



Mainstream

ORPAH

V. J. Jerome

THE EDUCATION OF SCIENTISTS

Norbert Wiener

THREE POEMS

Thomas McGrath

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

Russell Davis

ART

Siqueiros

May, 1958

50 cents

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ORPAH

V. J. JEROME

*And they lifted up their voice, and wept again:
and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth
clave unto her.*

*And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone
back unto her people and unto her god. . .*

—The Book of Ruth

SOLITARY she walked, a desolate figure, up the scraggy path by the mountain that led back from the crossroads, to Ar, in the Field of Moab. She walked under the white sun, slowstepped, with head low. Once only did she turn to look down the winding road behind her, standing on the knoll at the bend where the milletfield began. She could no longer descry in the empty distance the two human forms that had come to be all her life.

The urge came upon her to set off again on the road she had forsaken, to run until she overtook Ruth and Naomi on their way to Judah. She made a start to turn back, unmindful of the burdening bag of saffron-dyed kidskin she carried. But her step faltered as she recalled the forking of the roads beyond Eddar. What hope was left her of finding them before they crossed the River Arnon into Reuben to travel thence, by which course she knew not, to the bank of the Jordan?

Under a jutting rock of the brooding tawny mountain Orpah stood, frightened by her aloneness. "It is over—over," the sad words whispered themselves across her lips. She would never see them more. Her own hand, an hour gone by, had cut the strands of oneness with the flesh and blood of Chilion, her everbeloved, who was no more. Ruth had clung to Naomi like a daughter, but *she* like a daughter-in-law had abandoned her. Desperately she clutched at the remembrance of her

golden days with Chilion, and the fragrant afterlove, born of grief, that had twined her and Ruth and Naomi like lilies of a kindred growing tall together. Emptiness gaped before her and she could no longer feel solid ground. The earth under her had sunk and become a dark pit without bottom and she was suspended in a void over which no heaven hung. Yet she did not rue what she had done.

She set down her bag and drew out her woolen shawled cloak to rest upon under the solitary carobtree by the road, for the scant shade its branches might give her. A deep wayweariness settled upon her after the miles she had traversed forth and back under the pitiless summer sun. She marvelled how the two green lizards on the scorched stone could lie there basking in the open white blaze, and how the crickets could will to go on chirping. She had prevailed upon Naomi and Ruth to take the pouch of dates and her goatskin waterbottle. How parched she felt now, and how she longed to dip her aching bare feet in cool water! She sighed deeply; her eyes closed in troubled reverie.

Turn again, my daughters: why will you go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Naomi's words before the parting still sounded their pain to her soul. It was not for a husband that she had clung to her mother-in-law. Nor was it for Naomi's sake alone, no, not for hers alone, she owed to herself though great was their love for each other, but to be near to her who had brought Chilion into the world. For him, now two years cut off from her by death, she had been ready to leave her mother, her tribe, her homeland, to go to Bethlehem-judah with Naomi and be to her a daughter and a helpmate in her old age and impoverishment. But to Naomi the whole going was a course that could lead to no end forasmuch as a woman of Moab could hope to find no husband in Judah! Was this not her meaning . . . *are there yet any more sons in my womb?* As well might Naomi have partaken in my own mother's foolishness, Orpah laughed bitterly, as she remembered the whip, the herder's whip her mother had brought to her one day, saying: "How long will you sit thus widowed? Baanach the drover is a man of substance and kindly who would make you a good husband. Take up this his whip, my daughter, and bind three knots in it, that you may by the grace of Ashtar our Goddess bind him to you." Yes, Naomi too meant my good, and Ruth's, Orpah sat saying to herself; yet how could she not see, how could she fail to see that it was not to quest for a husband, but to be with her, and with Chilion through her, that I cried out with Ruth at the road's divide, *Surely we will return with you unto your people.* But

Naomi urged, *Go, return each to her mother's house*. Why had she not spoken out, Being daughters of Moab you can hope for no future in Judah, where you will be forever strangers at the gate? Better had she said it, yes, better the wound in the open than the gnawing of hidden pain!

Was it to break loose from the bonds to which she had clung so long that she had turned back, while Ruth followed Naomi? She could give herself no clear answer. It might have been that, the thought began to assert itself, and what Naomi had meant in her unsaid words about Moabites and Hebrews. It might have been. She rose to her feet. How far away—at the world's other end—the road to Judah lay! She knew there was no turning back. Heavily she set forward.

After a short span the milletfield came to an end, giving way to a wide stretch of grazing land. At a little distance before her, a woman's form was moving across the pasture from the road. Orpah could make out that she held a pitcher lowered to her side. *A well!* she rejoiced, for her thirst was indeed great. Quickening her pace, she cut across the pasturefield to follow the walker. The well was clearly in view when she came within some ells of her. She saw her to be a young woman, scarcely older than herself, of buxom build and full-faced, wearing sandals woven of branches, and earrings of bronze not unlike her own.

"God be with you," Orpah addressed the stranger. She looked down ill at ease upon her own bare feet.

"Blessed be of God," came the blithesome response.

"I am on my way to Ar, and I am athirst after being long on the roads. When I saw you going to the well, I followed after you."

"I come here," said the woman, "each sundown when all the women come to draw; but today," she smiled, "Baal set me upon my way at high-sun, that I might guide you to fresh water."

They came to the well-head. The woman descended the stone steps, Orpah following downward. Together they lifted the slab from the well's mouth. The woman lowered the rope of thongs with the leathern bucket.

Orpah drank deep from the filled pitcher. Her thirst appeased, she thanked the stranger.

"Do not thank me," the woman said, smiling. "It is I who should give thanks for meeting so pleasing a person and one so comely." She was about to take up the filled vessel, when she paused.

"Your feet must be weary from the road," she said. "At my house,

yonder," she pointed beyond the brickyard, "you can have a footbath and some goat's milk to refresh you. It will mean no toil for me."

Orpah was touched by her goodness and would have said aye to her, save that a strange, half-formed feeling drew her to linger at the well, the source of her refreshing.

"I am beholden to you for your kindness," she said. "But I think it will rest me if for a while I tarry here by this soothing well. The sun is yet far from setting, and I can be in Ar betimes."

The woman looked at her and, after a moment's thought, said:

"It is a strange thing that the road which this morning took two of our young women away from Ar should on the selfsame day bring another to its gates."

Orpah stood wordless. She could not bring herself to say, *Before you stands one of the twain that this morning turned away from Ar and from Moab*. The woman, she reflected, had no knowledge of whom she was addressing. Orpah responded with a nod and a halfsmile, as if to say, Yes, many are the things that are strange in this world.

The woman went on:

"It was to Judah they were going, say those that saw them pass this way, two sisters-in-law, widows both, following their Hebrew mother-in-law on her way back to her birthland after living ten years among us. You will hear of it, be assured, when you come into Ar. Her arm swung out toward the mountain, and anger lifted her voice. "The Hebrews have taken from us our plains and uplands—the whole other side of the Arnon—and settled on it their robber-tribe Reuben. And now this our Field of Moab, all that's left us, is not safe from Ehud's armies. My husband"—her voice trembled—"lamed in the war. Of my three brothers two fell at the fords of the Jordan. My field—she looked sadly toward her home—"lies waste for want of a who man to lay his shoulder to the plough; and what my hands earn at the loom reaches not the needs of my little ones. What daughters of Moab be these"—the torment in her cried out, the cheer of her face now bitterness—"to cast in their lot with the Hebrews, to go into the camp of the enemy?" She thrust up fists to the sky. "May the curse Chemosh—!"

"No! forbear!" Orpah broke in. "Do not curse them! do not curse them!"

The woman was shocked into stillness. Then, in angry wonderment pierced with suspicion, she cried:

"Who may you be to hold with campfollowers of the Hebrews

Orpah, her self-command regained, made answer:

"I am a daughter of Moab, and yet I can see them loth to let their aged mother-in-law make the long journey alone. Is it not rather to their good report that they should so honor the mother of their husbands taken from them by death?"

The woman stood silent, with lips compressed, her anger hardly abating.

Orpah spoke on:

"And can it be said of a truth that good abides not in the Hebrews, when two of our own can thus be drawn to the Hebrew mother of their departed husbands? Surely they are not two camps, enemy camps, to one another."

In pained puzzlement the woman looked fixedly at Orpah, till, turning away her eyes, she said low:

"Perhaps—perhaps. The tongue is not the heart. The grief in me—yet——"

She fell to setting right the linen draping over her head, then up-raised upon it the filled earthenware pitcher. Orpah stood hushed, the hurt in her deep. Then she felt the woman's smile upon her, broken out like a sun from the enclouded face, and heard her gentle words:

"Farewell, sister, farewell."

"Depart in peace!" Orpah answered from her heart, as the woman struck out into the trail across the pasture, homeward.

Orpah stood leaning over the mouth of the well.

How alone you are! she communed silently with the face that looked up at her from the darkly-shining water below. *Are you indeed my face? Are you a journeyer, travelspent, gone down to still your thirst and cool your aching limbs? Are you a being floating lonely, sundered from dear ones, despairing of shore? No, you are my face! My frightened eyes, with no will in them. My wavering mouth, and the trembling in it. Why are you not serene, strong and tranquil as I long to be, inner-harmonied as the moon that once shone over Mount Nebo when I stood with Chilion under its slopes?*

She turned away from the tremulous waterphantom of herself. Only emptiness and silence. The emptiness and the silence were within her. She was nothingness. She had lost herself, and she had lost Naomi, and Ruth. And Chilion was no more. And her going back was to the house of her mother, but not to her mother's heart.

The torridness of the day was spent. A light refreshing wind sprang up from the west, bearing the promise of moisture on its wings. The deep stillness was broken only by a half-heard slide of sand down the mountain slope. Orpah did not walk on, but stood near the well at a treeside, herself a slender tree rooted in thought. A half-light veiled her dark eyes, and a wistfulness touched the waning of her cheeks. Her heart misgave her at having withheld the deeper reason for not hastening on her way. Yet, she asked herself, could she have done else? make known to her, a stranger, how that her spirit sank at the foreview of coming into Ar in daylight, for people to point at her? She sighed deeply, perturbed by the scene her wrought-up mind evoked. The woman's fierce, bitter, punishing words still rang in her ears—*What daughters of Moab be these. . . ?* She had answered what was true, she told herself, in saying there were no enemy camps dividing the three that had been journeying together. No brighter years had she known than those among Chilion's kinfolk. She had learned much from him and from Naomi. She had felt with them pride in the story of their stem-fathers who had broken out of Egypt no more to be slaves. Yet, she sighed, camps there were, and a war there was beyond Arnon in the North. When tidings came of the defeat at Jordan, all Moab mourned, and her mother went about in sullenness through the house and spoke not to them, when she and Chilion visited her. She thought of old Amhad, the bronzesmith, dear, sparkle-eyed, wise Amhad, friend of many years to Chilion and to her, ever since he had come from his homeland in Tyre to sojourn in Moab. Amhad of the wondrous hands! She thought of the chalice, the beautiful bronze chalice he had wrought with loving fingers to present to them on their wedding day. She sat down upon the rim of the well. Her hand dipped into the bag beside her and from its bottom drew out the precious gift. She held up the graceful cup. *The chalice from which that night she had tasted the wine Chilion held out to her!* She brought its beauty to her cheek. How smooth it was within, how mirrorlustrous in the sun! And without—the Israelite Ark of the Covenant graven on one side, and on the other, the altar-hearth of Chemosh, Highgod of Moab; and in delicate silvered tracery interbranching, like vines embracing, the name *Chilion* and the name *Orpah*, *Chilion—Orpah, Orpah—Chilion*, her soft low chant swung forth and back, as might a child's singsong. "What the gods would keep asunder, let human hearts unite," she could still hear old Amhad saying, with his quaint Tyrian accent and his museful smile. "Two peoples, two neighbors, near-cousins speaking one language, s

alike in custom and way of life, and yet"—she remembered the sadness in his eyes—"and yet, to have plundered and seized the hafland of Moab down to the banks of the Arnon, with no claim save the word of their battlegod Yahweh!" And she remembered his further words and the mock in them—"How can their hearts believe what their Judges say, that what they took was not Moab but the land of the Amorites, when the Amorite king had seized that land from Moab? As though stealing from the thief is no thieving."

What the gods would keep asunder. . . . The reverberant words disquieted Orpah's spirit. She turned the chalice in her hand. Yahweh's Ark and the altar-hearth of Chemosh, each on its side of the cup, back to back, never looking at each other, never speaking. Perhaps, if they came together, like human hearts, there would be no camps, and war would not be. But how could that come to pass? Even among human hearts that were united, the gods created camps. It was not quite true, alas, it was not true, what she had told the woman about the three that had been seen journeying together. Two were on their way to Judah, while one was going back. In Bethlehem, Naomi would have her believe, she would walk unfriended among Chilion's people. Why had their marriage been right in Naomi's eyes in Moab, if in Judah it would have been a sin? And Ruth's and Mahlon's marriage? What had worked this change in Naomi? ". . . the hand of Yahweh is gone out against me," she still heard her mother-in-law lament. Yahweh had punished her, taken her husband from her and her two sons and all she had, because when the famine broke out in Judah she and Elimelech went forth from Bethlehem with their sons, abandoned their country and their people, all their near ones, to save themselves, themselves alone. More than once she had heard Naomi sorrow in this wise. But all that had happened so long back in the past—ten years gone by.

Her head drooped in sadness.

No, that was not it alone. It was Mahlon and Chilion Naomi meant!—on account of them Yahweh's hand had gone out against her, for that they had transgressed the Law of the Hebrews by marrying daughters of Moab. On account of their disobedience—oh, how she could read Naomi's heart!—Yahweh had cut off their lives in their youth and brought them without offspring to their graves. And now Naomi was going back to shake the dust of Moab from her feet—back to Judah that Yahweh might turn his wrath away from her. *How could I have gone with her after that: the widow of a Hebrew, the daughter-in-law of Hebrews, go to be*

unwelcome in the land of the Hebrews? How could I so humble myself? In anger she thrust back the chalice and let the bag fall crumpled at her feet. The bitter plaint of the woman at the well pursued her. In her lamenting Orpah heard the cry of Moabite mothers and children in all corners of the land for sons and husbands and fathers that would not again come home—ten thousand men of Moab fallen at the fords of Jordan. And upon the living, the burden of tribute to the Hebrews—every year a hundred thousand ewes and a hundred thousand rams, with their wool.

