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Modern Literature. (Speech.)

There are certain people who get ^{kind of} very haughtily whenever they discuss contemporary literature. They are ~~indeed~~ ^{lay been} in the habit of sneering at almost everything that ~~has~~ ^{has} been written in our days. In their opinion, it's all very cheap stuff, and not quite worthy of their serious consideration. - - To tell the truth: this kind of people make me pretty nervous. I don't like ~~listening to~~ ^{u/} their pretentious talk, and I feel they are rather silly, when they assure me, that they refuse to read anything but Shakespeare, and some ~~mythical~~ ^{goetical} prayers of old Egyptian Priests, and occasionally a few amusing paragraphs of Julius Caesar's ~~in an adductive mood:~~ ^{glance into Jane Austen.} I am inclined, then, to remark: "Your literary taste is utterly aristocratic indeed. - Incidentally, I am an admirer of Noël Coward, and Vicky Baum's 'Grand Hotel' ^{to me} ~~is~~ ^a sort of Bible to me...": Just to shock those smart people, you know, and to make them angry... For I really think old Cesar and the Egyptian Priests aren't bad at all. But our modern literature isn't merely rot and dirt either. As a matter of fact, I am very keenly interested in modern literature as I happen to be very interested in our modern life...

Pessimistic philosophers, such as Oswald Spengler, think Western Civilization has passed over its peak and ~~is~~ ^{is} obviously in decline. They express serious doubts as to whether or not modern civilization - the civilization of the XX. century - may succeed, once more, in creating any artistic works of high rank and essential significance. Spengler - who, by the way, was a sort of spiritual forerunner of the Nazis - ~~preached~~ ^{declared} that the representative type of our historical period is the engineer, not the poet nor the philosopher. The simple fact that he himself, Herr Spengler, happened to be ^{by profession} a philosopher, not an engineer, ^{did} ~~by profession~~ ⁱⁿ seemingly ~~was~~ ^{was} not disturbing ~~to~~ ^{to} him. ~~He~~ Probably he considered himself as being the last philosopher whose

special task it was to inform the public that the creative spirit of the Western World ~~had reached its end~~, was exhausted and had reached its end. - The confusing fact is that there are many minor Spenglers - writers and thinkers, whose profound and sinister pessimism for Western Culture doesn't prevent them from taking their own message and spiritual existence mighty seriously. ~~They keep on saying:~~ "We are the last ones! (Or rather: "I am the last one" - since the next fellow already ^{represents} ~~is~~, in their opinion, a dreary symptom of cultural decadence, but by no means the authentic voice and expression of the truly Occidental mind...) * "I am the last ^{one} of the really ^{great figures} ~~wise men~~, ^{all} ~~each of them~~ ^{insist} ~~they~~ ^{they say} proudly and desparately. "And I feel like the Holy Man who had to preach in the desert.... Nobody is able, in this dreary days of ours, to ^{appreciate} ~~understand~~ the importance of my ideas... Perhaps there will be future generations, enlightened and clever enough to understand my genius..." - This subborn hope for ^{to come} ~~coming~~ generations that will be ~~so much~~ ^{knowing} more intelligent and ^{understanding} ~~understanding~~ than we are, ~~seems~~ strikes me as a trifle paradoxical. For - if Western Civilization really is ^{on the verge} ~~in state~~ of decay, how ^{could it} ~~could it~~ ^{ever} succeed in producing any generations ^{much} ~~superior~~ to the doomed type of human-beings ^{that} ~~we~~ ^{represent} ~~are~~?

However, this melancolic and at once conceited sort of hope for more understanding generation ^{by any means} ~~to come~~, is not ^a ~~special~~ feature of our time. Misunderstood poets and thinkers ~~apparently~~ ^{have} always found some dubious consolation in the idea that the readers of the future may be more intelligent than the silly people of their own period.

^{The French writer} Stendhal didn't have the slightest confidence in the intellectual abilities of his own contemporaries; but he wrote down very flattering things for the readership of the future. "You will be able to grasp the charm and the significance of my writings!" He was meaning us,

the readers of the XX. century, when he spoke that way, as far back as 1830.

