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外文年記
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No.172

Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Maria Cross* (Burns & Oates, 1963).
 Chester ten, in his introduction to *The Old Curiosity Shop*, gave a valuable definition which has been too little heeded by subsequent Catholic writers: "The function of criticism, if it has a legitimate function at all, can only be one function—that of dealing with the subconscious part of the author's mind which only the critic can express and not with the conscious part of the author's mind which the author himself can express. Either criticism is no good at all...or else criticism means saying about an author the very things that would have made him jump out of his boots" (ix).
 The indefatigable Abbe Louis Rothloen, whose *Revue des Lectures* was presumed to guide the reading of the bien-pensant families, judged Mauriac's novels as "unhealthy", "morbid", "very pernicious" etc. (*Romans à lire et romans à proscrire*, 1928). A more scholarly authority, the Reverend Père Eugene Charles also said that Mauriac's novels were "steeped in an atmosphere of refined sensuality which penetrates to the marrow of your bones." Many leading Catholic critics, both lay and clerical, concurred in this judgment (5). The very ideal of the infidels, Andre Gide, drove the point home with a graceful flourish: "the object of your novels is...to remind Christians that there is something on earth besides Heaven." Such criticisms and his own eventual recognition of their partial truth brought about, towards the end of 1928, a crisis in Mauriac's development—a crisis often referred to as his "conversion", although he had never lost the faith. This "conversion" involved an effort to make his work more positively Catholic, to "portray" evil, as Maritain says, "without conniving at it" (quoted in *Dieu et Mammon*) (6). No novel has been written since 1928 contains that combination of qualities previously regarded as characteristic of Mauriac. *Le Noeud de vipères* (1932) centres round the possession of property and is not far below the previous peaks of his achievement, *Genitrix* and *Le Desert de l'amour* (1924 & 1925) (7). But it had no worthy successor (8). The real charge against him was that his tone, and the images he evoked, suggested a secret sympathy, a connivance with sin, instead of the uncompromising detestation of sin which Catholic critics felt they had a right to expect from a Catholic novelist. Lacordaire's doctrine of "universal amour": all love is fundamentally the same, there are no loves, only one love. This theory enabled a Catholic novelist to pass almost imperceptibly from the physical to the spiritual and back again, through a shimmering veil of confusion, a confusion which represents the genuine state of mind of one who is primarily a feeling rather than a thinking being (28). He has written of "that torture, the approach of old age, even when old age is still distant"; he has thought of writing "a terrible novel, *The Old Age of Lady Chatterley*" (30). He once said, "Holiness is silence." But in his own case holiness was garrulous. After the "conversion", although he accepted (*Dieu et Mammon*) Gide's view that no work of art could be produced without "the collaboration of the Demon", he had to try to get on without his old collaborator. The result is a depressing series of *l'intellectuels* and "moral" novels. One of these prefabricated edifices, *La Fin de la nuit*, has been taken to pieces with great care by Sartre, "Francis Mauriac et la liberté", *NRF*, Feb. 1939: "In a true novel, as in the world of

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Einstein there is no place for a privileged observer....M.Mauriac chose divine omniscience and omnipotence....God is not an artist; neither is M.Mauriac"(32).

M.Guerou in Bernanos's L'Imposture: "Since my illness, this poor life of mine all comes up to the surface again, like a choked sewer"(38). The Academician in Sous le Soleil de Satan St Marin is a savage caricature of Anatole France. M. Ouine in the novel bearing his name is a hostile portrait of Andre Gide. Gide: "Je me penche vertigineusement sur les possibilités de chaque être et pleure tout ce que le couvercle de mœurs atrophie"; M.Ouine takes "the lid of morals" right off(45). Bernanos is anti-Semitic---witness his homage to Drumont, La Grande Peur des bien-pensants; he hates the rich; he is a strong racialist. If he had been a German he would have been, for a time, a Nazi but he would have been too honest to have accepted the Nazi answer for long. He spat out with contempt the "realistic" Fascism of men like Maurras in his own country; hated Mussolini for attempting to revive the antique oppression of the Roman Empire; and, in Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune, the most eloquent and courageous of all his books, denounced France for bloody crimes committed in Majorca (the book was generally attacked in the Catholic press)(51). He saw the cause of Fascism as he saw the cause of Communism (which he attacked also, in La France contre les robots) in "the deficiency disease of the democracies...the unemployment of the heart"(52).

