.

1. "Marxist History." New Repub 72(0 12 '32)246-8.
Here we find Marxism to be, "... a scientific point of view which schools itself to be independent of class in order that it may for the first time in the history of thought study society and culture realistically in the light of the relationships of classes it is a new vision of human life and a new method of dealing with it The other world is dying but this other has its immense creative work to do."

There is, finally, the article on Trotsky¹ who, among other things, is a living example of the banishment of Marxism who awaits his next opportunity for taking the concept of permanent revolution into action.

* * *

The point of importance in the present phase, is Wilson's combination of Marxism and literary criticism. The latter now becomes something which we might designate by such a phrase as: "the superior sensitivity or ability or insight of the artist." This is not totally new for Wilson. In Travels in Two Democracies he wrote of Lenin, as I have quoted above: "An aristocrat a poet a scientist," and of Trotsky he writes:

There has never been another statesman who played so important a part in history who had at the same time so vivid a consciousness of the historical significance of his role and who has been able to write so brilliant a record of the events in which he figures.²

Finally, one of his most recent articles is entitled "Karl Marx: Poet of Commodities."³ Here we find it declared that, "Marx is certainly the greatest ironist since Swift he is able to get a certain poetry out of

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1. "Trotsky." New Repub 73(Ja 4, 11 '33)207-9, 235-8.
 2. "Trotsky." New Repub 73(Ja 4 '33)207-9.
 3. New Repub 102(Ja 8 '40)46-7.

money and it is after all the poet in Marx who makes of all things in Das Kapital a whole."

* * *

The three men used as examples above have definite and special affinities, but if we look into The Triple Thinkers we will find the same point made in connection with a diversity which will eliminate any charge of particular sympathies.

The title, The Triple Thinkers ('38), comes from one of Flaubert's letters to Louise Colet: "What is the artist if he is not a triple thinker?"¹ The sub-title tells us that we here have "Ten Essays on Literature." Eight of these are on specific figures, one asks "Is Verse a Dying Technique?" and the concluding essay is on "Marxism and Literature." All of them are most excellent examples of analysis and interpretation- criticism which makes aesthetic analysis but one of many departments. Two of the ten particularly lend themselves as indicators of superior sensitivity; this because the two figures in question, Flaubert and John Jay Chapman, apparently have more conscious awareness of the ability than their confreres. Let us take them as examples of triple thinking.

1. The Triple Thinkers, title page.

"Flaubert's Politics" finds its inception in Wilson's contention that Flaubert, in contradiction to what we usually hear about him,

.... owed his superiority to those of his contemporaries who professed the same literary creed- to the seriousness of his concern with the large questions of human destiny.¹

One of these questions is social.

In his letters, which contain his only explicit reasonings about society, his ideas seem incoherent and leave him far from formulating a social philosophy.² But his books tell a different story, that of paganisme, christianisme, and muflisme. The first and second have something about them, but in the last- our own time- with the bourgeois as villain, there is nothing of worth.³ L'Education Sentimentale gives his best social theorizing,⁴ disregard for either makes us underestimate both,⁵ and here we find that both Flaubert and Marx, ".... pursuing courses so apparently divergent, arrived at identical interpretations of the happenings of their own time."⁶ But there is one difference:

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1. The Triple Thinkers, p. 100.
 2. Ibid., p. 103.
 3. Ibid., pp. 105-6.
 4. Ibid., p. 108.
 5. Ibid., p. 106.
 6. Ibid., p. 108.

For Marx, the evolution of the socialist into a policeman would have been due to the bourgeois in Flaubert's *Senecal* ; for Flaubert it is a natural development of socialism. Flaubert distrusted the authoritarian aims of the socialists.

Today we must recognize that Flaubert had observed something of which Marx was not aware Here Flaubert, who believed that the artist should aim to be without social convictions, has been able to judge the tendencies of political doctrines as the greatest of doctorinaires could not; and here the role of Flaubert is justified.¹

This is the particular point in the essay. After 1870 Flaubert took a new direction which finally culminated in a shifting of the role of villain from the bourgeois to the incompetence of humanity- the bourgeois can think of nothing but a bourgeois way out.

"John Jay Chapman" offers the most self-aware example of the reaction of the artist. The essay is concerned with showing Chapman's development as an extremely sensitive reaction to his world. The consequence of this is exhibited in his growing narrowness- the result of conflict with the great age of American business- which ends in his being crushed by democracy.² Chapman was born in 1861 and

1. Ibid., pp. 114-5.

2. Ibid., p. 190.

.... by the later years of the eighties the industrial and commercial development which followed the civil war had reached a point where the old education was no longer an equipment for life. It had in fact become a troublesome handicap.¹

His interests finally are nearly entirely limited to his old Harvard circle and the belief in a great religious awakening.²

The sub-title of the essay is "The Mute and the Open Strings." Chapman had loved music and tried to learn the violin but had finally given it up. When semi-conscious, just before dying, he said: "'I want to take it away, I want to take it away The mute, the mate. I want to play on the open strings.'"³ He has finally realized how life has left him behind.

As with Flaubert and Chapman so with Paul Elmer More, whose contribution, valuable though it may be to others, has only separated him more widely from contemporary life ("Mr. More and the Mithraic Bull"); the Russian Shakespeare Pushkin ("In Honor of Pushkin"); "A. E. Housman," an example of cultural lag derived from the monastic order of English university ascetics; Henry James, with his inability to overcome his lacks in

1. Ibid., p. 189.
 2. Ibid., pp. 206-7.
 3. Ibid., p. 209.

experience ("The Ambiguity of Henry James"); Samuel Butler, with his momentary flash quickly extinguished by his inability to remove himself far enough from his class to analyze society ("The Satire of Samuel Butler"); on Bernard Shaw, finally, we find probably the most illuminating remarks; we definitely see Wilson's idea to be that the artist gives the most sensitive reaction:

And the integrity of the artist as a projector of the processes in which he finds himself involved has also survived in Shaw. He has not acted a straight role as a socialist; a lot of his writing on public affairs has been blather. But his plays down to the very end have been a truthful and continually developing chronicle of a soul in relation to society. Artistically as well as physically he is outliving all the rest of his generation.