Ruth followed after Naomi, Orpah reflected, to her land, her people, her God. Mine must be another way. "It was right of me to go back!" she spoke out passionately, as she took up her bag. Yet she suffered the thought to lash her: *Naomi and her kindred and their children's children will account Ruth the truehearted daughter-in-law that cleaved to Naomi, not heeding her entreaties to be left to go her way alone, nor thinking of her own prospect in the land whose people would not bring her into their fold. But against me, Orpah, their hearts will harden. Of me they will say, She deserted and turned back, the frail of heart, the unworthy one, to seek her a husband among her own kind in Moab.* She started up, in her eyes a rebellious fire. *Let those who will, say this—let them sting with their venom! I would not travel a lowering road. I am not lesser for being a Moabite!* She turned round fiercely—to her who had stood at her side, as though to say: *I am one of the two Moabite daughters-in-law, and I am going back—back to my people!*

Setting forth from the well, Orpah caught sight once more of her reflection in the water. She stopped. Now the face was another—an angry face, a warring, strong face. "Is this I?" she whispered, staring down at the defiant image. And a whisper, very like her own, replied:

I am your self. I am what your name bespeaks: Orpah, she of the firm neck, the strong of will.

Long she stood, looking at the resolute image of herself: the fear gone from it and the self-doubt. And it seemed to her that a smile curved about the certain face in the water. Then she turned, starting back across the pasture toward the road. And as she walked she kept saying to herself in a passioned wildsweet strain:

"I am Orpah, I am my self."

An onrush of memory brought to her words that Chilion had once spoken. They had come home with their sickles from the harvest and were sitting before their tent in the cool Tishri evening, still

humming together the plaintive Chant of the Reapers. His fingers were passing tenderly through her hair, and she, nestling to his breast, whispered: "In love, doesn't one heart flow into the other, until it is no longer, but beats in the other?" And he lifted up her face and his dark thoughtful eyes were upon her, and whether they spoke or his lips she remembered not. "We are not one; we are two. In our greatest love we are two—two that have come together. Be your full self, Orpah, that each of us may be to the other the fuller companion." She had felt him unkind thus to speak of their love, imagining that they were walking on paths apart. But now how clearly she understood. She had fused her being into his, her presence gone out of her, molten in his. For the wholeness of their love had she done this. And upon his passing, she bound her life to Naomi's, losing her selfness to Chilion's mother, who had become her certitude. But it was in her anguish—yes, she knew now—when she felt herself shut out as a daughter of Moab that the woman in her stirred to life, the person, the Moabite, Orpah!

Strange that only now Chilion's words opened out to her like petals of a bright flower. For this too is what he meant, and what his life had been with hers—two that had come together—Hebrew and Moabite come together, neither seeing the other the lesser for being the other.

The day was drawing to its close as she turned from the pasture into the road. Behind the farther ridge of the mountain the sun had begun to go down into the purpling valley that deepens along the west. A furlong and a half still lay between her and Ar, and she set herself a faster pace, that she might reach the gate before nightclosing. Ahead, stretched the long, coiling road, parched and soundless between the margin of bright fields and the dun expanse of tares and rubble and rocks which, farther in, rose in a wild slope toward the darkening hills.

She was now hard by the brickyard, whence the curve in the road would bring her, with one other turn, straight upon her homethat she walked briskly. The belongings she held corded together in the saffron kidskin were not quite the burden they had been before. Strange, the mildening thought passed through her, strange that the weight was less on her spirits than she had feared. She had shuddered at the thought that the very ground would mock the homecoming steps of her who had that morning spurned her native soil. Yet with every step homeward she sensed in the fields and the mountains about, in the sky over her and in the earth under, a welcoming and a renewing.

Down the road past the brickyard, by a crumbling mudhut, a little

boy sat looking at her fulleyed from the doorway. He held fondly in his arms a plaything of gaily painted pottery—a camel's head that delighted her. From across the way, Orpah smiled to him, slowing his step. The child, returning the smile, leaped up and came bounding across the road toward the gentlefaced stranger.

"See my camel's head!" he called out, holding up the pottery. "My uncle Resha brought it for me all the way from Kir-Hareseth. Ar—Ar—look—all the shining, half-moons round its neck!"

Orpah took up the bright figure in her hand admiringly, as she patted the child's head.

"Are you a lady from Kir-Hareseth?" he asked.

"No, little brother. I am from Ar—from right yonder." She set down the bag and bent to his height, pointing. "Can you see the dark hill, the wall far off on the hill? You could see it better in full daylight, at the tower, and the white gate too. That is Ar, whence I come."

"But you are not coming from there, you are going there," the boy looked at her.

"I am coming back."

"From where?"

Orpah felt the tears rise.

"From going away," she said.

This story was written in May, 1957, while its author was awaiting release from the Federal House of Detention in New York City, after completion of a three-year sentence, served in three prisons, under the Smith Act.—*The Editor.*

THE EDUCATION OF SCIENTISTS

NORBERT WIENER

We are publishing the following document because of its manifest pertinence to the discussion of American education now underway in the United States. It is an address delivered at Wabash College on the occasion of its 125th anniversary. Dr. Wiener has been Professor of Mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology since 1932. Among his works best known to the lay reader are *Cybernetics* and *The Human Use of Human Beings*.—*The Editor*.

I HAVE been asked to this conference to give a report of my notions of the role of the small college of the type of Wabash with a particular emphasis on the training of natural scientists and mathematicians.

Of course this talk must have special reference not to training and education in the abstract, but the training and education under the highly specific conditions of present day life in the United States. Let us, therefore, consider some of the respects in which education in the United States differs from that in other countries of Western Europe.

Here I must express myself with a certain diffidence. The last few years, and particularly those since the end of the Second World War, have seen a considerable change in educational methods and standards throughout the world. There has been a certain assimilation of methods in all the countries of the world, and the differences which I here wish to signify between European education and that in the United States have been somewhat blurred by the increasing prestige of American methods. Therefore I wish it to be understood that when I am talking of European education I am talking primarily of the norms of that education as they existed before World War I and during the period of transition between World War I and World War II.

The three countries of which I shall chiefly speak are Great Britain, France and Germany. Before World War I, and between the two wars,

the German educational system was largely the model for those of most Central and Northern European countries. Thus what I shall have to say is not confined to the three countries of which I speak. Education in Great Britain must be divided, to a certain extent, between English and Scottish education. The standard form of English secondary education was the great public school, whereas that of Scottish education was rather the grammar school. In England the public schools had in many cases started in the middle ages, and up to the Eighteenth Century schools for the training of able young men of whatever origin had looked forward largely to their training for the church which had for many centuries almost the monopoly of all education whatever. In the Eighteenth Century the rise of a new upper middle class, and above all the prestige and power of the upper class, enabled these schools to cast off most of what they had had of a quasi-charitable purpose and to become like so much else in the England of that time, a preserve for the aristocracy and the new plutocracy which was assimilated to the aristocracy. The history of education at that time belongs with the enclosure of the Commons and the many other aggressions of the ruling class.

In Scotland, on the other hand, the democratic tradition associated with Calvinism and the firm desire of families, no matter how humble, to have at least one minister teacher among their number lived to a greater degree in persistence of the ideal of education for all the peoples and the old grammar schools did not lose so completely their universal appeal.

Thus in England secondary education became largely the education of the gentleman for a certain definite social position. This secondary education was carried further in the universities, for the universities played a subordinate role to the great public schools. A man going to the university was supposed and is supposed to have become a man of acceptable general culture and urbanity during his public school education, and the university was and is regarded as merely the cap stone on his training; a later stage in which an already educated man undergoes further refinement and his general formation, or a preparation for a professional career.

Notwithstanding its highly class-limited character, the English public school education has always insisted on a rigid and arduous training of young people in certain fundamentals not to be modified by any wide range of choices of electives. The classics formed the center of this training, and the proficiency which the young men received in

the writing of Greek and Latin verses often had something of the artificial and the formal in it. At least it was supposed to leave them a thorough fundamental knowledge of antiquity, its language, its history and culture, and actually did leave this residue for many boys, even if not a small part of them immediately proceeded to forget what they had learned. Modern languages were less satisfactory, but if the French pronunciation of the average English school boy and cultured gentleman was generally execrable, he almost invariably possessed a thorough reading knowledge of French literature, and even the ability to write an acceptable French letter. Mathematics underwent more vicissitudes in the quality and scope of its teaching. Indeed, the Eighteenth Century quarrel between the schools of Newton and of Leibnitz affected the schools even into the present century. For much of the Nineteenth Century the mathematical training of English boys was sadly defective, and we find that most of the last century Oxford dons, like Lewis Carroll, devoted most of their teaching effort to the elementary geometry of Euclid. However, at least this much mathematics was thoroughly and rigidly taught, and when English mathematicians awakened to the sadly inferior position of mathematics in their country they were able to transfer to the generally accepted continental type of mathematics and to the newer mathematics and physics much of the thoroughness of their earlier teaching in more elementary and nugatory subjects.

HERE let me comment on a peculiar idiosyncrasy of English educational customs. Throughout the Nineteenth Century, and well into the Twentieth, a training in mathematics was chiefly valued in England not for its own sake and not as an introduction to scientific research, but primarily as a trial run for the intellectual, and the Cambridge tripos examination for honors in mathematics became largely a gateway to a later career in the law.

The natural sciences did not occupy a very strong position in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries British education. In fact, until well along in the last century public school education in these subjects can scarcely be said to have existed. However, when they did come to be taught in the English public schools, the quality of their teaching and the severity of their discipline received a large measure of transfer from the quality and severity of the existing teaching in classical and mathematical subjects.

Thus the English public school training, when it was successful, as it was in a very appreciable fraction of the cases, was conceived with the

idea of giving the young man a broad basis for the knowledge which he should have as a cultured citizen and a participant in the life of the country. Of late years, its aristocratic character has been greatly modified, and a large part of the public school boys would not be there at all if it were not for an extensive scheme of subsidization which seeks out everywhere those able to make use of the advantages of a thorough training. Nevertheless, these new scholars from the proletariat retain in the form and quality of their training much of the citizen-minded and even the aristocratic point of view which had belonged to their predecessors.

NOW let us go over to French education. French education, as we know it today, is the child of the French Revolution and definitely lacks the aristocratic coloring of English education. Nevertheless, it owes its origin to a world in which there were still many reminiscences of the Ancien Regime. One of the qualities carried over from the Ancien Regime to the Nineteenth Century was an enormous respect for their own language and a demand that every school boy shall know how to write literate and even refined French. This quality in the education is one of the mainstays of the persisting quality of French writing. The educated Frenchman, and a vast part of the population is educated, has a respect for his own language which is scarcely to be equalled elsewhere, and the standards of clarity are very rigid. The Frenchman does not tolerate second rate French. Furthermore, scientific education developed earlier in France than in England, and the mathematical training has been of the first quality.

Here let me point out one of the distinguishing features of French education, the Concours System. In many parts of the world the student is supposed to undergo rigorous examinations before he can proceed beyond the elementary part of his training. In France, however, these examinations are not the mere matching of oneself with abstract standards, but a definite struggle to exceed other individual competitors. The number of those admitted to further training is always strictly limited, and the students who fail in this competition have a black mark against them for the rest of their lives. They may have two opportunities to make good, and perhaps occasionally three, but beyond that a failure lowers the status of the student, even socially, for the rest of his life. Many times have I seen the worry of parents concerning the marks made by their children at the baccalaureate, and on one occasion I was on the Boulevard Saint Michael when the official records of the

baccalaureate examination of the year were published. I remember two girls who showed a striking contrast in their emotional attitudes. One who had obviously failed went along the street with a hang-dog attitude which denoted the utmost humiliation. Another whose name had obviously appeared in the list of accepted students jumped up into the air, clicked her heels against one another twice before they came down to the pavement and bore on her face an expression of high elation.

The German *gymnasium* has much in common with the French lyceé. Here the discipline is imposed, more from above, and the Concours System, if it exists at all, is less apparent. On the other hand, the training of youngsters is most exacting and often even humiliating. There is a saying that the transition between the under-gymnasium and the over-gymnasium, the lower and the higher secondary school, is marked by the fact that the teacher no longer says to the boy "du Esel" but "sie Esel." The problem of student suicide among those who have not obtained good grades was quite serious, at least until the First World War, and probably still later. Those who were successfully able to finish the gymnasium had a firm knowledge of the fundamentals of an education and knew that they had this knowledge. When they later went to the university for the doctorate they were able to specialize without the feeling that they still had their general formation ahead of them. In fact, for many of them the university was more a taste of freedom than a further discipline, and those who took and learned work seriously could devote their attention to their particular subjects rather than to the task of learning how to learn.

COMPARED with any of these three systems, our secondary education has been, and is, sketchy, and unexacting in the extreme. In the first place, the old rigorous core of classical training has vanished almost completely. The training in modern languages very seldom reaches the level at which the student is able to have any effective use of the language, either for conversation or for reading purposes, not to mention the availability of French or German or Spanish for the writing of as much as a simple business letter. His mathematics rarely reaches the point at which he can use it with any ease. There are a large number of rather nondescript school subjects which combine the greatest possible consumption of time with the least possible acquisition of any permanent tangible training.

There are several causes which lead up to this. One of them, and

perhaps the most important, is the convention that the school child should normally hate his school education and hate it with impunity and with the backing of his parents. This is reinforced by the large number of elective subjects for the choice of which the high school child is supposed to exercise a discrimination which is simply beyond him at his age and at the point of training at which he stands. Moreover, the American school system is in the hands of a powerful and self-perpetuating lobby of vested interests—the National Education Association. In teaching, content has been relegated to a position of the utmost unimportance, and the Arcona Method, a method which has nothing to do with the content to be imparted, has been elevated to top rank. Teachers are supposed, by their training and education, to be competent to teach any subject, whether they have given it serious consideration or not, and are in fact very generally called upon to teach subjects which they have never studied. In general, our mathematics teachers do not know mathematics, our language teachers do not know languages. The result is that a large part of the years of a high school are spent in a lock step marking time rather than in marching anywhere in particular.

It follows that our colleges are called upon to perform the task of general cultural education which should properly and naturally have fallen upon the high schools. It is an understatement to say that our school children at 18 are precisely where they were at 14. In fact they are far behind this point, for they have lost the élan which they may have had as young people first introduced to intellectual matters and desirous of knowing something about themselves and their environment. Moreover, they have embarked upon a professional training of many years or are about to embark upon this training, and the interval between the diffuseness of the high school and the exactingness of their professional courses is short indeed.

It is this gap which the small cultural college is called upon to fill in to the best of its ability. They must perform an educational task which nobody else is ready to undertake. This is of the greatest importance for the student and for the community, and colleges like Wabash deserve all praise and support for the role which they are here playing. However, I adhere more particularly to speak not about cultural training in general but of the peculiar role of the small college in training the budding scientist. I must comment on the very special state in which American science now finds itself. For a long period, and to a large extent, up to the Second World War the center of American science was

the individual scientist developing his own ideas after his own fashion, and possibly arriving at results suitable for commercial, industrial and military development. While the great commercial firms and the military services employed not a few of these scientists for their special purposes, the average scientist was a free lance worker.