Evelyn Waugh is a great exploiter of human disadvantages, and his unscrupulous adolescent cruelty in this is the common quality of his two most obvious characteristics: his humour and his snobbery(112). In Catholic countries Catholicism is not invariably associated with big houses, or the fate of an aristocracy. In his most Catholic novel Brideshead Revisited Lady Marchmain said: "The poor have always been the favourites of God and his saints, but I believe that it is one of the special achievements of Grace to sanctify the whole of life, riches included"(115). In Waugh's theology, the love of money is not only not the root of all evil it is a preliminary form of the love of God(116). He has evidently read some Proust---indeed in A Handful of Dust he twice pays him the tribute of mis-quotation(117). Scott-King's Modern Europe reveals the bitter delight of the aristocrat who finds the rabble living down to his worst expectations. The idea behind Neutralia, which might be Spain without the clergy or Yugoslavia without the Communist party, is that of the uniformity of modern totalitarianism, the two-aspects-of-the-same-bestial-visage theory of Miss Odette Keun(119). The satire of The Loved One is aimed---through the great burial place of Southern California, Forest Lawn Memorial Park---at the materialist civilisation of America. When he visited Hollywood, Waugh was powerfully impressed by Forest Lawn. In what is possibly the only article ever to have appeared both in Life and in The Tatler, he gave a factual account of that incredible necropolis. He showed how Forest Lawn substitutes for the old morbid conceptions of death its own sunny eschatology which guarantees eternal bliss for all clients (Negroes and Chinese excluded)(120).

No English-speaker can ever know what or means to a Frenchman but he can be sure that it never means the same as "gold". The English monosyllabic

that rhyme with "gold" are extremely weak in emotive force: "bold", "scold" "old", "cold", "sold", "told" etc. The shortage of nouns is remarkable. On the other hand, the or group is extraordinarily strong: tort, corps, sort, dort, port, bord, mort (163). In his Connaissance de l'Est, Claudel says of the moon: "Soleil des Songes consomme le sommeil" (164). A Catholic critic will take any detour what he regards as the mire of "Freudianism"; even if on every page of his subject a signpost points to the same "Freudian" situation, he will bicycle past with hardly a wobble. For fifty years processions of "Catholic critics" have wound their way round Claudel, happily clanging (181) together like cymbals the words "great" and "Catholic", but saying nothing more specifically relevant than halleluiahs (182).

Many Catholics reproached Léon Bloy for the Latin note in Le Mendiant in-grat: "Membrum virile symbolice Crucis effigies ab antiquitate videtur. Christus moriens in patibulo emisit spiritum. Vir coitans et hoc modo cruciatus in muliere anhelans emittit semen" (197). Lettres a sa fiancée: "For woman...there are only two ways...holiness or prostitution. Between the two there is only the respectable woman, that is the female of ~~of~~ the bourgeois, the absolute reprobate whom no holocaust can redeem (191)....Every woman, whether she knows it or not, is persuaded that her sexual organs are Paradise..." . The passage is incorporated almost verbatim in La Femme Pauvre. Bloy plastered his opponents with dung, covered them over with what Mr Flann O'Brien has exquisitely described as "a thin layer of buff-coloured puke" (205).

Giraudoux: "Faire la guerre c'est la façon d'aimer des impuissants" (218). This is not a literary Nuremberg trial for "dangerous impulses", with half the accused convicted and the other half dubiously acquitted. ~~For~~ seem to me to have certain unmistakable Fascist affinities: Peguy, Bernanos, Claudel and Mr Waugh (223).

Colin Macinnes: City of Spades.

He eyed me with aloof, imperial calm. Clearly he was of the stuff of which proconsuls can even now be made(7). Ah, that far, personally, I cannot follow you... I'm with you there. Thousands of our coloured cousins have come here in the last few years from Africa and the Caribbean, and given us what we never had before---a colour problem. Could it not be that we have given them just that in their own countries?(8) Could it be that I positively find myself in the presence of a liberal?---Of course you do! What else can one comfortably be in these monolithic days? He smiled with every tooth. I say good-bye to him and wish him the good luck that I fear he'll so much need(9).

Not the Negro's fault, but just his nature(10). London people with glum clothes and shut-in faces(11). His mouth split open into a candid ivory and coral smile(15). Landladies fear we dirty the sheets with our dark skins(16). We are Spades; you are Jumbles---spelt J-o-h-n-b-u-l-l-s(17). If I take lodgings, they must be Liberty Hall. No questions from the landlady. And me, when I give my rent, I'll have the politeness not to ask her what she spends it on(18).

I didn't yet know the reason, but I said that I was not at liberty to divulge it(19).

You look like him, though. He might have spat you out.---I should look like him. I'm legitimate(21). I'm sure Dad didn't rape her, and however young she was, she must have known a number of the facts of life(24).

The house stood all by itself among ruins of what I suppose was wartime damages, much like one tooth left sticking in an old man's jaw(26). Do you prefer standing there encouraging draughts(27).

Billy slapped her. She screamed out louder than the blow was worth(31).

Theodora made it so cruelly clear she thought the world would not have been in any way a different place if I had not been born. But circumstances threw us together. A year ago, the property changed hands, and notices to quit were served on all the tenants. All fled to their lawyers. A cold war began. The new landlords refused to accept our rents. Uncertain how to manoeuvre against anyone so powerful as a landlord, I clung steadfastly to her chariot wheels, and she dragged me with her to victory(33). Small wonder that the B.B.C. should pay her a large salary for doing I never could discover what. She became my counsellor: sternly offering me advice in the manner of one casting precious pearls before some pig. I'm learning fast; be merciful and don't turn the knife in the wound(34). To do a job well, and get on, you must never become involved in it emotionally(35).

