



Mainstream

THEATRE FOR LEARNING

Bertolt Brecht

THE GREY FLANNEL MOUTH

Barbara Giles

THE RETURN OF LAZARUS

*Elmer Borman and
Meridel le Sueur*

THE ROCK BENEATH

George Abbe

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,
OR POLITICS AND POETRY

Jack Lindsay

FOUR DRAWINGS

Alice Neel

June, 1958

50 cents

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THEATRE FOR LEARNING*

BERTOLT BRECHT

WHEN anyone spoke of modern theater a few years ago, he mentioned the Moscow, the New York or the Berlin theatre. He may also have spoken of a particular production of Jouvet's in Paris, of Cochran's in London, or the Habima performance of "The Dybbuk," which, in fact, belonged to Russian theater, since it was directed by Vakhtangov; but by and large, there were only three capitals as far as modern theatre was concerned.

The Russian, the American and the German theatres were very different from one another, but they were alike in being modern, i.e., in introducing technical and artistic innovations. In a certain sense they even developed stylistic similarities, probably because technique is international (not only the technique directly required for the stage, but also that which exerts an influence on it, the film, for example) and because the cities in question were great progressive cities in great industrial countries. Most recently, the Berlin theatre seemed to have taken the lead among the most advanced capitalist countries. What was common to modern theatre found there its strongest and, for the moment, most mature expression.

The last phase of the Berlin theatre, which as I said only revealed in its purest form the direction in which modern theatre was developing, was the so-called *epic theatre*. What was known as the "Zeitstueck" (play dealing with current problems—Trans.) or Piscator theater or the didactic play all belonged to epic theatre.

EPIC THEATRE

The expression "epic theatre" seemed self-contradictory to many people, since according to the teachings of Aristotle the epic and the

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dramatic forms of presenting a story were considered basically different from one another. The difference between the two forms was by no means merely seen in the fact that one was performed by living people while the other made use of a book—epic works like those of Homer and the *minnesingers* of the Middle Ages were likewise theatrical performances, and dramas like Goethe's "Faust" or Byron's "Manfred" admittedly achieved their greatest effect as books. Aristotle's teaching distinguished the dramatic from the epic form as a difference in construction, whose laws were dealt with under two different branches of aesthetics. This construction depended on the different way in which the works were presented to the public, either on the stage or through a book, but nevertheless, apart from that, "the dramatic" could also be found in epic works and "the epic" in dramatic works. The bourgeois novel in the last century considerably developed "the dramatic," which meant the strong centralization of plot and an organic interdependence of the separate parts. "The dramatic" is characterized by a certain passion in the tone of the exposition and a working out of the collision of forces. The epic writer, Doblin,* gave an excellent description when he said that the epic, in contrast to the dramatic, could practically be cut up with a scissors into single pieces, each of which could stand alone.

I do not wish to discuss here in what way the contrasts between epic and dramatic, long regarded as irreconcilable, lost their rigidity but simply to point out that (other causes aside) technical achievement enabled the stage to include narrative elements in dramatic presentation. The potentialities of projection, the film, the greater facility in changing sets through machinery, completed the equipment of the stage and did so at a moment when the most important human events could no longer be so simply portrayed as through personification of the moving forces or through subordinating the characters to invisible, metaphysical powers. To make the events understandable, it had become necessary to play up the "bearing" of the *environment* upon the people living in it.

Of course this environment had been shown in plays before, not however, as an independent element but only from the viewpoint of the main figure of the drama. It rose out of the hero's reaction to it. It was seen as a storm may be "seen" if you observe on the sea a ship spreading its sails and the sails bellying. But in the epic theatre it was now to appear as an independent element.

The stage began to narrate. The narrator no longer vanished with the

* Alfred Doblin (1878-1957), German novelist and essayist. His best-known work is the novel *Berlin-Alexanderplatz*.

fourth wall. Not only did the background make its own comment on stage happenings through large screens which evoked other events occurring at the same time in other places, documenting or contradicting statements by characters through quotations projected onto a screen, lending tangible, concrete statistics to abstract discussions, providing facts and figures for happening which were plastic but unclear in their meaning; the actors no longer threw themselves completely into their roles but maintained a certain distance from the character performed by them, even distinctly inviting criticism.

Nothing permitted the audience any more to lose itself through simple empathy, uncritically (and practically without any consequences) in the experiences of the characters on the stage. The presentation exposed the subject matter and the happenings to a process of de-familiarization.* De-familiarization was required to make things understood. When things are "self-evident," understanding is simply dispensed with. The "natural" had to be given an element of the *conspicuous*. Only in this way could the laws of cause and effect become plain. Characters had to behave as they *did* behave, and at the same time be capable of behaving otherwise.

These were great changes.

TWO OUTLINES

The following little outlines may indicate in what respect the function of the epic is distinguished from that of the dramatic theatre.

(1)

Dramatic Form

The stage "incarnates" an event.
Involves the audience in an action,
uses up its activity.
Helps it to feel.
Communicates experiences.
The audience is projected into an
event.
Suggestion is used.

Epic Form

It relates it.
Makes the audience an observer,
but arouses its activity.
Compels it to make decisions.
Communicates insights.
Is confronted with it.
Arguments are used.

* In German, "Entfremdung," sometimes translated as "alienation," and sometimes called "Verfremdung" by Brecht. The latter is an invented word like "defamiliarization."—Translator's note.

Sensations are preserved.
The character is a known quantity.

Man unchangeable.

His drives.
Events move in a straight line.
Natura non facit saltus.
The world as it is.

Impelled to the level of perception.
The character is subjected to investigation.

Man who can change and make changes.

His motives.
In "irregular" curves.
Facit saltus.
The world as it is becoming.

(2)

The audience in the dramatic theater says:

Yes, I have felt that too.—That's how I am.—That is only natural.—That will always be so.—This person's suffering shocks me because has no way out.—This is great art: everything in it is self-evident.—weep with the weeping, I laugh with the laughing.

The audience in the epic theater says:

I wouldn't have thought that.—People shouldn't do things like that.—That's extremely odd, almost unbelievable.—This has to stop.—This person's suffering shocks me, because there might be a way out for him.—This is great art: nothing in it is self-evident.—I laugh over the weeping, I weep over the laughing.

DIDACTIC THEATER

The stage began to instruct.

Oil, inflation, war, social struggles, the family, religion, wheat, meat-packing industry became subjects for theatrical portrayal. Chorus informed the audience about facts it did not know. In montage films showed events all over the world. Projections provided statistical data. As the "background" came to the fore, the actions of the characters became exposed to criticism. Wrong and right actions were exhibited. People were shown who knew what they were doing, and other people were shown who did not know. The theater entered the province of philosophers—at any rate, the sort of philosophers who wanted not only to explain the world but also to change it. Hence the theater philosophized; hence it instructed. And what became of entertainment? Were the audiences put back in school, treated as illiterates? Were they to take examinations and be given marks?

It is the general opinion that a very decided difference exists between learning and being entertained. The former may be useful, but only the latter is pleasant. Thus we have to defend the epic theater against a suspicion that it must be an extremely unpleasant, a joyless, indeed a wearing business.

Well, we can only say that the contrast between learning and being entertained does not necessarily exist in nature, it has not always existed and it need not always exist.

Undoubtedly, the kind of learning we did in school, in training for a profession, etc., is a laborious business. But consider under what circumstances and for what purpose it is done. It is, in fact, a purchase. Knowledge is simply a commodity. It is acquired for the purpose of being re-sold. All those who have grown too old for school have to pursue knowledge on the Q.T., so to speak, because anybody who admits he still has to study depreciates himself as one who knows too little. Apart from that, the utility of learning is very much limited by factors over which the student has no control. There is unemployment, against which no knowledge protects. There is the division of labor, which makes comprehensive knowledge unnecessary and impossible. Often, those who study do it only when they see no other possibility of getting ahead. There is not much knowledge that procures power, but much knowledge is only procured through power.

Learning means something very different to people in different strata of society. There are people who cannot conceive of any improvement in conditions; conditions seem good enough to them. Whatever may happen to petroleum, they make a profit out of it. And they feel, after all, that they are getting rather old. They can scarcely expect many more years of life. So why continue to learn? They have already spoken their "Ugh!"* But there are also people who have not yet "had their turn," who are discontented with the way things are, who have an immense practical interest in learning, who want orientation badly, who know they are lost without learning—these are the best and most ambitious learners. Such differences also exist among nations and peoples. Thus the lust for learning is dependent on various things; in short, there *is* thrilling learning, joyous and militant learning.

If learning could not be delightful, then the theater, by its very nature, would not be in a position to instruct.

* Reference to popular German literature about American Indians, by the author Karl May, in which, after a chieftain had given his opinion at a pow-wow he would conclude, "I have spoken. Ugh!"—Translator's note.

Theater remains theater, even when it is didactic theater, and if it good theater it will entertain.

THEATER AND SCIENCE

"But what has science to do with art? We know very well that science can be diverting, but not everything that diverts belongs in the theater."

I have often been told when I pointed out the inestimable service that modern science, properly utilized, could render to art, especially to the theater, that art and science were two admirable but completely different fields of human activity. This is a dreadful platitude, of course, and the best thing to do is admit at once that it is quite right, like most platitudes. Art and science operate in very different ways—agreed. Still, I must admit—bad as this may sound—that I cannot manage as an artist without making use of certain sciences. This may make many people seriously doubt my artistic ability. They are accustomed to regarding poets as unique, almost unnatural beings who unerringly, practically like gods, perceive things that others can only perceive through the greatest efforts and hard work. Naturally, it is unpleasant to have to admit not being one of those so endowed. But it must be admitted. It must also be denied that this application to science has anything to do with some pardonable avocation indulged in the evening after work is done. Everyone knows that Goethe also went in for natural science. Schiller for history, presumably—this is the charitable assumption—as a sort of hobby. I would not simply accuse these two of having needed the science for their poetic labors, nor would I use them to excuse myself, but I must say I need the sciences. And I must even admit that I regard suspiciously all sorts of people who I know do not keep abreast of science, who, in other words, sing as the birds sing, or as they imagine the birds sing. This does not mean that I would reject a nice poem about the taste of a flounder or the pleasure of a boating party just because the author had not studied gastronomy or navigation. But I think that unless every resource is employed towards understanding the great, complicated events in the world of man, they cannot be seen adequately for what they are.

Let us assume that we want to portray great passions or events which influence the fates of peoples. Such a passion today might be the drive for power. Supposing that a poet "felt" this drive and wanted to show

someone striving for power—how could he absorb into his own experience the extremely complicated mechanism within which the struggle for power today takes place? If his hero is a political man, what are the workings of politics, if he is a business man, what are the workings of business? And then there are poets who are much less passionately interested in any individual's drive for power than in business affairs and politics as such! How are they to acquire the necessary knowledge? They will scarcely find out enough by going around and keeping their eyes open, although that is at least better than rolling their eyes in a fine frenzy. The establishment of a newspaper like the *Voelkische Beobachter* or a business like Standard Oil is a rather complicated matter, and these things are not simply absorbed through the pores. Psychology is an important field for the dramatist. It is supposed that while an ordinary person may not be in a position to discover, without special instruction, what makes a man commit murder, certainly a writer ought to have the "inner resources" to be able to give a picture of a murderer's mental state. The assumption is that you only need look into yourself in such a case; after all, there is such a thing as imagination. . . . For a number of reasons I can no longer abandon myself to this amiable hope of managing so comfortably. I cannot find in myself alone all the motives which, as we learn from newspapers and scientific reports, are discovered in human beings. No more than any judge passing sentence am I able to imagine adequately, unaided, the mental state of a murderer. Modern psychology, from psychoanalysis to behaviorism, provides me with insights which help me to form a quite different judgment of the case, especially when I take into consideration the findings of sociology, and do not ignore economics or history. You may say: this is getting complicated. I must answer, it *is* complicated. Perhaps I can talk you into agreeing with me that a lot of literature is extremely primitive; yet you will ask in grave concern: Wouldn't such an evening in the theater be a pretty alarming business? The answer to that is: No.

Whatever knowledge may be contained in a poetic work, it must be completely converted into poetry. In its transmuted form, it gives the same type of satisfaction as any poetic work. And although it does not provide that satisfaction found in science as such, a certain inclination to penetrate more deeply into the nature of things, a desire to make the world controllable, are necessary to ensure enjoyment of poetic works generated by this era of great discoveries and inventions.

IS THE EPIC THEATER A SORT OF "MORAL INSTITUTION"?

According to Friedrich Schiller the theater should be a moral institution. When Schiller posed this demand it scarcely occurred to him that by moralizing from the stage he might drive the audience out of the theater. In his day the audience had no objection to moralizing. Only later on did Friedrich Nietzsche abuse him as the moral trumpeter of Säckingen.* To Nietzsche a concern with morality seemed a dismal affair; to Schiller it seemed completely gratifying. He knew of nothing more entertaining and satisfying than to propagate ideals. The bourgeoisie was just establishing the concept of the nation. To furnish your house, show off your new hat, present your bills for payment is highly gratifying. But to speak of the decay of your house, to have to sell your old hat and pay the bills yourself is a truly dismal affair, and that was how Friedrich Nietzsche saw it a century later. It was no use talking to him about morality or, in consequence, about the other Friedrich. Many people also attacked the epic theater, claiming it was too moralistic. Yet moral utterances were secondary in the epic theater. Its intention was less to moralize than to study. And it did study, but there came the rub: the moral of the story. Naturally, we cannot claim that we began making studies just because studying was so much fun and not for any concrete reason, or that the results of our studies then took us completely by surprise. Undoubtedly there were painful discrepancies in the world around us, conditions that were hard to bear, conditions of a kind not only hard to bear for moral reasons. Hunger, cold and hardship are not only burdensome for moral reasons. And the purpose of our investigation was not merely to arouse moral misgivings about certain conditions (although such misgivings might easily be felt, if not by every member of the audience; such misgivings, for example, were seldom felt by those who profited by the conditions in question). The purpose of our investigation was to make visible the means by which those onerous conditions could be done away with. We were not speaking on behalf of morality but on behalf of the wronged. These are really two different things, for moral allusions are often used in telling the wronged that they must put up with their situation. For such moralists, people exist for morality, not morality for people.

Nevertheless it can be deduced from these remarks to what extent and in what sense the epic theater is a moral institution.

* Nietzsche's quip referred to a banal verse tale by Viktor Scheffel, *Der Trompeter von Säckingen*, a standard favorite in Germany's "plush sofa kultur"—a parallel of Victorianism—in the second half of the nineteenth century.—Translator's note.

CAN EPIC THEATER BE PERFORMED ANYWHERE?

From the standpoint of style, the epic theater is nothing especially new. In its character of show, of demonstration, and its emphasis on the artistic, it is related to the ancient Asian theater. The medieval mystery play, and also the classical Spanish and Jesuit theaters, showed an instructive tendency.