Well, there we are... And now authors complain that the readers of the XX. century are far more interested in movies and politics, price fighters and ^{cheap} magazines, radio and foot ball than in serious books. I guess those ^{la} ~~complaining~~ authors are right, and, at the time, mistaken. Of course and very obviously, ~~people~~ the majority of people is much more keenly concerned with ~~Notre~~ the chances of the "Notre Dame" team or with Mr. Roosevelt's Third Term ^{they are} ~~than~~ with any new volume of poetry or with Eugen O'Neill's plans for a drama in seven parts that will keep people for a couple of weeks in the theatre... The basical mistake, however, which authors make is this: that they stubbornly assume ~~the~~ the public of some faraway period ~~of the past or the future~~ has been - or will be - any better. The average man of other centuries neglected literature,

^{because} not because he preferred the movies or the price fighters; but simply he could not read. And the comparatively small groups of people that

was able to read at all, ^{obstinately} consistently preferred cheap stuff to the works of the really important authors. The German public 140 years ^{for instance} ago, felt the novels and plays of Goethe were pretty dull, and ~~at~~ a

fellow by the name of Kotzebue, who wrote ^{maudlin} ~~melodramatic~~ nonsense, was ^{much} ~~by far~~ more popular than the "Prince of Poets" at Weimar. ~~At the same~~

time - the so-called "great period" of Germanic culture - a lady friend

of Goethe, a woman ^{by the name of} ~~called~~ Johanna Schopenhauer, produced heaps of ^{all of them} mediocre novels, and they were best-sellers. The son of Madame ~~sa~~

Schopenhauer, however - ^{a certain} Arthur Schopenhauer - was busy composing a long and complicated philosophical essay, "The World as ~~a~~ a Product of Will and Imagination." His successful mother couldn't help ~~se~~ sneering at her son's hopeless and senseless work - which later turned

was recognized was one of ~~the~~ mankind's most fascinating and essential intellectual achievements. What did Arthur Schopenhauer feel, when his own mother suggested him to stop ~~his~~ writing since quite obviously nobody on earth was interested in it? - He answered her proudly: "Dear and ^e esteemed Maman! People still will read and discuss my books when yours will be entirely forgotten..."

It has always been that way. Men and women, who ^{devote their lives} ~~have the ambition of~~ ^{to the delicate task of} ~~being - or of becoming~~ serious writing, should realize, before they make up their mind, that they would have a better chance, as far as financial success and popularity ^{are} ~~is~~ concerned, by going into politics, selling motor cars, or writing movie scenarios. Of course, writers want to influence the public, and pretty often they actually succeed in doing so, in the long run... But they should renounce the idea of having any ^{on} immediate influence with the people. ~~is a matter of fact, the immediate~~ popular success often turns out to be very dangerous for the further development of the writer, ~~cases like the somehow hectic careers of Ernest Hemingway or Erich Maria Remarque are proving this...~~ Writers want and need the Glory, and are always eager to conquer it. At the same time, they don't have - or should not have - any illusions regarding the somewhat dubious ^{and transient} ~~and~~ character of success and popularity...

The great German poet Rainer Maria Rilke has said: "Fame is nothing but the sum of all the misunderstandings ~~which~~ people circulating in the world about one individual." - ~~A very exceptional and fortunate combination of circumstances is necessary to bring about the rare phenomenon of a popular success that is at once solid and immediate~~ - as it happened, for instance, in the case of Dickens. As a rule, however, serious artists and writers - ^{one} ~~anybody~~ who ^{wants} ~~use~~ to express anything really new - have got to be very patient. They should have a

that's

soundly firm self-confidence - which is by no means identical with arrogance and silly vanity...

An artist or writer, whose self-confidence is firm and sound, is not likely to be afraid of the competition ^{to} movies, radio, sport and politics are making to the fine arts. The very competition of the movies, for instance, has its favourable aspects for serious literature as well. For we may safely assume that ^(at least some of the) people who have seen and admired the screen version of "Anna Karenina", "Madame Bovary" or "Raskolnikoff", are rather disposed to read occasionally - when they are sick in bed, or travelling on a boat - a novel by Tolstoi, Flaubert, or Dostojewsky - while the same sort of people, if they would not have seen the picture, ^{scarcely} ~~would~~ would have thought of any of those masters. We can take it for granted that a single picture like "Zola" has done more for the fame of French literature in this country than hundreds of scholarly books ever did. (I make this statement without over-rating the intellectual value this kind of ^{casual} ~~accidental~~ and superficial knowledge may have...)

I really think a serious author nowadays has got a better chance to be heard and appreciated than he ^{used to have} ~~has had~~ a century or five centuries ago. I suppose a definitely ^{higher} percentage of the average people now is concerned with literature than it used to be in 1840 or in 1640. It is my belief that the complaints of the authors about the general lack of literary interest, ^{in fact} are as un-justified as the snobbish reader's complaint that there aren't any new books worthwhile reading. As a matter of fact, there are plenty of them.

We have to admit that the world-literature possesses less really outstanding, imposing and truly first-rate figures to-day than it ^{still} did fifty or seventy years ^{ago}, in the second part of the XIX. century.