Industry and the war have produced a great change in this. Radar and the atomic bomb presented us both with enormous possibilities and with the need of doing something about these possibilities quickly. The pace was speeded up and every available young man was thrown into the effort. As many of these young men were not yet in a position to work freely on their own, and as much of the effort was of a military nature, and therefore of a secret nature, scientific tasks were divided up by the administrators of science into small pieces and scientists were employed for very specific purposes, often without the least attempt to acquaint them with the larger aspects of the problems on which they were working and even with a deliberate attempt to discourage curiosity on their part concerning these larger aspects. Here let me say by parenthesis the secrecy of military effort merely reinforced a growing policy of secrecy on the part of the commercial firms which regarded the intellectual aspects of scientific progress as secondary to the task of getting ahead of their competitors.

REINFORCING this departmentalization of science was a growing attitude of worship of the gadget. The automatism of industry, and particularly of new high speed computing machines, led to a philosophy of intellectual development in which the creative scientist was to be toppled from his high place and to be replaced by the mass effort of the assembly line. The unheard of speed of the newer computing machines completely dazzled those who had the task of applying ideas to industry or military purposes and led to the attitude that ideas were no longer necessary and even undemocratic and un-American.

The result of the juxtaposition of a new demand for scientific manipulators and a tacit contempt for scientific originators has led to a multiplicity of subordinate positions and a cutting down of those positions involving power and originality of thought. The ideal of the great original scientist has given way largely to that of the scientific administrator who is more concerned to parcel out his effort and to keep his machines and ideas busy than to develop his concepts. In this atmosphere of delusion there has been so much dead space and dead wood placed between those really capable of ideas that even they are forced to

work less effectively than ever before. The scientist is valued in accordance with the amount of money he spends, and his secrecy often protects him from the inspection which would force upon him the need to spend this money to good advantage.

It is not surprising under these circumstances that we have already had signs that the machinery of scientific investigation is creaking heavily. I do not have, nor wish to have, the entré to the hush-hush work being done on intercontinental missiles, but the merest layman may be pardoned for his suspicion that all is not going well. He may even be pardoned for the deeper suspicion that the mass production system of modern science must bear a heavy responsibility in this matter, and that our great laboratories with their respect for expenditures rather than intellect have let many a good idea slip between their fingers. We are in grave danger of being so interested in the bath than we are throwing out the baby.

I have had an early and sharp interest in automatism and the high speed computing machine. Let me try to disabuse you of some prevalent delusions concerning it. The high speed computing machine is not only an ingenious device, but in its proper field it is indispensable. It has given us the ability to handle problems which we could previously not even have approached, but there is one thing, that it is not—a replacement for intelligence.

The computing machine has essentially one advantage that outweighs all others. It is fast. It has also one major disadvantage. It is terribly expensive. When it is used for purposes for which it is suited, and for problems which have been properly thought out with respect to the powers and limitations of the machine, it is an admirable instrument. When, however, merely any old data are put on it, and the mathematician who has not been called in the advance is asked to make sense of these data, it is wasteful of money and man power. The true scientist should be called in for consultation long before a single number is put on the machine. He should have a full knowledge of its strength and limitations. He should not only have an understanding of existing computational methods, but, even more, an understanding of how these should be modified to make use of the value of the machine's possibilities. In fact not only does the computing machine not lessen the intellectual demands on the scientist, but when properly used it should increase these to an almost intolerable point. It is the poorest conceivable policy to employ second rate intellects in using first rate machines.

There are other related fields where the current worship of the

gadget and the undervaluing of the intellect are costing us heavily. It has been found possible to make translating machines which can reduce the rules of grammar and syntax to mechanically tabulated form and which can turn a text in one language to something which looks like another. Those who have considered these machines superficially may have thought that they will eliminate the task of the trained linguist. However, these machines incur great dangers, and curiously enough the better they are the greater the danger they incur. An obviously garbled translation needs the effort of a competent linguist to make sense of it, and because it needs this effort it is not likely to lead any intelligent man far astray for a long enough period to make much real difference. However, a machine that is merely good enough can lead to a totally misplaced degree of confidence in its workings and can cause the reader to accept its wrong results. The number of mistakes may be decreased by the improvement of the machine, but the danger of the mistakes will be increased in direct proportion to the confidence which the reader has that there are no mistakes. In other words, in the hands of a man with good linguistic sense who is alerted to problems of translation a machine may treble or quadruple the amount of work that some can do, but it is only such a man who is fitted to make much use of the machine.

THE present age of specialization has gone an unbelievable distance. Not only are we developing physicists who know no chemistry, physiologists who know no biology, but we are beginning to get physicists who know only the very shadow of mathematics. Moreover, the latter-day physicist does not know physics. He proceeds at once to the subtleties of quantum theory without a good fundamental knowledge of classical mechanics or classical optics, even though in these fields many of the very same problems which confront him in the latest specialty already have appeared in a simpler and more perspicacious form. We have people working on the electro-microscope who know next to nothing about the optical microscope.

This state of affairs cannot go on very long. It is part of the function of the good small cultural college to lead its undergraduate through a suitable curriculum not involving an exaggerated freedom of election to an understanding of the broad outlines and important details of a range of studies considerably wider than those which he will be called upon to undertake in his narrow specialty, for science is a developing subject and one never knows in one field how soon the essentials of another may find their application. For example, I have been studying the physiology

of brain waves and in this I found it indispensable to use not merely the analogy of spectroscopy as the study of electro-generating networks, but even the most intimate and technical details. I will admit that there is something absurd in the policy of the white knight in carrying beehives on the back of his horse and in equipping it with anklets against the bite of sharks. However, that policy of over-provision for contingencies which never occur is not the danger of the present day, and its precise opposite is just as devastating.

It is thus essential for the progress of science that the rising generation should have a broad scientific training. However, as newer and newer fields become opened up to the scientific method, it is impossible to draw a sharp distinction, and to say that this cultural field belongs to the scientific background needed by the rising scientist, and that that does not. For example, we are recruiting into the field of the design of translating machines many young people who are grossly ignorant of the facts of language. Their work can be no more competent than their general cultural understanding of the facts and problems of language. Again, we are facing a general tendency to assimilate the social sciences to the natural sciences: a tendency which can only lead to catastrophe if the workers in the fields do not have at their fingertips the best available understanding of the social sciences on their old non-natural-scientific basis. The attempts to devise a new mathematical econometrics have failed, will fail and must fail at the hands of those whose knowledge of economics is confined to parallels drawn from the realm of physics. The sociologist ignorant of the rich mines of information and understanding opened by the sociologists and historians of the past is only at best half a sociologist, and the worse half at that.

A PART from the need for men of a general cultural background for the specific purpose of intellectual progress, there is an even greater need for a broad basis of education if democracy is to survive, or even if society is to survive—for that it will survive is by no means a foregone conclusion. So long as we depend for our intellectual development on quickly-trained specialists, on neotenic forms like the axolotl, which are supposed to give birth to ideas before they have emerged from the larval state, we shall have to depend for the thoughtfulness and understanding which make society and democracy possible on those who have barely enough intellectual background to carry on their controlled supervised routine work, and have nothing left to spare for their duties as citizens.

In this direction, there lies nothing but totalitarianism. Democracy depends on the existence of a large part of the community with intellectual and spiritual resources far greater than those they will be called to exhibit at any single moment or in any single direction. Otherwise, we shall sink into a Byzantine type of bureaucracy, of the sort which always has been associated with the fall of empires and the advent of the dark ages.

We are already far advanced along this desperate course. We may indeed have already advanced so far along this path that we have gone beyond the point of no return and that the pit is already yawning for us. Let us hope that this is not the case, and that the sickness of the age is not in its terminal stages. Whether this hope be a real one, or be illusory, we must set as if a hope existed. If there be any such hope, a large part of the responsibility for making it come true is vested in those cultural small colleges like Wabash, which are dedicated to the imparting of a firm discipline and a broad basis of general cultural, literary, artistic and scientific training and education.

THREE POEMS

THOMAS McGRATH

MISS PENELOPE BURGESS, BALLING THE JACK

Barefaced baby with the three minute dream
Waking at morning with a soundless scream—
Not another ace in the dream-rigged packs,
Nothing but jokers and the non-wild jacks;

Oh baby, when the light breaks clean
(And there's nothing to run on but a benzedrine)
It's back on the bricks and hustle the stem
Where the buffalo are thicker than the iron men.

Git it up, give it up, I hear you cry.
But one day and another and life goes by,
A little bit lousier day by day
But at last at last at last at last it's all gone away—

Then it will come easy, when there's nothing to lose,
Nothing to hope and nothing to choose,
No reason to cry, no reason to sing
Just nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing—

Oh, I hear you crying, baby, in your platform shoes,
With your Cadillac mutant or your cut-rate booze;
I hear you in your brogans or in sable or mink
Where the clubwomen chatter or the chippies swink.

Was it Prince Charming who deceived you from the age of ten
 And threw you on the town in the world of men?
 Did you look for honor and discover its lack
 As you struggled for power from flat on your back?

Was it the books that tricked you or the priests that lied—
 Promising, promising equality and pride;
 While the boss demanded profit and the husband wanted more—
 A dual purpose property both mother and whore?

We all helped to make you and the way you are:
 Signed with our dishonor, an invisible scar.
 Dream bitch-goddess, or terrible nurse,
 On all of us who've harmed you I call down a curse.

Long gone lady with your three minute dream
 Waking in a trap with a soundless scream
 (As the child will scream at the terror of birth)
 Where will be born your dignity and worth?
 In what new heaven? On what different earth?

THE END OF THE WORLD

The end of the world: It was given to me to see it.
 Came in the black dark, a bulge in the starless sky,
 A trembling at the heart of the night, a twitching of the webby flesh
 of the earth.
 And out of the bowels of the street one beastly, ungovernable cry.

Came and I recognized it: the end of the world.
 And waited for the lightless plunge, the fury splitting rock.
 And waited: a kissing of leaves: a whisper of man-killing ancestral night—
 Then: a tinkle of music, laughter from the next block.

Yet waited still: for the awful traditional fire,
 Hearing mute thunder, the endless collapse of sky.
 It falls forever. But no one noticed. The end of the world provoked
 Out of the dark a single and melancholy sigh

From my neighbor who sat on his porch drinking beer in the dark.
 No: I was not God's prophet. Armageddon was never
 And always: this night in a poor street where a careless irreverent
 laughter
 Postpones the end of the world: in which we live forever.

PROLETARIAN IN ABSTRACT LIGHT

Now on the great stage a silence falls.
 In the long shudder toward collapse and birth,
 There enters, singing, the muffled shape of a future.
 He has no face; his hands are bloody;
 He is for himself; he is not to please you.

*You have stolen my labor
 You have stolen my name
 You have stolen my mystery
 You have stolen the moon*

The coldness of song goes on in his barbarous tongue.
 The hours condense like snow. The marble weight
 Of his dream, like a heavy cloud, leans on your glass houses.
 Expropriated of time, he begins himself in his name;
 He stamps his null on your day; the future collapses toward him:

*I do not want your clocks
 I do not want your God
 I do not want your statues
 I do not want your love*

*Siqueiros*

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

RUSSELL DAVIS

ON THE first Monday of June 1932 I graduated from college with a degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature. The next day it rained, with the consequence that I got my feet wet going into the city to return my cap and gown to the renting place, and came down with a nasty cold which took me ten days to throw off.

Of course I wasn't completely incapacitated. I managed to make a trip to the local library, to write a duty note to my Godmother thanking her for her graduation gift—a copy of *If* by Rudyard Kipling, inspirationally illustrated and suitable for framing—to drive my brother's car into the Ford agency and get new clutch rings installed for him, to take my fiance Midge Parkhurst to the local movies one evening, and to help my mother move some things around up in the attic one afternoon.

But I had barely recovered my health when there descended upon us a blasting, searing heat wave. It was record heat with high humidity, the kind that wilts a collar in two minutes flat and that seems to irritate the very nerve ends—particularly, I figured, the nerve ends of prospective employers finding themselves faced with applicants for positions.

I therefore did not look for a job, but sat out on the front piazza in a pair of white ducks, naked above the waist, sipping ice water and re-reading *Marius The Epicurean*.

The third day of this and no relief in sight, my father came home early. He drove his car up on the lawn to get it in the shade, shut off the ignition, clambered out and came slowly up the front steps. His big sagging face was slick with perspiration, he was carrying his coat on his arm, sweat stains nearly engulfed his shirt.

"Whew!" he exclaimed taking off his hard straw and balancing it on its crown on the piazza rail. He sank heavily into the glider. There was not a breath of air stirring. After a minute he turned. "Gone after a job yet?"

"No, not yet," I answered.

"When are you going to?"

I kept my eyes on my book. "Oh, pretty soon."

"Pretty soon?"

I pressed my tongue tightly against my lower teeth for an instant. "Yes," I answered.

"Any plans?" he pressed.

"Yes," I said, "sure."

"What are they?"

I stirred uncomfortably. His pressure was like the heat, the humidity. "I thought I might look up some publishers," I replied.

"Publishers?"

"People," I said acidly, knowing that he was deliberately drawing me out like Socrates, "who publish things. Books."

He seemed unaware of the edge in my voice. "What kind of a job will you ask them for?" he inquired mildly.

"Reader."

"Reader?"

"Sure."

"What's that?"

"Why, they read things that come in, manuscripts. The stuff goes to these readers, and there are first readers, second readers and so on. It's one of the jobs in a publisher's." As usual when my father faced me with this mild, honestly asking manner I began to lose my animosity.

"Which would your job be?" he inquired.

"Which?" I echoed.

"Yes, which, first or second?"

"Oh. I don't know. I suppose all that I could expect would be first, that's the lowest. I don't know."

"Do you know someone who is a reader?" asked my father.

"No."

A little silence followed during which I suddenly perceived the flimsiness of my claim to such a job—or any job. Sensing that he too perceived this, I turned to him.

"As a matter of fact, if I had a chance, I think I might—as a matter of fact I'm not too anxious to get a job—I think I might get to be an author and——" I gazed suddenly past him at his straw hat on the railing—"write."

"Oh?" said my father. "An author of what?"

I frowned. "Why books, novels. I mean, I think I could do it."

"By yourself, you mean?"

"Of course, by myself."

"Who would pay you?"

"Why, the publishers."

"I see. You mean you'd write something and send it to them, and they'd print it and pay you?"

"Yes, of course."

"How long would it take?"

"Oh, I don't know," I replied carelessly.

"A week?"

"No, maybe a few weeks. Probably quite a while. It takes time."

"A month?"

"Well, probably a few months, before I got started."

"You mean before any money started coming in?"

"I guess so. It's hard to tell. It depends on—it's hard to say. Ye gods, you can't start right off and make a million dollars."