Nor have his political confusions invalidated his social criticism. Of his influence it is unnecessary to speak, after all, the very methods we use to check him have partly been learned in his school.¹

In "Is Verse a Dying Technique?" the effect of the social situation is shown as divorced from particular figures, substituting a particular technique, and, while Wilson's conjectures are not hesitant, the point, for the essay, is that,

1. Ibid., p. 265.

.... literary techniques are tools, which the masters of the craft always alter in adapting them to their new uses. To become too much attached to the old tools is sometimes to ignore the masters.¹

That is, I believe Wilson might say, to show ourselves capable of ignoring them is to exhibit ourselves possibly as of them.

This brings up the concluding essay, "Marxism and Literature."² It has twelve sections. Let us give the point of each: first, Marx and Engels assigned literature and art to the superstructure, the different departments of which interact with each other and the economic base without being totally explicable in economic terms, which in the end (for a particular artistic period, for example) cannot exist beyond the economic base which made it possible;³

1. Ibid., p. 41.

2. For more on the same line, particularly with reference to America and in addition to those mentioned below, see in The New Republic: "Literary Class War," 70(My 4 '32)319-23, 347-9; "Art, the Proletariat and Marx," 76(Ag 23 '33)41-5; "Complaints," 89(Ja 20, F 3 '37) 345-8, 405-8; "Marxist Humanism," 98(My 3 '39)371-2; and in The Nation: "Novelist Bites Critic," 142(Je 24 '36)808-10; "Pleasures of Literature," 146(Ja 29 '38) 128-9.

3. In "Taking the Marxist Dialectic Apart" (New Repub 91 (Ag 4 '37)366-8), we find this: "Now it seems to me that one of the principal tasks of the Marxist critic today is to distinguish among products of any given field, which elements- from the point of view of the Marxist picture of reality- are tied directly to the economic basis of life, and which elements belong more properly to the superstructure. The ideological activities of

second, Marx and Engels never attempted to give social-economic formulas for artistic validity; third, Marx and Engels show no tendency to use art as a weapon and Lenin, though he suggested Gorky might be helpful as a Bolshevik journalist, said he mustn't be bothered if writing; fourth, Trotsky, in answer to Russian literature after the revolution, said that communism had, as yet, no artistic culture and the Russian proletariat would have no chance to produce one since their dictatorship was not to last and meanwhile the new literature would grow directly from the old; fifth, in present Russia:

The practice of deliberate falsification of social and political history which began at the time of the Stalin-Trotsky crises cannot fail in the end to corrupt every department of intellectual life, till the serious, the humane, and the clear-seeing must simply, if they can, remain silent.²

Sixth, Russia has thus been removed both as authority

the superstructure were not regarded by Marx and Engels as simply mirroring the social-economic basis." In "The Literary Class War: I" (New Repub 70 (My 4 '32) 319-23) we find that the artist belongs to two worlds: ".... a classless supernational one which does not exist yet, but which the mind can partially apprehend, and a real one of which he is a part."

1. The Triple Thinkers, p. 276.

and as inspiration and using "common sense" as a base we can draw the following conclusions: Marxism by itself is totally valueless as a measuring-rod of art, but it can give much on the origins and social significance of works of art. Marx and Engels first inescapably demonstrated the importance of economic systems for art, and Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky are worth listening to on literature not only because of their place in Marxism but also because they were capable of literary appreciation. Seventh, those who try to apply Marxism without real understanding of literature are open to going very wrong: the purport of the best works are not simple and are usually implicit, it makes no necessary difference as to conflict shown in and by the characters, and it doesn't necessarily matter as to victory or vanquishment in the end. Eighth, the incompetent leftist critic is engaged futilely in trying to measure by standards lacking validity. Ninth, there is long range and short range literature and while the latter may be a weapon it is difficult to connect some of the former with this idea as a part of their value. Tenth, it is impossible to identify the best creative work with the most active periods of social change, stable institutions and highly developed technique are, apparently,

necessary. Eleventh, there is apparently no obvious connection between the production of proletarian literature and the social revolution. Twelfth, and lastly, all this does not answer all the questions. Marxism is new and leads to action:

The Marxist vision of Lenin has in its completeness and its compelling force a good deal in common with the vision of Dante; but it was a creation, not of literary art, but of actual social engineering. It is society itself, says Trotsky, which under Communism becomes the work of art how can we doubt that, as it acquires the power, it must emerge from what will seem by comparison the revolutionary "underground" of art as we have always known it up to now and deal with the materials of actual life in ways in which we cannot now even foresee?

This is to speak in terms of centuries, of ages; but, in practicing and prizing literature, we must not be unaware of the first efforts of the human spirit to transcend literature itself.¹

Here, then, in this final essay we have returned to the end point of Axel's Castle with this difference: in Axel our main concern was human thought and art (Ulysses was used as an example of the union of Symbolism and Naturalism) and possible projections were limited by their terminology; now, however, the projection is

1. Ibid., pp. 288-9.

tremendously long ranged and extends to a possible society as art. A change of terms in this stage makes society the triple thinker.

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This brings us to Wilson's present work which has been announced in The New Republic¹ as a study of Marx, Engels, and Lenin under the title of To the Finland Station. A group of articles under this title--with the sub-title added later:² An Essay on the Writing and Acting of History--appeared in The New Republic from August 29 '34 to September 7 '38, that is, between the "series of eight" and The Triple Thinkers. An editor's note to the first article tells us that this is the first of a series of articles in three sections. The first is to center about Michelet and the decline of the revolutionary tradition in the French bourgeois historians (Renan, Taine, and Anatole France); the second will take the parallel rise of socialism and the efforts of the socialists to put their ideas into action (Babeuf, Saint-Simon, Enfantin, and Fourier and Owen); the third will be concerned with the mature development of socialism in

1. New Repub 98(Mr 1 '39)112; 101(N 15 '39)123.
 2. New Repub 80(O 24 '34)302-7.

Marx and Engels.¹

If the editor's note on the work in progress holds up, then, Michelet and his disciples together with the parallel section may probably provide part of an introductory background. The extent and division of the Marx-Engels-Lenin treatment is necessarily problematical for us. However, the five articles of two years ago, excellent as they are, can be merely a partial beginning. But from two of Wilson's most recent articles² it is obvious that Marx will be painted as Flaubert and Chapman and many others, he will be another triple thinker.