The XIX. century has produced an impressive group of literary giants who certainly did not have successors of the same size. Think of Walt Whitman and Flaubert, of Henrik Ibsen and Turgenev, of Strindberg and Zola, of Nietzsche and Darwin and Marx, of Tolstoi and Dostojewsky! All of them were the sons of the same historical period - the very period that has brought about Wagner and Tschaikowsky, Manet and Tish. Low and Verlaine, Frank Norris, Van Gogh, Edgar Allan Poe and Baudelaire. At that time, even the morbid genius possessed a strength and powerful fascination which the sound and vital talent often lacks. The spiritual character of men as Poe, Baudelaire and Strindberg has decadent elements, and still they are really great... The combination of decadence and strength is, indeed, one of the strange and thrilling features of the late XIX. century.

Men of this enormous size don't exist anymore. There isn't any "second Tolstoi" in Russia, not a second Flaubert in France, nor another Nietzsche in Germany, nor is there a new Walt Whitman in this country. - One may say that some "grand old men" who only recently passed away, still belonged to that illustrious XIX. century-family. When I met Maxim Gorki, at Moscow - just a few years before he died -

I was startled with this impression: Yes, indeed, he almost has the greatness of Tolstoi... This little word of "almost", however - which restricted my spontaneous admiration, actually proves that even Gorki was just a minor brother of the really gigantic ones: of Tolstoi and Dostojewski, Turgenev and Gogol... And the same is true about Anatole France, whom I ~~was~~ saw in Paris. There couldn't be any doubt, he was related to the most distinguished figures of French literature; he had the malicious elegance and the moral determination of Voltaire, the civic courage of Zola, the artistic conscientiousness of Flaubert. Yet he only was a distant cousin of those late giants...

And as to Gabriele D'Annunzio, the last great figure of the Italian literature, the phony elements in his work and personality are almost shamelessly obvious.

~~But~~ I don't intend, however, to hint at the general decline of our literature by admitting that the ~~great big~~ giants have died out. On the contrary, I believe that the intellectual and artistic level of the average literary production is higher now than it was in the XIX. century, and probably higher than it ^{even} ~~ever~~ has been ~~ever~~ before. I suppose there has been, in our grandfathers' days, much more melodramatic ^{bunk} ~~nonsense~~ in love-and-adventures-stories, than our generation possibly could bear. Literature on the whole - and I am speaking even about the kind of literature distributed ~~in~~ by the popular magazines - has become a little bit more realistic, somewhat closer to life - and even the childish romance of the pretty little stenographer who, after so many unfortunate events, in the last chapter finally gets married to her handsome and wealthy young boss - even those most silly modern fairy-tales, that are inspiring and comforting so many ^{a genuine} ~~real~~ little stenographers, are perhaps a trifle less idiotic than the more ancient pattern, of the count, the wicked baroness and the innocent peasant girl...

~~The literature of the XX. century cannot boast of any Goethe or Shakespeare, but it must not be ashamed of its general standard. There are plenty of interesting talents, and there even are some really distinguished authors, whose work is fascinating with the authentic characteristic of genius.~~

When I am speaking about modern literature, I mean, above all, modern prose. For the dramatic production, just now, is not really in the center of intellectual and artistic interest. There are, ^{of course,} a few outstanding playwrights in our time, such as Eugene O'Neill, Bernhard Shaw, and the celebrated German Gerhart Hauptmann. The two latter ones, however, ^{already has become} ~~seemingly~~ represent a literary period that is finished and historical. ~~already by now~~. For me feeling, the spiritual atmosphere in old Shaw's

brilliant comedies and dramas has pure XIX.-century flavour, and, in

spite of all his biting wise-cracks and his somewhat forced ~~own~~

juvenile attitude, Shaw's personality strikes me as the half comic half

venerable remnant of another ^{era} century. - Gerhart Hauptmann, who has

written some wonderful plays, used to be the spiritual leader of the

young naturalistic German school of drama, which was influenced by

Ibsen and the realistic French novels. Later he turned romantic, then

realistic again, and finally he got senile. He is living now in Nazi

Germany, stubbornly hoping Hitler may permit him to earn some royalties

... We really don't have, at this moment, anything I ~~may~~ would call

a literary movement of the theatre. The last movement that may deserve

this designation, was the expressionistic school, characteristic for

the ^{lectic} ~~first~~ years following the last war. It was more influential in

Europe than it ever has been in this country, and it had more importance

in Germany than ^{it had} anywhere else. - Now, the stage is more or less domina-

ted by plays which sometimes have "social significance" but very rarely

^{power} an impressive lot of literary charm or original ^{ideas} style. Or else we watch