I'm writing a report.---Might I ask on what?---You may, but I shan't tell you(36).

I'm a civilized respectable Trinidadian. The Africans are jungle cannibals(38).

His immense wife(39).

As an official, I am debarred from expressing any personal opinion even had I one(41). The driver decanted me at the railway station(42). Our eyes locked: his glare had such depth that my own sank into his(45).

Lord Alexander sang: "This little Miss Commercial Road she say to me, 'I can't spend much more time in your society, / I know you keep me warmer than my white boy can do, / But my mother fears her grandson may be black as you'(48).

I see you's a smart fellow, not rich in ignorance(50). Hamilton As ~~x-shinowo~~, baddest bad boy of the whole mission school(51). The band was only Jumble imitation of our style(52). Jimmy Cannibal tell his Jumble victims he was fed up on boiled missionary in his village(53).

Dorothy pressed up close and said to me: "Why don't you ask me out to tea one day?" "Oh, I drink coffee"(54).

About Indian food, there's a great mystery: How can a race so ancient and so civilized have devised anything so repellent? It always seems predigested and regurgitated. And the handkerchiefs it ruins!(63).

Liquor opens you outwards and gives you a foolish love of fellow men, the wish to chatter to them in a cheerful, not selective way. But weed, you see, turns you(64) happily inward to sit silent in the greater enjoyment of your personality. It's not habit-forming(65).

Theodora was in her off-duty dress, a gown made for a suppler, more yielding body(67). I was disconcerted to hear her ask Johnny: "Is there anything in the legend of Negro virility?" "Lady, the way to find that out is surely by personal experiment"(68). She was resplendently got, and looked like a lively rector's daughter's notion of a sinner. Though I'd not thought she had it in her, she looked almost demure(77).

Mr Karl Marx Bo, when I asked him, "You're taking time off from your studies?" answered: "We Africans are not a people who deposit our days in a savings bank, like you do."(80). Clergymen talking about brothers under the skin(84).

There was a loud silence. She spoke with a Cardiff accent. It came oddly out of her half-African face, the sound so ill assorted with a physical beauty that had reached her from thousands of miles away(86). She swung her magnificent bottom. I asked her:

"Where did you learn to dance so well? You're a perpetual revelation"(87). Am I being kidnapped? -- No, just forcibly invited(92).

In accents part Cockney, part bogus North American. I can't trust him a split second(101). The guide still bludgeoned the passengers' defenceless ears(104).

My chief was one of those who think it best to be kind to be cruel. He said: "Well, the blow's falling. I dare say you expected it. We're in duty bound to help these people in their hour of need. But remote control's the best, we've found. No matiness. Not going native." They just accept us as a necessary evil(113).

To live on the immoral earnings of a woman is a crime(117).

→ The cafe's frequented by human dregs(118).

Stay with us for evers, or we puts you in a pot. ---I'm bony, only good for soup. ---All him sames, we eats you as special favour(123)

The dance is an old art; it's not just shaking your asses round (140). She languishes, not quite in vain(152).

→ Miss "Theodora was saying in my ear, "Won't you just once, Johnny? I promise I'll never ask you ever again..." Oh, dear! There was her modesty? "Oh well, if you feel so bad," I said to her. "Where is it you keep your bedroom in this flat?"(157).

You have your cover-story ready. You don't make the copper's task any the easier(158).

Never say "Good luck" to any gambler! You not know that?(161).

Mr Tamberlaine the West Indian: "Not like your African friends? If we's more sensitive like you say, there's reasons for it. Our islands is colonies of great antiquity, and our mother tongue is English, like your own, and not some dialects. So naturally we expect you treat us like we're British as yourself, and when you don't, we suffer and go sour"(164).

→ Mindless masculine animal magnetism and natural villainy(168).

Johnny: "Our bruises do not show in court as well as white man's do. This is the reason why you hit us always harder"(191).

Good for the nerves. Tones you up in an emergency. White man's magic in fact(196). You will not rise to further dizzy heights in the B.B.C. if you get mixed up publicly in this case(202).

You think I will take a cut(205). When the Law frames a case, they make a point of seeing it sticks(207).

→ "Let Justice be done (and be seen to be):"(facing 212).

You can prolong matters to your heart's content. ---No, we Crown counsel don't draw your huge refreshers(~~212~~). That'll cost you a lot, won't it? Or should I say, cost your little lady and her customers?(217).

→ Theodora's departure from the B.B.C., under a lowering cloud(239).

Her case went straight up to the top, then down again to an appropriate level, to the person who actually had to wield the axe(240)

Behindhand with the rent and up to her grey eyes in debt(241).

Let me go and spy out the land(251).