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1. Actually only the first section was published under the head: "To the Finland Station" (Ag 29 - O 24 '34). The second section used "Origins of Socialism" (Je 9 - Jl 7 '37). The third had no general head but consists of the following: "Karl Marx: Prometheus and Lucifer;" "Marx Decides to Change the World;" "The Young Man from Manchester;" "The Marx-Engels Partnership;" and, "Marx and Engels: Grinding the Lens" (Jl 6 - S 7 '38).
 2. "Karl Marx: Poet of Commodities." New Repub 102(Ja 8 '40)46-7; "The Emotional Pattern in Marx." New Repub 102(F 19 '40)239-42.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD:
SYNTHESIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL,
SOCIOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM

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Wilson's critical method is, in general, based upon categories analogous to the three phases previously viewed: psychological, sociological, and philosophical. A particular essay, though the weight of the burden may be principally limited to one category, will usually exhibit features of all three; some will be comparatively balanced. Let us take examples of the various possibilities exactly as Wilson develops them.

* * *

"The Satire of Samuel Butler"¹ is one of those dominantly psychological; its thesis: his genius- "a livid intense flash"- was but the momentary rebellion of the bad boy of a pious family who was never really to outgrow that state of mind:

.... he was never able to assert himself without something of the sulkiness of the adolescent child who blurts out that he doesn't believe the Bible, without betraying by excessive pugnacity the delusion that the world, like his family was conspiring to keep him down.²

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1. In The Triple Thinkers.
 2. Ibid., pp. 210-11.

Through Freud we could show the use of father substitutes after the escape of the father's domination.

The revolt seen in *Erewhon* first directed attention to him but here he is as intolerant as his father whose traditional theology he only escaped half-way in his drive toward science.¹ The basis of why Butler failed to satirize the profit-motive is explained through the envy of both those who existed before the machine and those who make up the world of the upper class² (Townley in The Way of All Flesh). The reason, finally, why he failed to analyze the social system lies in his inability to remove himself from his privileged position in the middle-class, even though he understands it enough to criticize the development of his own family.³ When his father died he inherited his interest in the estate and in the preface to Erewhon Revisited he announced himself, "a member of the more advanced wing of the English Broad Church."⁴

"Mr. More and the Mithraic Bull"⁵ finds its final standard in the sociological. The essay is an account of an evening spent with him in the company of Dean Gauss of

1. Ibid., pp. 211-15.

2. Ibid., p. 217.

3. Ibid., pp. 217-8.

4. Ibid., p. 219.

5. In The Triple Thinkers.

Princeton. Wilson had gone there to visit Gauss who was to conduct a non-sectarian religious discussion the next day, Sunday, for the professedly unorthodox students. The discussions were used as a substitute for chapel, the ultimate purpose being to keep the students in town over weekends. Dean Gauss goes to More in order to brush up on Mithraism which had come up at one of his discussions. There follows an account of the evening: More's home, tea, and affable conversation in which More shows his finger tip acquaintance with Mithraism. The conversation finally becomes a little warm and More says that a capacity for certain artistic productions rules out the capacity for others. More's sister, meanwhile, has wandered in, said that she was cleaning out the accumulated rubbish in her bureau drawers, and wandered out. Gauss and Wilson finally leave and now, at the time of writing this article (the occasion was More's death) Wilson is going over the memory of the weekend:

.... the nice old lady with her firm resolution to burn all that old stuff up More himself with his lifelong consecration to that great world of culture and thought which he had succeeded in making real to others but which he could never quite re-join himself¹

1. Ibidl, p. 19.

We feel that Wilson is telling us as gently and tenderly as possible that as far as the present is concerned More's work and knowledge and intellect has outlived its function, it is something like the accumulation in the bureau drawers.

The concluding essay in Axel's Castle, "Axel and Rimbaud," illustrates both the third category and the combination of all three. It is divided into three sections. In the first there is a general statement on the preceding figures and their relation to Symbolism with the implied viewpoint under which they operate; this point of view is then given in Andre Gide's words:

"One's great objection to the Symbolist school is its lack of curiosity about life. With perhaps the single exception of Viele-Griffin all were pessimists, renunciants, resignationists, 'tired of the sad hospital' which the earth seemed to them- our 'monotonous' and unmerited fatherland,' as Laforque called it. Poetry had become for them a refuge, the only escape from the hideous realities; they threw themselves into it with a desperate fervor.

"Divesting life as they did of everything which they considered mere vain delusion, doubting whether it were 'worth living,' it was not astonishing that they should have supplied no new ethic-contenting themselves with that of Wigny, which at most they dressed up in irony- but only an aesthetic."¹

1. Axel's Castle, p. 257.

This, in turn, provides the introduction to the story of Axel which supplies the opportunity for Wilson's own statement,¹ first implied by the use of Gide, with reference back to the distinction from Romanticism made in the introductory essay.

This provides the opportunity for section two. Here we return to the social basis of the Symbolist point of view and, to give it special point, Rimbaud is used as a particularly clear example of the conflict between artist and society. This brings a comparison of the divergence of his effect upon us and that of the other Symbolists.

The question of the third section is thus posed: the future of Symbolism. Here Valery's opinion is pulled in and rejected, the change in the macrorosm in the last few years is taken account of and the philosophical revolt of the last hundred, first mentioned in the opening essay, is returned to and the relation of this long range tendency and its last most definite form, Symbolism, unite in the basis for Wilson's predictions.

What we actually have, then, in "Axel and Rimbaud" is one statement in three forms: sociological, psychological, and the relation of these two as they have come out in the

1. Ibid., pp. 264-7.

mass of possible creative forms. This third we may call the creative or philosophical. All three sections draw upon each of the three categories until, at the most, we can probably only say that any one section combines them all in varying degrees.