the triumphs of the classics - including Ibsen, ^{Scribe} and Dumas ^{junior} - or of

certain modern theatrical professionals, who combine a great deal of

^{technical} skill and ~~new~~ experience with more-or-less sparkling wit and a light,

amusing conduct of the dialogue. Outstanding among these minor masters

of the dramatic art ^{are} is the Hungarian play-wright Franz Molnar, the

Frenchmen Savoir, Henri Bernstein, Pagnol and Verneuil, and, finally, the

successful Americans Sam Berman and George G. Kaufmann. There are, of course,

other more ambitious and more profound dramatists, beside the isolated

figure of Eugene O'Neill; the Irishman O'Casey, for instance, ^{or Jean Giraudoux} is regarded

^I Robert Sherwood, Georg Kaiser, Paul Vincent Carroll and Soroyan.

by some influential critics as being the most powerful and original

dramatic talent of our time. However, I can see varied ~~theatrical~~ trends,

many successful or unsuccessful experiments; but I ~~don't~~ see any new

group, any collective ~~dramatic~~ movement. - - ^{in the modern dramatic production} ~~fail to notice~~

It is difficult, if not impossible, to discuss and to judge the standard and the tendencies of international lyrical poetry - simply because it is entirely senseless to read any poetry ~~in translation~~. ^{Actually} translated into a foreign language. For a poem ~~only~~ ^{exists} only in its original version; the translator either must destroy its real poetical flavour; or else he will create a new poem - which might be a good poem, if the translator happens to be an authentic poet ~~himself~~ by his own right. However, the new piece-of-art usually has but a slight resemblance with the original composition. - If Russian intellectuals keep assuring us that Puschkin's verses really possess ^{the} enchanting ~~charm~~ ^{may} sweetness and overwhelming power of Goethe or Shakespeare, we ~~can~~ believe it - or not... ^{Once} A Hungarian colleague ~~once~~ has told me: "We have a poet who really is as great as Heinrich Heine or Paul Verlaine. His name is Adi..." Probably the expression of my face remained a bit skeptical. The Hungarian connoisseur, however, grew very excited and passionate. "Take my word of honor for it!" he cried out. "That fellow Adi really happened to be a genius!!" - Well, I had to accept his word of honor as I was not in the position of enjoying the beauty of the Hungarian verses...

It occurs but very rarely that poets - even the ones who ~~are writing~~ ^{themselves in} ~~in~~ one of the widely understood languages - succeed in exercising any international ~~influence~~ ^{those} influence. Heinrich Heine, Baudelaire ^{known and} and Walt Whitman, whose poetical works really are celebrated ~~and known~~ ^{Nowadays} all over the world, represent quite exceptional cases. ~~In our days~~, however, only very few lyrical poets ~~get~~ have become famous outside their own countries. Rainer Maria Rilke - who was born in Czechoslovakia and wrote not only in German but later also in French - has found admirers and imitators everywhere; he probably is the most widely read German poet, after Heinrich Heine. But there are many other ~~eminent~~ contemporary poets who remain actually un-known abroad, although they are ~~regarded~~ ^{considered}

(The persuasive eloquence of his introduction. Introduced flowers and angels. International.)
Fame started from PARIS. Rodin's secretary.

as most

-10-
reflective

How many people have

eminent figures in their homelands. ~~who has~~ ever heard, in this country, the names of the great French Poet Paul Valéry or of the illustrious German Stefan George? ^{Edgar Wiesel, only known as a novelist...} How many Frenchmen or Germans have ever read a single line by Edna St. Vincent Millay, or by William Butler Yeats? ^{Carl Sandburg} And how many cultured people, in France, Germany or American, could tell me the names of any living Russian, Spanish or Swedish poet? - ^{indeed} ~~it really seems~~ Poetry is ^{which} the secret treasure each nation jealously is hiding from the other one...

The great international events of XX. century literature are taking place in the sphere of prose production, either fiction or essayistic. A skeptical observer may ^{state} ~~say~~ that the modern lyrical poets didn't conquer any new & spiritual or sentimental ~~new~~ eras, since the days of Whitman, Arthur Rimbaud and Rilke. ~~And those skeptics may add, that the drama did not really develop nor change its style since the literary revolutions of "naturalism" and "expressionism". Nobody can deny, however, that men like James Joyce and Marcel Proust have created something essentially and entirely new; that the psychological knowledge of modern novelists was deepened by the scientific theories of Sigmund Freud, while their social conscience was sharpened~~ ^{med. through the contact with} the materialistic philosophy of Karl Marx. (For we must not forget that figures ^{such as} like Marx and Freud have influenced even those who, for political, religious or scientific reasons, are opposed to their principles...)