Those theater forms corresponded to certain tendencies of their time and disappeared with them. The modern epic theater is also linked with definite tendencies. It can by no means be performed anywhere. Few of the great nations today are inclined to discuss their problems in the theater. London, Paris, Tokyo and Rome maintain their theaters for quite different purposes. Only in a few places, and not for long, have circumstances been favorable to an epic, instructive theater. In Berlin, fascism put a violent end to the development of such a theater.*

Besides a certain technical standard, it presupposes a powerful social movement which has an interest in the free discussion of vital problems, the better to solve them, and can defend this interest against all opposing tendencies.

The epic theater is the broadest and most far-reaching experiment in great modern theater, and it has to overcome all the enormous difficulties that all vital forces in the area of politics, philosophy, science and art have to overcome.

Translated from the German by Edith Anderson.

* After the defeat of the Nazis in 1945, the German administrators of the then Soviet-occupied zone—now the German Democratic Republic—invited Brecht to establish his own theater in East Berlin. This theater, the "Berliner Ensemble," is recognized today all over the world as a classical type of epic theater.—*Translator's note.*

THE GREY FLANNEL MOUTH

BARBARA GILES .

IF YOU were on Madison Avenue would you prefer to be the man who wrote the Maidenform Bra ads or the one who thought up the phrase "People's Capitalism"? Take your time about replying. There are more angles to the question than you may suspect. First the agency that portrayed those deliciously terrifying fantasies of half-stripped sylphs is the same one that attempted to package and market Adlai Stevenson in the 1956 campaign, while People's Capitalism is a brand name originated primarily for use by the sales department of the GOP. So your political purchases may be involved.

Then there's the matter of Applied versus Basic Research. In the case of Maidenform, the advertisers simply researched among some old dreams until they found the type ("universal repressed-exhibitionist" if you want to sound like a know-it-all) that might be applied in a way to hurl x-million maidens, their unconscious ravens, into the aisle between the foundation-garment counters. With People's Capitalism, however, the Advertising Council created the product itself—the phrase that is—and delivered it to the clients, who have done the Applying themselves. The Basic part of the operation rather eludes us, but it needn't matter. Along the Avenue it's generally accepted that any research basic to the upkeep of a ten billion-dollar-a-year business should be basic enough for anybody—and what more so than a euphemism designed to assure the customer that while his installment debt is his very, very own, he can share his proprietorship of Standard Oil with a up-and-coming young *entrepreneur* like Nelson Rockefeller?

After all that, would it upset you very much to learn that it is the Maidenform-ad writer who probably has the greater claim to glory? He "fixed the brand image" and in the advertising world no achievement ranks so high as this. While his rival's little sortie into political economy may find its place someday in a history textbook, as a small, malevolent footnote, "I dreamt last night . . ." is likely to be quoted in colle-

advertising courses for decades to come with the nostalgic ecstasy and envy evoked by "99.44% Pure" and "The Ham What Am."

Fixing the brand image is the *educational* goal of advertising, whose annual expenditures for this purpose are only two billion dollars less than the nation spends on all forms of just plain schooling. The results, as might be expected, are not unimpressive. Not long ago an advertiser was able to boast, according to Vance Packard in *The Hidden Persuaders*, that little children are learning to sing beer commercials before they learn *The Star Spangled Banner*.

Does that answer your questions as to what our children have been doing while those of other nations were learning science and foreign languages? Not entirely. It would be wrong to assume that the singing commercial is *all* the Madison Avenue educators have to teach America's young. There's such a thing as "brand loyalty"—the consumer-counterpart to "brand image"—a quality that requires careful, persistent planting and nourishment if it is to grow along with the child into the full, intoxicating beauty of an automatic demand for Knees-Ease Floor Polish or Pop-of-the-Gun Morning Flakes. Obviously, a musical jingle won't do this alone. To cultivate a real, old-school-tie fealty the advertiser must also work on the child's eye, taste buds, nerves, muscles, aggressions, vanity, fear, and material greed. A really inspired advertiser can, in a single lesson via a TV kid-curdler, cover all these areas not omitting the muscles, which are forced into play when the young disciple must rise from the living-room floor in order to seek out the nearest store that carries the one-and-only Jack the Ripper Candy Bar. The less gifted educator may have to resort to old-fashioned gold-star rewards in the shape of space helmets, say, given to the moppet who can deliver Mother to the salesroom for a demonstration of electrical appliances.

The latter gambit, while it lacks originality, has the added advantage of providing instruction for Mother who, if anything, needs it more than Junior does, having grown up in a generally retarded age when, as late as 1946, the outlay of advertising dollars was less than four billions. In any case her mentality is rated as not above her youngest child's, and one need not read Mr. Packard's exposé to discover that by Madison Avenue this flattered "prime target" of its endeavors is a giddy oaf who shouldn't be trusted with the purchase of a bag of peanuts, let alone the household supplies. If she lived to be a hundred she would never find out the difference between one dollar and \$1.98, and when asked why she has chosen a certain detergent from five brands all alike, she can only lisp that she liked the pretty colors on the box or was taken by the nice ad in the *Togetherness* magazine.

ODDLY, this concept of her IQ seems only to endear her the more to her monitors, who publicly admire and love her in full-page newspaper displays as the wise, clever, good goddess with a spending power of umpteen billion dollars—and who wouldn't admire and love umpteen billion dollars?—while assuring her through other, cozier displays that yes, darling, it *is* the pretty colors and the nice ad that really count. At least this was so until a few years ago. Then motivational research went to work and came up with the news that this goddess not only lacked mature intelligence; she was completely potty poor woman, with no rational idea as to why she bought *anything*, and the monitors had to start all over. But that sordid melodrama we shall leave until later. . . .

No higher grades, it should be noted, have been bestowed on the male consumer, who purchases expensive shirts that are just the thing to go with an eye-patch he doesn't wear, and switches his brand of cigarettes to one that looks good in someone else's tattooed hand in a picture, but since he does relatively little of the shopping he's not so important. And it's no use asking *him* why he buys one thing or another—he's been certified as irrational too.

It isn't always easy to sympathize with the problems of people who have ten billion dollars to help solve them, but we can try. To have to sell things when you don't know exactly why anyone should buy them and nobody can tell you, must be hell enough without feeling, as the ad fraternity professes to do, that if its mission fails, mass production will cease, the economy will collapse, and the nation's culture will be reduced to a remembered echo of Elvis Presley's last rock-'n'-roll. This panicky assumption rests upon the advertisers' own claim that it is they who "create wants." By this they do not mean that if you failed to read about soap in the ads it would never occur to you to want some to mix with your bath water, or that you would eat butter from a teaspoon lacking full-page reminders that bread is purchasable in stores. While the advertisers may have forgotten by now the precise reasons why people buy such things, a brief search of the memory will doubtless recall them. What they do mean is that if the economy is to survive you must want *more* than you want—than you need, or can afford—a type of hunger that hardly needs creating but does require an immense amount of high stimulating, coaxing, and bullying to keep it at the strength needed to take care of more goods at higher prices than you can afford. The more such wants, the more goods produced; the more goods produced the more wants called for. In this process, known to the Arbuthnots of capitalist economies as "keeping the wheels of industry turning," the salesman plays his proud but sensitive role.

Yet somehow it is not he who gets blamed (publicly at least) when the economy does begin to pale and tremble. His clients, the business chiefs whose goods he sells, turn instead on the consumer, who is held to be too cowardly or just plain ornery to whip up his buying *elan* himself—job or no job, debt or no debt, worry or no worry—and so lead us all back to the big rock candy mountain. As a rule the same point is made by the clients' pet statesmen. When the word recession threatened to vanish into something meaner-sounding Mr. Eisenhower, presenting a somewhat sterner version of the "father image" than Batten, Barton, Durstein & Osborn had thoughtfully worked up for him in 1956, expressed himself with ominous coherence on the subject of people with so little faith in "the inherent vitality of our free economy" that they counted their dollars before their blessings. The buying *elan* remained subdued nevertheless and the statesmen have grudgingly admitted since that there seems to be some connection with money or the lack of it.

Now if the salesman isn't blamed for this situation—if in fact his stimulating and goading of consumer appetites is publicly and officially assisted by his bosses and betters—his troubles are by no means ended. For one thing, his advertising accounts may be cut, since his clients' own *elan* is waiting on the consumer's and may have to wait for some time. Besides, holding up the economy isn't his *real* worry. His heart may well contract when he reads the unemployment figures but what makes his ulcers bleed is not the problem of selling more goods to the nation but that of selling more Rainbow Toothpaste, say, than another agency sells of the rival Red-White-and-Blue, or more boxes of that detergent identical with four other boxes which the goddess with mind of clay *thinks* she buys for the colors on the box but can't be sure because of the turmoil in her depths.

We're still trying to be sympathetic; we shall even try to be helpful. Putting ourselves in the advertiser's place, let's face the question squarely: confronted with five (it could be ten) products all alike, in different boxes, how *would* we choose? Eeny-meeny is out, and we won't even mention colors again. Our ear isn't sensitive enough to detect the relative delights of sounds like Wash-O and Soak-O. The boxes are the same size. The prices are no different. We haven't seen the TV programs sponsored by any of the brands involved and even if we had we would feel shy about evaluating dramatic or musical productions in the face of a scientific system of criticism like the Hooper ratings. Nor have we reread the companies' ads for clues, since it is we who are trying to furnish clues for the advertiser.

FRANKLY, we give up. And mind you, we were equipped for this task as many consumers are not: besides perusing yards of ads in general, just to get the feel of things, we had read two recent books in addition to *The Hidden Persuaders*: Martin Mayer's *Madison Avenue USA* and *The Amazing Advertising Business* by the editors of *Fortune*. Of course that's nothing compared with the equipment a salesman requires—market analyses, sales analyses, "product acceptance" studies, attitude surveys, media research, motivational research, color testing, name testing. . . . According to Daniel Seligman in *The Amazing Advertising Business*. "Today the copywriter does not even begin to work (in principle, anyway) until the research people have told him, for example, at which hour of the day Los Angeles beer drinkers are at their peak consumption." But do they ever tell him how to make the drinker at his peak consume a *certain* beer? There's that nasty question again.

In this situation, motivational research must have seemed like a promise of divine revelation. What a horror, yet what a relief, to be told that all the prodding, querying, measuring, sampling, and general casing of the shopping species to date had been wasted since anything resembling a human impulse was hidden in the subterranean whirlpools of the psyche—where, however, it could be reached by the deep-divers of psychology who would, through artful interviews and psychiatric tests, discover what the subject himself didn't know about his "resonance" to an advertising slogan, a picture, or a product.

Just at first the marketers couldn't believe it. It sounded too much like a "professor's" dream and, besides being suspicious of educators outside of the Ding Dong School the marketers are proud that they are no easy sell themselves. Once persuaded, however, they believed with the ardor of miracle-seekers. In 1955 Dr. Ernest Dichter, MR pioneer from Vienna, was receiving \$500 a day for his services and, according to Vance Packard, no less than eighty-two organizations were offering to do "depth research" on consumers. By the time Mr. Eisenhower's image was readied for the big pitch in 1956, BBD&O was able to draw upon the combined wisdom of "Pavlov and his conditioned reflexes, Freud and his father image, [David] Riesman and his concept of modern American voters as spectator-consumers of politics," and BBD&O's own "mass merchandising lore."

From Pavlov and Freud to Riesman and BBD&O is quite a stretch but no salesworthy insight along the way has been overlooked. It was found, for example—again according to Mr. Packard—that "The women seekers are a highly vulnerable market for air-conditioners," and, because men like to flex their muscles "like a gorilla" upon awakening

in the morning they develop an aggressive-type hunger which impels them to get their teeth into something crisp and crunchy. Makers of cake-mixes have been told to allow women to put the egg in themselves instead of "just adding water," a direction that makes them feel lazy and guilty. Little girls have been "depth-probed" on their secret wishes for curly hair and the resulting volume of data, weighing seven and a half pounds, used by an advertising agency to overcome mothers' resistance to home permanents for children—though not until the ads for this purpose had been written in "creative workshops" under the guidance of a child psychologist. An eye-blink meter was devised to measure the tensions of women in supermarkets, the number of blinks proving that the shopper went around in a trance or semi-hypnosis, qualifying herself as a pushover for packages carrying "symbols with a dreamlike quality."

Some of the products, too, simply begged for advertising words with "warm, emotional overtones" to relieve them of the unconscious associative and connotative guilt or inferiority with which less sensitive ad-writers had loaded them. (Remind us some day to tell you the story of the rejected prune who finally got her dream consumer—and the tea that ran away from the prim old ladies straight into the arms of heterosexual love.)

The full details of these and similar projects, which can be found in Mr. Packard's best-selling book, are something to curl the hair of more consumer-readers and break more eye-blink meters than the advertisers ever dreamed of. At the same time there's a temptation to laugh and forget the whole business. Obviously, it's a farce—a beginning reader in psychoanalytic literature could spin such findings out of his head—and it's a pleasure to see the salesmen and their masters for once on the wrong end of a buying illusion. But we don't laugh much. For a long time now the peddlers of America's profit system have been whitelashing the creative arts to serve their own passionate purpose of selling an extra tube of toothpaste, one more can of beer. We need not be astonished when they try the same thing with psychology. To take a science intended for therapy and use it instead to locate and exploit the very weaknesses it was designed to cure is no worse, we presume, than to stuff children's imagination with the perverted fantasies of life and art presented over the air. The former may be regarded as just one more piece of evil; it is, however, one more added to too many.

PERHAPS the editors of *Fortune* hoped that *The Amazing Advertising Business* would offset some of the damage done by *The Hidden Persuaders*. If so it seems a pretty half-hearted job. Of the eleven sepa-

rate articles picked up from the magazine's files, only one, the late Bernard De Voto's witty and indignant attack on the deceptions of advertising, is memorable—far more so than the smoothly arrogant rebuttals provided by two businessmen. Other articles deal with traditional problems: the budget, the commissions, research, the "hard sell" versus the soft and subtle, ways of winning a client. . . . Aside from the possible excitement of a first-person, rags-to-riches true story by the hero of Listerine advertising who discovered the word "halitosis" and retired six years later with a \$25,000,000 check in his wallet, there's little here to hold us. However, if you ever have the problem of securing a million-dollar advertising account from a manufacturer of dog-food you may want to read the chapter called "More Smooch in the Pooch" by Spencer Klaw, which tells how five competing agencies made their separate pitches to the client. We warn you, though, some of the ideas are hard to beat. Could you think up a promotional folder from which a dog leaps to "bite" the chain-store buyer? Or a psychological concept of a pooch as "a four-year-old child with fur"? And a radio jingle containing the lines, "More spark in the bark . . . No sag in the wag"? Could you and would you if you could, fashion a sentence like "Optimum commitment promise automatically assures relatively reasonable cost per target contact"? Well, neither could—would we—a million dollars just isn't enough.