There is one more point, operative whenever possible and sometimes far beyond the analysis given to the story of Count Axel of Auersburg,¹ which remains merely to be noted and is itself but a limited form of that which was found operative in "Axel and Rimbaud." This is the retelling, when a particular work is under criticism, of the story with which we have to deal and thus not only fulfilling the reviewer's minimum task² but also providing the starting points for the understanding of the story and its larger setting.

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1. See, for example: Axel's Castle, "James Joyce;" The Triple Thinkers, "The Ambiguity of Henry James;" "H. C. Earwicker and Family," New Repub 99(Je 28, Jl 12 '39)203-6, 270-4.
 2. For this and other points see: "Literary Workers' Polonius." The Atlantic 155(Je '35)674-82.

CONCLUSIONS

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This study of Edmund Wilson's development as critic has established three central facts.

1. First, from the bibliography it is obvious that Wilson's critical work has gradually absorbed his creative work. This becomes clear if we correlate his periodical articles with his book publications. To date Wilson has actually published five books of creative work and four of criticism. But if we examine the contribution to periodicals we find that there is ten times as much critical as creative work (two hundred and twenty-five critical items against twenty-two poems). This trend from creative writing to critical writing is further borne out by the examination of Wilson's development which has been made in the body of the thesis.

2. Our critical analysis of his development has established three phases. In the first of these Wilson was on the staff of Vanity Fair for one year (1920-21) and on The New Republic for five years (1926-31). He still contributes heavily to The New Republic. During this first period Wilson's main concern was to understand himself and to find his best medium for expression. His book publications are predominately creative (The Undertaker's Garland, Discordant Encounters, I Thought of Daisy,

and Poets, Farewell!), but according to the bibliography there are one hundred and forty-nine critical articles in addition to Axel's Castle, which is the terminal point of this phase, and which has as its thesis the interpretation of a literary revolution (Symbolism) which has practically taken place outside the English-speaking world. We may say, therefore, that the first phase definitely established him as literary critic. During this period his method was psychological. Sociological criticism, however, had been present from the very beginning ("Preface" to The Undertaker's Garland). In the second period, which coincides with the Depression, sociological criticism moves to the fore.

In the second phase there are two books of social reportage (The American Jitters and Travels in Two Democracies), sixty-one critical items in periodicals (taking those up to 1938), and one book of three plays (one of which had been written in 1924). Here Wilson's main concern is the criticism of the world in which he lives, and his chief finding that capitalism is at the root of most of its major evils.

The third phase is a synthesis of the abilities acquired (psychological and sociological) and materials

covered (creative, critical, and sociological) in the first two phases. Wilson's contention here (The Triple Thinkers, "series of eight," and "To the Finland Station") is that the artist, his forms ("Is Verse a Dying Technique?"), and his productions ("Marxism and Literature"), show a superior insight or more sensitive reaction to the world. It follows, therefore, that we may derive a superior insight if we are capable of understanding the artist and his methods and his productions. At present Wilson is engaged in extending his concept of the triple thinker to Marx and his precursors and followers. This we have already caught sight of in "To the Finland Station" and, more recently, in two articles on Marx: "Karl Marx: Poet of Commodities," and "The Emotional Pattern of Marx."

3. The third central fact established was that Wilson's method is a counterpart to his development and the resolution of his major problem as a critic. This problem Wilson had first explicitly stated in "The Old Stone House" (in Travels in Two Democracies) as a sense of being caught in the present between two worlds, that of the nineteenth century with a certain dignity and prestige, and that of the future world which, as yet, he has seen but partially realized in Soviet Russia.

This problem, we now realize, had been the motivating force behind the work of all three phases. In the first it had centered on the individual's attempt at solution, in the second its scope had been society as a whole (especially as it resulted in the American Depression and in Soviet Russia). In the third, society and the individual are united in an attempt to obtain a greater understanding of both.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography has three divisions: I. Books, II. Periodical Articles, and, III. Periodical Poetry, Prose Poetry. The source of the periodical materials is The Readers' Guide (I mention this as an indication of a limitation). All sections are arranged chronologically. The second section is annotated to indicate, at the least, the subject of each article.

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5. Axel's Castle, New York, Scribner's, 1931.
6. The American Jitters, New York, Scribner's, 1932.
7. Travels in Two Democracies, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1936.
8. This Room and This Gin and These Sandwiches, New York, New Republic, 1937.
9. The Triple Thinkers, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1938.

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H. L. Menchen, James Huneker, and
The Nation.

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2. After the play. New Repub 26(Mr 9, Ap 6,
My 4 '21)47-8, 162, 299.

Reviews of plays: Lionel Barrymore in
Macbeth, Drinkwater's Mary Stuart,
May 4 not available.

3. Books and things. New Repub 26(Ap 20 '21)
240-1.

It is nice to think it would have been
good to live in France before the
Revolution but it really wouldn't have
been any better than now.

4. H. L. Mencken. New Repub 27(Je 1 '21)10-13.

'Aitchel's uniqueness: an A 1 artist
and intellectual saturated with the
common life.

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5. New Jersey: the slave of two cities. Nation
114(Je 14 '22)712-14.

The fifth in a series by various writers
entitled "These United States."

6. Poetry of drouth. Dial 73(D '22)611-16.

Not available.

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7. Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Forum 70(S '23)
1871-9.

Universities, "have quite definite
individual characters."

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8. Imaginary conversations. New Repub 38(Ap 9, 30
'24) 179-82.

Later in Discordant Encounters (Rosenfeld
and Josephson).

9. Mrs. Alving and Oedipus. Lit R 4(F 9 '24)
501-2.

Later in Discordant Encounters.

10. American Comedy. New Repub 39(Je 18 '24) 103.

Its weakness of the last few years.

11. Bernard Shaw since the war. New Repub 39(Ag 27
'24) 380-1.

Is more optimistic, more human now.

12. Notes on modern literature. New Repub 41, 42
(D 24 '24, Mr 4 '25) 118, 39-40.

Casanova and Rousseau; Rimbaud; our fault
in falling back on the past.

