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Powys Notes

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The Powys Society of North America

Founded in December, 1983, the Powys Society of North America seeks to promote the study and appreciation of the literary works of the Powys family, especially those of JOHN COWPER POWYS (1872-1963), T. F. POWYS (1875-1953), and LLEWELYN POWYS ((1884-1939).

The Society takes a special interest in the North American connections and experiences of the Powyses, and encourages the exploration of the extensive collections of Powys material in North America and the involvement, particularly of John Cowper and Llewelyn, in American literary culture.

POWYS NOTES, the Society's publication, appears in Spring and Fall issues and presents scholarship, reviews, and bibliography of Powys interest.

IN THIS ISSUE

When Thomas Hardy died in 1928, both John Cowper Powys and Llewelyn Powys were living and working in the United States. John Cowper was then engaged in his last few years of public lecturing, and was deeply involved in the composition of Wolf Solent; Llewelyn was "visiting critic" for the New York Herald-Tribune, a post he had taken in December, 1927, and which had previously been occupied (in four month terms) by a succession that included Lewis Mumford, Ford Madox Ford, and Rebecca West.

The appearance of two recent books--reviewed in these pages by Charles Lock and Robert Crozier--that link the Powyses to Hardy and to British literary regionalism, prompt us in turn to present two uncollected and perhaps little-known essays on Hardy, both from the year 1928, by Llewelyn and John Cowper respectively. The one by Llewelyn--one of his contributions to the Herald-Tribune--is essentially an obituary but it shows also how Llewelyn was capable of turning what for some might have been a dreary obligation into a magnificent and passionately crafted cameo of Hardy and his place in literary history. John Cowper's piece--an article for the New York magazine, Current History--is at first glance more contrived and less immediate, but it has the compensatory appeal of providing a glimpse of the irrepressible style that stirred so many to laughter and to thought when in the lecture hall a fired-up JCP decided to strip absolutism and arrogance of its various pathetic disguises.

We feel that Richard Maxwell's essay, a pioneer study of Porius--of its total achievement, and of its place within the genre of the historical novel--fits naturally alongside John Cowper's fulminations against imperialism in the age of Thomas Hardy. [D. L.]

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Llewelyn Powys:

THOMAS HARDY

Letters from Dorset opened yesterday were full of news of the great blizzard; stories of ewes buried deep in snow on the Dorset downs, stories of strange wild fowl come to settle upon the inland water at Abbotsbury, of five "whoopers," or wild swans, seen there for the first time in many years. Dorset has been enshrouded with snow. The turnpike road leading from Wareham to Dorchester, past Max Gate, impassable; Holworth Farm, under Gallow's Hill, completely cut off; the lanes and hollows leading up to White Nose banked high with drifts, even to the level of the topmost twigs of the hawthorn hedges.

At the time of Oliver Cromwell's death a furious hurricane, long to be remembered, swept across the shires of England, and it is appropriate that Thomas Hardy, the last of the great Victorians, should have died at a season that will be impressed upon the memories of every man, woman and child living today in the West Country.

That his ashes are to be buried in the Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey is fitting. Let them rest under the shadow of Geoffrey Chaucer's tomb. Deeply do all English-speaking people wish to honor this great poet, a poet as great as England has seen since the death of Matthew Arnold. When that celebrated Frenchman, Anatole France, died and his corpse lay still unburied, certain young intellectuals of Paris circulated pamphlets through the streets of the Latin Quarter deriding the art of the great "cadaver." Fortunately in the case of Thomas Hardy there is no need for such unseemly contentions. To all who understand the true meaning of that mysterious word "poetry," that word of such significance in the story of the destiny of the human race, the place of Thomas Hardy among the immortals will always remain unchallenged.

Though less musical, he was a far more important poet than Algernon Charles Swinburne, infinitely greater than George Meredith, greater than Robert

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Browning, more original than Alfred Tennyson. His sense of form as displayed in his prose, was remarkable, but nothing so remarkable as the sense of poetry that poured through his being for eighty or more years. It was sufficient to hear this "little great good man" speak to appreciate the high privilege one enjoys to have lived in his day.

Like Sigmund Freud, like all the really great people I have met, he was direct and simple. Any kind of publicity was extremely distasteful to him. Affectation or insincerity he could not abide. Vanity or conceit it would be impossible to associate with the dignity of his noble and integrated personality, so reserved, so courteous and so proud. Thomas Hardy was profoundly religious. I use the word purposely in a wide connotation to indicate a certain intense solemnity of utterance, the spiritual temper of which brings Lucretius and Dante together.

With infinite compassion throughout his long life his mind brooded upon the sorrows of the earth. He had a head that refused to be gulled. He waged war against conventional prejudices because he detected the unnecessary cruelty they inflicted upon a race already sufficiently ill-used. His heart was moved by a tenderness that could with sympathetic penetration break through not only the limits of class but of the human race itself, down even to the nerves of the lower levels of sentience among "the poor creatures of the earth." In his great old age his mind still remained vigorous and his kestrel eyes undimmed. His memory stretched back over the years with the realistic exactness of a shepherd who can remember under the shelter of which hedge he has folded his flocks every lambing time for the greater part of a century.

Last summer, in fine June weather, we walked to Thomas Hardy's birthplace at Upper Bockhampton. We set out from Dorchester, crossing Grey's Bridge. Barney Hallett, the old scissor-grinder, whose station for forty years had been by the south wall of St. Peter's Church, had shown us the way by pointing to the heavy timbered trees in the Stinsford meadows which form so pleasant an horizon to the clattering street where he stands each Wednesday and Saturday

LLEWELYN POWYS 7

with his handcart. Indeed, from "The Bow," which is the center of Dorchester, it is possible to make out the green acres upon which Stinsford Church is built, the church of "Mellstock" that shelters the bones of so many of Thomas Hardy's ancestors and where his own heart, "that tiny pinch of priceless dust," is to be hidden. The churchyard is small, but extremely lovely. It is overshadowed by black-clouded yew trees, with open spaces, where the sunshine can blaze down upon daisy, and butterfly, and mossy stone. From the churchyard wall a footpath runs by the side of the glittering Frome to Bockhampton Bridge. Large, cool, taut-finned trout poise motionless in its current above the green-tressed waterweed, fresh and bright. Over the bridge we went and for a mile along a Dorset lane; then to our right into a great wood, and then out on the other side of it to a wild tract of Egdon Heath. The bracken was at its full and it was difficult to push our way through it. Often its fanlike growths sheltered our heads from the sun. Its still fernstalks resisted our progress, the heather below impeded our steps, tripped us up. Back we went to the wood again. We had hardly reached the open ditch which bordered its banks than we saw, a hundred yards further on, a thatched roof and a gate that gave access to the heath from a lane running unseen by the side of the wood. We had arrived at last at the birthplace of Thomas Hardy. Under this thatched roof Thomas Hardy had been born eighty-seven years before. The garden was a tangled mass of roses. The place was embowered in the green foliage of ash and oak and beech and sycamore.