There's nothing half-hearted about Martin Mayer's attempt to restore—or simply create—some sort of brand loyalty to the image of advertising itself. In *Madison Avenue, USA* the salesmen are hard working, quick-thinking, high-feeling men who wear sincere grey flannel suits and do not, either, say, "Let's run it up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes it." Their problems are hard and bitter, and according to the author they seem to be "haunted by recurring doubts about their value to society." As an answer to these doubts the theory of "creative wants" seems inadequate to Mr. Mayer—too vulnerable in argument. To replace it he offers a theory of his own, from which we quote directly to avoid charges of misrepresentation:

Advertising . . . *adds a new value to the existing value of the product.* . . . Whenever a benefit is promised from the use of a product, and the promise is believed, the use of the product carries with it a value not inherent in the product itself. . . . The fact that the value is fictitious as *perceived* by the consumer does not mean that it is unreal as *enjoyed* by the consumer. He finds a difference between technically identical products *because the advertising has in fact made them different.* . . . Two identical lipsticks marketed under different brand names may have a very different value for a teen-age girl. Wearing one of them, she feels her ordinary self; wearing the other, which has been suc-

fully advertised as the high road to romance, she feels a beauty. . . .

Candor is a beautiful quality but it can be carried too far. Offhand the only recent example of "advertising theory" we can recall to compare with the brazenness of Mr. Mayer's is the billboard lobby's outcry that a law to prohibit its signs on the interstate highway would deprive motorists of their "esthetic rights." His idea, however, is not so original as he thinks; only the public statement of it is. When have the advertisers *not* proceeded on the assumption that a teen-age girl, or a woman of any age, can be kidded into believing that a certain lipstick will rearrange her features into the likeness of the ravishing creature in the ad? And what is all the ulcer-bleeding about if not the frantic need of each agency with a lipstick account to "successfully advertise" its product to just this end? The manufacture of promises and illusions is the very business of Madison Avenue. It's not usually admitted, though—quite the contrary—and so far as we know, nobody but Mr. Mayer has proposed to exalt it into a social virtue.

The truth is, there's been nothing really new in advertising's basic concepts for several decades. The last thing it has ever tried seriously to sell is the actual quality of a product. It has sold glossy containers instead, ribbons and cellophane, dreams of glory, snob appeal, fear and anxiety, mother love, rhymes, jingles, spectacles, and prose. Infinite frills have been added and it's claimed that the "power of suggestion" is more subtly conveyed now; that whereas a picture of a shapely leg in a stocking was once the crude come-on in advertising almost any product, a dressed up lady in a delicately provocative situation is now deemed more effective. We've been told that ads don't shout and shriek anymore, they truly *suggest*. And the psychological know-how of course is supposed to be far deeper and more complicated.

Well, maybe. Personally we can no more relate the dressed-up lady to a can of coffee than we could connect the shapely leg with a pack of cigarettes. We'd just as soon be urged to buy bread that loving mothers used to make as offered an air-conditioned womb operated on alternating current. As for the refined and subtle come-ons built into the products, we are not moved to buy a new kitchen range because our old "easy to clean" one doesn't have a device for playing "Tenderly" when the meat is done (yes, Virginia, there *is* one on the market, as well as a clothes dryer that plays—natch!—"How Dry I Am").

TO SELL the appearance, the suggestion, the frill is one of the two most changeless ideas in salesmanship. The other is the marketers'

conception of the good customer in terms of class and racial or national ancestry. The class is the middle. In *What Makes Women Buy*, a book written primarily for the trade, Janet Wolff remarks that she hasn't "explored deeply" the "special problems of the very low and high income groups." She doesn't say that their problems are the same; yet, considered from the seller's viewpoint they do have one point of similarity in that neither group offers a sufficient market to be a "prime target"—the very poor for obvious reasons and the very rich because they are too few in number. Members of the latter group frequently appear in the ads but largely as snob bait, in the same way that the sultry model is used to land perfume-buyers. The "prime target" is the group in between with incomes starting roughly at \$4,000 and running to a height not specified but probably at around \$25,000, excluding 50 per cent of American families at the first end and one half of one percent at the other. It is assumed that if the remaining 49.5 percent do not dissipate their "discretionary spending power" (above the amount required for basic needs) in wild projects like saving for their children's college education or a future trip to Europe, and if they are brave about installment debts, Madison Avenue can educate them into buying practically anything.

What is the "projected image" of these most worked upon consumers as they appear in the ads? Having no wits to speak of, they are rarely caught reading a book or agonizing over anything deeper than dandruff and tired blood. The salesman sometimes offers them a "conversation piece," as for example a mink-encircled coaster, so evidently they are expected to converse. Sometimes, too, they are given a script having to do with the extraordinary flavors, uses, beauties, etc., to be found in certain products. For the most part, however, they merely buy and smile. They are a remarkably handsome lot, if you don't mind assembly-line effects, with regular features, trim figures, and perfect taste in clothes, cars, and home interiors—all three plainly costing more than most people in their income class can afford, but then that's just the point.

Very much the same type is featured in the "cultural contributions" of mass media, from the shiny magazines to the TV shows. The heroes and heroines are as insipidly "attractive," as untroubled by real problems in an explosive world, as the idealized nitwits who smile from the adjoining columns or appear between programs with an arch reminder of the shopping list. In both departments, one labeled Advertising and the other Entertainment, the ideal image may be blonde or brunette, pastel or sun-tanned, so long as it is "white." Its features preclude suspicion that America has been populated with the aid of any new national

stock since the *Mayflower* dropped anchor. Some perfume ad men, Vance Packard tells, wanted to use a Gauguin drawing of South Sea girls with bare bosoms to suggest the exotic nature of the product, but when they guinea-pigged some of their "representative middle-class women" they found that the girls in the picture seemed "dirty, heavy, sweaty creatures, maybe Africans." The ad appeared with a South Sea backdrop all right, but the young lady posed against it was pale-skinned and blonde with "love-shaped lips." You can't pit Gauguin and the brotherhood of man against the prejudices of a prime target. Not that the salesmen often try it. Usually it's just the reverse—so much so that we find a mass medium entertainer himself, Robert Keeshan, the "Captain Kangaroo" of TV, protesting (*New York Post*, March 20) that many of the cartoons shown on children's programs are "filled with bigotry, animal cruelty, racial prejudice, and anti-Semitism," and deploring the lack of educational themes in TV, which he said occupies twenty hours a week of the average child's time.

TWENTY hours!—four hours a day, five days a week, of Madison Avenue's own educational themes, of racism, inanity, violence, and appeals to greed. Ten billion tax-free dollars to persuade people by assaulting their common sense, their budgets, their privacy, and their last desperate claims to individuality and free will. Even in this decade of billions, that's a stack of money—proving perhaps that common sense doesn't break so easily. One has to *work* at it, and this the marketers undeniably do. The volume and inescapability of their productions hardly needs discussing—one can't so much as strike a match without being jabbed by a brand name. To the visible evidence they now hope to add the invisible, through subliminal advertising, the technique of flashing their messages in type so small that consciously they are unseen by the consumer, who receives them below the threshold of awareness as suggestions are registered in hypnosis. However, the teensie-weensie ad directions have just one eensie defect: they can't make a consumer, even one in a trance, purchase a product that his conscious mind rejects. For that the manipulators will have to invent a different version of man.

We are not among those who hold that none of the advertising hoopla matters much, since little of it is absorbed and less remembered. It's true of course: the brand image keeps coming unfixed, so that most people who do recall "The Ham What Am" can't tell you its exact name and, when queried about "Save the Surface and You Save All," are likely to remember it as a cosmetic slogan instead of one for house-paint.

But that's not the point. The point is in a sort of dream we sometimes have which wouldn't interest the depth-problems. It's a dream of a world in which there is one really good detergent instead of ten possibly good; in which an impartial public body like a People's Bureau of Standards, tests each product and tells you, without song-and-dance, what it can do for you, and no other claims are allowed; in which Christmas can come and go without a whole nation being ragged into assisting at the holy delivery of the Sales Record; in which the colors we learned at our mother's knee have not been transformed into an unimaginable "linden green" or "Cairo tan," and a bottle of face lotion containing three cents worth of ingredients will sell for less than a hundred times that amount.

But what then would the producers do with their ten billion tax-free dollars? We have some suggestions about that too, though it isn't likely that they'll be accepted. Why not, for example, broaden the prime market to include the very low income groups by adding those ten billions to their spending allowances? They would surely be glad to help keep the wheels of industry turning and in other ways than by applying their shoulders and backs. After all, while they do not create wants they have a full set of flourishing ones already, and they do create value even if it is not the kind that Mr. Mayer is talking about. By economists far removed from the gold dust of Madison Avenue it is termed "surplus value," and out of it come the very ten billions under consideration.

The above is really our only original suggestion. We've read elsewhere at various times some sensible-sounding ideas about improving markets by cutting down on the tomfoolery and prices while upping the quality of the goods—researching the product instead of the consumer—but that's another dream. In the disorder, wastefulness, and chaos of free private enterprise, to which Madison Avenue plays huckster, sensible and humane plans are not the ones that get run up the flagpole. Their creators are more likely to be strung from a tree.

THE RETURN OF LAZARUS

ELMER BORMAN

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

I LOOKED at Elmer's face with deep anxiety as he leaned out of the window of the car and asked, "Which curve was it now? Sixty years is a long time and my brother is buried. Is it early for the crocuses to come up Melker Hill? There! There!" he cries, and his lean wood-carved Scandinavian face is sharpened by the winter wind from the old glacial terrain, from the frozen Mississippi that widens here at Lake Pepin before it travels on down to the sea. "There, that's Bogus creek or is it? There the trout would be biting and my brother and I laid on our stomachs dropping the bait down where we could see the fish as clear as day. It was here—here—no this is not it, this is full of hazel bush, the forest is gone. Here there was a birchwood coulee. Gone . . . gone now. The village should be below, around this bend."

I am filled with love and anxiety for him returning now to his birthplace, and even the old limestone cliffs look like old men squatting as time roars across the shining lake. Even the air is wreckage above us, and we are sniped and shot in the back by ghosts and intentions that haunt us like old orchards, unbloomed. As we drop to the river's edge, the village seems a carcass shape, a skeleton marking the flesh of men's intentions, and the abyss between flesh and ruin. I could see the gaunt thought adown his cheeks heated with anger and memory now and his blue sea eyes moistened to see the village of his youth so forlorn, a ruin.

The old river town, a skeleton, lay on the ancient beach behind the "Jim Hill" railroad tracks and the station marked nostalgically STOCKHOLM. Elmer got out and started past the station, looking back up the hill at the empty village to the farmed-out prairie above the cliffs, wheat gone, people gone. He started to run toward the big lake and the ice fishermen sitting dark in the great light and I after him, running through the sand over beer cans, dead trees, stinking fish.

"Look! Look!" He whirled in the cold light, like a ghost himself twirling in some fierce vengeance and anger pointing like Isaiah up the bluff to the prairie edge rimmed by cedars. "That was the richest land humus six feet deep. We came and plowed it and thought nothing of it and then we went on and plowed North Dakota and thought nothing of it. I left here from that very station, on an immigrant train, a lean lanky youth with land dreams on a 'Jim Hill' excursion, so crowded we took turns to sit down, crowded with land dreamers, athinking we were going to a free homestead in a new state, a hundred and sixty acres for all. What came of it all? What? What?"

His black arms fan in madness and grief, his coat falls about him windless, the forsaken and ruined village reflected on his face, Ahab after the white whale. Who ruined him? Who took his life and the life of the others? A man can be cut down like a forest, can be ruined like the earth—eroded, wasted—but as in the earth dread forsaken fire burns underground and like the swamp fire can be seen in the night of the soul and in the vengeance of the body.

I can feel his thought in his face like the knot in wood showing an injury. . . . (O let the house where I was born be there. Let my dead mother and sister be there under the cucumber vines and the great pines I planted. Here there was a tiny spring where my brother and I lay, boys, dreaming of something that didn't happen. Yes, the tiny spring circled the hillside and came out into a moss-covered barrel, a rusty tin cup tied to it. From this we drank. The water was so clear you could read a paper from the bottom but we did not read the truth there. We looked west to the land opening up. Now he is dead. I am old and the cool cool water is gone . . . gone. . . .)

"Opening up," he said aloud, "everything was opening up. There's the very station, see, it says 'Stockholm.' The immigrant trains went through night and day. What became of all those people? Oh ho I was a young feller then. We loaded my brother's machinery, four horses three cows on a freight car right there in the night and food for the journey. We stood here by this very cottonwood waving, right here and he left for the new land. We buried him last month with no land. I am an old man and I have nothing. Nothing we have. Nothing. Gone, gone, all is gone."

We look up at the forsaken village, the ghosts at our back in the cold wind, the limestone of ages holding up the richest prairies of the earth. . . . "And from here," Elmer says, and I put my hand on his arm "used to be shipped the most barley and wheat, one of the biggest shipping centers of wheat in the world. Would you believe it?" He is

stumbling towards the tiny mainstreet and the tavern. "Hundreds of people with hopes lived here. There in the river stone building the blacksmith kept a fire, there the speculator in wheat, there the harness shop. Gone, the town is gone."

He turns and takes off his hat, baring the delicate fine head of a woodworker, of a careful, necessitous and thorough thinker. "Where have they gone?" he cries into the sharp teeth of the cadaver wind. "Where in heaven's name have they gone?"

2

It was with fear we went into the dark Sunday tavern. In the odorous gloom I was afraid the tavern keeper would not remember Elmer. He was a little pale man with a white cloth over his arm. A fisherman with a long burnt nose like a turkish slipper hung his huge head around the booth to look at us, bugled his scimitar nose, and spit clear to the spittoon by the counter. He was in great need of the beer which he could not get till church was out. I sat in the dark booth hating to see Elmer's anguish. He must be remembered by someone.

He leaned over the counter, down to the short man, thrusting his lean face as if by force into his sluggish memory. "Why, don't you know me? Don't you remember my two brothers, one, the wild one? Why, you were with him right along. Remember the time the wild one took over the bar, the bar right here, and the beer flowed right out the door that night."

The little man slowly wipes off the counter. Memory seems like a fox he is watching approach cautiously and he squints one eye to get a bead on it. He shakes his head, and Elmer begins to ask these men who have never left the dying village to remember what seems eroded in their minds. Like the rim of the wheel Elmer circles the hub, those who have stayed in the center of disaster and borne it in sleep. He tries to make them see in him the lines of the boy, the past they have murdered. To every name calmly they both shake their heads like dead raftsmen manning the boat over the river Styx. . . . "Gone, gone, he's gone. We laid them away. Passed on. Disappeared. Never heard from him again. Gone. Gone. Don't know where. I guess he was dead, they buried him! Just left. You'll find him up on the hill pushing daisies. Found him dead in his barn. Killed in the war I reckon. Went to the big city, never heard of him again!"