Yes, I daresay and insist on it, ~~there~~ that there are essentially new elements in the modern way of observing and describing human life, either social or individual. There is a new method of understanding and describing human history as well. Compare the somewhat naive and stiff historical novels by Sir Walter Scott with the psychological ^{Bruno Tassan} historical portraits by Lytton Strachey, Stefan Zweig, and André Maurois!.

of historical personalities, as created

Emil
Emding

Take on the one hand the un-realistic, ^{theatrical} ~~maladromantic~~ descriptions of ^{of old} ~~ancient Athens and Greece or Rome~~ or ~~ancient Oriental life~~ we had to read in our twenty that used to be popular, thirty or fifty years ago - and on the other hand, the historical novels by Lion Feuchtwanger, or Schalom Asch's new novel on Jesus Christ, or certain recent epics dealing with ^{historical} ~~ancient~~ American life. ^{for instance: "Gone with the Wind" or "The Tree of Liberty."} There you have the difference! The ~~historical~~ novelist of the XIX. century used the ^{historical} ~~ancient~~ background as a romantic setting as Verdi has used the African milieu in "Aida" or Richard Wagner the ^{ancient} ~~old~~ Germanic mythology in "Der Ring". The ~~historical~~ novel of the XIX. century had the highly theatrical style of the opera. The modern author, however, seeks in the ~~historical~~ the human elements in the historical disguise; he is concerned with the resemblances between modern conditions of life and the ^{far away} ~~ancient~~ events; he discovers in the Rome of Emperor Nero, or in Elisabethan England, social struggles, psychological complications, human problems that are amazingly similar to our own troubles.

~~There~~ What I like about modern literature, and what I think to be its most significant feature, is its direct approach to human life/including all of its aspects, all its mysteries. The modern novelist, who really ^e ~~deserves~~ this honorable designation, does not have the ambition just to ~~invent~~ tell an "interesting story", to make up an exciting plot. The profoundly detailed description and analysis of a single day in a single man's life - as James Joyce ^{has given} ~~gave~~ it in his "Ulysses" - can be as fascinating a topic/as any story of great intrigues and adventures. On the other hand, the epic of a group of people, the collective novel seems to certain authors ^{to be} more timely, more typical for our special period, than any tragedy or romance of ^{any} ~~any~~ individual. In the great novel "U.S.A." by John dos Passos the real hero is no individual character but the country as a whole. (In the dramatic form, Thornton Wilder tried to perform the same task when he gave the comic tragedy

and tragic comedy of "Our Town".) ^{the leading character...} The community as such becoming

In other representative modern novels neither the collective nor the individual take the ^{dominant} ~~leading~~ part, but rather the ideas, the spiritual or moral problems themselves. The result is a new type of half-philosophical, half narrative prose, which we may call the "novel of ideas".

^{just as the} ~~Antique Philosophy - Nietzsche - Ortega - Bergson - Spengler~~
In Aldous Huxley's ^{last} ~~important~~ book, for instance - the novel ^{half or} ~~"Evelyn in Gaza"~~ ^{logical,} ~~"Evelyn in Gaza"~~ ^{half} ~~the authentic drama seems to take place rather~~ ^{analytic}
between ideas and contradictory principles rather than between human beings. ^{also} The same thing is true regarding the famous novel "Les Faux Monnayeurs" ("The Coiners"), by André Gide. And in Thomas Mann's "Magic Mountain", too, the intellectual adventures and moral struggles of the young hero, Hans Castorp, are more essential and more dramatic than the actual plot. ~~For the~~

In these "novels of ideas", as in the "collective novels", the crucial topic is the present state of mankind; the chances and the dangers of its further development; the social and metaphysical implications ~~we~~ involved in our mysterious existence on this wandering planet that we call The Earth. - The social problem is but one aspect of the human ^{to be more of course, but} ~~enigma~~ ^{has been somewhat} ~~essential aspect~~ ^{was} ~~which perhaps~~ ^{over-emphasized} in modern writing, just as in former days the sentimental theme, the love angle has definitely been over-plaid. The social point of view has dominated, for quite a while, the modern novel, and, more especially, the modern American novel. In Europe too, of course, political and social struggles ~~were~~ have been mirrored in a striking literature of social protest. Young French writers, as André Malraux and Louis Aragon, followed with zeal and talent the pattern of their great compatriot, Emile Zola. ^{of the last 25 years,} ~~The daily political and social events,~~ ^{to} the profound changes of the social structure in Europe, could not fail ~~exercising~~ ^{to} a deep and lasting influence upon modern European literature. The last World War wasn't yet finished, when Henri Barbusse published his sensational