Yesterday I was startled into a curiously complex feeling by reading such notices as these in the daily papers. "Thomas Hardy, writer, is dead." "Great author, dead at eighty-seven." This feeling was due largely to the realization that this reticent man of so homely a locality should have compelled even the clanging street corners of New York City to recognize and to do reverence to what does represent after all the highest faculty of man--imagination!

Ageless is Stonehenge, that "temple of the winds" set up in the country Hardy loved. In the same manner shall the spiritual monoliths uplifted, stone by stone, by this mason of words, abide the upheaval of

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all save what he himself used to speak of as "the final overthrow." It can hardly be doubted that as the centuries pass the name, Thomas Hardy, we will come to gather up into the compass of its four stubborn human syllables all the taciturn perpetuity of that monumental enigma.

[Reprinted from The New York Herald Tribune: Books, January 22, 1928, p.3.]

* * *

John Cowper Powys
English Novelist, Literary Critic and Lecturer

THOMAS HARDY AND HIS TIMES

Unlike Balzac, who according to Henry James, was essentially a historian, Thomas Hardy, although possessed of considerable antiquarian curiosity, concentrated his whole nature upon that quarter of England which he was the first of moderns to name Wessex. His reactions to the contemporary history of his country were of that deeper, slower, more instinctive kind that belong to a rural as distinguished from a metropolitan life. The "alarums and excursions" of great public events did reach him, but they reached him through the medium of the diurnal rains and fogs and frosts, the leisurely noons and the slow twilights, of one particular spot upon the earth's surface.

Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840, in a thatched cottage, which has remained to this day practically unchanged on the edge of Egdon Heath, in the small hamlet of Uppper Bockhampton, a mile or so from the old Roman town of Dorchester, the capital of

the county of Dorset. After a solid local education, at least as classical as the one Shakespeare had in his boyhood, Hardy attended lectures in King's College, London, and was speedily articled, as a practising pupil in architecture, to John Hicks, who was especially interested in ecclesiastical buildings. With Mr. Hicks he remained from 1856 to 1861 and then, for the four most malleable years of his life, from 22 to 27, he worked in the architectural offices of Sir A. Blomfield, a gentleman for whose talent and character he always expressed the utmost respect. The important rôle played by architecture in Hardy's aesthetic development received an external stimulus in 1863, when he became a prize man of the Royal Institute of British Architects. It was at this period of his life, exiled from Wessex, that he began writing poetry, the art of which, as we all now know, he regarded as a good deal superior to the art of the novel.

His first published story was Desperate Remedies, which he wrote under Meredith's not very wise advice, with meticulous care for the plot interest. There is much to be said, for and against, the almost fantastic emphasis upon plot which he subsequently developed and it is probable that Meredith's hurried words, as a publisher's reader, only accentuated what may well be regarded as an architectural bias in his handling of the art of fiction.

When it comes, however, to the obscure question of the effect of contemporary history upon Hardy's reserved, indrawn, local-obsessed nature, it must be remembered that these detached ironic-tragic works were composed in one of the most momentous epochs that England ever passed through. It is strange to recall that the months that preceded the publication of his first novel were those months of extreme tension between Great Britain and the United States over the matter of the part played in the war between the North and the South by the Confederate ship Alabama, allowed to sail from a British port. One can imagine the excited chatter that flowed with the brown ale in many a Dorchester tavern while Desperate Remedies was being revised by its author. But what cared the rooks in the Yelham woods, what cared the starlings in Fordington Great Field, or the carters of the Mayor of

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Casterbridge as their lumbering wagons creaked along those lanes leaving scented wisps of hay in the high hedges even though, in an angry Senate at Washington, Mr. Sumner, head of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, thundered furiously at Gladstone's Government?

The final touches to Hardy's next volume, Under the Greenwood Tree, the book in which he first showed that he had really found his method, a method evocative of as mellow, as ripe a flavor as the pippins in any West Country orchard, must have been given when in the country across the Channel the end of the Franco-Prussian war resulted in the Third Republic. It was then that in the House of Commons Sir Charles Dilke and other truculent republicans--while the Prince of Wales lay sick almost to death--were proposing a reduction of the royal salary. No English novelist has caught as Hardy has done the quaint savour full of its own homely rusticated romance, of our peculiar English attitude to the House of Hanover, and one may be sure that these rhetorical republican gestures won scant sympathy from that compact kestrelhawk head bent now over the pages of sly realism antedating many a famous continental cult!

But in 1874 appeared a far greater book than this, none other than Far From The Madding Crowd, and it is not perhaps "considering too curiously" to imagine the relief with which quiet people all over the land turned to Shepherd Oak's whimsical courtship of his proud Bathsheba to escape the grandiose fluctuations of Disraeli's Arabian Nights diplomacy. Thomas Hardy, for all his Dorset respect for George III's granddaughter, was never an imperialist. The England he loved and represented was the Chaucerian, the Shakespearean England, the England of the insular, white-cliffed, indigenous tradition, of barton, garth and turnpike, of Candlemas twilights and Lammas dawns, of Pack-Monday Fairs and Guy Fawkes bonfires!

Meditating upon Hardy's philosophical detachment in the midst of an England so stirred up by militarists and politicians, one wonders what sad, sardonic thoughts flitted through that skull, now turned to ashes in its solemn "Hydrotaphia" at Chaucer's feet in the Confessor's Abbey, when all the Jingoese of the land were welcoming Lord Beaconsfield home from

Berlin, triumphant protector of the Turk; home to his hypnotized "county families" and his Orient-obsessed sovereign? But he has himself answered this question. For in 1878 appeared The Return of the Native with its background of Egdon Heath, of a Wessex seen, one might say, sub specie aeternitatis, and its foreground of the simple grandeur of the vexed heart of man, as Shakespeare has limned it in King Lear!