Exhausted, Elmer returns to me and the present, sinks into the dark of the booth opposite me, speaks to the two men who listen to me, to the ghosts that now stand between the winter light and the beery

darkness. "I had my first drink here. I went to get presents for my sister, a doll, she died that year, and a tool chest for my brother who died in February. I had three beers and I got on the ice coming back. I was falling down and I was a sight and you said, 'Come on in, I'll fix you up,' and your ma gave me some soup, remember?"

He shakes his small head and keeps wiping the bar as if slowly wiping out every vestige of memory in Elmer. Terror grips us both. The lost day smokes on the dirty summer glass, shines cold as the tablets of Moses. Elmer in the dark seems to smoke with his memories, gets up, paces the length of the tavern. . . . "Can't buy beer till church is out. Old Jehovah is still here, Meridel, roaring from the hills, in the thunder, calling people to heaven, calling them from being mortal, being human. Remember old Truro," he says to nobody, but the two river men are watching from beneath their old lids. "Every Saturday he got solemnly drunk just to show the Lord God Jehovah he had no power over Old Truro. He sat straight up driving his black horses, drunk or sober, his black beard to his belly button. Drive across the rocking ice." Elmer's face darkened, and the voice of old Truro came over the rocking ice with the heads of the damned sticking through the abyss, roaring and shouting. . . . (O Truro you hated the wrath of Jehovah, as I did, looking from the face of river rock of time and sin, pointing from the church steeple, howling from the thunder, from the rocking cracks of the break up, Jehovah, swallower of little babies, of rafts and steamboats, sucking them straight to hell, all all to his smoking breast, children's feet thrust from his black beard. I heard you beneath the ice shouting obscenities at the bright young girls in the thicket of sin. Strike me down, you cried to Jehovah.)

Aloud he said, "One Sunday he was found dead in his cutter. The horses had stood quiet all night and he was sitting upright, the reins in his hand. My mother said God struck him down. I thought it was the booze."

The barkeeper raised his blind village eyes. "I remember that," he said, "it was God and booze."

Elmer runs to the bar. "You do remember. You remember. Elmer Borman. There were the Sandbergs, Larsons, Carlsons. Remember? My grandfather was the Moravian minister, built the church. My father farmed the sixty right by the schoolhouse."

They smile, cunning, an antique memory curling their senile mouths. "O Borman," he says without excitement, "yes, your cussins still living back there, you know behind the church. The old man had a heart attack right at the plow last fall."

"... back of the church," Elmer cries, "then they came back to the old place?"

"Yaaas," says the bugle-nosed fisherman, "cussins marrying. I always say, they come back and now he is a dead man. You can still phone him. There's the phone. Phone him."

"I'll call my cussins," he says, his hand shaking as he asks for the number, his face looking vague into time as he waits for a voice from the meadow above, through space, "they are still there, still there," he says. "Hello. Hello. Guess who." The bartender begins to wipe the bar, but his pale eyes are fastened on Elmer's face, and the old fisherman has come over leaning close for he is far out in death himself. "Yes," Elmer says, "we're right down here on Main Street." He does not say the tavern. He nods, then hangs up. "They are there still. They're going to the second service. We'll go and see where I was born. Where my mother and sister died. We will return."

He half runs out the door and I can see by the strange look of the two boatmen of death, that there is no house, that all is gone.

We will return.

3

We turn abruptly from the river, past the abutments called Point-no-Point, past the wooden houses still with New England uprightness and decorum, and the white steeple pointing, rotted and dilapidated, but to heaven. We lift through the thicket rising into the long prairie sunshine.

"It might seem funny to you, Meridel," Elmer is excited now rising on the old familiar road, "but many citizens of Stockholm got their beginning in that thicket! You can't imagine, Meridel," he said, as the long prairie stretched in the bright sun, stubbled, and every winter copse surrounding the house, barn, neat upright, "you can't imagine how it was for my grandfather and father to come from a little country like Sweden, and then see all this land. I saw it after them and followed it west and we set the steel plows in her and ruined her in one generation.

"I know every house, I have walked every inch. I have plowed most of her, helped clear her, walked the wooden plow, then the steel, then the big machines.—Turn here! Turn here! The house should be here. . . . Here."

We turned onto a dirt road. "There! There!" he cried as we came to a grove of shaggy Norwegian pine. "It was there! I planted those

piners!" I turned right angles into the kind of entrance into a copse lovers make invisible to night patrols. There was nothing but wild dried cucumber vines hanging from the unleaved thickets, a gnarled low apple tree, the rotted foundation marking where a house and a barn had been seen over the prairies, marking where cities of thousands had once been.

"Gone . . . Gone," he cried, as if it had never never been. "Right there I was born, in a lean-to in 1886; in that space my mother and sister died and we carried them out. There was the barn. There. My uncle was the community carpenter and he built the barn. My father used to walk to the barn with his pipe when the sun was coming up over his own land and say, 'Isn't it beautiful?' And he'd recite poetry in Swedish that sounded good as I'd squat down listening."

He would not get out of the car. I could see him through the glass as in a coffin as I walked around among the black plum thickets and the little chickadees scolded at me. "Elmer, come out, come out!" I cried, but the wind blew and the windows were closed and I saw his anxious thin face huddled in the coat fearfully looking out. I began to shiver. I opened the door and got in beside him.

He seemed to be talking to himself. "We all worked day and night always. I can remember when I was knee high to a grasshopper working beside my mother before we got the binder. I threw the oats behind the reaper and my mother bound the sheaves by hand. I can see her hands." . . . (O hands of the dead murdered mother, take the cutting straw from the loose sheaf on the ground, divide in two parts, the grain down, grasp the straws with the left hand near the grain and take the one half of the straw with your hand and throw it under and over your right hand. There, there you stand, the banded sheaves in your arms. . . . O mother the hemorrhaging blood, and my father holding me by the nape of the neck . . . there in that space he closed the door and held me as she died of her twelfth child. . . . It is the will of the Lord, he said. I hated him and the Lord. He would not let me run down that slope for the doctor. She will live or die, he said, it is the will of the Lord, and she died, died from us, from my brothers and sisters, and we buried her on that winter hill where the crocuses come early . . . sea of fire and brimstone. . . . Oh these houses held the terror, terror it was. Repent, repent, Babylon has fallen, has fallen!)

"There in that space she died," Elmer said, "and it wasn't the will of the Lord. See that white house over there, to the right, why that woman there had gangrene and her leg rotted off and her husband put it in the coffin to wait for the rest of the body. . . . What could alter the will of

God? My grandfather was right. He said, 'You didn't go to Jerusalem in a gilded chariot but like Christ on a jackass.' The picnic grove is gone, the people are gone. . . . Let's be gone. Those are the pines I planted. I was twelve and there they are." The winter wind groans and sighs through the green beards of the old pines.

I backed out of the forsaken place back past the school house to the road. "What happened?" he mumbled now, not looking at the winter prairie. "We worked. My dead brother worked all his life. Anyone could carry a small pail worked from the time he could walk. My brother and I would carry the sheaves together, the men pitched down the bundles to us, held the bank knife and grabbed the twine with the other, and pitched them into the machine. The long beards crawled in your skin, your fingers were raw and bled but you worked from can't see to can't see. The neighbors' kids in harvesting came too and slept in the hay lofts. Yes, we worked all the time, all our life. My cussins have done nothing but work for the mortgage. I went to that school till I was thirteen. That's all the schooling I got. You have to be careful all your life what you learn. I've read many books and everything in books is not true, you know that, Meridel. It has to come from everything that you have been doing and all the machines you have been working. In my life came the reaper, the binder, the thresher. I have seen these things in my life time. I have lost my land, everything. What I have is understanding. It took me all my life. I had to be very careful to get the true understanding of the worker and farmer. You can get a lot of understanding. You have to learn or it will go on."

Don't look back. Don't look back. I cried to myself, as I felt the dirge of the empty cold corpse of their death and the rotten eye sockets of defeat start after us from every empty house and barn, and from the graveyard the dead women rose in the frosty afternoon light crying, "Remember . . . Remember. . . ."

4

"You see that field?" Elmer pointed his long finger as we passed. "Many's the time I plowed that field. It used to be barley. Now it looks like it's lying fallow. Can you imagine how they felt when they came to this rich land? There were the Bormans, Sandbergs, Larsons, Carlsons, the girl I might have married lived there. We lay on the bluffs . . . suppose I had married and stayed here like my cussins with the vengeful God, singing sad hymns at the top of my lungs. . . . We will

assemble in God. . . . But this land made me dream and hunger after land, not righteousness. I tell you there is nothing like it. . . . I left here and went after my brother to Dakota and there I saw the land unplowed for a million years stretching as far as I could see without tree or stone. It was 1908 and I filed on free land. I went by stage coach when the railroad ended. Then I hired a team of broncoes and made sixty mile the first day and I saw my land. I couldn't sleep for fear I wouldn't make it to the land office. I was 21, a citizen and I was the owner of land. I walked over my land with a good and bright vision. It looked good to me. I built my shack. I had a latch on my door and a bed of straw and buffalo chips to burn. I had no horses and no plow but I had thirty-five dollars to hire my neighbor. I dug my own well and found petrified fish and shells. The land had been there a long time. I plowed it up and seeded my flax by hand from a rigged sack hung from my neck. I wrangled extra horses, worked for my neighbors, helped with calving eighteen hours a day, and came back to look at my flax, which came to my knees. It was beautiful. The next day a black cloud came up. I jumped to the hay rick and hit for my place and in ten minutes there was two inches of hail and my grain lay flat on the ground.

"I hit the harvest fields. I borrowed six hundred dollars at 12 per cent interest. Bought four horses, a breaking plow and a disc harrow. I was in the trap now. I had a mortgage and interest. Well, it takes a life time to learn.

"There. There. That's my cussins' big mortgaged barn. And the original log cabin is the base of their little house. There it is. There they've been all this time."

We turn into the muddy confused barnyard, full of dead machinery, the thicket with abandoned cars, old plows, the refuse of a life time. The little white board house is covered at the roots with tar paper and hay to keep the cold out, the winter door is black tar paper. Elmer knocks and lowers his head waiting till the door is opened to a small wren's face. "You remember me?"

"No," Elmer said, as if she was striking him with a whip. She came on at him. "Why not Elmer?" "I lost it the mortgage, drought, grasshoppers. You always lose."

"It's the will of God."

"Now don't rile me up," Elmer says, "you got the barn paid for? You only paying the interest, I know."

"It's true," the old farmer says sadly, his huge hands hanging helpless between his legs. "It's true."

"Now what are you getting for eggs?" Elmer is going to give a

lesson in economics. "Now somebody is making all the money off your eggs. In the city we are paying twice as much as you are getting. Who's getting it?"

"My hens lays the biggest eggs around here."

"But you don't get the feed back."

"The eggs we get, I say, is the same but we pay twice as much as you get."

"Yes," she says, "the egg is the same, no more has been added to it. It is the same egg for twice the money. Herod," she says, "is running rampant in Babylon."

"Now you come by some truth," Elmer says.

We must go. The two cousins who look like the wood they have cut and handled all their life lean beautifully and solemnly together, their big work hands embracing for the last time. Modestly she holds out her veined big hand and their only affection is in a little bow. As we drive away we look back and see them at the fragile door of the wooden house, thrown up as if they had not lived in it seventy years and more. "O God," Elmer cries, "What has their life been! O my God!"

Now the hills look like Golgothas and the roads to Calvary, and the strange black sarcophagus at the cemetery like some shaman of terror, and I wait in the car watching him with true anguish as he runs among the graves black and alive, searching, then stopping at what must have said Mother, Sister, Father, Brother. He stood for a long time in the dark of the snow which seemed to keep to the brow of the hill with the dead, tall and gaunt. I could not look at him.

(What have you got to say, you dumb and silent hills? How many lone thunderers have demanded answers? What is written on your undecipherable sides? Is there any message? Howl, old Truro. Do not be silent like my mother. O brother, I told you to understand or it is nothing. Let us all drop dead if we should forget you, O Jerusalem. Let our right hands wither and stink if we do not raise them in your defense. Howl, old Truro, I hear you. I hear in the tall pine wind, I hear you, my mother.)

I did not look at his crying face. It was growing dark. . . . "They were fierce men, my fathers," he said to the dark. "Roaring they went into the dark. 'Man,' my grandfather said, 'is sitting in a manure spreader deep in the mire.' Ascend, ascend," he shouted, "let the filth fall from the fiery wheels of Mammon as you ascend."

But we descend into the ruined village. "Stop, stop," Elmer says. The fishermen are coming in for a beer, leaving their lines descending

into the icy elements below, "One more beer. One more."

Tim, space, memory release the talk in men like flavor out of old wine. Elmer scanned the faces of the fishermen who came for beer now church was over, but he kept on talking. "It is interesting," he said, "to think of the meaning of time. Time is events and how we have grown from them. It is not regulated by the clock but by people and what they need and what makes them grow. My family is dead. My cussins are dying and what have they had but toil and labor? This day is a painful day but I would not miss it, Meridel. It took me all my life to understand. It has taken too long. Now over the earth it is coming what I have dreamed and I am old. I am proud I had much to do with it. I am proudest of this—that I spoke to the people and they spoke to me and I was not like my cussins alone, alone.

"I had a hard time learning. The people who own the mortgages control what we know. People are thrown into prison for holding ideas contrary to the mortgage-holding class and dare speak out the truth to the people. That is my only possession. My dearest possession—Socialism. Right here in that church I first heard the word. The preacher said it was of the devil and we must shun it like hell. I never heard the word before, so why did he have to speak it?

"I heard it again in Dakota. I told you about my first crop. After that I worked like a demon. I went crazy to be a big operator. I sharpened my plows at night. I got a new fangled thresher, hired out, got more mortgages. That year, it's crazy to think of it. . . . If the weather had been good, I had so much land seeded, I might have become a capitalist; then I never would have understood the struggles of man. Well, I was saved. The crops burnt to a crisp. Maybe we did not die of despair because things happened quick. There was all these new inventions and there was Socialism. This new idea spread like wildfire. The first farmer I worked with carried a bunch of papers in his pocket. He gave me one—"There is something," he said, 'for someone who wanders in the dark.' It said *Appeal to Reason* on it and I saw the word Socialism, and thinking of the preacher, I threw it in the fire. The farmer looked at me when I told him and he said, 'You're not to be condemned, you are to be pitied!'"