novel "The Fire" - which was followed, later, by Remarque's success= full war story, and many other books of the same kind - ; the civil war in Spain, the concentration camps in Nazi Germany, the ^{tragedy} ~~exodus~~ of the German Jews, the struggle in the Far East, the strikes of the French proletarians - : all these events have ^{been used} ~~served~~, almost without any delay, as ^{topics} ~~subjects~~ for plays, novels, poems and short stories. - On the other hand, there is, at the same time, a certain tendency toward a new kind of mysticism - which is very obvious, for instance, in the strange and fascinating prose of the Austrian Jew Franz Kafka - whose barock ^{and at once classic} short stories and ^{fragmentary} novel were translated into varied languages, including English, ^{His peculiar} and whose style influenced many writers, although it ^{with great} ~~exactness of dreams~~. America. "Abandon" (K. in Paragon) Liberty never became really popular with the wider public. We can notice

mystical and neo-religious element in the enchanting writings of the

French-American novelist Julien Green, in the latest works of Aldous

Huxley, in Thomas Mann's Biblical epic "Joseph and His Brothers",

in the poetical production of ^{David} modern French ^{and Austrian} Catholics, among them

the most refined artists and most progressive thinkers. The so-

called surréalists, ^{André Breton and his followers}, are trying very hard, although not always success=

fully, to combine a radical revolutionary attitude with ecstatic

^{wondrous and grotesque} visions and morbid dreams of the most ~~terrifying~~ sort. But even their

hectic exaggerations are a symptom of the very trends and moods I have

mentioned. I may add that all of this has nothing ^{at all} to do ~~whatsoever~~

with any new tendency of "back to the Ivory Tower". We have left that

notorious building - the Ivory Tower - , deliberately and for good.

The new mysticism I have in mind does not mean any attempt of escaping

the ugly hardships of reality; it rather represents a new approach

to the complex and comprehensive reality of the Human Problem.

In the American literature, however, this trend and element, ^{seemingly} ~~seemingly~~

are less outspoken and less influential. What we admire most about

American novels, is: that they are giving us the precise and genuine

picture of real American life. There is a clear and impressive line,

Popularized
theory of
Dalton
Publishing
The theory
of
Prof. Dalton
- No:
5. Am.
window

leading from Frank Norris to ~~his~~ Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair, and Hergesheimer. From them - who almost possess the dignity of classics by now - the strong life-line of American literature goes further, to the younger generation of ^{Sherwood Anderson} Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner, John Dos Passos and Thomas Wolfe, Thornton Wilder and Steinbeck. I think the American novel to be the most significant ^{purely} cultural achievement this nation has ^{made} ~~reached~~ in this century - far more ^{essential} ~~important~~, in my opinion, than ~~the~~ modern American music or painting. All of the ~~the~~ novelists I have mentioned, show the experienced master-craftmanship that has absorbed European narrative art which they have regenerated and transformed by blending it with some new element - the element of ^{true} ~~real~~ Americanism...

America has received a great deal from European culture; the great novels of Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis wouldn't exist as they ^{are} ~~do~~, without the influence and pattern of the French social novel. The realism of the "American Tragedy", ^{lower} is not quite the realism anymore of Zola's "Germinal" or of Flaubert's "Madame Bovary". There is an new element in the striking realism of the American authors. The American realism of 1920 is not any longer the European naturalism of 1890. And the American realism of 1930 and 1940 ^{has gone} ~~is going~~ a decisive step further than the generation of Dreiser ~~and~~ could do. For those masters - Dreiser and his generation - , who have given us the first authentic and convincing epics of American Life, still ~~lacked~~ ^{lacked} a certain touch, a mysterious something - that Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe and Hemingway have discovered.

What is it that makes the the dry staccato of Hemingway's early writings so fascinating? Why did so many European authors try to imitate this ^{seemingly so very simple manner} ~~new way~~ of telling stories and ~~describing~~ ^{early} people? There are certain scenes, ^{brief} ~~certain~~ short dialogues in Hemingway's books

of giving the very essence of relations between human beings.