As one turns over the faded pages of Punch, with those queer pictures of bygone fashions and excitements, one cannot resist thinking how true are Goethe's words that a great man is linked to his passing age rather by his weakness than by his strength. Little enough of such "weakness" was in Thomas Hardy, and one cannot help feeling, in comparison with other writers of his time, how his books hit us now with so undated, so unmoded a weight, over the heads of that fantastic, bustling, self-satisfied generation, whose images those "sere and yellow leaves" call up from the past.

In a significant reaction from the tricky banalities of imperial policy in 1879, from Sir Bartle Frere's ridiculous little war, for example, against Cetewayo, King of Zululand, Hardy's imaginations turns in his Trumpet Major to the heroic age of Nelson and Bonaparte. Nelson meant as much to Hardy as he meant to Conrad, and this was because Nelson's character had that undying English element in it, that element that might be called the "Platonic Idea" of the actual soil of England, a secret essence, rising up from those deep plough-lands, whimsical and yet tragic, reckless and yet tender, of which there was, one fears, little enough in the transitory activities of a Sir Bartle Frere or a Sir Garnet Wolseley!

With the opening of the nineties, notorious as the apogee of Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley and The Yellow Book, in the two years separating the death of Browning from the death of Tennyson, Hardy was occupied with the final revision of Tess of the D'Urbervilles. This famous work had already appeared in an expurgated shape--the confession scene, for example, entirely omitted--in The Illustrated London News; but with its appearance in book form it lifted him to a literary niche equal to that of the greatest men of

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letters then living in any country. The scenes in Talbothay's Dairy, fragrant with the breath of cattle, brimming with the saps and juices of rain-soaked vegetation; the scene on Salisbury Plain, tragic, taciturn, monumental, the scene where Angel and Liza-Lu mount the hill above Winchester with their heads bowed; to surpass these things one would have to leave prose altogether and turn to the noblest poetry.

With both Tennyson and Browning dead--those great pious interpreters who stood between agnosticism and the faith of our fathers--the sombre pessimism implicit in Darwin's teaching began to prevail. Skin by skin the intellectual minority stripped itself of the old Victorian panaceas, of the old sentiment, of the old aplomb!

At the very moment when President Cleveland hurled his challenge to Lord Salisbury over the affair of Venezuela; at the very moment when President Kruger defied the new imperialism of Cecil Rhodes, Hardy flung down in Jude the Obscure, published in 1895, an intense, vibrant arraignment of the whole system, moral, social, theological, of the conventions of his time. The Puckish whimsicality, the mellow, metheglin-sweet humor of his earlier novels congeal and precipitate themselves in Jude the Obscure into a veritable stalactite of pity, a piercing frozen cry, like human tears turned into some appalling pendant of anguish; so that the book becomes perhaps the saddest book ever written by mortal pen.

Seven years after this, when The Well-Beloved, a work more bizarre than any he had written, had completed the cycle of his novels, the death of Emma Lavinia, Hardy's first wife, left him a solitary figure in that house on the Stafford road, facing the south wind and the Ridgeway tumuli. But in 1914 at the outbreak of the war he married his second wife, Florence Emily, the gentle and intellectual lady who comforted his troubled spirit and kept him alive for his lovers and disciples till within three short Summers of his ninetieth year.

. . .

There is something singularly harmonious and

satisfactory to the mind in Hardy's career--so few external events of the usual biographical banality, such deep, unthwarted, unfrustrated reticence! Here, as with Shakespeare, his life is in his work. From the year 1865 to the year 1928 he was expressing those innumerable tragic-humorous reactions to the human predicament which make up the substance of [his] strange eventful poetry in which far more than in his popular novels his genius is revealed.

As one compares the piety of early Victorian writers with Hardy's Promethean challenge to the opposeless will, the change of tone serves us as a memorable striking of the dark clock of Time. If the skeptical doubts of the "impercipients" among us fall upon sadder, graver, more tolerant ears, as they reach us today, than they carried when The Illustrated London News could not bring itself to publish Tess in its entirety, the difference is due no less to him than to the great scientific writers. Like some lonely woodpecker's beak repeating its blows upon the bark of a sapless tree his unconquerable hostility to the illiberal beats upon the most indurated and knotted heads.

The Wessex novels form a kind of classic viaduct from the ponderous forums of the Victorian age to the hurly-burly of the modern market place. But the final overtone of Hardy's attitude to life hovers above all these changing fashions. The soil to which he remained faithful all his days, and in which his heart has now been laid, rewarded him for his stubborn fidelity. By a passionate love of the Particular he attained the Universal. By an intense scrutiny of the hedgehog upon his lawn he approached the secrets of the Zodiac!

[Reprinted from Current History (New York), 27: 829-831 (March, 1928)].

Richard Maxwell

TIME AND CHANCE IN PORIUS

Georg Lukacs wrote his study of the historical novel during the winter of 1936-1937. He began by celebrating "the classical form" of the genre, as exemplified in the works of Sir Walter Scott and his followers. Though Lukacs's enthusiasm for a determined Tory like Scott might seem inexplicable, he makes the grounds of his approval clear. Lukacs argues that "without a felt relationship to the present, a portrayal of history is impossible."¹ In one sort of "felt relationship," the past can be treated as "the prehistory of the present;" i.e., Scott can emphasize certain features of the past which have their fruition in the present. Expressive anachronisms--like endowing characters with a consciousness of their age which only those coming after them could have actually had--serve to bring past and present closer together, to reveal the links between them. Lukacs dwells at some length on such possibilities. A little later in the book he makes a related suggestion, that a novelist's own era can be treated as history. For Lukacs the first writer to have done so is Balzac, who adapted Scott's kind of novel to his own purposes. In the Comedie Humaine, Balzac limits himself to a lifetime exploration of a few decades; he thus achieves a "concentration in time" (HN, 83) by which years rather than centuries or half-centuries take on specific properties: "the compression of historically portrayed events into a relatively brief period, full of big changes following one another in rapid succession, forces Balzac to characterize almost each year of the development individually, to give quite short phases an historical atmosphere peculiar to them." (HN, 84)