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13. Comedy, classical and American. Theatre Arts
M 9(F '25) 73-84.

The New York stage productions from
November 15 - December 15 '24.

14. Last phase of Anatole France. New Repub 41
(F 11 '25) 308-10.

He represents an entire culture.

15. Stieglitz exhibition. New Repub 42(Mr 18 '25)
97-8.

Georgia O'Keeffe.

16. Finale at the follies. New Repub 42(Mr 25 '25)
125-6.

Sketch of the dress rehearsal.

17. Stravinsky. New Repub 42(Ap 1 '25) 156-7.

A social interpretation.

18. Road to Greenwich Village. New Repub 42(Ap 15
'25) 215-6.

And the freedom there.

19. W. B. Yeats. New Repub 42(Ap 15 '25) sup 8-10.

Not available.

20. Pilgrimage of Henry James. New Repub 42(My 6
'25) 283-6.

Criticism of Van W. Brooks' book by
that name.

21. Greatest show on earth. New Repub 42(My 13
'25) 320.

Barnum's circus.

22. On this site will be erected. New Repub 42
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Blight and construction in New York.

23. Doom of Lulu. New Repub 43(My 27 '25) 20-1.

On the present state of the American theatre.

24. Paul Valery. Dial 78(Je '25) 491-7.

Not available.

25. Paul Rosenfeld. New Repub 43(Je 3 '25) 48.

Criticism of his Men Seen.

26. Sixty-five years of realism. New Repub 43
(Je 17 '25) 101.

Criticism of Pinero's Trelawney of the Wells.

27. Hell as I know it. New Repub 43(Je 24 '25)
125-6.

No article by this title but in its place one on "Houdini."

28. Boswell and others. New Repub 43(Je 1 '25)
153-4.

The others: P. E. More and modern art and science.

29. Movies and burlesque. New Repub 43(Jl 8 '25)
181.

Their present state.

30. People against Dorothy Perkins. New Repub 43
(Jl 15 '25) 202-5.

31. Engaged. New Repub 43(Jl 29 '25) 262-3.

The Stagers revival of W. S. Gilbert's
comedy by that name.

32. Critics: a conversation. New Repub 43(Ag 5
'25) 292-3.

Is terminated by the downfall of
Western Civilization.

33. New Chaplin comedy. New Repub 44(S 2 '25) 45.

Chaplin is, "the one comedian who has
succeeded in doing anything really
distinguished with this comedy of gags."

34. Pope and Tennyson. New Repub 44(S 16 '25)
96-7.

And Tennyson and Verlaine.

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144-5.

Their state this season.

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203.

Our attitude toward his heroes shows
how little we now expect public honor
and excellent taste.

37. Alice Lloyd and Farfariello. New Repub 44
(O 21 '25) 230.

The great English and Italian music
hall singers.

38. George Bellows. New Repub 44 (O 28 '25)
254-5.

Bellows and the American school to
which he belonged.

39. Conversation in the Galapagos. Atlan 136
(N '25) 577-87.

Later in Discordant Encounters.

40. James Joyce as a poet. New Repub 44(N 4 '25)
279-80.

Probably the beginning of Axel's
Joyce.

41. Theatres, books and ladies' wear. New Repub
44(N 11 '25) 303-4.

42. After the game. New Repub 45(N 25 '25) 16-17.

Between Princeton and Yale.

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42-3.

Louis Untermeyer.

44. Some recent films. New Repub 45(D 16 '25) 109.

45. Paul Valery in the Academy. New Repub 45(D 23
'25) 134-5.

The significance of his succeeding
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45(D 30 '25) 161-2.

Are probably among the first to pass
beyond the spiritual obstruction of
scientific materialism.

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47. Lysistrata. New Repub 45(Ja 6 '26) 188.

The Moscow Art Theatre in New York.

48. Jazz problem. New Repub 45(Ja 13 '26)
217-19.

The chief interest of the new music season: the efforts of jazz and serious music to form a junction.

49. Opera comique. New Repub 45(Ja 20 '26)
240-41.

On productions of the Moscow Art Theatre and others.

50. Conversation on drama. Atlan 137(F '26)
235-42.

A close relative of "Mrs. Alving and Oedipus" in Discordant Encounters.

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An expressionistic play laid in the Grand Central.

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73-4.

His Les Noces; T. S. Eliot's The Hollow Men.

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Criticism of some movies.

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197-8.

Three creative sketches of negroes
as told to Wilson.

57. Reflections on returning to New York from
Louisiana. New Repub 46(Ap 28 '26)
304-5.

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The people and the Kittiwake Club.

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Repub 47(Je 30 '26) 168-70.

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(Jl 14 '26) 227-9.

Reviews.

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(Ag 4 '26) 310-11.

Bretano's new store.

64. Broadway in August. New Repub 48(S 1 '26) 44-5.

Notes on this and the then new vitaphone.

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70-1.

Their almost feminine cruelty.

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(O 6 '26) 194-5.

Kipling is not "written out."

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219-20.

The basis of this.

68. Gentlemen prefer blondes. New Repub 48(O 20
'26) 245-6.

Comparison of the book and the stage
version.

69. Publisher's list. New Repub 48(O 27 '26)
269-70.

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296-7.

A. N. Whitehead's suggestion on
Romanticism.

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77-80.

On much of the recent work on Poe.
Modern literature tends toward his
musical indefiniteness and mathema-
tical exactness.

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110-11.

On his Notes on Democracy. "...to have
made the Americans recognize themselves
in his super-boor and turn from the
revelation in horror is no inconsiderable
achievement."

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the first rank of the prose writers
of the time."

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112-13.

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Author.

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De Gross Wilbur's expressionistic play
by that name.

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Sitting in the club on the second day of
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The season's poetry. "...roots in contemporary reality ... is what I am pleading for in poetry."

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His background and work. He is "... perhaps one of the great creative minds of our days."

79. Beech street. New Repub 51(Je 29 '27) 150-1.

An account of a call on a friend there. This might have been an exercise for I Thought of Daisy.