which I can never forget. What ~~is~~ ^{is making} them so unforgettable?
There is a new realism which is more complex - I would like to say:
more complete - ^{from the} mechanical realism of the XIX. century. This new style -
the style of the XX. century - is embracing and forming new elements
which seemingly have been un-known to former generations. It is plain
realism, yet it has a mysterious element. For life is very real, but, at
the same time, it is very mysterious. He/who has the feeling for the
entirety and the complexity of life, and who wants to transmit it,
~~has~~ will find ~~and~~ or will invent a new style - which ^{we may call} is: realism plus
surrealism. And some American authors have found it, this new style.
I feel it and I admire it in Thomas Wolfe's "Look Homewards Angel!"
which I consider ~~to be~~ one of the most original and most significant
literary achievements of our time. And I can recognize it in certain
parts of Steinbeck's ^(social topics) ~~stories~~, and in young Frederic Prokosch's
sad and colourful descriptions of Asiatic landscapes and folks -
human beings and sceneries, by the way, that he never has really seen,
a fact to which the prose of "The Asiatics" probably owes its
dream-like intensity... Yes, I can feel and I can admire this new qua=
lity and charm in the books of many Americans: in some short stories
and in a thrilling novel like "Cain" ^{his book} "Serenade",
of Saroyan, and in the hard and concentrated style of James T. Farrell -
that highly gifted young fellow of Irish descent, from
whom we ^{still} can expect a lot...

I could go on for quite a while, mentioning names, praising talents.
But what I ^{want} really ~~am~~ to say, is just this: that the European writers
at this moment receive-back important portions of the stimulating
gift ^{in many respects} European literature has once given to America. Now it is the
term ~~of~~ the European novelists to learn and to admire ~~them~~

from their American
colleagues

in modern Am. lit. Violence

There is a new enthusiasm and a new bitterness, a new ~~anger~~ and a new tenderness, a new fear and a new courage, a new feeling of human things, a new rythm, and a new love. Yes, definitely, there is a very new way of loving this life and this country. The poet Archibald Macleish is crying it out when he writes:

"America is promises to
Us
To take them
Brutally
with love *but*
Take them.

O believe this!"

~~I have nothing against those Egyptian Priests, and Cesar, and the rest of them. But the literature of the XX. century is not bad. I insist upon this point: it is not bad at all.~~

The XX. century may not be a very cosy century; but ^{it} certainly ~~is~~ is not dull. So the literature it produces, can scarcely be very cosy. ~~It~~ But it isn't dull. - I think ^{amazing} ~~fantastic~~ old Gertnude Stein is not mistaken when she ^{exclaiming} ~~exclaims~~:

^{Century}
"So the twentieth is that, it is a time when everything cracks, where everything is destroyed, everything isolates itself, it is a more splendid thing than a period where everything follows itself. So then the 20. century is a splendid period, not a reasonable one in the scientific sense, but splendid. - So then the twentieth century is splendid. - Yes. Thank you."

Thus ^{she announced} ~~the brave old lady~~ speaks in her very stimulating little book on ~~the painter~~ Picasso. Don't you think it's quite plain and fairly ~~under-~~ ^{intelligible} standable? I really feel she is right.

For ~~our~~ the century that it ours, ^{happens to be} ~~strikes me as~~ an utterly dangerous one. Not only because of totalitarian states and totalitarian wars; ~~but~~ ^{but} ~~also~~ - and above all - because of the new intellectual adventures

we have to face

~~for~~ man. There is a new kind of uncertainty ~~we have to face~~, and there ~~is~~ a new kind of ^{spiritual} Freedom. Modern man keeps asking more and deeper questions than human beings have ever asked before. And he has less confidence in answers than other generations used to have. Many issues that were taken for granted by the people of the XVIII th. and the XX th. centuries, are considered as very dubious by the people of our time. ^{therefore} Modern thinkers are speaking about the "utter destruction of the Reasoning Man".

The End of Reasoning Man: thus is the ~~new~~ title ~~of~~ of a series of significant articles, ~~I found in the magazine~~ "New Republic".

The author of the ^{central} essay, Malcolm Cowley, remarks that John Stuart Mill had portrait Man "as possessing certain attributes: he was rational, he was civilized, he was morally free, he was an individual. Now, one by one, these attributes have been stripped away from him. He was not rational; on the contrary, most of his actions were conditional reflexes, and many of them were acting out in symbolic forms of suppressed desires; his psychology could be best understood by studying that of animals or children. He was not civilized; on the contrary, his social behavior was full of concealed survivals from barbarism and was capable of reverting at the least excuse to forthright savagery..." And so on. It sounds rather depressing, and still more so ^{since} ~~as~~ we cannot deny that ^{there, statement} ~~all of this~~ contains a great deal of actual truth...

Man knows more, today, about the conditions of his own existence and about the mysterious in his own inside. He has destroyed old illusions and ancient lies. - Intellectuals ^{family} ~~are~~ speaking about the "end of Reasoning Man". Can they do so without shuddering? For: the ~~the~~ actual end of the Reasoning Man inevitably ^{involve} would mean the end of intelligent and civilized life; it would, ^{indeed} ~~indeed~~, mean the end of the Western Culture. And ~~the~~ ^{current history} ~~events of the last~~

~~decades~~ ^{the end} ~~proves~~ that this very notion - is not fantastic and says but has a realistic and happy ending.