"What would you live on while you were starting?"

"Well," I said, "you."

"You," said my father, "can drop that idea."

There was another silence between us then, during which I stirred cautiously in my chair and felt a couple of drops of perspiration roll down my ribs. Although I tried to fix my gaze on *Marius The Epicurean*, my eyes stalled and would not read. My father got to his feet; in fact, he came and stood squarely in front of me.

"Elliot"

I raised my head.

"You're through college now."

"I know," I answered.

"I want you to look for a job."

"All right," I said.

"Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"I want you to look for a job."

"All right," I said. I stared at him. He stared back.

"Tomorrow," he said.

"All right, if——" I hesitated. I was thinking of the weather. If the weather would only cool off. I had been intending to go look any-
way when the weather cooled off.

"Tomorrow *morning*," said my father.

We looked each other squarely in the eye.

That evening I went over to see Midge. She was sitting out on her porch in the couch hammock poring over a movie magazine.

"Hi," I said.

"Hi," she murmured, turning her head for a second, not lifting her eyes. It was all right for her to act indifferent; her whole family was around her. My, it was hot wasn't it, said her mother, a larger, less blonde version of Midge. She was sitting in a low rocker, her mouth working a little as though with worry, but her voice seemed quite cheerful.

"Yes," I said.

"How are your folks?"

"Fine," I said.

Midge's older sister Lily was sitting in a wicker chair, her legs apart, her wrists dangling in her lap. She was an angular, bony girl taller than Midge, not so pretty, sharper in her manner.

"Get him a chair, Ed," she said.

Her husband Ed was propped against the wall in a folding wooden chair, his knees jutting out, one hand to his mouth squeezing a brightly burning cigarette. His black eyes seemed to shine like the end of his cigarette. He needed a shave. He gave me a fixed stare, casually reached behind him, produced and snapped open a folding chair.

"Thank you," I said.

"Don't mention it." He watched me as I sat down, pulled on his cigarette. "How's everything going?"

"All right," I said. I looked at Midge who continued to gaze into her movie magazine as though into a pool. She scratched her knee absently.

"You graduated," Ed stated.

"That's right," I said.

"Find jobs opening up for you? But I suppose you do, being a college graduate. Personally, as you many know, I'm not a college graduate."

Lily uttered a little impatient sound which Ed ignored.

"Personally," he continued, "I find things tough. Some others also are finding it tough, I hear."

I didn't say anything. An automobile drove by, sounding its klaxon at the corner. No one looked up. The automobile went on.

"Maybe," persisted Ed, "maybe you don't mind my asking you a simple question."

Lily turned her head and looked at him steadily. He ignored her.

"Have you found a job?" he asked.

"I haven't looked," I said.

"You haven't looked!" exclaimed Ed. He leaned forward now in order to inspect me even more closely. I avoided his stare. "What are you going to do, go back to school for another degree?"

"Oh no, I'm going to look for a job."

"When?"

"Pretty soon."

"What kind of a job?"

"Well for heaven's sake is that any of your business?" burst out Lily angrily.

Ed gave her a side glance. "Keep out of this, will you?"

Lily's eyes widened. "You're the one to keep out! It's none of your——"

"I just want to get a line on what kind of a job a college gr——"

"It's none of your business!" she cried shrilly.

"All right, let *him* tell me that."

He won't. He's too polite. He's not like you."

"Aw, shut up, shut up," said Ed.

Lily drew in her breath sharply.

"Well," I began, "I'm thinking of looking around in the publishing business. I——" I hesitated and stopped, aware that Ed was not listening. He had slouched perceptibly in his chair and he stared out at the now quiet street exhaling clouds of smoke, martyred into silence.

Midge absently scratched her knees. A moment later she remembered to tug at the hem of her skirt, but I could see, without looking directly at it, the gleam of her knee. She was reading near the bottom of a page, and her chin was sunk so that her lips pressed gently against the heel of her palm. The flesh of her palm must be moist and warm. I imagined her lips pressing moist and warm against my lips. As though she divined my thought she turned her head a little and suddenly met my gaze. With a slight move of my head I gestured "Come on" to her. She frowned her refusal. Mrs. Parkhurst, who had been making a series of quick little motions of finality, wrapping up her sewing, now peered smilingly around at all of us. "What do you say, children, shall we have a game of hearts?"

Oh God, I thought. But nobody responded to her suggestion, also nobody objected. I would never get Midge away at this rate.

Mrs. Parkhurst leaned sideways in her chair. "Henry?"

And for the first time I noticed that Mr. Parkhurst was sitting just inside the open window. I could see part of his large gray frowzy head and one gray hand holding the evening paper behind the lacy curtain.

"We're going to play hearts, dear, won't you come out?"

Mr. Parkhurst turned his head a couple of degrees and held it there as though listening for more; after a moment as though responding to further urging, although his wife said nothing, he arose slowly from his chair and went away from the window. It seemed to me unlike him not to respond; he was not like this. I looked at Mrs. Parkhurst.

"Your mother well?" she asked.

"Oh yes," I replied.

"That's good."

Ed yawned noisily and let his chair down, started to get to his feet.

"Where are you going?" asked Lily.

"Out."

"Don't be silly."

I thought I'd go for a little air. There's nothing wrong in that, is there?"

"You know we're going to play hearts."

"Huh?"

"Why do you always have to spoil everything?"

"Oh-h crap," yawned Ed. He leaned back, hooked his thumbs in his pants pockets, led his eyelids droop, waiting.

There was a sound at the front door. Mr. Parkhurst appeared with cards, score-pad and pencil, also carrying a folding card table, one of the legs of which now dropped open. It caught against the door jamb. He peered through his horn rims at it, stood on one foot trying to fold the table leg back with the other foot.

"Ed, help him!" exclaimed Lily.

"What's the matter now?" said Ed wearily.

"Help him! Oh Ed!"

"Help who? Where?" said Ed.

Mr. Parkhurst meanwhile managed the table and came out. When it was set up, Mrs. Parkhurst said pleasantly, "Now come, children, gather round."

Mr. Parkhurst set up the table, then looked around for a place to sit down.

"Ed, give him your chair," ordered Lily, but Ed did not notice or pretended not to notice, and Mr. Parkhurst found a camp stool, opened it and sat down and began lining out a scorepad with his pencil, writing each of our names at the top of separate columns. Again I had a feeling about him. His face seemed older than usual. I wondered if he could be sick.

"Four no trump," said Ed when he had been prodded to pick up his cards.

"Oh dear," said Mrs. Parkhurst, "is it bridge? I'm afraid I'm not up to bridge this evening."

"No, it's not bridge, Mother," said Lily. "Ed, if you don't stop it, I'm going to bed."

"Well now, that's a real threat," murmured Ed as he sorted his cards. "Well now."

After the card game was over, Midge and I went for a slow, cooling walk, swinging our hands. But after a few moments she disengaged hers. I knew now something was wrong. "What's the matter?" I said.

"Oh," she answered, "everybody's out of sorts."

"Why?" I demanded.

She didn't answer.

We came to a corner. I took her arm to draw her over to the street that led to the park, but she resisted. "No."

"Let's go sit in the park."

"No."

"Why not?"

"No."

We walked the other way, toward the center of town. "Midgie——" I began.

"Now don't start that."

"Start what?"

"You know."

"Everybody *is* out of sorts," I said.

We walked along and I tried to think of another subject, but I couldn't. "What are you worried about?" I said after a while.

She frowned. "Oh——" she answered in a lilting, yet strained voice, —"you know. Ed and Lil. With Lil going to have a baby and Ed out of a job so long. And now Dad——"

"Your Dad?"

Yes.

"What's the matter with him, anyway? He seemed awfully quiet."

"Haven't you read the paper?"

"No. What happened?"

"Educator Shoe went bankrupt."

"They did!"

She nodded.

"You mean the whole company?"

She turned to me, strained. "Of course!"

"Gosh, you mean your father is——"

She nodded.

"But you mean he has no job or anything now?" I couldn't believe this. Mr. Parkhurst, I knew, had worked for Educator Shoe all his life. He had started as an office boy and gradually worked his way upwards.

"That's right," said Midge.

"But at least," I said, "they must need people to close down, clean up the books or something. I mean when a company goes *bankrupt*——"

Midge shrugged.

"Gosh!" I said involuntarily.

"There's only me now with my job."

I looked at her. "But you can't——"

"That's right, I don't make much. Mr. Moss pays me only ten a week, you know."

"Ten a week!" I exclaimed. I had not known. She had never told me, and it was not the sort of thing you asked, even your fiance, somehow. It was about half what I had guessed. No wonder she had never told me. But now she defended it.

"It's not so bad. The highest they pay in the whole bank is thirteen, Elliot."

"The highest?" I echoed stopping stock still on the concrete sidewalk and turning and facing her.

"To women. I don't know what the men get. Of course they must get a lot more. But old Miss Heckle gets only thirteen and she's been there a long long time."

"My God," I said.

"Ten a week is not so bad. I started at eight."

"My God," I said. I was thinking how much I myself should set as an asking price. I had been toying with thirty-five a week, even forty; at other moments I had sunk as low as twenty, then I was worth thirty a week, no matter what the job was. Statistics showed the average college graduate got thirty-five a week, though not right away. Well, say twenty-five, then, to start. On the other hand it was not the money at all; if I were offered something with a very interesting future, then what difference did it make how much they paid, so long as I could live on it, maintain myself comfortably? Maybe twenty a week would do, in such a case. I began to express these ideas aloud as we walked. Midge listened without lifting her head. "Of course," I said when she did not answer or offer any ideas, "men get more."

"If they get anything," she agreed. "Look at Ed."

"Ed doesn't have an education," I said.

"He has too," said Midge. "He graduated from high school."

"Well," I said.

"That's as much as I did."

"Well," I said, "you went to secretarial——"

"Ed went to mechanical arts."

"Oh, all right," I said.

She was silent.

"But your father," I said, "will get something else."

She nodded. "Yes, after all, he was district manager."

I had not the slightest idea what district manager meant. I had always deduced Mr. Parkhurst held some kind of an executive position. Now I gathered from her emphasis that district manager was not merely executive but something more or higher than I had been thinking it was. "Oh well," I said in a relieved tone, "if he was district manager, then he goes without saying he'll get another position without any trouble."

"He's a very valuable man in the shoe business," stated Midge.

As we strolled along I felt we were both regarding her father as something he wished him to be regarded, as someone on a pedestal, someone not really reduced one iota in any way by his present embarrassing position of unemployment. I was conscious even of a twinge of jealousy because she did not, I sensed, look up to me with an even remotely similar kind of respect.

"I'm going to look around myself pretty soon," I stated. "Going to look into publishing first, I think."

"Do you think you'll get a job?"

"How do I know?" I said, my confidence suddenly disappearing from under me.

"It's too bad Educator went out of business," said Midge thoughtfully. "You might have got a job there, you know."

"I don't know," I said a little gingerly, "as I'm really interested in the shoe business. I mean it's *all right*, but——"

"I suppose there isn't much place for a writer," Midge agreed, "if you're less in advertising."

"Well, I don't know but what that's an idea," I said charitably, trying out of politeness to half convince myself for the moment that advertising was a respectable trade. "I might look into advertising that."

Then, as we were walking, alongside a thick green hedge in the twilight of a quiet cross street, I tried to kiss her. She resisted. "Elliot."

"Nobody's looking," I urged.

"Don't force me."

There was, of course, the shadow of a promise in this, a criticism of method rather than objective. "How about a soda?" I said.

"All right."

"I don't see what you're so worried about. Everything will be all right."

"It's all right for you. You've got your father."

This annoyed me. "What's the matter? What are you so worried about?"

She didn't answer, set her mouth.

"We're engaged, aren't we?" I persisted, feeling somehow that this should be enough for her.

"Oh Elliot, how can we be the way things are?" And as she caught the hurt look on my face, "It wouldn't mean anything."

"I'll get a job."

"Oh Elliot, where? How?"

"I don't know, but I will."

"You're not even trying."

"I am. I'm going in town tomorrow morning." I pulled her toward me, one arm around her shoulders, my other hand on her slim jaw line. One little kiss, then she pushed me away and smothered herself down, and recoiled from me when I tried to come near her again.

"Now stop, keep away," she warned.

"Just let me take your hand, damn it."

Then as we walked along she said frowning, "Lil and Ed fighting all the time. It's terrible. With the baby coming. Of course they don't mean it, they're scared, that's all." She shook her head. "But with only me and my little job, I don't see how——" She pulled away, threw my hand off as though it were something hateful, and I saw tears in her eyes. When we reached the first lighted stores of the village center she pulled a handkerchief from her sleeve, blew her nose, wiped her eyes and examined herself in the plate glass. Then we went along and had our soda, sitting opposite each other in the cramped booth, our knees touching. Her face was pink and pretty and serious, with her hair clustering over her forehead as she bent her head and puckered her lips around the straw which rose from her glass. We both had strawberry sodas. On the way home, later, after it was dark I tried again to kiss her. She let me without objection, but also without enthusiasm. Her lips were cool. Her eyes rolled. "Darling," I murmured. She made no response. When we reached her front walk she turned to me. "Well, goodnight."

"Goodnight," I said.

She went up on the steps, paused a moment on the porch where father was still sitting, and I heard the slight sound of her kiss on cheek. Then she went in.

As I turned to go, I heard my name called quietly. I stopped.

"Come up here."

I went in the gate.

"You don't have to go home right this minute," said Mr Parkhurst. "Sit up here. We'll talk a few minutes."

I went up and in the screen door of the porch and sat down. Parkhurst filled his pipe. Feigning rather than actually feeling indifference I lit a cigarette. Actually a little chill of apprehension swept through me.

Mr. Parkhurst took his time, did not speak for a minute, then he inquired, "Hunting a job, are you?"

"Yes." I added a nervous deprecatory laugh. "I expect to get into publishing, as a reader or something, I don't know, maybe I'll end up as an office boy." As I said them, my words irked me; they were not what I intended, not what I meant. I certainly did not intend Mr. Parkhurst to gain the impression that I was willing to accept an office job after four years of college. I shook my head. "I studied English, French, and Latin," I said lamely.

Mr. Parkhurst cleared his throat. "How—how are you going to get into to see them?"

"The—who?" I said, confused.

"Well, you said you expect to get into publishing. How are you going about it? What will you do first?"

"Well——" I said. For a moment in the dim light of the porch our glances met. I was shocked at the intensity, sternness even, of his face. "I'll just barge in and ask I guess," I finished.

"Ask to see—who?"

"Well, the editor I suppose."

"How about agencies?"

"Agencies? Well, yes, there might be a chance there," I said, surprised at his keenness. I had, as a matter of fact, never before thought of the idea. A job with a literary agency—why not? Yes, it was an idea. But Mr. Parkhurst was speaking again.