"Well, the season kept coming on, no rain, no crops. I was working for the mortgage day and night. Another neighbor who was a miner asked me to eat with him and to my surprise he had a library of books and the first one I took was Ingersoll and the next one was Paine. He went back to the mining camp to earn money for his mortgage and he sent a box of books. They were by a man named Marx. By

kerosene lamp that winter I read until three in the morning. I did not understand all I read. I began to distribute things myself. I would have a copy of Victor Berger's paper, the *Christian Socialist*, in one pocket and Le Sueur's *Iconoclast* in the other. I never spent a lonesome winter from then on. We had dances in the farmhouses, talked and danced in relays till morning, twenty-five cents, and the women brought the cake, the bachelors the sugar and music. We argued through the winter nights, drew together, a light kindled between us. At the spring lambing as we waited we looked into each others' faces by the camp fires warming ourselves together in the light of Socialism. In the shearing pens, the hay barns, in the fields, in the machine sheds we had meetings on Socialism. Ring the bell at the schoolhouse and have a meeting like your father used to do. We took turns sleeping and the rest arguing.

"Now can you believe this, Meridel, I was known as a man who would work day and night. I got another mortgage, got a gasoline driven tractor in 1912. We had the Non-Partisan League then. We got the power in the state in a way. Much happened. The war, the wheat pools. We started co-ops, even tried our own newspapers. Some men killed themselves when organizations failed, others like myself went on to the next organization, the next step, the next try.

"You wouldn't believe it, Meridel, but when I lost my land, walked off it naked as a jay when the banker came, I tried again, yes, I did, I went to Canada, imagine that, got another mortgage and found it was the same there, till the depression showed us we had produced too much and got too little. I lost my land again, worked in a factory, a landless worker at last. I was talking Socialism and I was still able to believe that I would somehow be able to become a big operator under capitalism! I learned. That sounds like I was going to be a learned man, this is not the case. Perhaps you are tired of hearing about the mortgage. It is a very tiresome thing and my cussins are dying of it. Mortgages I maintain are not the American way of life. I am the American way of life. I am only one man who has a history. All people who create, make and have a history. If we could have a complete history of the people who have created wealth instead of the people who steal it, we would have a very interesting library of reading matter. Mortgages, you see, cannot live without people. We are the people. We plow and reap and build, and the joy I have had from the people! All those I had to meet talking Socialism. . . . They are the ones who learn from the facts of life. We are more nearly right all the time because it is the facts from which we come and learn. People have commenced to study this all out very

seriously, even my poor cussin is beginning to ask 'where does it go the wealth I have produced?'"

"Like Lazarus at the home of Dives, I have returned. I have returned many times to the tomb of my labor, Meridel. I went back to my beloved Dakota shack where I first thought I was a man of the land, there was a few strands of barbed wire, posts ready to fall, the remains of the foundation. My shack had died. Houses and land and earth die without man. It was an illusion. We were led into an illusion that we could have peace and security on a little piece of land and have a mortgage too. It was an impossible belief. You see here the ruin of a dead and wrong idea and you can read something greater than in any book. Facts are facts and these are the facts that in the end will make a new world and those that understand and take reality in their hands, they will be the most contented and leading people."

He rose, gaunt, and we went out into the dusk, his lean body straight with courage, his delicate stern head, and the strong life of his immortal hope.

As we drove back to the city where he lived in a furnished room he said, "I talk of myself because I am one of millions and it is important to understand me. It is the shame of my cussins, my dead mother and sister, of all our work going for nothing. There were those who gave us the illusion, lived on the men and women who sowed and reaped the golden grain, those who built the big mansions, took the money and went away and left us here with the earth eroded, suffering. We worked seven days a week, sixteen hours a day. Who robbed us? I did not even have to bother to sell my land. All I was asked to do was forget it. I will never forget it—or forget the labor of my mother."

"I found out and stood with the people."

We do not speak, but I feel near to him, and the earth does not reject us and the river flows for us, and in the old limestone of the earth and of man the underground fire burns, and we touch, and the hills as we move through them have an outward presence, a moving breath against our own, burning.

THE ROCK BENEATH

GEORGE ABBE

PIGEON COVE IRON WORKS

They own an iron-works, burning with rust and black;
the drop-forge in it thumps with honest work,
feeding fire-seed to molten bars men thrust
in, out, in copulation with ore's rust.

Their eyes made beryl and umber,
and beauty-shining by pain—brow pearl,
cheeks flame, and arms hard-hammered,
flattened and curved at fingers like good oars—
let them go catch riotous sails, go race on waves,
thresh up the icy, rubber-bubbled weeds.

Let them with bruised and molten flippers,
curved to take in the world to which they're blind,
rise up at last on glacier, like bold seal,
hero of cold and battle, natural in the mind,
win their way back to glory
in a cruel and primitive wind.

THE ROCK BENEATH

Past the wan brink of roads and fields on edge,
beyond suns tilted to the angle of stone,
the pines' love whisper bought with bloody coin
of moonrise lustier than mortal bed,

I hastened—to forget, to leave behind
houses where people were crammed like dressed fowl
in whom the burnt pin-feathers of their minds
sharp-loose and blackened were with the greedy and dull.

And suddenly, dropping beneath the rim
of wall and tillage, byway and earth's water,
I slid, soil crumbled under me, and dumb
with shock immeasurable, I saw the fetters
of ancient stone stretched round a gully's green,
jagged and taut, and lay against their iron,
and drew a terrible strength from the monstrous-born.

And there, ringed by unnatural verdant grass
in rock wrenched like an anguished growth from flesh,
the imprint of a foot, demonic-formed,
more comforting and deep than human remorse.

And I the lava of my sins recalled,
the tremor of my shapings in first womb;
and peace from terror, sweetness from fiendish chill
past tiny mortal folly assuaged me full.
The noble and profane: man's earliest home.

CARVED WOODEN BED

The bed did not feel pain when it was made;
its wood is having a good time now
crouching different from its tree form, leaning
backward in a manner of flexed flow,
or holding the glory of mattress as one would the gleaming
contours of a girl's flesh. I actually know
the sensation that wood of the bed must have:
it is rain particles flying out to kiss,
it is the ache of ice in a knot or bole exploded
out to the fixed crystal of dazzling white paint,
making the wood astonishingly happy, but never co

for the arch of its here is mere act of *softly, slowly*
for the human eye it must now serve,
and it yearns back beyond *motionless* or *fast*
to the meaning it has for species that merely *are*,
unconscious of haste or contour or beauty or rest,
what it knew in the trees before human consciousness,
and before that in sun when color was born as reach
of the inner toward outer, the rapture of energy's search.

WOMAN IN A TIGHT BATHING SUIT

The groove between a lady's breasts
and her vaginal crease
have metaphysical extent:
something continuous implied
and only partly meant.

The natal and round nuture join
in lascivious display
to help the male recall his own
dark promiscuity.

But what appears to start at deep
and plunge to wondrous ends
nourishes flesh from sleep to sleep,
and sex with silence blends.

And I made fevered by that line
find that it breaks between:
the shores that I would hurry to,
only the place I've been.

THE VETERAN

His face
has the graceless bone
of lonely haters; he lies
coatless, with sleeves rolled up, immense
prehensile biceps freckled and hot with sun.

In war lately done
he fared with bloody honor;
wore with adroitness home the great scar
of sombre patriot, American Legionnaire.

He rakes
white flakes of syringa
with fire of carbine, rips
lily blossom and neighbor fence,
the tender nubs of corn parting the soil.

Maple
and lazy elm
he shells with leaden command;
the handsome new leaves drop; the house next door
is sheared to a melting honeycomb of wood.

No blood
comes anywhere.
Angry, he thumbs the bolt
open to leap of burnt cartridge,
blows the bore free of smoke; the oil

gives odor
living and ripe.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, OR POLITICS AND POETRY

JACK LINDSAY

THE Renegadism or Turncoating of the Lake Poets, who were the vanguard Romantic poets of the 1790's, has long been seen to raise in a crucial form the question of Poetry's relation to Politics. Browning's poem fixed the idea of Wordsworth as the Lost Leader; but critics like Hazlitt had raised it much earlier and the revival of political radicalism among the poets such as Byron, Shelley, Keats, of the post-Wordsworth generation had thrown into strong relief the retreat of the Lake Poets. Thus, Crabb Robinson in 1826 complained of Wordsworth's "moral and intellectual suicide."*

Born in 1770, Wordsworth, with three brothers and a sister, was left an orphan when his father died in 1785. Among relations at Penrith he was made to feel inferior and dependent; and he was embittered by the way in which the Earl of Lonsdale cheated the family out of £5,000 due to the father, his employee. Professor Todd shows in detail how William at Cambridge was one of the extreme radical group, turning to the Jacobin poets like Charlotte Smith. In 1791, before leaving for his visit to France, he called on that poetess at Brighton where (her sister wrote) she had "formed acquaintance with some of the violent advocates of the French Revolution, and unfortunately, caught the contagion." He got from her a letter to the Jacobin poetess Helen Maria Williams, who had gone to stay in France. At Blois he came strongly under the influence of the revolutionary patriot Beaupuy (who reappears later as one of the models for the Happy Warrior). The invasion of Savoy, which upset Burns, was for him only "the emancipation of 'the slave of slaves.'" On his return home he handed his poems to Johnson,

* Conclusive evidence of Wordsworth's position is offered by the recently published book of Professor F. M. Todd, *Politics and the Poet* (Methuen, London). Apart from valuable new material about the poet's youthful connections, this study shows how deep his early radicalism and how stubbornly fought-out was his retreat. We are given both a new insight into his poetry and into the general issues of the relation of poetry and life.

whom the Tory *Anti-Jacobin Review* called "the favorite publisher and friend of the Priestleys, the Darwins, the Godwins, and other *unprejudiced* authors"; to which list we may add the names of Blake and Paine. He was also friendly with the editors of the Whig-Radical *Morning Chronicle*. He was fiercely against the war with France (which incidentally was cutting him off from Annette whom he had got with child at Blois). He was powerfully moved by Godwin's *Political Justice* (February 1793) and drew on that book as on Paine's writings for his reply to the Bishop of Llandaff's *Strictures on the French Revolution*, printed with the sermon *The Wisdom and Goodness of God in having made both Rich and Poor*; but the element in him that shrank from conflict prevented him from publishing his essay. However, he declared that he considered political enquiry "the most fruitful field of human knowledge."

The Terror did not shake him; he was staunch in support of the members of the Corresponding Society in their trials for treason in 1794; and as late as 1797 a spy, reporting on the household at Stowe, assumed that he was well known to the Government as a suspected character. "The inhabitants of Alfoxton House are a set of violent Democrats." But he was beginning to grow worried about developments in France. His play "The Borderers" attempted to bring out the complex of issues, the way in which the best of intentions could be perverted and in which abstract principles, not fully based in experience, could turn into their opposites. He still however blamed any bad proceedings in France on the attacks and pressures of the encircling reactionary forces. He kept seeking to show in his poems the courage and humanity of the poor and oppressed; his thesis that the language of poetry should be that of the middle and lower classes derived from his sense of solidarity with those classes. His brother admitted:

He entertained little reverence for ancient institutions as such; and he felt little sympathy with the higher classes of society. He was deeply impressed with a sense of the true dignity of the lower orders, and their sufferings; and his designs was to endeavour to recover for them the rights of the human family, and the franchise of universal brotherhood, of which . . . they had been robbed by the wealthy, the noble and the few."

Drawing away from France, he visited Germany with Coleridge, hoping to find signs of a strong brotherly movement there, but was horrified: "Money, money is here the God of universal worship." England began to seem not so bad a place after all. In "Resolution and Independence" the poet saw the leech-gatherer as "carrying with him his own fortitude, and the necessities which an unjust state of society has entailed upon him"; but his angers were weakening. The events of 1800-2 made him

feel, with Coleridge and Southey, the need to turn his attention more to the home situation. He considered that the advocates of reform had no true feeling for their own people, that they idealized France and Napoleon, and that their roots in national life had been cut. Still, he earnestly looked to Fox as the political leader who could actualize the aims set out in his poems.

The turning-point came when Napoleon invaded Switzerland in 1802. He felt that France was now simply an aggressive power, and he wanted a people's war against her. He still distrusted the Tories and hated having to look to them for leadership in such a war. Two events, however, had a decisive effect: the death of his brother John at sea in 1805 and the uprising of the Spanish people against the French invaders in 1808. In his noble tract on the Convention of Cintra he set out his conception of a war of liberation, in which the struggle against Napoleon would be linked with a forward social programme. (On this basis he completed his fine sonnets on Freedom.) In 1809 his rich friend Beaumont felt it necessary to caution his guests against the poet's "democratic principles."

BUT his sense of insoluble contradictions in the historical process was weighing him down. He began to reject struggle against an "unjust state of society." Because he could not understand the new forces at work, he shrank from the violence appearing in the Burdett riots, in Luddite protests, in the assassination of the Prime Minister Perceval. He had now grown friendly with some well-off cultured Tories like Beaumont and Lord Lonsdale. Lonsdale offered him a property worth £1,000, which he refused; but, six years later in 1812, in worsening circumstances, he applied to the Lord for a Government job and was appointed a Distributor of Stamps. At the same time he was turning towards the Church of England and religious consolations. Even so, he sent a copy of his works to Leigh Hunt when in jail for libelling the Prince Regent and in 1816 contributed sonnets to Hunt's *Examiner* and the liberal *Champion*. But all the while he was steadily succumbing to fear of the new forces at work in the social and political fields; he renounced his belief that it was "derogatory to human nature to set up Property in preference to Person, as a title for legislative power." He distrusted the reform movement and could not see what measures would help in such a complicated situation:

It is hard to look upon the condition in which so many of our fellow creatures are born, but they are not to be raised from it by partial and temporary expedients. . . . Circumstances have forced this nation to do, by its manufacturers, an undue proportion of the dirty and unwholesome work of the globe. The revolutions among which we have lived have un-

settled the value of all kinds of property, and of labor, the most precious of all, to that degree that misery and privation are frightfully prevalent. We must bear the right of this, and endure its pressure, till we have by reflection discovered the cause, and not till then can we hope even to palliate the evil. It is a thousand to one but that the means resorted to will aggravate it.

His uncertainty and caution now led him to oppose or at least deprecate all progressive policies, which seemed to him only to intensify the grip of the new dehumanizing money forces. Yet, in 1836, some verses of his satirise the Canutes who try to halt the ocean of progress; and something of the old radical flickered up with the rise of Chartism. "I have no respect whatever for the Whigs, but I have a good deal of the Chartist in me." Also, he expressed enthusiasm for the Italian struggle for independence.