80. Janning's first American film. New Repub 51 (Ag 3 '27) 283.

The waste of, "...much first-rate ability on what is essentially a maudlin film."

81. American court. New Repub 52(Ag 24 '27) 19-20.

The desire for an American hero is still unsatiated.

82. Lobsters for supper. New Repub 52(S 28 '27) 145-8.

A day at a country club. On the train back he reads with amazement that the Massachusetts Supreme Court has refused to grant the appeal for Sacco and Vanzetti.

83. Proust and Yeats. New Repub 52(O 5 '27) 176-7.

Their affinity (Symbolism).

84. Preface to Persius. New Repub 52(O 19 '27)
237-9.

The dead (as Persius), not the living,
are usually our best allies.

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102-3.

Criticism of Hemingway.

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Valery's induction into the French
Academy.

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88. Literary politics. New Repub 58(F 1 '28)289-90.

The various American critical schools.

89. Tennessee poets. New Repub 54(Mr 7 '28)103-4.

Review of Fugitives: An Anthology of Verse.

90. Short view of Proust. New Repub 54(Mr 21 '28)
140-8.

On the publication of the last volume
of his work. The "I" of the novel is
not Proust.

91. Movietone and musical show. New Repub 55
(Jl 18 '28) 226-7.

The new impression given by the
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efforts.

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E. E. Paramore.

93. Thornton Wilder. New Repub 55(Ag 8 '28) 303-5.

Wilder the first American profoundly
influenced by Proust.

94. Great magician. New Repub 56(O 18 '28) 248-50.

Houdini in retrospect.

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(O 24 '28) 274-6.

"As Dostoyevsky is one of the greatest
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the one who makes us most discontented
with literature."

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99-100.

Genevieve Taggard.

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97. Art Young. New Repub 57(Ja 9 '29) 217-18.

Review of his On My Way; his invaluable
contribution.

98. Dostoyevsky abroad. New Repub 57(Ja 30 '29)
302-3.

Review of The Diary of Dostoyevsky's Wife. Another example of the importance of the nineteenth for the twentieth century.

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(F 6 '29) 316-17.

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352-3.

Review of Geo. W. Cable: His Life and Letters by his daughter, Lucy L. C. Bikle.

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Gertrude Stein's Useful Knowledge opens the way for showing that "nonsense" implies "sense."

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The basis of "Symbolism" in Axel's Castle.

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Review of his Airway's, Inc. The American middle class cannot be as bad as he makes it.

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A slight controversy on American v. English.

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essays.

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300-5.

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Daisy.

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28-33.

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"Chapman."

108. Burton Bascoe. New Repub 59(My 29 '29) 49-50.

Review of his A Bookman's Daybook.

109. William Butler Yeats. New Repub 60(S 25 '29)
141-8.

A precursor of Axel's "Yeats." A follow
up on "A Preface to Modern Literature."

110. Paul Valery. New Repub 60(O 9 '29) 191-6.

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follow up on "A Preface to Modern
Literature."

111. T. S. Eliot. New Repub 60(N 13 '29) 341-9.

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another follow up on "A Preface to Modern
Literature."

112. James Joyce. New Repub 61(D 18 '29) 84-93.

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evidently another follower of "A
Preface to Modern Literature."

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113. Personality of Proust. New Repub 61(F 12 '30)
316-21.

See the fly-leaf quotation above.

114. Axel and Rimbaud. New Repub 62(F 26, Mr 5 '30)
34-40, 69-73.

Later in Axel's Castle.

115. Fable of the three limperary cripples. New
Repub 62(Mr 12 '30) 100-1.

Creative experiment of a literary
editor's stream of consciousness in
imitation of Joyce's Finnegan.
Carl van Doorman, Fumanism, Muck-of-
the-Month-Club, etc.

116. Notes on Babbitt and More. New Repub 62
(Mr 19 '30) 115-20; Reply. S.
Collins. Bookm 72(O '30) 162-4,
209-17.

From their essays in Humanism and America.

117. H. C. New Repub 63(Jl 16 '30) 266-8.

Herbert Croly.

118. Beautiful old things: scene from an unproduced
comedy. New Repub 63(Jl 30 '30)
313-17.

An experiment in surrealism.

119. Lucian versus Plato. New Repub 68(S 30 '31)
181-2.

Criticism of John Jay Chapman's Lucian, Plato and Greek Morals.

120. New Mexico notes. New Repub 68(O 7 '31) 202-4.

Later in The American Jitters as
"Indian Corn Dance."

121. Nietzschean line. New Repub 64(O 21 '30)
248-9.

The occasion: Norman Douglas' Goodbye to Western Civilization.

122. Dwight Morrow in New Jersey. New Repub 64
(N 5 '30) 316-17.

Later in The American Jitters.

123. Political headquarters. New Repub 65(N 19 '30)
15-16.

Later in The American Jitters.

124. Sophocles, Babbitt, and Freud. New Repub 65
(D 3 '30) 290-1.

The reply to S. Collins. See "Notes on Babbitt and More."

125. Foster and Fish. New Repub 65(D 24 '30)
158-62.

Later in The American Jitters.

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126. Appeal to progressives. New Repub 65(Ja 14 '31) 234-8.

127. Small depositors of Bank of United States meet at City Hall. New Repub 65 (Ja 28 '31) 290-1.

Later in The American Jitters.

128. Painting, opera, and theatre. New Repub 65 (F 4 '31) 322-3.

129. Communism and the cops. New Repub 65(F 11 '31) 344-7.

Later in The American Jitters.

130. Noel Coward, Camille, etc. New Repub 66 (F 18 '31) 19.

Remarks on the post-Xmas crop of shows.

131. Detroit motors. New Repub 66(Mr 25 '31) 145-50.

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132. Still-; meditations of a progressive. New Repub 66(Ap 8 '31) 198-200.

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133. Bad day in Brooklyn. New Repub 66(Ap 22 '31) 263-6.

Later in The American Jitters.

134. Progress and poverty. New Repub 67(My 20 '31)
13-6.

Later in The American Jitters.

135. Senator and an engineer. New Repub 67(My 27
'31) 36-8.

Later in The American Jitters.