Lukacs's notion of a "felt relationship" to the past involves us in making connections among past, present, and future. The truth, not to mention the value, of a novel resides in the way that we are allowed to shuttle back and forth among these categories: by this means we come to grasp both "the necessity of the historical experience" and the "infinite net of chance which forms the precondition

of this necessity." (HN, 83; cf. 151, on necessity and anachronism). However, when we read historical novels of the later nineteenth century, Scott's intelligent mobility tends to get lost. We have to put up with works like Flaubert's Salammbô, whose archaeological exactitude leaves us in a past which is past and nothing else. Such books have nothing to tell us about the processes of history; they express only the decadence of their own conception. Early twentieth-century novels offer modest but insufficient improvement. "This historical novel of our time, therefore, must above all negate, radically and sharply, its immediate predecessor. . . The necessary approximation to the classical type. . . will, as our remarks have shown, by no means take the form of a simple renaissance. . . but, if one will allow me this phrase from Hegel's terminology, a renewal in the form of a negation of a negation." (HN, 350). If Lukacs's recommendation means anything, it means that the novel should return to the "classical sense" of past, present, and future as intimately related quantities. Only when this is accomplished will the play of chance and necessity from which history is made once again become visible in historical novels.

A slavish imitation of the earlier masters was not going to produce the result that Lukacs desired. It remained an open question how historical fiction could be revived. Lukacs was perhaps hoping for a great Marxist novel. I leave open the question of whether that book got written because I think that the novel most pertinent to his challenge appeared from a somewhat unexpected corner--a rural community in Wales where the aged John Cowper Powys was turning to historical fiction just as Lukacs was publishing his work on that subject. Lukacs never read Powys's Owen Glendower (written 1937-39, published 1941) or his Porius (written 1942-1950, published 1951). Had he done so, he might well have been unsympathetic. Nonetheless, these extraordinary books do much to confirm his prediction. Powys helped create a new historical novel, "a negation of a negation." I concentrate here on Porius because it most clearly demonstrates Powys's innovations, particularly his enquiry into past, present, and future. No less than his classical predecessors in the genre, Powys makes the divisions of time an issue; he is thus able to

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give an account of the interplay between chance and necessity, though not the Hegelian synthesis which Lukacs desired.

During the forties and early fifties, Powys wrote enthusiastically to friends about Porius. In describing the novel to correspondents or to a hoped-for reading public, he often celebrates the obscurity of the period he has chosen. For example, in an unpublished preface, he notes that what suited him about the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries was that "in one specially privileged portion of [this period] there were surviving, and, as we say, 'extant,' no historical documents at all! . . . the last two decades, let's say of the fifth century and the first two decades of the sixth century, that is between Patrick and Gildas, there is for my private enjoyment as a story-teller nothing but a beautiful, a heavenly blank!" Why does this gap in the records exist just here? "It is in fact 30 to 40 years of peace in these Isles and as such has (as is usual in times of Peace) no history at all!"² Powys yearns for an age which is itself undocumented though ringed, as it were, by documents; itself peaceful though ringed, as it were, by wars. To some extent this quest after a period of obscurity or blankness is traditional in the historical novel. Scott rejoices that writing about an unchronicled period makes it difficult for readers to second-guess the novelist, to challenge the picture he offers of a past age.³ Lukacs agrees: he praises Scott's tendency toward "free movement" within little-known historical territory (HN, 167-168). Powys follows Scott but for reasons perhaps more elaborate than his master's. It is not just his own free movement which concerns him but the free movement of his characters. He writes, recording "fact and fable with philosophic indiscriminatio⁴," relishing the likelihood that "anything may happen"; they act, defying the historical forces which should limit them. Powys insists that these two defiances of necessity are closely linked.⁵

A cross-reference to Hegel will help situate Powys's search for freedom within history. According to the Lectures on the Philosophy of History, "periods of happiness are Blank Pages."⁶ Hegel's memorable phrase was perhaps at the back of Powys's mind when he

wrote of the gap in the records which was also a heavenly blank. However, it is well known that Hegel had little liking for blanks; after all, they made no contribution to the dialectical progression of history. The historical processes needed victims, over whom the apostles of future had to triumph if destiny was ever to have its way. Powys's attraction to blanks originates in assumptions about history quite different from this one. Not only is he perennially fascinated by victims and losers, he resists the notion that history works according to a rigid logic. As he notes in Mortal Strife, a polemic on World War II tossed off while he was in the early stages of composing Porius: "All the movements that are most dangerous to human happiness in our age can be shown to be derived from Hegel." There follows a description of Left, Right and Center Hegelians, concluding that "...the way to know the descendants of Hegel is an infallible one. They hate and dread free will."⁸ The blank page, then, looks quite different to Powys than to Hegel--or indeed to any Hegelian, Lukacs probably included. It constitutes a realm where necessity can be avoided. The only difficulty is to know how to find this realm, whose existence seems less and less certain in an age dominated by very practical Hegelians--the sort who know how to invent and use V-2 rockets.

The old man sitting in his Welsh village, living on a pittance and without much of an audience, is in one sense powerless. He doesn't even get rockets lobbed at him--much less can he fight back against them. Not unlike the characters of his Dark Ages novel, he is limited to a little world whose blankness is a borderline matter: the Corwen of the 1940s, no less than the Edeyrnion of 499 A.D., seems at peace but might well consider itself just on the edge of disaster. (People in the novel sometimes pause to wonder whether war is imminent or not--confusion prevails on this matter. People in Corwen knew very well that a war was under way, but cannot have felt the war's immediacy with any preciseness). Under these circumstances--sensing a bit of what his Dark Ages people must have sensed--Powys sets himself a relatively modest task. He takes it upon himself to consider the implications of a tense, to work out its use for his characters and for himself.