Even this rough summary shows how prolonged and deep-going was the political struggle in Wordsworth, and how essential is an understanding of that struggle for a penetration into his poetry. The obtuseness still prevalent, however, on such issues among our intellectuals may be gauged by the review of Professor Todd's book in *The New Statesman*:

Politics, even in the widest sense, were a very small part of the man—of the grim old insomniac. . . . The craft of verse and Christianity, with interplay of pride ('I have no need of a Redeemer') and humility, are the important things. (J. Johns).

An assessment that gives the lie direct to the poet's own statement in 1833 that he had allotted "twelve hours" thought to the conditions and prospects of society, for one to poetry." In fact his political attitudes entered into every line he wrote, and determined the whole direction of his poetic development. And our comprehension of this relation between his political positions and his poetic activity is not only crucial for our enjoyment and analysis of his poetry; it also throws an illuminating ray on the inner conflicts of all the most significant modern poets—on the "depoliticising" of Baudelaire by the defeat of the revolution in 1848, as on the confusions and flights brought about among our own writers by the events of 1939 or the post-1945 Cold War. It is worth while then to discuss Wordsworth's inner conflict for the issues that it raises and the relation of those issues to our own world.

1. He lost his grip because he could not sustain in his poetic definitions the strong sense he had of the contradictions of his epoch. We cannot of course ask him to rise to the perspective of the French Revolution which has been made possible by the events of 1848, 1871

and 1917. But what we can ask is that he should have held fast to his deepest sense of what was humanly at stake, that he should have continued to fight for a poetic grasp of the struggle which he felt so intensely going on all around him. Blake sustained this sort of poetic penetration, and Keats was beginning to make it with great profundity, so that we are not asking the impossible of Wordsworth.

2. He at first made a strenuous effort to understand and incorporate in his thinking the most advanced theretical views available in the revolutionary situation of the 1790's—the views of Godwin and Paine. He drew powerfully on what was humanly valid in them, and he reacted against what was abstract, rigid, mechanist; he began to feel his way into distinguishing what truly advanced the cause of freedom and brotherhood, and what was a confused "liberalism" using fine phrases only to intensify the capitalist controls breaking up the "natural bonds" of love and brotherhood, and furthering the exploitation and thingification of men. In his reaction against the elements of falsity he found himself driven towards Burke, the conservative expounder of tradition and of the need to accept gratefully the rich diversity of existence; he felt compelled to choose between conservative acceptance of life and doctrinaire theorisings which, behind the thesis of human perfectibility, seemed only to help the money-forces of exploitation and dehumanization.

3. For the same reasons he felt compelled to choose between a hypocritical liberalism which had no feeling for the people whom it sought to mobilize for its limited aims of class advancement, and a patriotism with Burkean roots. The internationalism which he had admired in the Corresponding Society had somehow become a cheat; and an un-English idealization of a foreign power, France, seemed to leave him no choice but a recognition of the Tories as the inheritors, however unsatisfactory, of national pride and independence. Doctrinaire theorising was felt to be one with the failure to enter into the people and to live the national tradition.

4. This unresolved conflict of his entered into his conception of the People. He opposed the Dalesmen, the Statesmen, of his early years in Cumberland and Westmorland, to the emerging proletariat. (The speed of change in his period is shown by the fact that whereas at the time of the *Lyrical Ballads*, there were twice as many country laborers as town workers, by the time of the Reform Bill the situation was reversed; towns like Manchester and Leeds had almost tripled their population.) Here is the point at which his break from reality asserted itself most strongly; and since Professor Todd ignores it, it is worth some detailed notice. In his letters to Fox and Poole he declares that with factories, workhouses and soup-kitchens the home-affections have decayed; *Michael*

and *The Brothers* were written to dramatize the dispossession of the small farmer by the (vaguely defined) money-forces. He thus was defending a way of life based on the peasant and the craftsman, on "landed property, including the feelings of inheritance, homes, and personal and family independence." But he seems to have known little, and to have clouded what he did know, of the farmers of his region. All the evidence goes to show that the Cumbrian farmers held by the copyholds common in customary tenures all over England—though he once wrote "our land is, far more than elsewhere tilled by men who are the Owners of it." Feudal charges "galled and fettered" the yeoman, says W. Marshall in *The Review and Abstract of the County Reports to the Board of Agriculture*, York, 1813. Other contemporary writers called the tenure of the Cumbrians a state of slavery and bondage, a reminder of vassalage, and a species of feudal oppression (J. Donaldson in *Modern Agriculture*, 1796, and J. Britton and E. Brayley in *Cumberland*, 1802). The oppressors were, however, not the new industrialists, but the Tory landlords whom Wordsworth had come to revere, the Lowthers, Howards, Tuftons, Wyndhams, Grahams, Lawsons, Flemings and Curwens.

Thus, at Rydal, where he had moved by 1813, three-quarters of the original customary land had been consolidated in four farms and the rest had reverted to demense; by the mid-nineteenth century all the customary land was in demesne.* But, having taken his stand, Wordsworth remained blind to the actuality about him. Harriet Martineau commented on his almost total isolation from what was happening close at hand:

I, deaf, can hardly conceive how he with eyes and ears and a heart which leads him to converse with the poor in his incessant walks can be so unaware of their social state. . . . Here vice is flagrant beyond anything I ever could have looked for . . . drunkenness quarrels and extreme licentiousness with women—here is dear good old W. for ever talking of rural innocence and depreciating any intercourse with towns lest the purity of his neighbors should be corrupted.

He had set up in his mind as absolute categories the pre-capitalist farm life and the town life of the emerging proletariat; and he dared not look outside his own mind. The proletariat, torn from the soil, appeared to him as the instruments of capitalism, contaminated by the system that engulfed them. So he opposed to his Faith in the People his Fear of the Proletariat.

* Between 1806-20 the Flemings won cases against tenants who had refused to pay a huge general fine of forty times the yearly rent, which was levied at the death of Sir Michael Fleming. For the status of the Statesmen, see W. W. Douglas, *Science and Society*, xii (1948) 387 ff.

5. His sympathy for the downtrodden was thus perverted into an acceptance of the system that provoked by its cruelties the fortitude and steadfast love of the humble. He had come round to the Bishop of Llandaff's position, which had once seemed a blasphemy. Hence the deepening significance of his views on Nature. The people of the industrial towns had lost Nature; their characters could not be formed by the natural "images of danger, melancholy, and grandeur, or loveliness, softness, and ease." The bond of man and man was broken, and men were being subjected to all sorts of distorting pressures. The expropriated masses, deprived of "natural" bonds, could only become a destructive force, blindly upheaving against the blind mechanism that dehumanized them. The Return to Nature became a safeguard against Revolution, which now represented not the "very heaven" of his youth, but the ferocity of a shorn Samson crashing down the pillars of things. All the weak frightened elements of his character coalesced to repudiate development through struggle. (J. S. Mill saw the fundamental implication of his poetry as the rejection of "struggle or imperfection." This is true of the Message that emerges, but not true of what remains vital in his poetry, as we shall see later.)

6. Now religion came forward to justify the rejection of struggle and to life all his conceptions to a sphere outside action, to a meditation of the poet alone with Nature or God. His brother's death by shipwreck had done much to begin this retreat within himself; and we can perhaps now best come to grips with what happened to his poetry during the complex struggle which we have outlined, by considering the poem which most powerfully utters his emotion over that loss: "Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm, painted by Sir George Beaumont." Here, looking concretely at the conflict rending his being, we can estimate both his achievement and his failure in artistic terms.

In the opening lines he recalls living near the scene that is depicted. Everything then was peaceful and hopeful, the castle image trembling in the calm water. A scene that could have evoked: "The light that never was, on sea or land. The consecration, and the Poet's dream." "A picture had it been of lasting ease, Elysian quiet, without toil or strife." Only the gentle movement of elemental forces. And in the picture he would have "seen the soul of truth in very part; A faith, a truth, that could not be betrayed." (Thus he defines his early Utopian attitude when revolutionary France was "standing on the top of golden hours, and human nature seeming born again.") But now that picture is obliterated. "A power is gone, which nothing can restore; a deep distress hath humanized my soul." In the smiling sea he beholds the treacherous storm that

wrecks the ship of man, while the Castle, "cased in th'unfeeling armour of old time," rides safely above.* The dream of beauty and peace now seems a limited egoism. Having been drawn down deep into human suffering he sees a different world.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

The poem thus powerfully expresses the dialectics of growth. Utopian dream and harsh reality clash, and out of loss is born a deepened sense of union. One hope is broken, but a stronger hope is born, able to endure. As poet, Wordsworth reaches down below the terms in which he is analyzing his changing loyalties; he creates a richly evocative pattern of change and development. (The core of the struggle then lies in what he is to make of the deepened "hope"—whether he is to root it in earth or divert it on to God.)

So we find that when we turn to the poetry the issues grow much more involved and subtle than the direct political analysis suggests. That analysis was correct enough in showing that finally Wordsworth receded from reality too far to remain a true poet; but it merely affords us a set of signposts for exploring the poems in which he continues concretely to struggle with the situation and to seek the human clue amid a baffling tumult of forces.

WE CAN now proceed to do more justice to his idea of Nature. That idea enabled him to complete his "moral and intellectual suicide," but it also lay at the heart of his creativeness. To deal with it adequately we should have to discuss at length the way in which the Romantics from Thomson's *Winter* onwards had sought to find in men's relation to Nature the clue to the deep changes going on in social relationships, in culture, in the political struggle. Briefly we may say that the moments of comprehensive change in "the Face of Nature" were taken as images of human change—the moments of Dawn and Dusk, of Storm and Moonrise. The Return to Nature was seen as a

* It is perhaps no accident that the painting is the work of his rich patron or that the castle of power alone outrides the storm of change—though the poet in Wordsworth sees it not as a beneficent thing but as closed in "unfeeling armour," resisting the blow that humanises. Further we must see the poem as belonging to the very wide series of poems and images (inaugurated largely by Falconer's "Shipwreck" in which the sense of social cataclysm draws on Wreck or Storm for symbols of commercial and imperial doom (the retort of outraged Nature). Turner's seascapes, with their culmination in the Wreck of the *Slavership*, belong to the same development. (Ruskin's magnificent passage on that picture had a potent effect on the young William Morris.)

tryst with one's deeper self, away from a corrupted world; as the moment of dialectical change; a withdrawal that was inverted into a sense and a need of fuller union; a test of truth and falsity; a refuge and a flight, but also a source of purifying energies that could flow back into the social sphere as revolt and finally revolution. (That culmination occurred in Blake.)

Wordsworth from "Tintern Abbey" to "The Excursion" struggled with this great surge of explosive imagery, which is one of the great contributions of our poetry to world-culture. In many ways he stabilized and extended it; and his magnificent achievement in this field cannot be understood apart from the stubborn political conflict which Professor Todd had set out. His weaknesses as well as his strength entered into it; but on the positive side there was a continual triumph of the dialectical grasp which we have seen in little in the "Elegiac Stanzas." Perhaps we can summarize his particular contribution best by pointing to "The Prelude" and the way in which he there clarifies and develops the idea of a necessary return-to-nature at each moment of crucial change in the individual, each nodal point of dialectical growth and expression of social being. Nature thus ceases to be a mere maternal bosom of repose or a blind set of elemental forces, and is truly humanized. The poet's weakness in trying to limit the ultimate basis of these moments of realized union to an economy of peasant-crafts and to the relations of love and fellowship flowing from such a basis, cannot in the last resort destroy the deep truth of his vision, his imagery. In a sense the new relations of the industrial world come into the picture, since they constitute the pressure of fear and loss that lends urgency to the poet's need for love and brotherhood, for human wholeness.

Now let us glance back at the main points I made about Wordsworth's development and its inner conflict. It becomes clear that though he made some bad mistakes the conflict was fruitful as long as it maintained real links with the condition of the people, with the ordeals and pangs that followed their loss of the land. Long after the poet in his conscious mind had renounced struggle a deep struggle went on in his writings. But the renunciation was not therefore meaningless; it pointed to the limitations in his understanding of what was happening to people—limitations which carried certain flaws, vaguenesses and flatnesses, through his work from the beginning, and which increased inhibitions as time went on, finally destroying his creativeness altogether.

We may then generalize that the extent to which a poet's conscious political views help him towards a real grasp of the contradictions of his epoch and of the essence of what is happening to people, they are

a necessary part of his creative mechanism. There is no substitute for them. The more fully he understands the nature of development through struggle in all its aspects, the better poet he is going to be. (I use the term *understanding* not simply of his analysis of things, but rather of his total comprehension, which is concrete and immediate as well as analytical.

The poet feels the need of absorbing the most advanced theoretical analysis of his day; but by his nature he will react against all that is mechanistic and oversimplified in them. Wordsworth could never have developed as a poet without Godwin and Paine, both through the enlargement of his perspectives that they brought about, and through his reaction against all that was rigid and abstract in their formulations. He sought to fill the gaps and interstices with his poetic intuition; and where he failed in this effort, he fell back on God, on Nature as an idealist principle, on a repudiation of struggle.

In all these matters we have problems that are with us still and that will continue in one shape or another as far as we can foresee. Today Marxism provides the vanguard theoretical analysis of what is happening to our societies, our peoples. And so far as it fails in its high task of creating a new sort of unitary dialectical consciousness, it reveals doctrinaire and abstract elements, ideological ossifications, against which the poet must react. Similarly, in so far as Marxists have failed to resolve the issue of international solidarity and national tradition, they create afresh something of the quandary of Wordsworth in the years around 1802-08.

NOT that I suggest it is possible to transpose mechanically the problems of one age into another age. To ensure that a mechanical transposition is not made we must relate each phase of revolutionary thought to the forms of social conflict from which it arises, and we must realize the ways in which both its strengths and its weaknesses express the degree of development in people. Thus, the gap between Godwin's thought and the actual level of culture in the emerging proletariat in his day is the measure of his abstractions and inadequacies, and the confused struggle in Wordsworth has a real relation to the sufferings and pangs of consciousness in the dispossessed people looking back to a life on the land, which they inevitably idealize—the sort of thing that carried on all through the Chartist years and begot the later schemes of settlement.

In our own day, socialism has been achieved over a large part of the earth and Marxism has there become the form of thought through which development is realized. The working-out of Marxism is thus inseparable

welded with the forward movement of the peoples in the socialist countries; and this produces both a massive force and a series of acute problems for the free and full working out that we are only beginning to realize.* The fact that Marxism in its essential ideas and methods cannot come into conflict with the needs of brotherhood or the liberation of the creative faculty must not blind us to the fact that particular applications can, and often have done so. We have yet to embody this sort of problem in our thinking. How was the writer, struggling to be true to the full human situation, to react and express himself in a situation where Marxism became sadly narrowed or distorted as, for instance, under Rakosi in Hungary, or in the days of the "No-Conflict Theory" in the U.S.S.R.? These are very real issues; for it seems unlikely that in the struggle to develop socialism into communism there can be other than a continual tension between inadequate formulations and the expanding forces and possibilities of life. One way or another we will have this sort of problem with us at least until the advent of world communism. I do not think there is any easy answer; but unless we have the issue steadily in our minds we are going to increase mistakes instead of working towards solutions.