"What exactly do you do? Fill out an application, I suppose? What happens?"

"No-o," I said slowly. "That is——" suddenly I understood that he meant employment agencies, not literary agencies. I was shocked. I had an idea only unskilled labor and domestic help used employment agencies.

Once when I had strayed to the waterfront I had seen a drunk being thrown out of a hiring hall. This picture came to my mind now. "I mean——yes," I stammered.

"How much commission do they get, do you happen to know?" pursued Mr. Parkhurst.

"No, I'm not sure," I said. "I really don't know much about it, I'm afraid."

"Not necessarily for your type of job, but any type—say my type of job, or clerk, say clerk in a shoe store. What would they ask for getting anyone a job like that?"

"I don't know," I said uneasily.

"How about writing a letter? Would you know how to write a letter for a job? Is that generally done? Say for a job in a grocery store or a filling station? Or do you just go up and ask the proprietor or manager?"

"Well," I said slowly, "I think for that you just go up and ask him."

"I see," said Mr. Parkhurst thoughtfully. Then he said, "How about your father's work? Ever thought of going into that?"

"Teaching? No, I——I'm not much interested in teaching, I guess."

"Still, there must be an opening now and then."

"Yes, I guess there is, but——"

"Anything open right now in any of the schools that you know of?"

"No." For some reason I began now to feel very uncomfortable. I felt perspiration starting in the roots of my hair. The slight coolness of the advancing evening, all the cooling effect of the walk with Midge, seemed to have disappeared. "Of course, my father doesn't really do any hiring. He's only the principal," I murmured.

"He hasn't mentioned any opening lately?"

"No, he hasn't."

"If he does hear of such a vacancy, or anything around town at all, or any other town, or if you, Elliot, in the course of looking around yourself, hear about some such job—that a man in his middle years but still spry, might apply himself to, why, let me know."

"Yes," I said. "Yes, I will."

"As you are aware, I know the shoe game. But that's flat just now. This is to tide over, you understand. On the other hand I would promise to stick through until a perfectly satisfactory replacement could be found. So if you run across anything, or your father, anything, night watchman say—let me know immediately, will you Elliot?"

"Yes," I said, "Yes, I will."

"I would be glad to pay you a commission."

"Oh no," I exclaimed. "No, I——"

He raised his hand. "I'd be only too glad to."

I didn't say anything.

"I think it's getting a little cooler, isn't it?" Mr. Parkhurst stood up.

I stood up too. "I guess I'll run along."

"Remember," said Mr. Parkhurst. He took a step toward me. "Anything your hear——" he patted me clumsily on the shoulder, "Anything at all, old boy."

"Yes," I said.

"Goodnight, Elliot, old boy."

"Goodnight," I said. I smiled to show him that I was not embarrassed.

But Mr. Parkhurst was not smiling. There were deeply strained lines around his usually bland mouth. He turned his back abruptly and went into the house.

"Any cooler over there?" inquired my father.

My mother and father were sitting out on their porch in rockers facing the street. The street light on the corner, hooded by heavy foliage, ringed by fluttering moths, cast a wan light across them, giving them a two-dimensional, cardboard appearance. I sat below them on the lower step, resting my chin on my fists.

Cooler? Warmer? A block away? I started to reply, and shrugged instead.

"Is it any cooler——"he began again.

"No!" I snapped. I lit a cigarette.

Now my mother stirred in her chair and rattled her palmetto fan as she inquired with comfortable concern whether I did not think I was smoking too much.

"No!" I said.

Somewhere in the neighborhood a party was breaking up. There were voices, the sound of a slammed car door, an engine starting with an unnecessary roar and then subsiding to a steady, irksome beat, gay voices calling over this sound, ending in laughter and shouted good-byes, then the engine: first gear, pause, second gear, longer pause, sharp grinding, finally high gear and the rippling diminishing hiss of the exhaust fading through distant streets until finally it was beyond hearing and there was no sound but the little clicks of moths colliding with the street light reflector. The air was motionless and oppressive.

Each leaf in the trees seemed to hang separately, like wet cloths, preventing any motion of air.

"I really think you are," said my mother.

"Educator Shoe," I remarked without turning around, "has gone bankrupt."

"What's that? What did you say?" said my father.

"Educator Shoe. They've——"

"Take the cigarette out of your mouth so I can hear you."

I removed it.

"Now what did you say about Educator Shoe?"

I shrugged. "They've gone bankrupt, that's all."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed my mother—although I still had my back to them I could sense she had turned and was facing my father, aghast. "Isn't that the place where Mr. Parkhurst works?"

"Worked," I corrected.

My mother uttered a gasp.

"I'm sorry to hear that," stated my father.

"But I don't understand. When did it happen?"

Again I shrugged. "Today."

"You mean without any *warning*?" insisted my mother. "Didn't they *know*?"

I shrugged.

"I wish you'd turn around here," said my father, "so we can hear you."

"I didn't say——"

"You what? Turn around, will you?"

I turned. "Mr. Parkhurst," I stated, "wants to know if there is any chance of him getting a job. He wanted me to ask you. He wants to be a janitor." I glanced at my father. He stared back at me, his lips pursed, his large face grave and skull-like. Beside him, my mother uttered a pitying little exclamation.

"They're all such a nice family," she said.

My father cleared his throat. "I'm sure he'll find something closer to his line of work. Besides, there aren't any openings." He was silent a moment, then he said, "Elliot?"

"Huh?" I said.

"Do you have an alarm clock in your room?"

I shrugged without turning.

"Does he, Emma?"

"Why, I don't know," replied my mother. "Is he going somewhere?"

"Yes," answered my father.

"Where, for heaven's sake?"

"He's going in town to look for a job."

"Oh," said my mother.

I sat again facing the street, chin in hands.

"Set it," said my father, "for seven."

"All right," replied my mother.

"Have you a train ticket, Elliot?" my father now asked.

I didn't answer or move. I was annoyed. There was something rehearsed and unnatural about their exchange. Why couldn't they let me alone, for God's sake?

"Have you got a train ticket?" he repeated.

I raised my head. "What?" Train ticket? Me? I don't know. Yes. I guess so. So what?" I lowered my head into my hands again.

"Have you?" he insisted.

"Yes! Yes!"

"There's no need to act angry."

"Who's acting angry?"

"Your mother's going to leave an alarm clock for you, set for seven, so you can make the eight-fifteen train. Do you hear me?"

"Um," I responded.

"Do you hear me?"

"Yes," I said wearily.

"What time is it?" asked my mother.

"Eleven ten," came my father's reply.

"I think I'll go in." She rose, pushed her chair back. "Goodnight. I'll leave an alarm in your room. You hear me, don't you, Elliot?"

"There's nothing wrong with his hearing," said my father.

"Goodnight, Elliot."

"Goodnight," I said.

She went in. A mosquito stabbed my ankle; I slapped at it. Then there was a long silence, so long that I began to wonder if my father had slipped into the house and left me. I turned my head slightly, a little more until I caught a glimmer of his outline. No such luck. He spoke now.

"Try to make a good appearance. See that your hair is combed, shoes shined, fingernails clean. These things are more important that you realize. And your voice. Be sure to speak up. I don't know whether you realize it but you have a habit of mumbling. Don't mumble. And keep your hands away from your face, particularly from your nose."

"Ah-h!" I gave a snort of disgust.

"What?" said my father.

"I'm not going to *crawl* to them," I said.

"What? What's that?"

"Nobody is going to hire me for my appearance."

"What are they going to hire you for?"

"How do I know?"

"You have to put up a good appearance."

"All right, I'll put up a good appearance."

"You have to put your best foot forward, there's nothing wrong in that."

"Oh, all right, but I'm not going to *crawl* to them."

"Nobody's asking you to crawl to them. It's just that—," my father cleared his throat nervously—"one of the reasons for the business recession we're now in is that—" there was a slight alteration in my father's tone now, as though he were repeating something he believed but did not wholly understand—"there are a lot of people today who just won't work. You can tell them by their looks. They dress in a slovenly manner, talk radicalism and live on relief, which makes a burden on the rest of us." He frowned, moved one hand. "Of course some people are deserving. For that reason we can't deny funds for charity. But there are those who take advantage of the present temporary situation. Grhm——" my father cleared his throat again—"that's why it's always better to keep up appearances. It's just in order not to look like people of this stamp."

I pressed my chin moodily down on my knuckles and gazed through half-closed lids at the street light. The moths circling it cast shadows as big as airplanes. When I spoke it was in a harsh angry tone that I hardly recognized myself. "All right," I said, "All right. But all I can say is if people keep telling these people they have to cut their fingernails, shine their shoes and slick up their hair just in order for them to get some measly job doing work for somebody, then I don't blame them. No wonder they won't work, if those are the conditions! Ye gods, neither would I if that's the way it is."

My father stirred in his chair, alarmed. "Now that's no attitude to take," he said.

"The hell with it, if that's the way it is!" I exclaimed.

"Now that's no attitude to take." My father hitched his chair in some agitation. "You don't seem to realize you have to sell yourself——"

I wheeled around. "Sell myself? What am I? A prostitute?"

My father did not speak. He allowed the word to echo from the

sides of the neighboring houses and shame me. After a while he said quietly, "There's no reason to shout."

That was all. He resumed his empty, worried gaze out at the dim street. He had nothing more to say.

I stood up. "Well, goodnight," I said uneasily. I waited for him to speak. He did not, except to say goodnight in an absent, preoccupied tone, and so I went in and upstairs to my room carrying with me the mental image of my father's heavy, sweating, lined face.

I sat down on my bed and removing my shoes and socks started digging at my toenails with a bent letter opener. The door latch clicked and the door opened.

"Elliot?"

To my angry amazement it was my father again. Couldn't he leave me alone? Must he be forever at me, at me? Ye gods!

"What *is* it?" I demanded facing him, my head thrust forward. My tone was that of a parent dealing with a particularly annoying child.

"Sh-h." He came in.

"Well?" I demanded.

"Sh-h, you'll wake your mother." He reached in his pants pocket and drew out a bill. "Here's five dollars. You'll need something for lunches and carfare."

"Oh," I said, lowering my voice, ashamed. "Thanks."

He turned, opened the door. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight," I mumbled.

When I had finished my toenails I cut and cleaned my fingernails, then I got my black shoes out and polished them vigorously with a handkerchief. I examined my hair and scalp, snipping the ends off a few strays in front of my ears and cleaning the roots of my hair at the hairline with another handkerchief which I wet with my tongue. Finally I selected a shirt and conservative tie and got my suit out and brushed it carefully with one of my military brushes. I stood in front of the chiffonier mirror.

"Six slim slender saplings," I whispered distinctly. "Six slim slender saplings." I licked my lips. "She sells—sea shells—by the seashore. One dozen damask dinner napkins. She sells—I am desirous—of—serving—your firm—to the best—of my ability." I paused, gazed loathingly straight into my eyes. "To the best of my ability."

NO HARD FEELINGS

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

OVERHEARD in the lobby after a performance of *The Crucible*:
"Isn't it terrible the way they act behind the Iron Curtain?"

* * *

11 March

"Think of it," says P. "The first atom bomb to fall on American soil is stamped: Made in USA." Bitter thought, but not surprising. Weren't the bombs that burst on Pearl Harbor made of the Third Avenue El and scrap shipped from every port in the country?

* * *

The history professor sings the praises of medieval times, when everyone knew his place. He speaks with contempt of the restless world of today, as if it were a game of musical chairs. He forgets that he might not have been born a baron, but a serf.

* * *

Some time ago the property owners of Chappaqua in Westchester County rose in arms because it had been proposed that part of a nearby estate be turned into a rest home for disabled veterans, providing a sports area for paraplegics, amputees and blinded men. They contended that the club would cause an irrevocable drop in real estate values in a fine residential area. On the other hand, officials of the same county now warn against the passing of a law which would deny public assistance to people who have lived in the state less than a year. Can it mean that their hearts are thawing? Not at all. They figure that it would be more expensive to return such wanderers to their homes. One must call a halt when inhumanity costs more than home relief.

* * *

Carried aloft on the current spiritual upsurge, L. pleads with her friends to go to church even if only once a month. "There might be a God after all," she says, looking as if she were going to cry.

B., who cannot get himself to crush a cockroach, says it has just occurred to him that if there were no God he might become a sadist, a killer, an absolute degenerate, why, he might do god knows what. Breathing heavily, he says: "Cardinal Spellman was right." Dozing, I see the Cardinal, having lost his faith, doff his vestments and sneak into Cerutti's bar.

R., who never thought about the matter since he was twelve, is uneasy, too. When his wife is about to bear him a son—he hopes—he contacts the most reputable *mohel* in town. "One might as well have a real *briss*," he explains. "It's only to please the old folks." He invites a *minyán* and more of friends to the ceremony, but half of them have forgotten to bring hats. This quite rightly displeases Reb S. and he orders them to cover their heads with handkerchiefs or fold newspapers into what look like dunce caps. Halfway through his duties, he spills alcohol on the brilliantly polished table. The baby bellows, his wife glares at R., and the guests think: "He didn't need a holy man to spoil the furniture."

* * *

Revolutionary art is a grain of sand to the passive oyster. Its innocence is insufferable. How can one not accept the manifest discrepancy between what is and what ought to be? Isn't that what every reasonable intellectual does who adjusts himself to the iron-bound state of things, man's fate, the tight spot of those who are caught in their present milieu and cannot think their way out of it? But the Left intellectual has to reject just that wisdom. He is too stubborn to recognize that what is, is; and that what should be is quite another affair, beyond realization. Is that naive of him? Has human will and science never bridged the gap, to make what should be, what is?

The apparent power of every ruling class is such as to make men forget that its predecessors were unseated by the very process whose continuity it wants them to believe has been suspended. But the revolutionary process is unending. The difference between being and changing will always exist, and the difference will always be surmounted—and give way to further difference. So revolutionary art, reflecting and hastening these transitions, is not so simple after all. It says: without tears you will have no pearls. Freedom is the pearl. This view, not to be confused with faith in the innate goodness of man, is hostile to the consolations of tragic irony. The latter is a philosophy for the elite which permits them to pretend that they are striving for goals which are tacitly understood to be unattainable. Therefore, it can only project

ideals to put the race of man to shame, rather than find in men themselves and in their concrete existence the stirrings of a different and better life.

* * *

Once upon a time a Chinese prince thought, "Why don't I become an artist?" He called his court painter.

"What are the hardest subjects?"

"Dogs, horses, men and women."

"And the easiest?"

"Ghosts and monsters," the artist advised. "These have no definite shape and no one knows what they look like, so they are easy to paint."

The prince took the hint and became an Abstract Impressionist.