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Initially the suggestion that our novel favors the present tense over the past and the future may seem a useless distraction: how could something of this sort ever be proved, especially when Porius is written in the conventional narrative past? One mark of Powys's bias is his willingness to linger over certain acts of writing or reading which emphasize the present moment. Brochvael, a cosmopolitan classical scholar, "Remembered the artfulness which Sidonius would introduce into a letter his actual sensations at the moment of writing" (P, 159); he subsequently tries to imitate this artfulness, to write and live, as it were, simultaneously. Later we are told that the Henog, an historian of King Arthur's court, "has been reading from what he is in the midst of composing" (P, 543)--not the same trick as Sidonius's but suggesting a similar paradox: that artfulness can be combined with spontaneity, the impulse of a moment with accomplished form. These slippery examples cannot be categorized rigorously--cannot be categorized at all, perhaps, except as they relate to a certain prejudice on Powys's part, a certain aspiration with regard to his own writing and his apprehension of human experience within time. Though Powys does not want to become either Brochvael or the Henog--both of them are finally a bit pedantic--he shares their peculiar combination of bookishness with a desire for constant involvement based on a sense that events (writing, speaking, living, implicitly identified) are in the process of occurring. To write or read the events of the moment will remain a prominent aspiration of Porius and of characters within it. Powys is chronicling a time past (not just a disguised version of the present, a kind of historical writing for which he feels as little sympathy as Lukacs would have) but he wants to do so as if its outcome were still in some fundamental way undecided. He achieves this goal by imagining the past, the blank page, as though it were spread before us now--as though history were just in the process of being recorded upon it.

The question remains of what it would mean to tell a story whose atmosphere, if not grammar, was that of the present tense, of something always in the process of being made up. One difficulty Powys faces in his endeavor is that a pure present, separate from other tenses, is difficult to conceive. A character who

tries to imagine it is the poet Taliessin. Taliessin celebrates

The beginning forever of the Peace paradisiac,
The 'I feel' without question, the 'I am' without
purpose,

The 'It is' that leads nowhere, the life with no
climax. . . (P, 417),

a state he arguably achieves. But Taliessin's is not the usual case. Powys evidently realizes that there are problems in trying to prolong the present: the desire for a moment without desire, in which one can rest sans purpose or expectation, is embodied by the most confusing image of the novel. Like Taliessin, like Powys himself (cf. MS, 132-133), Porius aspires to lift "this jealous past and crazy future off their feet while [he] hugged the present" (P, 139). When we try to visualize his ambition--lifting the past and future while hugging the present--its difficulties become evident. Powys borrows the situation from an exploit of Porius's hero, Hercules, who destroyed the giant Antaeus by holding him in the air (once he could no longer draw strength from earth, Antaeus was fatally weakened: he could be crushed). But how can any man with only two arms lift one giant while he hugs another? This labor would be beyond Hercules. It would seem that Porius will not be able to hug the present without in some sense continuing to hug the past and the future; time must be embraced all at once.

Powys cannot completely affirm Taliessin's viewpoint; to reject it, however, lands him in greater difficulties. If time comes all of a piece, if future and past are irretrievably implicated in our present actions, then we come close to something like Saint Augustine's position on time. In book eleven of the Confessions, Augustine argues that past and future exist only as elements of the present: there is a past of the present and a future of the present, but these are psychological rather than objective categories. Augustine's brilliant argument anticipates crucial elements of the English Romantic tradition from which Powys drew so much.¹⁰ It also serves as a bridge to an affirmation of God's ultimate knowledge--his total grasp, from outside time, of things past, present, and to come. At this stage, as any reader familiar with such debates will be aware,

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the denial of free will is just around the corner: if God knows all, then the course of history is set. Though Augustine is not a character in Porius, his presence is felt through references to his theological opponent Pelagius, who affirmed the reality of free will so vigorously that Augustine worked to have him declared a heretic. Powys, a Pelagian, finds himself in danger of adopting an Augustinian position on time and will--that is, a Dark Ages version of what Hegel represents to more recent centuries.¹¹ Like his hero the novelist wants to embrace a greater load than he can handle.

The more he becomes aware of this peril, the more Powys strives for a ground where a vision of history as necessity, as a fated sequence of events, is partially accommodated even while it is defied. The novelist has two principal means for seeking his middle ground. These methods, really no more than devices of form, are based on the free space provided by the blank of the Dark Ages; more precisely, they set out a plan for filling the undocumented space which Powys finds so attractive without committing reader, writer, or characters to unyielding laws of historical movement:

(1) Eventfulness. As Powys works on his novel, the time-span of the narrative increases. He has condensed "the whole thing" into four days, then into six, then into seven. However, despite these small-scale expansions, he continually emphasizes the shortness of the plot-time in Porius. "How many days & nights, do you suppose, are described in some 2100 pages? Only 4 days & nights!"¹² "Where it is most original is in the way I've crowded the whole thing into six days and nights." (Newsletter, 6). In Owen Glendower, a narrative spread over many years had occasionally moved slowly or clumsily. From frustration with Glendower or some other cause the novelist has now arrived at a firm conclusion. He and his readers will appreciate the sort of book which rushes from incident to incident, which presented a fictional-historical world as though it were full of more or less simultaneous happenings.

(2) Intermingling. Powys sees his chosen period as typified by cultural, religious and linguistic mixtures. He is fascinated by this "rich beautiful mysterious fusion of so many cults, traditions, races,

languages, religions, and above all its blend of all the horrible, delicious, beguiling, fascinating decadences of the dying classical world with all the startling, childlike, magical, shocking crazy beginnings of nobody-then-quite-knew-what of a Christian world." (Newsletter, 8). Two words in this rhapsody--"fusion" and "blend"--require qualification. Such terms suggest that Powys's interest is in various forms of syncretism: he wants to show us how a whole strange stew of influences helped produce what we call Western Civilization, or, more specifically, the British character. However, the elements in this mixture will largely remain indistinct, so that the classical scholar, the Mithraic soldier, the Druid, and all the rest mingle without losing their defining beliefs.

Eventfulness and intermingling are a good deal like each other: what the one is in the order of actions, the other is in the order of personages. Both devices promote a kind of condensation which results in surprising juxtapositions; both make a long novel seem crowded. Taken together, they have an even more significant effect. Consider as an illustration these moments from an early stage of Porius's adventures, moments where eventfulness and intermingling combine in an especially intense manner:

This was one of those occasions when the dam of events has been pulled up so rapidly that the un-sluiced imagination had difficulty in overtaking what the tide is carrying down.

Porius certainly needed every mental power he possessed to keep, mentally speaking, even at a boat's length behind the rush of sensations. He was vividly aware of that special kind of shock that comes when a phenomenon that in itself is perfectly natural presses so hard against the sequence of things with which we're familiar that it discredits the very witness of the senses themselves. . . the air seemed as ruffled by excited stirrings and flutterings as the earth seemed ransacked by wild scamperings and drummings. . . . That yellow vapour was here again! Yes, that same stubble-coloured mist. . .