Well - there we are where we have started..., and the conclusion we are drawing, ~~now~~ seems to contradict to the beginning. For: now we seemingly ~~to be~~ pessimistic, ~~and even are using Mr. Spengler's sinister slogans.~~

- But this hasn't been ~~as~~ yet our final solution. There remains something to add. There remains to emphasize and to praise the amazing courage and resistance of Human Spirit, that gets ^{even} stronger by recognizing and analyzing the deadly dangers ~~in~~ it has to face.

The creative spirits of this century have a very complex and comprehensive vision of the Human Character. But did they ^{deadly} lose ~~any~~ confidence in mankind, by renouncing comforting illusions?

The paradoxical and inspiring fact is, that their confidence in mankind was rather strengthened than weakened, by their deepened and enlarged knowledge of human conditions. The intellectual elite of the XX. century is even more optimistic than the Ibsen-Zola-generation used to be.

The "new complex realism" ~~of modern literature~~ is somehow lighter and brighter, indeed, it is less depressive, ^{more buoyant,} more inspiring than the heavy, ^{earthy} naturalism of fifty years ago. ^{just as Emerson's romanticism is lighter, less earthly than Darwin's.}

~~Modern poets, writers and thinkers in their majority, believe in the future of mankind - in spite of dangers and catastrophes and confusions.~~

~~They regard these disastrous disturbances as troubles, ^{which} an immature and obstinate, although highly gifted young man has to overcome. Mankind has beastly features, and it has divine features. We believe it will succeed in overcoming the beastly tendencies, and finally it will have humane features.~~

~~It can manifest itself as a religious or a social instinct.~~
There is a new spirit of Humanism in modern literature; and probably this is its most promising, most essential characteristic. To love men, ^{their good,} in spite of their ugliness, their meanness, their arrogance, their perversions - :thus is the ambition of modern writers... "Everything that lives is Holy." The young British poet Wystan Auden ~~is quoting the~~

We put this ~~setence~~ simple and beautiful sentence as a motto over
an essay that was published in book, entitled "I Believe" ^{and contains} ~~The~~ ^{edited by Chilton Tatham}
Personal Philosophies of certain eminent Men and Women of Our Times."
Very different opinions are expressed in this fine work I recommend
to you: socialistic opinions, and the faith of a devoted catholic,
radical ^{ideas} ~~opinions~~, and conservative ^{convictions} ~~opinions~~. All of them, however, deserve
~~in more or less~~ the designation of "humanistic", ~~in the more or less~~
For each of the philosophers or writers ~~who are talking to us~~, in one
way or another, believe in the good future of mankind; in the earthly
or metaphysical mission of Man. None of them supposes that Man as
such, or the Western Man, is doomed and will have to perish.

It is a French Catholic thinker who coins the fine term of an
"Integral Humanism" - : "considering man in the integrality of his
natural and his supernatural being and not setting...limits on the
descent of divinity into man..." - And it is a German novelist ^{in exile}
who suggests the formula of a "Third Humanism" to come - the two
first one, having been the ~~the~~ culture of Hellas and the culture of
the European Renaissance. Both of them, however, seem almost superficial
~~compared with the Third Humanism - that does not exist as yet, but~~
~~that has to come, and perhaps already is in its becoming...~~ Both the
First and Second Humanism, did not dare to recognize the ^{realistic} ~~realistic~~
^{realistic} truth. There may have been forebodings - and in the Greec mythology
the element of fear and pain ~~is~~ indeed is powerful. Yet there has
been but little and limited knowledge. And when knowledge ^{finally} came - in
the time of the Enlightment Philosophy, and later in the XIX. century -
faith vanished.

It is ^{the} ~~the~~ mission ~~of~~ and aim of the Third Humanism to re-combine
Knowledge and Faith - : the knowledge of the Evil, and the Believe in
the Good.

You may find in contemporary literature a great deal of apprehension and even of actual horror. But there also are the traces of new hopes and the promising symptoms of new confidence - : hopes and confidence, in spite of everything; in spite of so many doubts, ^{and qualms} so many sinister experiences - : can they be in vain? Can they be senseless and empty? I tell you: NO. Hopes and confidence that ^{proved} ~~are~~ strong enough to sur-vive struggles and deadly temptations as ~~modern~~ we have to face them - they couldn't be in vain. - The very strength of the hope is ^{guaranteeing} ~~promising~~ its fulfilment. - Things of this kind hardly can be proved. ^{you can} They must be believed. To quote, ~~the American~~, once more, the American poet:

"O believe this!" - I do.