* * *

Having read an article on the fate of Chinese art under the Communists, a group of well-fed professionals sit down to bemoan it. Of the seven of them, two could tell a Tang horse from a Marino Marini. Six do not know, and one has forgotten, that Mao Tse-tung is a practitioner in the *old* style of poetry. The name of Chi Pai-shih, who died last year at the age of 96 honored as China's greatest modern painter though he devoted himself in the main to flowers, birds, insects and fish, that name is unknown to all of them. But show them a photo of a commercial artist painting a poster of Mao, and they see in this modest man a Picasso in chains. So let us see what our own Picassos are doing.

The window designers of Lord and Taylor deserve to be decorated themselves. What a splendid display they put on the other day: a statue of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy ringed with arrows, shot, I suppose, from the bow of some cultured Desperate Desmond. This seeming sacrilege (so the *Times* puts it) was all in fun, to convey "a sort of game room feeling." Had Kwannon not been so expensive—she was priced at \$2,450—they would probably have hammered off her arms and head or thrown a pie in her face.

On a higher plane, the privately financed International Council of the Museum of Modern Art has selected 17 Abstract Expressionists to represent advanced American art to the people of Western Europe. One reviewer reports that most of the pictures are 6' x 8', which is as it should be, since when the inner self is directly in touch with the nature of things, the pigments are liable to spill over the sides of a smaller canvas—and a square one at that.

How symbolic, this marriage of money and the creative imagination!

While our corporation lawyers, disguised as statesmen, force nuclear death down the throats of other nations, our bankers, disguised as art lovers, let loose a pack of nose-thumbing, crotch-clutching clowns on their captive audience of debtors. So long as the oil pours in from the Middle East, the oil will be smeared and tossed in the counterfeit studios of counterfeit or one-time painters. But let the oil falter on the market tumble, Maecenas will unload his watered stock and the free spirits will start to render the bloom on grapes and the fuzz on peaches.

* * *

We stand in the corridor outside the courtroom during a recess following the young defendant's testimony. "I'd like to bury the hatchet in his head," a man with an expensive briefcase says confidently to all of us. "Watch out, bud," a shabby stranger warns him. "They'd have *you* on trial, then."

* * *

The prosperous middle-aged couple sit in Sweet's downing seafood. The forks leave their mouths reluctantly and hover before them as though postponing the time when they must pick up another load. No word passes between this man and wife; their eyes swim past each other like carp in a pool. One can see that they were once fresh and handsome; but at some point their creeping ugliness had become a point of pride. Now they are not even vain.

* * *

The young writer will tackle nothing but serious subjects: poverty, anti-Semitism, violations of justice, segregation, and so on. But his family bores him, his friends are not intellectual enough, and he is too proud to keep a notebook to record what anyone says within earshot. He is like those English explorers described by Stefansson, who died in the Arctic though they had guns and there were tracks of bears, wolves and foxes all around them.

* * *

A. finds a man clever only if he quotes the witty sayings of famous men. If he said the same things himself, she would think him uncultured and presumptuous. When she was in France, not knowing the language she made the best of it by speaking with a French accent.

* * *

It is unlikely that Mann intended a comic parallel between the adventures of Joseph in Egypt and those of Felix Krull in France and Portugal. Yet might he not have sensed a resemblance between the

conversation of the Ishmaelites and the border guards before the Fort of Thel, and that of Felix with the French customs inspector; between the watchers and the gatekeeper at Pharaoh's house, and the concierge and desk clerks at the Hotel Saint James and Albany; between Montkaw, Potiphar's steward, and the general manager of the hotel, Herr Stürzli; the head gardener, Khun-Anpu, and Hector, the commis-de-salle; Eni, the wife of Potiphar, and Diane Philibert de Houpflié; and lastly, between the delicate relationship of Joseph to Montkaw-Potiphar-Pharaoh, and Felix' soothing the ruffled spirit of the king, Don Carlos I? Of course, by resemblance we mean contrast, for the experiences and feelings which charm or agitate us in the Joseph books are *absurdly* counterparted in the modern confessions. Krull is no fraud, though the jewels he has stolen from Mme. Houpflié call to mind as opposites, the merchant's treasures, of which Joseph himself is one. The swindle is bourgeois society, which converts Joseph's wisdom into the artistic shrewdness of Felix; Eni's passion into Diane's perverted taste for what to her are lackeys; and Potiphar's loneliness, which Joseph associates with the isolation of his jealous god, into the fretful concerns of the ridiculous Don Carlos. In this brilliant, if unconscious, parody, we see how not only great events and personages but ordinary social existence may occur twice, once in lyric or tragic form, and now in farce.

* * *

The rich have two categories for expenditures, one for ordinary things and the other for expensive pleasures. They subject each to equal scrutiny in their economies. So never tell a rich man that something is cheap if it costs relatively little. He will immediately put it in the category of small expenditures and refuse to buy or contribute to its maintenance because it costs too much. The rich haggle over their dollars the way they force the poor to worry over pennies.

* * *

M. is afraid to marry because she can't distinguish those who desire her for her money as well from those who want her for her money alone.

* * *

W. thinks himself a man of principle, but he is terrified of being a failure. So all his life he does things he despises in order to be admitted to an elite he cannot respect. Should he find himself in straits he will not hesitate to become an informer. He will even reproach the friends he has betrayed for their lack of charity in refusing to

understand or at least to forgive him. He sends a manuscript for criticism to a fellow-writer whom he has fingered to a Congressional committee and is shocked when the letter is returned unopened.

* * *

A mixup at the concert. The pianist begins with the Bach Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue. He follows with the Schumann Fantasia in C Major. The audience is electrified by his playing of the heroic second movement and bursts into violent applause. The master rises to bow once, twice, a number of times. He then sits down to the third movement. By now the audience has lost track. It is almost sure the Schumann is over—otherwise why so many bows?—and prepares to hear the third number: a dazzling Prokofiev sonata in one movement, utterly different from the somewhat dreamy close of the Fantasia. Having heard Schumann to the end, some of the orchestra occupants, convinced that they have been listening to Prokofiev, start toward the exits for their intermission smokes and exchange of comments. The innocent pianist walks to the wings for a moment, preparatory to playing the sonata, whereupon more music lovers get up for their stretch outside. Someone behind stage, observing their departure, turns up the house lights and the rest of the audience rises. The ushers at the doors tell people that the first half of the concert is still on, so they drift back reluctantly to hear what they believe to be Chopin, since he is the next composer listed on their programs. Throughout the real intermission which follows the sonata their conversation is inhibited because they are dying to ask each other whether they have been listening to Prokofiev or Chopin but fear to lose face if they do; and they wonder what is in store for them when they take their seats again.

* * *

S. remarks of the Nobel prizewinner Camus that his notion of the absurd might be traced ultimately to his dilemma as the child of French settlers in Algeria. I think of his first novel, *The Stranger*, in which the greatest absurdity, apparently unnoticed by the author, is that a *colon* should be guillotined for the killing of an Arab in dungarees.

In Camus' latest book, *Exile and the Kingdom* (Knopf, \$3.50) one finds an interesting example of the manner in which he almost invariably manipulates his plot to freeze his characters, so that his own paralysis before what is to him an insoluble problem shall appear as man's fate and built-in predicament. Since he cannot reconcile justice with what he believes to be necessity: the interests and safety of the colonials, he

denies the utility of action. The Algerians ought to be free, but the French cannot afford to free them. Yet one must for the sake of decency go through the motions of freeing . . . millions? One. And what happens then. Not what one intended.

The story is "The Guest." Daru, a teacher in an isolated schoolhouse on the Algerian plateau, is ordered by a gendarme to conduct an Arab prisoner to police headquarters some twenty kilometers away. When the teacher protests that is not his job the gendarme explains that he must return to his post because of talk of an impending uprising in the territory. He says that the Arab had killed his own cousin in a fight over grain, but that his fellow villagers wanted to release him. In the ensuing discussion, Daru tells the gendarme, apparently an old friend, that the whole business disgusts him ("most of all your fellow here") but that honor forbids him to hand over the prisoner. The gendarme goes off in a huff. Daru is left with the captive whose hands he proceeds to unbind.

The next morning the prisoner and his unwilling guard set off. A short distance from the schoolhouse Daru hears a sound behind him and goes back to investigate. He sees nothing. He and the Arab then walk on. At a certain point he hands the man a package of food and some money and points in two directions: toward the east and captivity, toward the south and liberty. Starting on his way home, Daru looks back to see the Arab headed toward jail. Returning heavy-hearted to his classroom, he finds scrawled on the blackboard an accusation and a threat: "You handed over our brother. You will pay for this."

The whole thing is contrived. Against the background of the actual liberation movement, represented here as a threatening local revolt, we have the Arab who chooses prison. Even more dubious is the imposed misunderstanding which completes Daru's exile in his own land, since he has already incurred the gendarme's displeasure. The mistake of the tribesmen is not, however, one of those surprise reversals which used to intrigue superficial storytellers. It is the universal irony which crouches ready to spring upon and nullify positive deeds.

But Daru's deed is no more than a gesture, an appeasing of his (Camus') conscience. His freeing of the prisoner is coupled with repulsion or indifference. He thinks of him as "the Arab" and seems not to want to know his name or anything about him. Therefore, what he does is merely humane. It is only when his act is stripped of social understanding, when it becomes a subjective abstraction, a matter of personal honor, that it becomes human for Camus. By then, though,

it has lost its efficacy and Daru is doomed by faceless creatures whose brother he has befriended. The sources of his tragedy are the oppressors' guilt and fear, which Camus shares. And the latter, rather than shout: "Let this people go!" says: "See what happens if even one is let loose." Who cares if he then announces: "And yet I must free him"? His "realistic" acceptance of absurdity has left an impression which his noble defiance of it cannot wipe out.

Right Face

Quite Unfounded

Commissioner Conway noted that, although the State Police formerly had Negro troopers, it did not have any now. This could arouse suspicions of discrimination, he said.—*The New York Times*.

Honesty Is the Best Politics

The early returns favoring the conservatives indicate Premier Sarasin will probably have strong support for reappointment. His policy is pro-West and pro-United States.

The lack of enthusiasm in the election and the thorough police precautions may have been responsible for the evidence that the balloting was the most orderly in Thai history. The police said it was also the most honest.—*The New York Times*.

Nothing to Worry About

BERLIN—Radioactivity in Berlin has risen in recent months according to the West Berlin Atomic Commission. An official said the rise might have come from nuclear experiments. It has not reached a dangerous level, he said.—*The New York Times*.

Classified Info

The Senate subcommittee summarized the secret testimony of the CIA representatives in a formal statement issued by Johnson. It quoted them as saying the Soviet economy has been growing "relatively faster" than that of the U.S.—*The N. Y. Post*.

Ugly But Ob My!

NO DOWN PAYMENT.

John McPartland.

Essandess entry into the "oust Peyton Place" drive. In pretentious, no-down-payment Sunrise Hills live four young couples. Chiefly interesting among them are Jean and David Martin—he on his way to the vice-presidency of Verdun Labs; she ambitious, loving—so lovely as to

be tempting to mean Jerry Flagg and sadistic Troy Noon. An ugly story of sex, phoniness, rape, and violence but *it will sell very well.*—*The Retail Bookseller.*

Disqualified

But he (Mikoyan) has gone as far as he can go in the Russian firmament and he knows it. An Armenian has the same chance of reaching the Number One spot in Russia as an Hawaiian or Puerto Rican has of being elected President of our United States.—W. R. Hearst, Jr. in *N. Y. Journal-American.*

Ragged Trousered Justice

Chief Magistrate John M. Murtagh rejected a request from a deputy Fire Commissioner to invalidate a traffic ticket issued to a Municipal Court justice.

The deputy commissioner was Albert S. Pacetta; the justice, Herman C. Stoute. The ticket had been issued by a fire lieutenant because Justice Stoute was parked alongside a fire hydrant.

When asked whether he would pay the fine, plead guilty with an explanation, or plead not guilty, Justice Stoute would only say: "Ten dollars is a substantial part of my day's pay." His salary is \$17,000 a year. He is reported under consideration for promotion to the Circuit Court, where the salary is \$22,000.—*The New York Times.*

Lily White?

Two areas totaling 320 square miles in Johore and Malacca, southern Malaya, were declared "white" or free of Communist terrorists, today.—*The New York Times.*

books in review

Too Well Written

THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, 1957, edited by Martha Foley. Houghton, Mifflin. \$4.00.

I AM willing to take Martha Foley's word for it that the 20 short stories included in this volume are the best published in 1957. I can't myself remember any that were better—nor for that matter any that were much worse. They all seem to have been stamped out by the same cookie stamper—written by the same writer in different but scarcely more serious disguises; and the United States that is implied (if one can still ask of art that it imply a society any more: these writers possibly would blush at the suspicion) is already itself a fiction, a kind of conventional arrangement among artists and critics that this shall be their mutually agreed-upon myth.

The originals of all these episodes appeared 20-30 years ago. Since then many of the originators have disappeared into the colleges of the land and have been teaching imitations of their own work for a good solid generation or so. For all these stories are the work of adapters, imitators, college students: none of them shows the slightest sign that the writer ever stepped outside a college door and took a pratfall into life. It's as though what is being said of this edifice, this

America, is that the structure has been built and its origins forgotten: now all that's left to do is rearrange the furniture from time to time in the same rooms, in the same house, sitting on the same foundation. A whirlwind or a tornado, it seems, will have to come and knock everything to smithereens—the sad, clever, dull people inside it, too.

What is so dismaying is not that the stories are too badly done. Nobody pulls anything lower than a C plus. Not a single writer in this book writes as "badly" as Dreiser, or commits as many faults as Sherwood Anderson, or becomes as awkward and even ridiculous as Sinclair Lewis (everybody today writes better than those writers, take them a line at a time!). What is dismaying is the determination, you might almost say the dedication with which these writers set themselves small goals, and with what a sense of triumph they achieve them! No story fails here because the writer choked on his theme, finding it too big to swallow. The tragedy is that the issues are so small they slide down scarcely leaving a scratch behind.

There is not, of course, the slightest intimation of social rebellion here, or if rebellion is too shocking a word today, even a sense of criticism—only of regret, lament, or what is even sadder, fatigue.

And yet I can't complain too much. For those writers who should be giv-

ing us a real picture of the United States today in its terrifying role of giant strutter against the horizon of the world's hope, have themselves abdicated, in large part, have themselves sickened before the complications of our difficult era, lost sight of the prime truths which move all others. When the labor movement appears to be compromised and led by small people, and when the Left is torn by inner struggle, all faith in the people themselves dies or turns into its opposite. How then can one fulfill Checkhov's idea of great writing? "Remember," he says in a letter, "that the writers whom we call eternal or simply good and who intoxicate us have one common and very important characteristic: they get somewhere, and they summon you there, and you feel, not with your mind, but with your whole being, that they have a certain purpose and, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, do not come and excite the imagination for nothing. Some—it depends on their calibre—have immediate objects: abolition of serfdom, liberation of the country, politics, beauty. . . ."