* * *

Fast as he ran, his thoughts moved faster. A new

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idea had just entered his head; for instead of exhausting him or making him long for nothing but sleep, all these agitating events, overlapping each other like breaking waves, as the Henog's Past and the Prophet's Future seemed unable to do, gave his thought wings. What if that straw-coloured mist that had followed him for so many hours. . . were at the back of all that was happening to him? (P, 50; 111)

In both cases, the sorcerer and prophet Merlin or Myrddin Wyllt, a Saturnian personification of time, presides over the scene: he is there by implication in the first passage; he is recalled by Porius in the second passage, though recalled to be dismissed along with the Henog (his official court biographer). Time is also associated with water: a "tide" from the "dam of events," "breaking waves." These figures define Porius's impression of many events happening all at once; in addition, they remind us of the river Dyfrdwy, which moves through the vale where the action of Porius occurs. Like a snake ("the serpent of time," P, 102 and passim), Dyfrdwy doubles back on itself. Its sinuous, slow-moving path, as well as its tendency to become lost in swamps, helps create a mist, a third motif which relates to time. Mist in Porius, especially when golden in hue, possesses "its own obscure, indefinite, inescapable identity" (P, 445); it is often a "strange bridge backwards" (P, 550), linking Porius to a race of giants or Cewri who should be extinct but still lurk somewhere within the fogs of this region.

Most of these materials are familiar from previous novels by Powys; the yellow mist, the onrush of water, and the figure of Saturn meet with special force in A Glastonbury Romance (1933). The question of what they are doing in Porius seems at first problematic. By itself the wave-like rush suggests time's onward march, its impetus forward through the medium of innumerable events; in combination with the presence of Cewri, creatures soon to reappear among the human inhabitants of the region, it charts a backward movement: towards nostalgia, the earth, a golden age--towards Porius's great-grandmother who was herself a giantess. Pace Taliessin, there will be no pure present under such circumstances; time just keeps

accumulating, much like the river and fog, piling itself into one inclusive moment. Pace Augustine, this sort of moment frees Porius rather than situating him within a preordained pattern. Far from feeling hemmed in by the expansive present, he gains from it a consciousness of his own possible choices. When sequential time starts up again, our consciousness of it is transformed. "The motion without motion, that eternally moves the world [a consciously Aristotelian formation] appeared to stop dead. Then in the hearing of them both a faded poplar-leaf fluttered down upon the moss; and once more the causeless, indetermined fluctuations of ananke and tyche, of 'necessity and chance,' flowed and wavered on." (P,633)

Powys's attempt at a compromise is familiar from the Romantic adaptation of Augustine mentioned above; The Prelude, for example, takes over Augustine's psychological argument, seconding its emphasis on the importance of memory and anticipation without accepting determinism as a corollary. Nonetheless, typing Powys as a romantic who flirts harmlessly with Augustine or Hegel while trumpeting free choice hardly does him justice. Even the reader who neglects Powys's "subtle philosophical motive" (P, 403) retains what the novelist would call a "sensation" of time's flow distorted and remolded. . .but never cancelled altogether. "Sensation" is a term intended quite literally. Powys's characters exercise sight, smell, touch, hearing, and even taste on the scenes immediately available to them. By following their repeated endeavors we learn to feel the rhythm and point of apparently meaningless moments, through which in turn the power of chance is revealed. The consciously absurd word "cavoseniargize" does something to evoke the combination of sense-experience, expanded or distorted present, and chance, but does not remind us that an "embrace" of "material elements" has its limits. Powys is well aware of these limits, which makes his taste for freedom all the more compelling. In Mortal Strife, he refers to "our terrifying modicum of freedom of choice twitching its fatal needle at the core of our being" (MS,41). Porius is based on similar oxymorons. "The dice-box of fate" (P,546) can never abolish chance, a thought at once dismal and comforting since it leaves us open to the "peculiar and special pain" (P,594) of

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a divided will but also holds open the possibility of escape from what must be.

One of the extraordinary features of Porius is that a notion of history is communicated through largely formal means; as a consequence we come to feel the parallel between the novelist's struggle with his materials and that of the characters with their circumstances. Ideas about history are also presented in motifs quite separate from style.¹³ However, for present purpose I prefer a return to Lukacs's "classical" historical novel, whose links with Powys can now be defined. According to Lukacs, Scott wrote of an "infinite net of chance which forms the precondition of [history's] necessity." There is much of this interplay in Powys, as much as in Scott, surely, but the terms are reversed: if anything, necessity forms a precondition for chance. Coming to terms with luck proves just as terrifying as coming to terms with fate--think of the V-2 rockets that can fall on anybody--but requires a different wit than the kind we would need in a world ruled by destiny first and foremost. (What a mistake to think that fate rules all, that "nothing," for instance, "can stop the City of God," (P,627); people who believe this kind of thing get into big trouble.) Powys's relation to the Balzac described in Lukacs is equally telling. Balzac's accomplishment was to condense history into a few years, and to instruct us by this means that the present as well as the past can be treated historically. Powys, by contrast, suggests that the past can be treated as we would the present; that only by experiencing history as contingency, as something that has not yet happened and so need not have been, can we prepare ourselves to grasp its meaning or meaninglessness. Allowing the present to include other parts of time does not result in a glorification of fate or providence; rather, it intensifies our sense that anything might happen--even that anything could have happened in a present long gone by.

If I were to summarize Powys's accomplishment in a single sentence, I would say that he took God and God's point of view out of historical understanding to an extent matched by no previous novelist; furthermore that he gave history back to human beings and a human point of view. In any case, Porius is not one of

those works which exhausts the possibilities of a genre; the negation of a negation, it prepares the way for a new version of the historical novel, one which since midcentury has been further defined by several wonderful books. Above all, I would suggest, Porius anticipates the masterpieces of Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Cien Años de Soledad, 1967) and Thomas Pynchon (Gravity's Rainbow, 1973). Neither Marquez nor Pynchon, of course, seems ever to have heard of Powys. Since both are still alive, I can conclude with my own fantasy, that they--along with their readers--might stumble across Powys's great "Romance of the Dark Ages" and recognize in this student of history's blank page, this chronicler of the sinuous path between necessity and chance, a kindred spirit. Perhaps when Powys is seen in this larger context, as the predecessor and equal of novelists currently prized, he will begin to get something of his due. To quote from one of Porius's most memorable characters, the Derwydd (Druid) of Edeyrnion, "I'm not one myself to deny any possibility." (P.303)

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Notes

1. I quote from the English translation of Hannah and Stanley Mitchell: The Historical Novel (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1963), 53; when he writes of the present, Lukacs means a writer's own time as opposed to the "past" which his novels address.
2. I quote from the otherwise unavailable documents--preface, letters, character list--published in the Porius issue of The Powys Newsletter (no. 4, 1974-1975, pp. 8, 6).
3. The preface to The Fair Maid of Perth praises "wildernesses in Scottish history, through which, unless I am greatly misinformed, no certain paths have been laid down from actual survey, but which are only described by imperfect tradition, which fills up with wonders and with legends the periods in which no real events are recognized to have taken place." (Fair Maid [New York: John Lovell, n.d.], 19).