136. Aladdin's lecture palace. New Repub 67(Je 10
'31) 90-2.

Later in The American Jitters.

137. Despot of Dearborn. Scrib M 90(Jl '31) 24-35.

Ford is a truly remarkable man but
ignorant and naive beyond belief.

138. Frank Keeney's coal diggers. New Repub 67
(Jl 8,15 '31) 195-9, 229-31.

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139. Two protests. New Repub 67(Jl 22 '31) 251-3.

Later in The American Jitters.

140. Tennessee agrarians. New Repub 67(Jl 29 '31)
279-81.

Later in The American Jitters.

141. Freight-car case. New Repub 68(Ag 26 '31)
38-43.

The Scottsboro boys. Later in
The American Jitters.

142. Red cross and county agent. Scrib M 90
(S '31) 249-58.

Later in The American Jitters.

143. Hoover dam. New Repub 68(S 2 '31) 66-9.

Later in The American Jitters.

144. Enchanted forest. New Repub 68(O 28 '31)
290-4.

Later in The American Jitters.

145. Eisenstein in Hollywood. New Repub 68(N 4 '31)
320-2.

Later in The American Jitters.

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(N 11 '31) 344-5.

Telling Americans of American
Capitalism instead of patronizing
G. B. Shaw might be a job more
worth doing.

147. Lawrence, Mass. New Repub 69(N 25 '31) 36-9.

Later in The American Jitters.

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149. Jumping-off place. New Repub 69(D 23 '31)
156-8.

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"The Case of The Author" in
The American Jitters.

151. What do the liberals hope for? New Repub 69
(F 10 '32) 345-8.

Can't say except vaguely and
uselessly.

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153. Brokers and pioneers. New Repub 70(Mr 23 '32)
142-5.

An ancestor of one part of "The Case
of The Author" in The American Jitters.

154. Literary class war. New Repub 70(My 4,11 '32)
319-23, 347-9.

Wilson and the Gold-Wilder fight.

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Criticism of The Lewis Carroll Book
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1896-1910.

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In "series of eight."

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35-9.

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163. Lytton Strachey. New Repub 72(S 21 '32)
146-8.

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72(S 28 '32) 173-5.

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165. Marxist history. New Repub 72(O 12 '32) 226-8.

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166. Trotsky. New Repub 73(Ja 4,11 '33) 207-9, 235-8.

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F 1 '33) 260-2, 287-90, 317-22.

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168. Inaugural parade. New Repub 74(Mr 22 '33)
154-6.

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169. Hudson River progressive. New Repub 74
(Ap 5 '33) 219-20.

Books by and about Franklin D.
Roosevelt.

170. Shaw in the Metropolitan. New Repub 74
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171. Satire of Samuel Butler. New Repub 75
(My 24 '33) 35-7.

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120-2, 148-9.

A precursor of "Illinois Household" in
Travels In Two Democracies.

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176-8.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

174. Detroit paradoxes. New Repub 75(Jl 12 '33)
230-3.

The conflict of Henry Ford v. Diego
Rivera, etc.

175. Is politics ruining art? Forum 90(Ag '33) 82-4.

An answer to the "politicophobia"
of J. W. Krutch.

176. Andre Malreaux. New Repub 75(Ag 9 '33) 346-7.

"I am not qualified to deal with his
work ... [but] Nobody in this country
seems to be doing anything about him."

177. Art, the proletariat and Marx. New Repub 76
(Ag 23 '33) 41-5.

"These are my opinions on this subject,
and now let people leave me alone."

178. Milk strike. New Repub 76(S 13 '33) 122-5.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies
as "The Second Battle of Oriskany."

179. Old stone house. Scrib M 94(D '33) 368-72.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

1 9 3 4

180. Canons of poetry. Atlan 153(Ap '34) 455-62.

Later to become "Is Verse a Dying
Technique?" in The Triple Thinkers.

181. What to do till the doctor comes. New Repub
79(Jl 11 '34) 230-2.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

182. Bernard Shaw's latest phase. New Repub 79
(Jl 18 '34) 269-70.

On his Short Stories, Scraps and Shavings and Too True To Be Good,
Village Wooing and On the Rocks.

183. Miss Barrows and Doctor Wirt. Scrib M 96
(Ag '34) 102-4.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

184. To the Finland station. New Repub 80(Ag 29,
S 19, O 3, 24 '34) 64-7, 91-5, 123-7,
150-3, 207-10, 302-7.

Section one on the decline of the
French revolutionary tradition in
the work of the bourgeois historians.

185. Man who chose the golden mean. New Repub 81
(N 28 '34) 79.

On R. H. B. Lockhart's Retreat from Glory.

1 9 3 5

186. Literary workers' Polonius. Atlan 155(Je '35)
674-82.

Edmund Wilson himself.

187. Letters to the Russians about Hemingway. New Repub 85(D 11 '35) 135-6.

Written for a Soviet paper. On
Hemingway's Green Hills.

188. Man in the mirror. New Repub 85(D 18 '35) 169-70.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

1 9 3 6

189. First days in Moscow. New Repub 86(Mr 25 '36)
184-6.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

190. Letters in the Soviet Union. New Repub 86
(Ap 1 '36) 212-14.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

191. Stalin as ikon. New Repub 86(Ap 15 '36) 271-3.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

192. Russian idyls. New Repub 86(Ap 29 '36) 339-42.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

193. As I saw Leningrad. Travel 67(My '36) 20-3.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

194. Russian paradoxes. New Repub 87(My 13 '36)
11-13.

Later in Travels In Two Democracies.

195. Novelist bites critic. Nation 142(Je 24 '36)
808-10.

James T. Farrell's Note On Literary Criticism.

196. Octogenerian Shaw. New Repub 87(Je 24 '36)
209-10.

On his The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, etc. "I am afraid that Bernard Shaw is showing signs of old age." Used later for The Triple Thinkers' Shaw.

197. Evgeni Onegin. New Repub 89(D 9 '36) 165-71.

Later in The Triple Thinkers.