Again there is no point in lecturing young writers when the very practice of art has been brought to such a low moral level in our era by yesterday's brightest, boldest and most fearful rebels. We have witnessed what is unwitnessable—men who have abased themselves before Congressional Committees, spat on their past work, named names, prostituted their honor and even bragged about it, like Elia Kazan, taking a whole page of the *Times* to let the world know! We have seen writers, like Odets, so brave in his plays—become so frightened and so puny when it came to defending his honor before

small men, that he turned in the name of a friend who was already dead—cowardice that crossed the grave!

"We," Checkhov says, describing his generation, but describing our own even better, "we have neither immediate nor remote aims, and in our souls a great emptiness. We have no political beliefs, we do not believe in revolution, we have no God, we are not afraid of ghosts, and I personally have no fear even of death and blindness. He who desires nothing, hopes for nothing, and is afraid of nothing, cannot be an artist. . . . We write mechanically, submitting ourselves to the long-established custom in accordance with which some are employed in offices, others in trade, others in literature. . . ."

One needs models after all. Before one can know what courage one must have seen it once or twice in one's lifetime. But if the young writer of today thanks his lucky stars that he was born too late to be "compromised" by the Thirties, like so many of those he has watched crawl on their bellies or like an Irwin Shaw slither with his own hand his play *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* because it might be as persuasively anti-war in the "wrong" time as it was in the right time—how can you really "blame" the young writer for giving up the fight before the battle even begins? How can you blame them if they turn instead—"before they climb into the ring—marihuana for kicks, and Billy Graham for philosophy? Can you blame them for yearning to be "hip," and smoking reefers to get close to glory? And what use to point out to them that it is rather sad to hear the chains that bind them praised as the rebellious flag of their freedom?

So, if Mike Gold once advised the young writer to GO LEFT, and so many did to their bitter cost (as they've been telling us in book after book), you heed him today at the risk of your ennui. Go Right—go to Hell—go to drink, abnormal psychology or drugs—but, on pain of your life, don't open your eyes and pronounce that the God is naked, this huge gold-splattered God, with H-bombs in both hands!

What stories then did I "like"? Well, here are a few: Algren's pieces from his book, called here *Beasts of the Wild*, *The Song* by Harris Downey, *I Stand Here Ironing*, by Tillie Olsen, *Escape to the City* by Gordon Woodward.

But something tells me the time is growing short for triple-told tales of sad lost life in the South which Faulkner and Caldwell first discovered and nobody has discovered any other part of since; or tales of other sad lost souls who would like to, but don't dare, or who already have lost their minds, but their cracked brains make even duller reading than their sound minds might have; and when all else fails, the writer can always tell his dull tale in the present tense instead of the usual past, in the first person instead of the third, and so get something published as "new" which is only a tedious trick in grammar and nothing else.

PHILLIP BONOSKY

The Harsh Longshore

THE RAW EDGE, by Benjamin Appel, Random House. \$3.95.

EVER since the unsolved murder of Pete Panto, the rebel Brooklyn

longshoreman, and the discovery of what is now known as Murder, Inc., novelists and movie-makers have been entranced by the explosive quality of the New York waterfront. Benjamin Appel, whose *Raw Edge* is the rim of docks surrounding the world's richest port, has now come closer than any of his predecessors to the nature of the violence that has produced so many corpses among the men who load and unload the ships.

Mr. Appel dedicates his book To the Rebels, and his chief rebel is immigrant Pete Pironi who, with the intellectual guidance of the old Italian anarchist Georgie Bosco, stirs up the men in Red Hook. Union chief Joe the Boss Dinetti, who controls most of the Brooklyn docks, finds Pete Pironi most annoying. Squint Donahue, a pint-sized killer who is making his bid for power on the docks and who is beholden to Joe the Boss, arranges the violent removal of Georgie Bosco. Pete Pironi thereafter is blacklisted and the rebel movement in Brooklyn is temporarily disrupted.

Pete Pironi in time changes his name, falsifies his identity and gets a job in Manhattan in the watchmen's local controlled by Donahue. When another longshore revolt gets under way and Pete's identity becomes known, Squint Donahue murders him with a stolen car—a death listed as a hit and run accident.

The bulk of the novel is concerned with Andy, Pete's son. Andy at 17 had mixed feelings about his father. An idol-worshipper, he had clipped pictures of champion Tony Canzoneri and other heroes. Occasionally he saw his father in this image, but he was more thoroughly impressed by his

street-corner, candy-store teen-age friends who scoffed at Pete as an idealistic fool who could never beat Joe the Boss.

When his father was killed, Andy swore vengeance and was certain that Joe the Boss was the killer. To find Dinetti, who was in hiding for other reasons, Andy went to Donahue. The Squint, for reasons of his own, decided to befriend the kid. From there on, Andy is gradually swallowed into the sordid corruption of the gangster-ridden waterfront.

The corruption seeped from the top down. Mayors and special prosecutors went half-way but never the full distance against the crooks and killers. Jim McQueen, president of one of the three biggest stevedore companies in the city, held the 14th Street headquarters of the Longshoremen's Union in his pocket and twice a year, at gift times, spread nearly \$50,000 in handouts to the deserving dishonest.

Squint Donahue bucked them all and the rule was not the double cross, but the triple and quadruple cross, and when he had to, Squint killed again. In the meantime he was looking after Andy; he cut him in first on unearned money on a special waterfront work gang that did no work, then got him an easy well-paying job with a numbers runner. Andy, too, was learning, and became the lover of Squint's wife, who owned her own bar. When Squint went into the stevedoring business himself, with an assist from the wrong-guessing Jim McQueen, Andy was elevated to his trouble-shooter.

When one of Squint's sisters became pregnant without benefit of any due process, Andy was the logical man to marry her. By then he was living high and couldn't afford to say no,

which created a crisis in his affair with Squint's wife.

He finally learned who had murdered his father, but by then his vow of vengeance had been watered down with the easy money, the good food and the custom-made suits. He went through with his last act of retribution but with all the wrong motives and a faulty execution. Mr. Appel's final judgment of young Andy is that he forgot everything and learned nothing. Corruption had engulfed him. The author, his morality tale told, has the last say: "When will we see straight? When?"

Benjamin Appel, who grew up in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen, has written many a tough novel, and this may be his toughest. He is a realist, with no adjectives to qualify the term. Mr. Robert Frost, the eminent poet, once confided that he recognized two kinds of realism and used the potato to illustrate both. There was the potato, he said, freshly dug from the ground with earth and dirt clinging to it, which was one reality; then there was the potato scrubbed clean and shining and cleansed of its origin, which was his reality. Mr. Appel prefers the potato in its natural state. Any other way, it's false.

LAWRENCE EMERY

A Thinking Artist

THE SHAPE OF CONTENT, by Ben Shahn. Harvard University Press \$4.00.

WELL-KNOWN painters who have used the written word, from Leonard and Michelangelo to Whistler

and Gauguin, have been notably gifted in the art of writing. The Journals of Delacroix looms as an important work of the mid-nineteenth century and the letters of Van Gogh bring it to a blazing close. Nevertheless writers and critics alike have always regarded the painter as the dupe of his talent and quite hopeless as a spokesman for his art. Thus, art criticism from the beginning has see-sawed from literary to moral descriptions. The only English writers worth rereading on art, George Moore and Roger Fry, were also painters, although the former forsook the brush early in his career.

Fortunately, Harvard University has, for its Norton lectures, been inviting practitioners in poetry, music and art. We thus have a fine opportunity to read a full-length discussion on painting by one of America's foremost artists, Ben Shahn, who has always expressed himself firmly and thoughtfully in words as well as in paint. We may add that Shahn is an artist who has accepted responsibilities and faced greater issues than most of his contemporaries, so that his outlook on life and art is particularly welcome at this time when most painting, floats in outer space.

The title of Shahn's book, *The Shape of Content* expresses his opposition to the concept of shape as a thing-in-itself. That content has to be reclaimed and nourished once again is a sad but certain fact of contemporary aesthetics. Without content, the human equation in art must disappear and Shahn is with us at the twilight hour. He does some vigorous thinking in his book and we should all participate if we want to sustain culture in the midst of Kerouac and Kline.

Shahn points out that much contemporary aesthetic opinion sharply divides form and content. "Content, in this sorry divorce," he says, "seems to be looked upon as the culprit. . . . Some critics have been schooled to look at paintings in such a way as to make them wholly unaware of content." And he quotes various professional art critics: "White cuttings expand and contract, suspended in inky black scaffoldings which alternate interstices and positive shapes," ". . . an ascetic whirlpool of blacks and whites, a Spartan melodrama, alleviated only by piquant whispers of turquoise, yellow or olive. . . ." He examines the Abstract-Expressionist view of painting according to which the content of a work of art is actually the paint itself. Shahn points out, however, a curious kind of content or content-reference in the most automatic of smudges. "Socially, we must note that there has been no other time in history when just this art could have taken place. It had to be preceded by Freud; it must necessarily be directed toward a public conversant with Freud . . . it had to be preceded by Picasso, by Kandinsky, by Klee, by Miro, by Mondrian, for its forms, whatever new departures they may have taken, are an inheritance from the earlier group of great imaginers." This tradition is more abused than honored in the elephantine canvases of Pollock and Rothko, the frenetic brush thrusts of Kline and Mathieu, and the whole school's display of an unusually self-conscious unconscious.

Shahn feels that there is much less variety of form in Abstract Expressionism than might be expected, that an art setting material alone (color and texture) as its objective should be

able to display far more virtuosity in relating shapes. Here I feel Shahn might have pointed out the far richer incitement to variety and meaning produced by the *concrete image*. History shows us what an endless succession of metamorphoses, since cave art, the image of animal, man, cloth or mountain has undergone through the artists' vision and design.

In his first chapter "Artists in Colleges" Shahn critically inspects the new role of working artists as university professors. With all the best will in the world, with the high hope that the humanities and the practice of art might nourish each other, he finds three major factors militating against the marriage.

The first is dilettantism, that is, the casual dabbling in a serious field by students who do not even want to meet the minimum requirements of the profession. The second problem arises from "the fear of creativity itself." Since the university is so concerned with classifying, analyzing and memorizing aspects of knowledge, it provides little time for original work. The student hardly integrates what he knows with what he thinks, and, as a result, has no opportunity to form the creative habit. Shahn was even told by a department head in one university that the creative arts were discouraged there because they might interfere with the liberal arts. Shahn's wry comment is "Scholarship is perhaps man's most rewarding occupation, but that scholarship which dries up its own creative sources is a *reductio ad absurdum*, a contradiction of itself."

The third block to the artist's usefulness in the university is that he is

looked upon with curiosity and more than a speck of suspicion. This prejudice is reinforced by the New Criticism so prevalent among the advanced collegians, which asserts that only the elite viewer can fathom the work of which the painter, acting as a medium, has produced independent of his work.

Shahn sums up the first chapter with a warning to the creative individual as university teacher. Though art is held holy in the university hierarchy of values ". . . teaching itself is so largely a verbal, a classificatory process that the merely intuitive kind of knowing . . . the self-identification with great moods and movements in art and letters may be lost or obliterated by academic routine."

In his chapter, "The Biography of a Painting," the crux of Shahn's philosophy as a painter is expressed. He discusses his development as a painter, the usual conflicts, the various roles and how he came eventually to "confront the terrain of the social view." He talks about his work in the Office of War Information, his reaction to the horrors of destruction, his search for themes to express his innermost feelings. He saw art turning abstract, and realizing this direction was too limited sought deeper and more fruitful ones. In relation to Surrealist and automatic practices of art he says clearly, "The subconscious may greatly shape our art; undoubtedly it does so. But the subconscious cannot create art. Every act of making a painting is an intending one; thus to intend and at the same time to relinquish intention is a hopeless contradiction. . . . Shahn's development of this concept as a principle makes excellent reading.

At another point in the same chapter

ter, he elaborates that which only a creator can possibly experience—the conflicts, the vast changes, the formations and transformations that veer and tumble before a work of art may limp haltingly out of the cave of the creator. "I have never met a literary critic of painting," he says, "who, whatever his sentiments toward the artist, would actually destroy an existing painting. He would regard such an act as vandalism. . . . But the critic within the artist is a ruthless destroyer. He continually rejects the contradictory elements within a painting, the colors that constitute dead places within his work . . . insufficient drawing . . . forms incompatible with the intention or mood of the piece . . . the mood itself as banal or derivative. . . ." Often after completing what might appear to others as a brilliant or successful work the artist may wholly obliterate it.

The two concluding chapters on "Modern Evaluation" and "The Education of an Artist" are more general discussions with a sprinkling of acute observations and apothegms but are not welded to the solid content of the four previous chapters. However, even here Shahn is immensely quotable, as exemplified by the concluding sentences of the book. "The incidental items of reality remain without value or common recognition until they are symbolized, recreated, and imbued with value. The potato field and the auto repair shop remain without quality or awareness or the sense of community until they are turned into literature by a Faulkner or a Steinbeck or a Thomas Wolfe or into art by a van Gogh."

HENRY PRAEGER

Analysis vs. Apologia

THE EMPIRE OF HIGH FINANCE, by Victor Perlo. International Publishers. \$5.50.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY, by Alvin H. Hansen. McGraw-Hill. \$5.00.

IT WOULD be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this inquiry into the anatomy of present-day financial and business power in the United States. Amazingly detailed in its research, digging into little known or carefully hidden data, Mr. Perlo's study is indispensable reading for anyone who wishes to understand the central reality of American society, its overwhelmingly concentrated control by a tightly knit group of monopolies and their top personnel. His book takes its place with such studies as Paul Sweezy's *Theory of Economic Development* and Paul Baran's *Political Economy of Growth* as one of the major recent works of American Marxist scholarship.

The implacable social process by which America's economic machine and its national wealth came more and more under the control of an ever smaller minority was described in such classics as Gustavus Meyers' *History of Great American Fortunes* and later in the Marxist work of Anna Rochester on American finance capital, *Rulers of America*. Perlo's exhaustive study brings this unfolding drama of politics, economics and power up to date. He has probed a mountain of documents, tracking down often barely visible trails of "inside" power and influence, and has made available to the country the latest evidence that

the America of the mid-century is, for all its various minor deviations from the evolution of capitalism in other lands, a monopolist-dominated society par excellence.

Here are tracked down absorbingly the centers of financial power, eight in number, as defined, operating through a densely linked network of about 200 corporations dominated or influenced by such dynasties as the DuPonts, the Rockefellers, the Mellons, the Morgans, as well as the empires that have risen around the First National City Bank of New York, the Bank of America in California and the biggest banks in the Chicago and Cleveland areas. He finds that the Morgans and Rockefellers "still stand out as the giant empires of America, with \$127 billion of assets between them. The Chicago group, with its \$22 billion of total assets, leads among the lesser kingdoms."