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4. Porius: A romance of the Dark Ages (London: Macdonald, 1951), 453.

5. In the unpublished "Preface," Powys notes that he would be a fool to write about a period where he himself would not want to live. He notes later, "now I personally felt, as I was passing through each [of] these successive days and nights, that I was really there--moi qui vous parle--whether the person whose body and mind I inhabited like an indwelling good or evil spirit was a man, woman, or child." (Newsletter, 8-9).

6. I have benefitted from the discussion of Hegel and Berlioz in Paul Robinson, Opera and Ideas: From Mozart to Strauss (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), especially 108-109. Robinson argues convincingly that Berlioz's Aeneas (Les Troyens) is an Hegelian world-historical individual who fulfills destiny while leaving victims in his wake. Appropriately, at the one moment in Porius where Porius imagines himself an Aeneas-like hero ("the blustering hero of some pseudo-heroic Roman epic," 572), he immediately recognizes the absurdity of this thought. It is Hegel's remarks in Lectures III.2.c., "The Individual as Object of History," which puts him most clearly and directly at odds with Powys, for whom the death of the individual and the particular have a meaning they could never have for the philosopher.

7. Powys feels about the Welsh somewhat as Scott about the Highlanders; however Scott's treatment of his glorious losers is much more open to Hegelian interpretation. This subject deserves greater attention than I can give it here.

8. Mortal Strife (London: Village Press, 1974; first published in 1942 by Jonathan Cape), 233.

9. The following discussion is indebted to Denis Lane, "Elementalism in John Cowper Powys's Porius," Papers in Language and Literature (Fall, 1981), and Michael Ballin, "John Cowper Powys's Porius and the Dialectic of History," The Powys Review, no. 19, 1986.

10. On Augustine and the Romantics, see M.H.Abrams,

Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York: W.W.Norton, 1971).

11. Abrams describes the patterns common to Augustine and Hegel: see Natural Supernaturalism, 46-56, 83-87, and 225-237.

12. Letters of John Cowper Powys to Louis Wilkinson 1935-1956 (London: Village Press, 1974), 241.

13. For example: a water-clock, functioning mechanically and implacably, was invented by Boethius, defender of free will; the Cewri, giants who embody the power of chance and of individual human will (P, 102), stumble into the novel's most fatal conflux of events; blots and blurs of natural origin look like hieroglyphs (messages written on the blank page of history) but remain accidental marks: finally in Powys's favorite Welsh myth, Bran the Blessed's severed head suspends time even while it suggests the abruptness with which history breaks in on any such suspension. A favorite image in Porius, the severed head is "the ghastly but imperishable medium between the buried past and the new-born future" (P, 490); it is, in fact, the present moment itself, "never-dying [since the present is always here and now] yet eternally dead [since it always turns to the past, to what must have been]." (P, 490).

P O W Y S A N D T H E F E M I N I N E

The Fifth Annual Conference of the
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Charles Lock

TRACING THE LINE: A REVIEW

Peter J. Casagrande. Hardy's Influence on the Modern Novel (New York and London: Macmillan, 1987).

The common reader has no difficulty tracing the line through George Eliot to Hardy and Lawrence. Critics, however, have had to labour under the pernicious illusion of Leavis's Great Tradition which insists on a hiatus precisely where Hardy should be. One can point to numerous single works of criticism that defy the Leavisite proscription--by David Cecil, Albert Guerard, Irving Howe, and many others--and to the prominence of Hardy in the academic syllabus, and yet feel that Hardy is an outsider, that he still demands apology. If one moves from the canon of English fiction to a comparative perspective Hardy remains an outsider. He is not cited as a Naturalist with Zola, or as a forerunner of Modernism, with James and Conrad. For all his international fame and reputation, Hardy seldom figures in the history of the modern European intellect and sensibility.

Casagrande's book aims at restitution. The main argument is built on six chapters devoted to Hardy's influence on George Moore, D.H. Lawrence, J. C. Powys, Proust and Alain-Fournier, John Fowles, and Dreiser. Such eclectic and selective instances of influence is the worst of arguments: imagine trying such a list with Dickens or George Eliot. Insofar as influence can be specified within a tradition, it is not influence but a matter of idiosyncratic taste. Influence if it is to matter in literary history has to be less discrete.

One's sense of Hardy's importance to twentieth-century literature as a whole is, frankly, scandalized by the particularism of Casagrande's list. Fifty other novelists would be as suitable, and only such a large number would be representative of the scope of Hardy's influence. Admirers of J. C. Powys will appreciate the chapter devoted to him, but they will also question the absence of T. F. Powys. And as J. C. Powys has definitely not been included in the canon of modern literature, either by critics or by readers, we may wonder what such influence is meant to demonstrate.

If Casagrande's book were entitled "Studies in Creative Readings of Hardy" its individual chapters would have something to offer. The presence of Tess in George Moore's Esther Waters is interestingly argued entirely in terms of the seduction scene. The importance of Tess might be less glaringly obvious if some mention were made of other well-known seduced heroines--Hetty Sorel, Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, etc. The Lawrence chapter treads competently the familiar ground, without developing the sense of formal influence adumbrated by Ian Gregor.

The chapter on Powys has good things on Maiden Castle, in an extended treatment of that neglected novel (pp. 94-109). I do not know how long ago this chapter was written, but Casagrande is entirely unaware of After My Fashion: this weakens his argument about the importance for Powys of returning natives. He is not a careful reader who calls the hero of Rodmoor, repeatedly, Adrian Sorley. Is Powys's return to England in "1943" a typo? (Some of his books are set in "Dorest.") Numerous other inaccuracies vitiate the chapter.