One way of working towards solutions is to deepen in any and every way understanding of the creative process and of the relation of Politics and Poetry. The coming-of-age of socialism in the U.S.S.R. has brought these matters urgently on to the agenda of history. That is why I said that Professor Todd's book was welcome because, in enabling us to get at closer grips with Wordsworth's success and failure through his political ideas, it helps us to clarify our own cultural problems today.

* I do not mean that Marxism in countries still capitalist has no part to play; there too there is the same link between theoretical levels and national development, though complicated by the class-struggle. The same conflict exists between creative and dead or doctrinaire formulations.

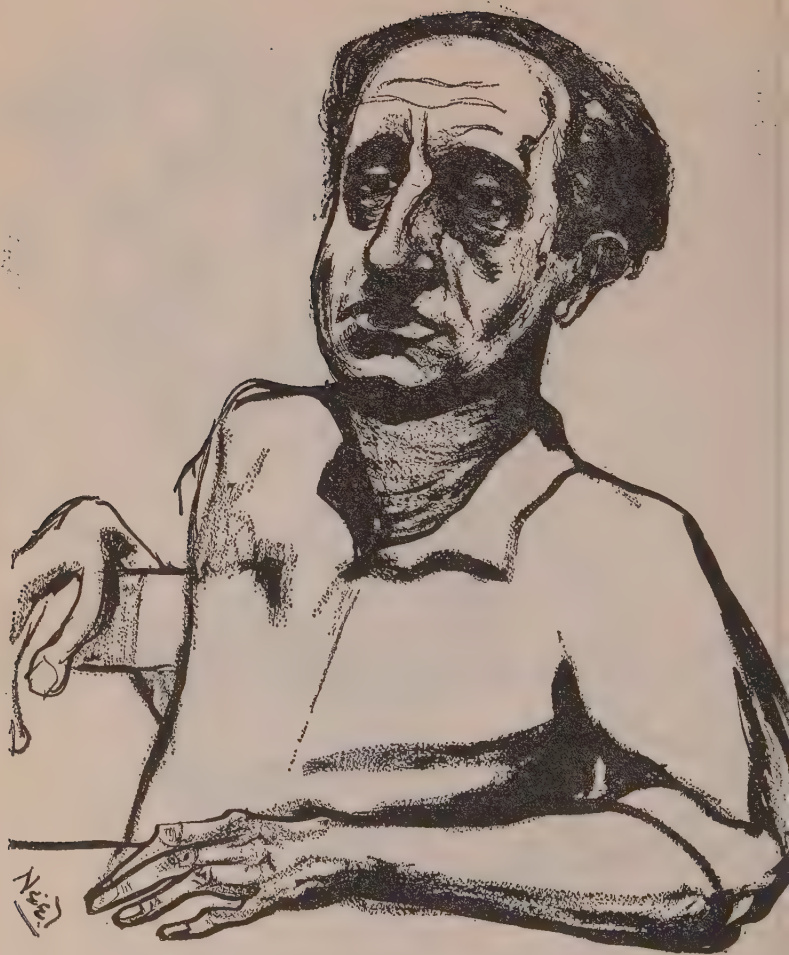
FOUR DRAWINGS

ALICE NEEL





NEE
12/10/56





J. P. E.

Right Face

Operation Crossindex

WASHINGTON.—The Government is giving more than 2,000,000 of its civilian employees emergency instructions on what to do to keep the governmental machinery running in the event of an enemy attack on the United States. . . .

The plan supplants one ordered in January, 1953, by the National Security Resources Board.

The first plan was dropped because it was found that employees failed to carry with them the registration cards they were supposed to mail to the Civil Service Commission after an attack.

Under the new plan, cards will be available at the nation's 37,000 post offices.

The cards would be forwarded to a secret relocation site arranged for the Civil Service Commission in the area in which the card was mailed. That office would retain the card for its files or forward it to the proper commission office in one of eleven regions of the country.

The cards will provide such information as the name, position, title, grade of the employee, other occupational skills, trade or professional licenses, birthday, sex, agency employing him, city and state in which he has been employed, where he can be reached in the next three months, ability to work and number of dependents that would accompany him to any new place of work—*The New York Times*.

Old Hopeful

Some wide-eyed youngsters from Puerto Rico were introduced to the rags-to-riches tales of Horatio Alger yesterday, with the hope that they would follow in the footsteps of the writer's heroes.

The youngsters were at the East Harlem center of the Children's Aid Society, where they listened to Ralph D. Gardner, an advertising executive who had an Alger-like past himself. He presented the society with a library of Alger's works.

Mr. Gardner said he felt the books could inspire youngsters from Puerto Rico since Alger often wrote about lads new to the United States.—*The New York Times*.

Advice from the Heir

RABAT, Morocco.—The pretender to the throne of France warned the King of Morocco today against the dangers of democracy.

Henri Comte de Paris, lineal descendant of deposed King Louis Philippe, delivered his admonition at an audience with King Mohammed V to which reporters were admitted.

After King Mohammed had outlined his plans for a democracy, the following conversation took place.

Comte de Paris: "Do not go too far in the democratic direction."

King Mohammed: "We can take what is best from others."

Comte de Paris: "Democracy is very dangerous in its extreme forms. Liberty should not be anarchy."

King Mohammed: "There is authority to which the people give their free consent."

Comte de Paris: "It is essential to give leadership to the masses, without which they will go too far."—*The New York Times*.

Always Above Board

When John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, told the press last week that the country had to continue making small "clean" nuclear bombs, a reporter asked whether the country would "eliminate from our atomic arsenal the megaton bomb and the dirty bombs" when this task was finished.

Mr. Dulles did not answer directly, and the reporter phrased it again:

"But will we retain any of the larger, megaton bombs and dirty bombs in the arsenal?"

When the official transcript came out, the word "dirty" had inexplicably been changed to "kiloton." Inasmuch as "kiloton"—meaning an explosive force measurable in thousands of tons of TNT—has nothing to do with "dirty" bombs, the newsman later asked why the change had been made.

The department said that the transcribers had had some question about what they had heard and, after conferring, had decided that they had heard "kiloton" instead of "dirty." The tape recording plainly played back the word "dirty" and State was asked if the record would be corrected.

It would not be, a spokesman explained, because the slip "was an honest error."—*The New York Times*.

books in review

Conservatism, Inc.

THE AMERICAN CAUSE, by Russell Kirk. Henry Regnery. \$3.00.

FOR some years now, Professor Kirk has been deploying his erudition to persuade the country that what it needs is a New Conservatism to check the alarming decay in national culture, morals and politics. It has been easy for conservative and even reactionary critics to shoot large holes in the fabric of national complacency. All they had to do was to display the vulgarity of commercial culture and the mechanization of human personality, starved for a meaningful moral existence, amid the clank of an inhuman social-economic machinery which dominates the lives of most Americans in a direct and intimate way. Professor Kirk, in short, appeared to be engaged in that kind of intellectual enterprise which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the 1840's dubbed "feudal socialism," the criticism of modern industrial society from the standpoint of "order" and the presumed idyllic relations before industrialism had reduced all relations to those of soulless cash. Such criticism—whether Tory, pro-slave, or merely ecclesiastical—has always been able to scrape the raw nerves of the industrializing bourgeois (American slave-holders for example were eloquent and accurate with regard to the miseries of the New England textile workers). But the fate

of these "conservatives" has always been the same. As in Marx's day their summoning of the country to return to presumed earlier idylls has invariably been greeted with "loud irreverent laughter." (See Herbert Aptheker's study, *Masses and Mainstream*, April, 1953).

In Professor Kirk's latest book the attitude of the austere social philosopher, the Cato upholding the noble morals of the Good Society, gives way to a more mundane, coarser philosophy. Professor Kirk's book is simply another of those pieces of learned propaganda to justify the economics of re-armament and the diplomacy of war. This is done by the simple and classic maneuver of equating human civilization with the social and economic interests of private corporations, and the right to extend their investments in every corner of the world. "The American cause is the defense of the principles of true civilization . . . to make America the example to other nations . . . to keep alive the principles and institutions which have made America great," he writes fervently. But this is not the democratic fervor of a Jefferson, Lincoln, Emerson or Whitman. On the contrary, in Professor Kirk's view our true national character is best expressed by the brutal philosopher of the Confederacy, John C. Calhoun.

Professor Kirk specializes in unconscious ironies: he not only cites the mortal enemy of the American nation

as its most typical spokesman, but also puts at the center of the American Cause the industrial system which has spawned the horrors of the commercial society he finds so repellent. To make the values of freedom, individuality, dignity, and a sense of moral direction synonymous with private profit, Professor Kirk does not hesitate to dangle before us every known cliché of anti-socialism and falsification of Marxian thought. Thus, he carefully befores the Marxian view of capital by his own banal interpretation of capital as "simply those tools, goods, machines, ships, trains and the like which are used to produce other goods." In this view, capitalism disappears, for has not every social system required tools to make other goods? Is it possible that this expert on the failings of socialism does not know that capital in Marxian thought is not a "thing" but a *relationship* within which a thing becomes capital only when its owners are in a position to extract privately-appropriated unpaid labor from those who work the thing?

Similarly, Professor Kirk in his enthusiasm for his conception of the American Cause finds that "it is not poverty that creates discontent, for the great majority of mankind have been poor and yet reasonably contented with their lot." In his view, the turmoil of modern times which upsets "order" arises from the "agitator" who "awakens a sense of injustice where often no injustice exists." It will be obvious in these gleanings from Professor Kirk's rich harvest of banalities that this social historian looks blindly at the central fact of contemporary history—that humanity no longer is under the necessity of enduring the

poverty of the many in the face of the well-being of the few since the material means for abolishing poverty have been at hand for several generations.

Continuing his unwitting ironies to the end, Professor Kirk, in the name of the American Cause, urges humanity to accept poverty reasonably and with dignity just when the non-industrial majority of humanity seeks to emulate the American experience of producing abundance. This aspiration, indeed, constitutes the social content of that "communist menace" which Professor Kirk summons us to arm against. As if this irony were not enough, Professor Kirk proclaims the glories of the present property relations as "a great flourishing disproof of Marxist theories" just when every American is painfully aware that the Marxist-predicted new economic crisis is again upon us. Whatever else Professor Kirk may be conservative about, he is far from conservative in his accumulation of such boners.

MILTON HOWARD

Infamous Justice

THE SOUTH AFRICAN TREASON TRIAL, by Lionel Forman and E. E. Sachs. Monthly Review Press, \$5.00.

ON THE fourth anniversary of the first Day of Protest and Mourning—June 26, 1955—nearly three thousand delegates gathered beneath a great green four-spoked wheel in Kliptown—a village just outside Johannesburg specially chosen because it was not within the urban area and

people of all races were therefore entitled to be there without permits. It was on specially leased private ground, open to delegates only so that it could not be banned as a public gathering."

The main business of this Congress of the People was to write the long-planned Freedom Charter which would represent the just aspirations of the common man of South Africa—black or white. The gathering was jointly sponsored by the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured Peoples Organization, and the Congress of Democrats. The largest representation was African, but there were hundreds of Indians, and more than one hundred whites.

Shortly before four o'clock, when the last sections of the Charter were under discussion, the President of the Congress of Democrats jumped to the platform and shouted: "Armed police are approaching!" The crowd rose and standing still in their place, began to sing, "Nkosi Sikelole, Afrika." While the police methodically interrogated and searched the delegates in groups, the Congress continued its work, the creation of an affirmation of determination, faith, hope, confidence and freedom—the Freedom Charter.

"One year and six months later, when the Freedom Charter had spread to the four corners of the land, came the dawn raids, the imprisonment without bail, the declaration by the Prosecutor that he intended to prove *treason*."

Now we have a book, written, the largest part, by a newspaper editor who was hauled out of bed that dawn "twenty days before Christmas" and flown hundreds of miles away from

his family and associates to be locked in The Fort at Johannesburg.

"One hundred and forty families were wakened that morning—Africans, Indians, Europeans, Coloured; doctors and laborers, teachers and students, university principal, a tribal Chief. And if the names and occupations were analyzed, there was a complete cross-section of South Africa: Afrikaners, Englishmen, Jews, Zulu, Xosa, Basutho, Hindu, Moslem, young and old; sick and healthy; university graduates and illiterate. . . ."

I took up *The South African Treason Trial* with interest, but with a kind of dread. I did not place it on my reading table beside the bed, because I was sure reading it late at night would destroy all possibilities of sleep. I was sure it would be informative. We are aware how little accurate information comes *out of South Africa into the United States* (note both italics) and I knew that Lionel Forman, editor of the *New Age*, was one of the defendants. E. E. Sachs, at present living in exile in England, was a fighting labor leader in South Africa. He has served jail sentences under the Suppression of Communism Act and was finally ousted from the country. First hand revelation of the terrible conditions in a completely "benighted land" would be harrowing but I felt that I ought to read this book and I set about the "task" with a kind of tight-lipped determination.

Preconceived ideas can be so wrong! For this book has been cast up from the swiftly moving stream of rushing life. Reading it is an exciting, exhilarating experience. Details are grim. The prisons of South Africa are among the worst in the world. The "treason"

prisoners were introduced to brutality, petty humiliations, filthy rat-ridden cells and vile food—when finally something was brought that first day. There was strict apartheid in the prison and Forman knew that conditions for their African comrades were a hundred-fold worse than for the whites. Then, they heard singing—singing coming from the “hole” and the whites pressed their faces against the bars of their cells. “They are singing, and I am singing too: ‘Izokunyathela i Afrika’ . . . ‘Afrika will rample you under-foot’. Unrepentant.”

Nor were the people outside idle. The raids were a stunning surprise attack, though on the Monday before, *New Age* carried a front-page warning that the Government was preparing “some drastic action.” Forman’s editorial began: “It is becoming increasingly clear that the Government is planning its own version of the notorious Reichstag fire trial of Nazi Germany as a means of eliminating the most consistent and determined opponents of its apartheid policy. If it is treason to demand these rights for all South Africans, then we are proud to plead guilty to the charge of treason.”

And so the people’s stunned surprise did not evaporate into bewilderment. The wave of arrests did *not* serve to smash the non-white political organizations nor did it intimidate white opponents of Government policies into silence. A National Defense Fund was brought into being on the day of the arrests. Food committees were functioning well before mid-day. “African, Indian and European women took turns at the catering. Groups sat up late through the night preparing sandwiches

for the 6 o’clock breakfasts, men and women together carried heavy steaming coffee urns into the Fort. Several Indian homes were converted into bustling kitchens where the gigantic task of turning out hot meals for the 153 prisoners was efficiently carried out. Africans in jail who had never before been introduced to curry ate curried fish or curried eggs or curried beans. African washer-women at Orlando offered to do all the prisoners’ laundry, and stood singing at their tubs as the bundles piled up around them. Moslem shopkeepers supplied the committees with generous quantities of fruit, vegetables and meat. One butcher supplied a whole sheep daily.”