From his carefully reasoned statistical data, it would be easy to make a case for the statement that these great constellations, minute only if seen in terms of the numbers of persons involved, really govern the United States today.

That there are rivalries, conflicts and antagonisms among these giants Perlo is at great pains to prove, while uncovering their intreconnections, collusion and common interests. Such rivalries are the stuff of which those behind-the-scenes political decisions are often made which take shape without any apparent cause on the floor of the U.S. Senate, in the conference rooms of the Cabinet or the State Department. In fact, Perlo's probing for the changes and shifts within this family of imperialist power is one of the most exciting parts of his work and a most

significant contribution in his discussion. He demonstrates how the Rockefeller interests, with their international connections in oil, have strengthened their influence at the expense of such industrial or banking combinations as the coal-and-iron Mellons, and the formerly all-powerful House of Morgan. To understand how this affects our Middle East policy, now in the hands of the Rockefeller lawyer, John Foster Dulles, requires little imagination.

For the average reader, or even for the "little investor" who has been told that he controls America's big corporations through "democratic ownership" and a beatific "people's capitalism," Perlo tells the harsh story of hidden power which turns all such fairy tales into blatant nonsense. The top circles have foreknowledge of every major military-investment decision, of capital expansion decisions, and of other vital information by the use of which they make child's play of the Stock Exchange market—for themselves. For example, it was such "investment insight" which enabled Laurance Rockefeller to turn a \$450,000 investment in the McDonnell Aircraft Corp., into an enterprise handling \$300,000,000 of U.S. Navy "defense" orders, with a backlog of \$700,000,00 in 1957. The number of such financial tycoons could meet together in a very small hall and have the power to decide the actions of virtually every major corporation in the country.

Perlo's evidence disposes of the rather academic discussion which has been taking place among some students on the relative importance of industrial and finance capital in the U.S. While for a few years in the Thirties it was true that some of the large

dustrial corporations were able to finance their expansion out of accumulated profits, capital expansion during the past decade has been securely in the hands of the banks. Wall Street's grip on the economy is stronger than ever. In any case, the top financial cadre as delineated by Perlo cares little whether its profits and power are in the form of industrial capital or finance capital (banking capital merged with industry). Even so fine a book as C. Wright Mills' *Power Elite* tended to equate such groups as the military, business, and political in terms of power. Perlo's book, an excellent and necessary complement to Mills' work, shows that the strings from which the lesser monarchs of the power elite dangle are in the hands of a surprisingly small number of billionaires. This fact can never be forgotten by any student of American society as it turns to tackle the problems which arise inexorably out of our social structure.

It is a commentary on our "free world" hypocrisies that this magnificent volume, the product of three years of research by one of the most brilliant and competent economists of our time has not been reviewed in any capitalist newspaper of any size. The same papers will devote pages to the squeaks of minor professors extolling some new phase of "people's capitalism." So far as the big New York papers are concerned, the treatment has been similar to that accorded another "empire" exposure, Harvey O'Connor's *The Empire of Oil*, although the latter book did get mentioned in the press of a few other cities. But Perlo, an economist with a world-wide following, has been given the don't notice treatment by the high priests of the "free press," in-

cluding of course the *New York Times*. Its founder, Adolph S. Ochs, we are told in a recent appraisal (*N. Y. Times* magazine section, March 9) originally declared its columns "a forum for the consideration of all questions of public importance and to that end to invite intelligent discussion from all shades of opinion." This principle has long been abandoned by a paper that refuses even to accept paid advertisements from the publisher of Perlo's scholarly work.

Perhaps the wealthy journalistic descendants of A. Ochs don't like the conclusions drawn by Perlo at the end of his mighty array of facts and figures: "The trend towards the interlocking of government and private economic life is not likely to be reversed. But the anti-monopoly politics, to be fully effective, will have to change its content—from government service to monopolies at the expense of the public to government service of the people's needs at the expense of big business . . . from government backing of corporations in laying off millions of workers seasonally and cyclically to government insistence on the maintenance of full employment in constructive ways . . . from the development of nuclear weapons to the development of peaceful atomic power and that great advance in the life of our country which modern science, technology and labor skills make possible."

Altogether, the facts in this book and their masterly handling make an unanswerable case for socialism. Maybe that's why the *N. Y. Times* and its fellow free enterprisers want to smother it. Every person who buys this book will be helping to smash this censorship.

THE burden of Professor Hansen's book is the thesis that the capitalist world has put on an immeasurably better performance after World War II than it did in the period following World War I. He is at a certain disadvantage with this message, since the major part of it comprises lectures delivered nearly two years ago, and some serious hitches seem to have developed recently in his favorite system. Some people use the word recession: James Carey of the I.U.E. and the Democratic National Committee call it a depression; God knows what people will say it is before long.

True, we have managed to scramble out of two recessions in this post-war period, and we may climb out of the present incipient difficulties once more. But better to keep one's fingers crossed. We maintain a polite skepticism about the efficacy of the built-in stabilizers when the moment of real pressure arrives.

To give Professor Hansen, an old Keynesian, his due, he is not entirely convinced by the bright picture he has drawn. For at the very beginning, on page 11, we find him saying:

It could be argued, not without reason, that the high-pressure, full employment economics experienced after the Second World War is purely an accident and has nothing to do with policy. This is indeed true in no inconsiderable measure. This undeniable fact is, however, likely to obscure something that is very real, namely, the basic and fundamental change that has occurred in the outlook and purpose of countries in the Western world. It is true that the cold war, Marshall Plan aid, Korea, the

spreading of the conflict into new areas in the Far East, the Middle East, and Africa, have forced on the entire Western world vastly enlarged public budgets which have tended to place the economy under pressure.

It should be noted that the phrase "high-pressure . . . economics" means massive government spending. Reading the foregoing passage, I began to suspect that Professor Hansen was almost as skeptical as I. As he continues, however, the Professor regains assurance, so that by page 167 he is able to assert:

The book [Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*] is not an attack on private enterprise. Indeed Keynesian policies have (demonstrably, as far as anything is demonstrable in economics) immeasurably strengthened the private-enterprise system. The book is an attack on the belief, so dear to the older school of economists, that the economy tends automatically to function effectively of its own without governmental direction, aid or support.

Now it is true that we have come a distance from the old days when you were unemployed it could only mean that you didn't want to work. Keynes, with the help of the Great Depression, disabused us of that illusion. (Marx had done so years before, but then no one read or reads Marx.) It may even be said that, for the last ten or fifteen years, the applications of his approach did head off serious economic difficulties. Obviously, in limited space, it is impossible to discuss either the approach or the applications, whether peaceful or warlike.

What cannot be ignored, however, is the neutrality of the Keynesian approach.

proach to the human aspect of economic phenomena. One might say that Professor Hansen is inconsistently aware of the problem. His chapter on "The Standards and Values of a Rich Society" concludes with this paragraph:

Few will deny the cultural deficiencies of our cities and towns, and everyone will agree that an adequate program would cost a lot of money. And the answer to that is usually that we can't afford it. We are too poor! Ah, that is it. We have become so gadget-rich that we can't afford to build culturally rich communities. But what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul?

What indeed; but since Keynesian economic theory sets itself the prime goal of maintaining full employment, it tends to be satisfied with any kind of massive spending. Military spending as well, which is particularly attractive because it is least likely to upset the status quo by a redistribution of income in favor of the working class. So our educational system is a shambles; our young people are harassed and in open rebellion, while the militarized state, armed with the latest weapons of mass destruction, holds on to them like the old misers to their money bags. The logic is that it is better to die than to go through another depression.

Professor Hansen will not consider the fact that another social system, namely socialism, does not require the mad devices we employ to keep us going. So for all his Keynesian good will, he cannot help us out of the wamp.

RICHARD ROWE

Mum Is the Word

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHERS AT WORK, edited with an introduction by Sidney Hook. Criterion Press, \$7.50.

THIS volume is an attempt to answer the question: What are American philosophers doing? It is not a general survey. Rather, it permits American philosophers, twenty-nine of them, to speak for themselves by bringing together samples of their work, self-chosen.

Sidney Hook, the editor, explains his purpose in a brief introduction:

"Instead of offering a summary and interpretation of the doctrines, allegiances and classifications of American philosophy, which inevitably reflects an editorial bias, it seems desirable, and a welcome departure from previous accounts of American philosophy, to give representative American philosophers an opportunity to present their own selections from their writings, to reveal them, so to speak, at work."

The selections, for the most part reprints from specialized philosophical journals, are grouped under three headings. The first, Logic and Scientific Method, includes contributions by such prominent logicians and philosophic analysts as Carnap, C. I. Lewis, Black, Nagel, Quine, Goodman, Alice Ambrose and Wilfrid Sellars. The second, Metaphysics, presents among others Blanshard, Ducasse, Weiss and Sidney Hook, himself. The final section is devoted to Ethics and Social Philosophy, with articles by Kallen, Northrop, Morris, T. V. Smith and other specialists in this field.

Readers interested in mathematical

logic and philosophic analysis should find the first part lively and rewarding. This is especially true of Carnap on "Meaning and Synonymy in Natural Languages" and Quine on "Logical Truth." While Nelson Goodman's "The Revision of Philosophy (that is, 'a new way of looking at philosophy')" scarcely bears out the promise of the title, it too contributes to the atmosphere of inquiry and controversy. If there are few solutions in this field of logical analysis, there are at least lively debates on problems.

On the other hand, this reviewer found the metaphysicians, like the eloquent Paul Weiss, still wandering in their private wilderness in search of a meaningful definition of their calling. And in ethics and social philosophy—where one might have expected to find at last some reflection of the great social issues of the day—the ivy-clad tower, unfortunately, seems to have lost few of its philosophic inhabitants.

But perhaps this volume does not give an accurate picture? It is quite true that Hook's invitation list is open to serious objection. He could well have included some American philosophers who specialize in the problems of the physical sciences, the application of mathematical logic to the theory of automation, the study of new approaches to language and communication, the foundation of psychology.

American Marxists, of course, have been excluded altogether by the editor. Not only are the off-campus exiles ignored but even those academicians who publish on dialectical materialism in the leading American philosophical periodicals.

Taking these reservations into account, one must still conclude that the

selections offered in this book do pretty much reflect the actual status of American philosophy.

What then are American philosophers doing? By and large—and this includes most logical analysts as well—they are philosophizing about philosophy. And this in virtually complete isolation from the world about them.

In his introduction, Hook observes that "the United States is still a country in which philosophy is least studied, in which proportionately fewer books on philosophy are bought and read, in which the views of philosophers are considered less relevant to the concerns of non-philosophers, than in most European countries."

Granted that this is so, I fear that the appearance of this volume will do little directly to change the situation.

However, it may help explain it. *American Philosophers At Work* makes painfully evident why the views of philosophers are not considered relevant. To begin with—and leaving aside the question of Marxism for the moment—it is simply because most American philosophers do not apply their skills and techniques to "concerns relevant to non-philosophers." To use a tired illustration—where is the American Bertrand Russell?

Sidney Hook is not unaware of the problem. He acknowledges that "philosophers have attempted to come to grips with specific social problems involving conflicts of specific sets of values, in a philosophical way." In his own essay on "Naturalism" he defines the most fundamental problem of philosophy to be: "what it means for man behavior to be reasonable or rational."

But an awareness of the problem

not enough. If coming to grips with "specific social problems" entails the kind of "rational human behavior" displayed by Sidney Hook in his campaign against the Fifth Amendment last year (cf. the transcript of his TV debate with New York *Times* editorial writer, John Oakes, June 9, 1957), the non-philosophers will be pardoned if they seem inclined to leave well enough alone.

This, of course, is not the answer. Indeed, there is growing evidence both on and off the campus that American philosophers will not remain forever quiet while so many of their scientific colleagues are insisting on an end to nuclear tests and a beginning of scientific exchange and peaceful competition with the socialist world.

There is a lot of work for American philosophers to do in this age of space, sputnik and the atom.

ALBERT E. BLUMBERG

A Lineup of Philistines

THE WORLD IS A COMEDY: A TUCHOLSKY ANTHOLOGY, translated and edited with an introductory essay by Harry Zohn. Sci-Art Publishers. \$3.75.

THIS is the first presentation in English of the work of the German satirist, Kurt Tucholsky. A comprehensive essay on his life and times introduces fifty of his pieces. These writings extend from the end of the First World War to the Nazi seizure of power. Tucholsky had seen the war at

first hand and joined in the great anti-war literature of the period.

It is all here, the face of the German ruling class in all its ugliness: grim-visaged militarists, heartless judges, pompous bureaucrats, pitiless industrialists. And the "little people," the lackeys who blindly and callously carry out the orders, are also not spared. Tucholsky was a connoisseur of the Philistine in all his meanness. These essays are the prose equivalents of the drawings of George Grosz. Unfortunately, Tucholsky's pen was not mightier than the sword of the Philistines. He killed himself in exile; the targets of his satires went on to build their gas chambers.

There is a poignant undertone to much of his satire since he despaired that mankind would ever learn compassion and forbearance. However, the range of his writing is wide and he has a more light-hearted side. Many of his pieces are comic gems full of humorous insights, from the farcical "Where Do the Holes in the Cheese Come From?" to the ironic "The Poverty of the Rich."

Tucholsky was a great stylist and wrote a simple vernacular German. Although his style is free of the turpitude of much of German writing, he is by no means easy to translate. It is a credit to Dr. Zohn that, with reservations, he was able to convey so much of the original flavor. The choice of a title for this collection is unhappy. The world was far from a comedy for the gentle, sensitive Tucholsky. His wit was bittersweet—more bitter than sweet.

MARTIN CALDER

Ready in May—

NO MEN ARE STRANGERS

BY JOSEPH NORTH

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A book of affirmation in these troubled days is like a fountain of clear waters in a parched time—it is good for the health! Joe North's *No Men Are Strangers* (International Publishers, price \$3.25) is such a book, a kind of modern Pilgrims' Progress except that, instead of dealing in allegory, the author writes of living facts, observed at first hand, reportage from all the fighting fronts of man's struggle for a better world, the human documentation of the most turbulent, swift-moving, epochal half-century of modern history.

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His on-the-spot observations of America during the Great Depression; his activity in founding the weekly *New Masses* and his lively contacts, as editor of that soon-to-become famous magazine, with the best known writers and artists of that day; his eye-witness narratives of the militant sit-down strikes which helped to usher in the C.I.O.; his stirring coverage of the battlefronts of Spain during the Civil War; his danger-fraught voyages on convoys crossing the Atlantic in World War II; his first grisly entrance into the still-smoking hell of Dachau, all are brilliantly told in this book. Don't fail to order your copy from your nearest bookstore or, by mail, from—

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