Potentially the most useful thing for English readers in Casagrande's book is his chapter on Proust and Alain-Fournier. On nostalgia Casagrande has much of interest, and his account of Hardy's influence on Le Grand Meaulnes is most rewarding. Proust and the stone-mason's geometry is a more familiar topic, but Casagrande does a good summary, and gives a useful survey of later French criticism of Hardy. An opportunity is missed in the case of the critic, J.-J. Mayoux, who wrote on Hardy, and who has subsequently written on Powys. (Casagrande, alas, misspells his name.) Mayoux's article "John Cowper Powys: l'extase et la sensualité" is to be found in Sous de vastes portiques.....Etudes de littérature et d'art anglais, Paris, 1981. Casagrande closes this chapter with words that are sadly true: French critics have been much more sympathetic to Hardy's "heterodoxy" than English critics, among whom the sense "still persists, that Hardy's is a seriously flawed greatness."

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Robert Crozier THE OLD WAYS AND THE ENCROACHING NEW:
A REVIEW

W. J. Keith, Regions of the Imagination: The Development of British Rural Fiction (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 192 pp. \$30.00. Can., cloth.

In Regions of the Imagination, W. J. Keith surveys the regional novel from its earliest beginnings in the romances of Ann Radcliffe, to the decline of the genre in the 1930s. The regional novel, he asserts, ordinarily explores the connection of people and place through work, concerning itself "not with a static rural society but with a countryside in process." It presents "a locality distinctive in its character and related (at however great an imaginative remove) to a corresponding countryside indentifiable on a map of the United Kingdom." It usually contains bits of local history, descriptions of work and customs peculiar to the setting, careful reproductions of the local dialect, detailed descriptions of scenery, and incidents from humble life. It was Scott, primarily, who concocted the blend that became literary regionalism, associating his stories with particular locales--especially the border country--and contrasting the local with the cosmopolitan. His documentary sense, combined with his use of the conventions and language of romance and Gothic fiction, brought him early recognition as a writer of popular social history.

Keith tells how, in general, the major regional novelists--Hardy, Lawrence, and J.C. Powys--maintain a balance between documentary realism and romance, between the old ways and the encroaching new, that the lesser writers do not. Indeed, that conflict is Hardy's major theme. His novels chronicle the disintegration of regional culture and the triumph of Victorian bourgeois life. Lawrence continues the documentation of rural decline, showing the conflict between and transition from agriculture to mining, from the rural/regional to the urban/industrial, until finally in Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928), all "regional characteristics have been negated." John Cowper Powys, heavily influenced by both Scott and Hardy, produced a conventionally realistic novel in Wolf

Solent (1929) and proceeded to combine topographical exactitude with an interest in "a spirit of the spot, its mysterious emanations and extraterrestrial influence." In Powys's middle novels the balance between the two interests holds, but in his later novels topographical realism unfortunately yields to the romantic element. Nevertheless, according to Keith, Powys produced a "brilliant body of literature that is in his own words 'deeply local, and yet wide as the world.'"

In the minor writers, suggests Keith, the blend is less balanced. Some, like Sheila Kaye-Smith, allow the documentary element to dominate so that the connection between setting and plot become tenuous; others, like Eden Philpotts, disconnect their setting from historical events, losing the conflict that is most characteristic of the regional novel. The setting is not the significant microcosm that is Wessex, but rather some insignificant backwater. Although the conventions of the genre were brilliantly parodied in Stella Gibbons' Cold Comfort Farm (1932), it was not the parody that brought an end to the regional novel but the replacement of regional cultures by a standard, homogeneous culture. Keith's book is not a dirge for the passing of the regional novel; rather, its purpose is broader: to show that "for over a century the regional novel provided a form within which some of the finest novelists in the language should express their creative visions as well as their response to the rural landscape around them."

In a book remarkable for its range of reference, W. J. Keith clearly establishes an important tradition, demonstrates the enduring influence of Scott, and, in juxtaposing major and minor writers, illuminates the strengths and weaknesses of each. His assessments are acute, balanced, and trenchantly expressed. He writes with special sympathy and approval of lesser writers such as Constance Hume and Mary Webb who, he argues, belong more in the company of Hardy and Powys than of Conrad and Woolf; and he is always interesting on the major writers. This is an ambitious book, and its purposes are superlatively achieved.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

PSNA Executive Committee. Added to the Executive Committee at the Annual Business Meeting in Ottawa this last June were: RICHARD MAXWELL as Treasurer and Membership Secretary (address: Dept. of English, Valparaíso University, IN 46383), and CHARLES LOCK as Member-at-Large and Bibliographer (address: Erindale College, University of Toronto, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada L5L 1C6).

As Bibliographer Charles Lock would appreciate receiving from members any information, however obvious or repetitive, on publications on or by the Powyses. Photocopies welcomed (title page, verso, and contents of books; entire copies of articles or reviews, if possible).

The ACADEMY BOOK STORE in Manhattan specializes in out-of-print and rare books, and now offers 21 titles by John Cowper Powys originally published by THE VILLAGE PRESS, London. Also available are the Harper paperbacks of Wolf Solent and Weymouth Sands. For a complete listing contact Academy Book Store, 10 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011. Tel: (212) 242-4848.

The new newsletter of the Powys Society [U.K.] informs us of the availability of back issues of The Powys Review, Nos. 1 - 4 only. Ordering information: No. 1, #10.00 (limited supply); Nos. 2, 3, 4: #5.00 each. Add 50p postage for one copy, #1.00 for more. Order from: Griffin Beale, Secretary, The Powys Society, 39 Church Street, Bridgwater, Somerset, England TA6 5AT. Note: # = pounds sterling.

BOOKS, NOTED OR FORTHCOMING

For T. F. aficionados: Judith Stinton, Chaldon Herring: The Powys Circle in a Dorset Village (Boydell & Brewer, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF), and T. F. Powys, Fables, ed. with Introduction by Lawrence Mitchell (Rigby & Lewis, Teignmouth, S.Devon TQ14 8HA).

Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers, Writing for Their Lives: The Modernist Women, 1910 -1940 (London: Virago). Study of a number of early 20th century feminists who "liaised in varying intensity with Yeats, Pound, Powys, Stein and Freud," and whose "egoism clearly had its origins in a desire to create literature rather than babies."