1 9 3 7

198. Complaints. New Repub 89(Ja 20, F 3 '37)
345-8, 405-8.

Indictment of the literary left
and of Bernard de Voto.

199. Word-fetishism. New Repub 90(F 17 '37) 43-4.

Creative. Ah-h!

200. Kipling of Westward Ho! New Repub 90(Mr 24
'37) 214-15.

On his Something of Myself. The
publishers are roundly drubbed for
a sloppy job.

201. Mr. More and the Mithraic bull. New Repub
91(My 26 '37) 64-8.

Later in The Triple Thinkers.

202. Origins of socialism. New Repub 91(Je 9, 16,
30, Jl 7 '37) 121-4, 149-51, 213-17,
241-6.

Section two of "To the Finland Station."

203. Prize-winning blank verse. New Repub 91
(Je 23 '37) 193-4.

On Maxwell Anderson.

204. Taking the Marxist dialectic apart. New Repub 91(Ag 4 '37) 366-8.

One of the tasks of present Marxist criticism is to work out the relation of the economic base and superstructure.

205. A. E. Housman. New Repub 92(S 29 '37) 206-10.

Later in The Triple Thinkers.

206. John Jay Chapman. Atlan 160(N '37) 581-95.

Later in The Triple Thinkers.

207. Russia: escape from propaganda. bibliog Nation 145(N 13 '37) 531-2.

Much of the recent adverse criticism in books.

208. Marxism and literature. Atlan 160(D '37) 741-50.

Later in The Triple Thinkers.

209. Stalin, Trotsky, and Willi Schlamm. Nation 145(D 11 '37) 648-9.

1 9 3 8

210. Bronze horseman. New Repub 93(Ja 26 '38) 303-4.

Later in The Triple Thinkers.

211. Pleasures of literature. Nation 146(Ja 29 '38) 128-9.

By Edmund (himself) Wilson (not Christopher Morley).

212. Bernard Shaw at eighty. Atlan 161(F '38)
198-215.

Later in The Triple Thinkers.

213. Kipling's American quarrel. New Repub 94
(F 16 '38) 53.

On Rudyard Kipling's Vermont Feud
by F. Van de Water.

214. Shut up that Russian novel. New Repub 94
(Ap 6 '38) 264-7.

"So long as we persist in imagining those one hundred and seventy-five million people as either a New Jerusalem or a nightmare, we shall be unable to see our own one hundred and thirty million people. We shall be unable to see ourselves. Let us shut up that Russian novel."

215. Peggy Bacon: poet with pictures. New Repub
94(Ap 27 '38) 363.

"This is what the life of art ought to be."

216. Justice to Edith Wharton. New Repub 95(Je 29
'38) 209-13.

217. Karl Marx: Prometheus and Lucifer. New Repub
95(Jl 6 '38) 244-7.

In section three of "To the Finland Station."

218. Marx decides to change the world. New Repub
95(Jl 20 '38) 301-4.

In section three of "To the Finland Station."

219. Young man from Manchester. New Repub 95
(Ag 3 '38) 352-6.

In section three of "To the Finland
Station."

220. Marx-Engels partnership. New Repub 96
(Ag 17 '38) 40-3.

In section three of "To the Finland
Station."

221. Marx and Engels: grinding the lens. New Repub
96(S 7 '38) 125-8.

In section three of "To the Finland
Station."

1 9 3 9

222. Ghost of an anglophile. New Repub 97(Ja 25
'39) 347-9.

Criticism of L. P. Smith's Unforgotten
Years.

223. Some letters after 1848. New Repub 98(F 8,
Mr 8 '39) 21-3, 130.

Engels to Marx and Flaubert to
Maxine du Camp support Wilson's
present individualism.

224. Antigone in a new tempo. New Repub 98(Mr 1
'39) 106.

On The Antigone of Sophocles: An English
Version by D. Fitts and R. Fitzgerald.

225. Marxist humanism. New Repub 98(My 3 '39)
371-2.

Marx and Engels have, "...that sense of a rich and various world, that conception of many kinds of mastery possible for human beings, all interesting and all good in their kinds."

III. Periodical Poetry, Prose Poetry

1. Gluck in New York: poem. New Repub 22
(Mr 31 '20) 150.
2. G. H. Q., January, 1919; poem. Poetry 17
(N '20) 78.
3. Not here; poem. Poetry 17 (N '20) 78.
4. Landscape. New Repub 26(Mr 23 '21) 96.
Description of a blight area.
5. Night thoughts in Paris: a rhapsody. New Repub
30(Mr 15 '22) 75-7.
6. Stucco and stone; poem. Lit Digest 74
(S 30 '22) 30.
7. Olympians; poem. Scrib M 73(Ja '23) 62.
8. It's great to be a New Yorker! New Repub 42
(Mr 11 '25) 69-70.

Jumble of the jumble that is New York.

9. Reveries. New Repub 44(S 30 '25) 155-6.
10. To a friend going abroad; poem. Scrib M
79(Mr '26) 274.
11. To a young girl indicted for murder: poem.
Sat R Lit 2(Mr 20 '26) 647.

In Poets, Farewell!
12. Still life. New Repub 48(N 10 '26) 322-3.
13. (tr.) Dedication to a book: poem. A.E.Housman.
Bookm 66(O '27) 162.

In Poets, Farewell!
14. Off New York: July, 1919. New Repub 57
(N 28 '28) 45.
15. Provincetown: poem. Bookm 69(Ap '29) 166.
16. Dark room; poem. New Repub 81(O 5 '34) 101.
17. Response of the gentle scholars; poem. New
Repub 82(Mr 27 '35) 178.
18. Night in May; poem. New Repub 82(Ap 10 '35)
238.
19. Sleeping and waking: This blue world; Nightmare,
Poured full of thin gold sun, September;
Crows of March; poems. Poetry
47(F '36) 243-5.

20. Land's edge: Provincetown, 1936; Past midnight;
Morning; poems. Poetry 50(Jl '37)
186-7.
21. Good neighbors; poem. New Repub 92(O 27 '37)
337-8.
22. Playwright in paradise; poem. New Repub 98
(Ap 26 '39) 332.