From the very beginning, and right throughout the long trial, the accused insisted that no steps be taken in the legal conduct of the defense without full attention being given to the stressing of the *complete unity and solidarity of all the accused and the brotherhood of all races which that unity symbolized*. And this wave of solidarity caught the Government by surprise. It was prepared to ignore the outside world but was thrown into confusion by the mass demonstrations on the streets of Johannesburg. The opening day of the trial will be long remembered in Johannesburg. “We have met our European comrades-in-arms after the days of separation,” writes one of the defendants. “The world is lovely though seen through mesh. . . . There are crowds, huge crowds, outside the Drill Hall and their warmth beats on you like strong sunlight after rain—planting life. And you know, as you never knew before, that you could never be lost; that if you fell another would take your place: that the struggle

could never be lost. It could never have been in vain."

There is humor in *The South African Treason Trial*: the sketch of the Rev. D. C. Thompson, "blissfully breaking his bail conditons in front of dozens of gaping policemen, addressing the accused, and, 'as a member of the World Peace Council, wishing everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas.'" The response by the Prosecutor as he called out the name of the prisoners that first day: "The first few answered with a simple 'yes,' but then one responded in deep and formal Zulu and the idea caught on at once. In a variety of languages and in every form of subtle irony came the reply. 'I am here if it may please your worship.'" said Archie Sibeko, Secretary of the Congress of Trade Unions in dignified si-Xosa. "My lord, I have the pleasure to be in court," said Cleops Sibande in Sesutho. "Ich bin do," said Hymie Barsel in Yiddish. For a long time there was no Afrikaans, the language of Strijdom, but the morning was not to pass without a symbol that there are Afrikaners in the freedom movement too.

"Ja, ek is teenwoordig," came the reply when Jan Hoogendyk's name was called, and the magistrate's head snapped up.

E. S. Sachs' contribution is a survey of the background of South Africa's long oppression and exploitation of the many by the few. He presents documents and numerous accounts, and the present status of the trials which have not yet been concluded. You will be informed, moved and inspired by this book. Startling parallels and contracts will come to your mind. For my own part, as I read of this magnificent,

unified resistance, of the care of the prisoners' children, of the concern for these prisoners, I knew that South Africa has much to teach us.

SHIRLEY GRAHAM

The Poetry in Science

SCIENCE AND HUMAN VALUES

by J. Bronowski. Julian Messner
\$3.00.

THIS slender volume of 94 pages is the first appearance, in book form, of the article which originally appeared in *The Nation* of December 29, 1956. Attracting wide attention and provoking enthusiastic comment at that time, Bronowski's thoughtful and original essay deserved more permanent form than that given by the pages of a weekly magazine. For this edition the only changes are some 100 additions, ranging from a few lines to two or three pages each. These in no way alter the essential theme of the original but serve to bridge passages and offer a little more elucidation. It is unfortunate that a work which can appear in a 25c weekly costs twelve times that much when brought out between hard covers.

Dr. Jacob Bronowski, trained in mathematics, has specialized in the application of statistical methods to various subject matters and is now Director of Research for the British National Coal Board. He has written of both science and poetry and was the author of the British Report "The Effects of the Atomic Bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki." His books, *The Common Sense of Science* and *W*:

William Blake: A Man Without a Mask, have attracted special attention. He has lectured for the Fabian Society in London, served with UNESCO, been a visiting professor at M.I.T., written radio plays, and was given virtually the entire issue of *The Nation* for the present essay. His interest in art as well as science is manifest in the striking illustrations of this volume, taken from William Blake and Leonardo da Vinci.

There is much that is astute and suggestive in these pages. Bronowski writes clearly, vividly and with a sense of excitement and urgency. The opening and closing of the book with their evocation of the ruins of Nagasaki effectively marks the author's concern with whether science is used for human betterment or mankind's destruction. The Fabian lecture referred to shows his keen sense of what science has given us in a hundred years in the way of health, life-expectancy, and material comforts. The present book is concerned with what its author believes science can give us in the way of an all-human ethic.

Before discussing this central theme, it might be well summarily to review key features in Bronowski's approach to, or theory of, science. He starts with the fact that we live today in a world powered by science; "and for any man to abdicate an interest in science is to walk with open eyes towards slavery." He insists that science is knowledge of a real world and that we control nature "only by understanding her laws." He opposes the attempt to erect a sharp boundary between knowledge and practice, and castigates all those who would make science only a collection of facts. "I have had, of

all people," he writes sardonically, "a historian tell me that science is a collection of facts, and his voice had not even the irony of one filing cabinet replacing another." He firmly, and correctly, insists on the non-photographic nature of science, rejecting categorically a copy theory of both art and science. He likewise rejects any passive spectator theory of knowledge, saying: "Reality is not an exhibit for man's inspection, labeled: 'Do not touch.'" Throughout he stresses the central role in science of those truly epoch-making creative concepts such as Newton's universal gravitation through which a multiplicity of phenomena are brought into unity. In taking these stands, Bronowski makes it clear that he opposes the popular positions of Ernst Mach and Bridgman, as well as those of Russell and Wittgenstein.

These are valuable affirmations in the morass of so many current confusions and distortions concerning the nature of science and its relation to the universe we live in. Bronowski is even more concerned with the issue broached by the second part of his title: human values. He begins this with the question as to how many people will allow the sanction of experienced fact in questions of ethics, of "justice, honor, dignity and tolerance." His aim is to attempt to place such ethical concepts in the realm of empirical scientific investigation. And he asks: "Is it true that the concepts of science and those of ethics and values belong to different worlds? Is the world of *what is* subject to test, and is the world of *what ought to be* subject to no test?" His answer is a resounding "No." Yet from this point (p. 54) on to the end of the book it is seriously

to be questioned whether Bronowski really contributes to laying a scientific foundation for moral values, and for the solution of the great social and moral problems of our day. This reader, for one, suspects that he rather "moralizes," instead, about the practice and method of scientists, idealizing the practice and the scientists both.

Two qualifications of this rather harsh judgment of a work that has been so highly praised by noteworthy figures in both science and public life need to be made at once. Bronowski does make several valuable contributions in the course of his effort to derive all ethical values from the practice of scientists (and of all creative workers). First, he shows the menace to mankind of any by-passing of science in matters of fact. Referring to Himmeler's theory that the stars were made of ice, Bronowski compares this with what the Germans were taught to believe about the races of mankind, and states: "When we discard the test of fact in what a star is, we discard it in what a man is." Once, in short, we depart from a scientific approach to a solution of any question not only is the answer to all others endangered, but society too is threatened.

Second, Bronowski beautifully reveals some of the fundamental conditions, of a moral character necessary for the very existence of science and scientists. Referring caustically to "the finger-wagging codes of conduct by which every profession reminds itself to be good," he shows that there are certain basic human values which are "the inescapable conditions for its [science's] practice." Briefly, these are sketched in as (1) independence in observation and thought; (2) democracy, in-

volving independence coupled with respect and tolerance; (3) a sense of human dignity. He says: "Men have asked for freedom, justice and respect precisely as the scientific spirit has spread among them." In another place, (a page added here to the *Nation* article) he seems to be saying in a deplorable and trite comparison of East and West, that the East never could have had science because it didn't have the values science requires (see also pp. 80 f). But then he states categorically: "Men have asked for freedom, justice and respect precisely as the scientific spirit has spread among them." It is hard to get this straight, because Bronowski writes more spiritedly than he does logically. Which comes first here? Do men get these values because they have the scientific spirit or do they get the scientific spirit and science because they have these values?

The whole last section, entitled "The Sense of Human Dignity," is not as Bronowski would seem to think it is an application of scientific method to human values and the total of our individual, social, and international relations. Bronowski implies that if only all society would take over the values that the collective body of scientists has developed, all the world's problems would be solved. This whole section seems hastily put together and sounds considerably better as an article in a progressive weekly than it does in book form. It is not a scientific approach to values at all, for Bronowski's society of scientists is highly idealized and therefore his values rarely get beyond being abstractions. His community would have to embrace both Linus Pauling and Teller. One cannot but

recall here such a serious and large-scale approach to the same question as that of Abraham Edel in his scholarly and penetrating work *Ethical Judgment: The Use of Science in Ethics* (1955). Professor Edel looks to the sciences "to help us fashion a general outlook on our world and ourselves," to help men "to broaden and refine and increasingly to achieve their human aims." Dr. Bronowski believes that the practice of scientists has achieved the desired values and all that is needed is for society to take them over.

HOWARD SELSAM

History in Novels

THE YOUNG CAESAR, by Rex Warner. An Atlantic Monthly Press Book. Little Brown and Co. \$4.75.

MICHELANGELO THE FLORENTINE, by Sidney Alexander. Random House. \$4.95.

IT WOULD seem that Marguerite Yourcenar, in *Hadrian's Memoirs*, has set a style, or the beginning of a style, in historical novels. And English publication (*The Slave of Pleasure*, by Peter Green) and now, *The Young Caesar*, by Rex Warner, use the technique that was so effective in that book: a man, powerful in life, a king or statesman, looks back upon his life at his life's ending, knowing he is about to die, and tells the story of his days.

The choice of method is understandable; it is easy, for example, know-

ing from the sources only the bare outlines of Caesar's action against the pirates who had lately held him for ransom, to write, "We found the men on shore, mostly suffering from the effects of their feast, and the ships inadequately guarded. There was little fighting and among my own men there were on casualties at all," rather than to use the direct method of the third person, to give life to that engagement. It is, indeed, more accurate, if it is the function of the historical novelist to be narrowly accurate. To me, this is debatable.

This is not to say that the autobiographical form of the historical novel necessarily fails in interest. But there is nothing in *The Young Caesar* which I find deeply moving, as was the death of Antinous in *Hadrian's Memoirs*, to cite only the climax of that book.

Warner's Caesar is, above all, intelligent, and it is highly probable that the Caesar who wrote, in his *Gallic Wars* ". . . our troops made their entry: I had the entire population sold at auction in one lot, and the purchasers returns showed a total of 53,000 souls," would also tell of politics and battles and marriage and death with the dryness Rex Warner gives his protagonist; would probably say, "Indeed, in every one of the physical aspects of warfare, except the mere shedding of blood, I took a delight which was surprising to some of my friends and to most of my enemies," and, "I almost prayed that I might not prove unworthy . . . in what had always seemed to me the richer, brighter, and more honest field of warfare." (More honest than politics, that is, the time being the tag-end of the Republic.) We as-

sume, here, that it is Caesar who speaks;

But such ironies rarely enliven the book. I would like to be presented with, not told about, the many historical characters who influenced and entered into Caesar's life; I could endure being spared many of the battles he fought, but I would like to experience at least once, since we are dealing with a soldier, the clash of the legions in battle, and to experience the horror of battle, whether in victory or defeat—and perhaps the monotony of life under arms, to illuminate the irony of Caesar's preference for it. I would like to see the living young poet, Caesar's preference for it. I would estimate of his work by the imaginary Caesar; I would like to know something of Caesar's wife, of whom he demanded that she be above suspicion, and when scandal touched her, divorced her.

It is only when the book treats of the conspiracy of Cataline that my interest wakens. Nevertheless, I strongly suspect that the orations of Cicero, read painfully in high school, but remembered, brought the interest of the familiar to that section of the book.

TO DRAW the portrait of a great genius in any of the arts is perhaps the hardest task a novelist can set himself. In *Michelangelo the Florentine*, the poet Sidney Alexander has set out to draw such a portrait, and in this reviewer's opinion, has failed. Michelangelo is overshadowed, both by the rich background in Italy, which Alexander presents with a poet's absorption in sights and sounds and smells, and by the fictional character in the book, a Jew, Andrea del Medigo, who wishes to be an artist and does not

succeed. It is far easier to interest the reader in the complex problems of such a character in such a setting than to present the austere passion of creation that must have been Michelangelo's.

Yet even Andrea does not dominate the book; it is dominated instead by the pageant of Florence, and of Rome under the Borgias, whose well-known corruption is presented at too great length, especially in view of the fact that neither Michelangelo nor Andrea ever encounter any member of that Papal menage. And unfortunately, even a successful pageant is not a novel.

MARGUERITE WEST

Precursor of Progress

TA T'UNG SHU: The One-World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei. Translated from the Chinese with Introduction and Notes by Laurence G. Thompson. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.

PLANNING utopias for mankind has been an honored activity of intellectuals ever since Sir Thomas More first gave the term currency. This is the first complete translation of a famous Chinese contribution to this thinking. In his book K'ang Yu-wei, a scholar in the great Chinese tradition, an official in the twilight of the Ch'ing dynasty, and a sincere patriot, described the changes he saw as necessary before man could achieve happiness.

Master K'ang was no ivory tower thinker.

orist; he was directly involved in late nineteenth century Chinese politics through a series of memorials he addressed to the throne. These all stressed the necessity for reform to restore China's position in the world. They culminated in the famous "Hundred Days" of 1898; during this period and on the direct advice of Master K'ang, the young emperor promulgated one modernizing decree after another.

But the old Dowager Empress saw things more clearly. She realized that, in its extreme decay, the Manchu court could only endure so long as its authority was propped up and reinforced by the various imperial powers. She swept the reform regime aside and imprisoned the emperor.

K'ang Yu-wei fled China. His brother and other progressive co-advisors to the throne were beheaded. Master K'ang completed *The Great Unity*—as *Ta T'ung Shu* may be translated—in exile.

Even so late in his life as 1916 Master K'ang's ideas on reform had not changed in any essentials from those that he had tried to put into practice during the Hundred Days. He was still unable to "identify the main enemy."

He was perhaps the last of his special kind of Chinese scholar, the philosophical idealist who wants happiness for mankind but cannot identify the forces that block mankind from achieving it.

It is regrettable that Mr. Thompson did the job on Taiwan, the Chinese island sealed off from mainland China by planes and warships of the United States. Consequently, mainland scholars will have to supplement his work with concrete examples of how *The*

Great Unity dreamed of by Master K'ang and other scholars for thousands of years before him is being realized in practice in New China.

RALPH IZARD

This Time Limping

SOME CAME RUNNING, by James Jones. Scribners. \$7.50.

UNHAPPILY the chief effect of forcing oneself to plod through the 1260 pages of *Some Came Running* is an uneasy suspicion that James Jones' first novel, *From Here to Eternity*, could not possibly have been as interesting and promising a book as it seemed six years ago. It was obviously over-long, clumsily written and confused in thought, but it did appear to ask serious questions, to raise significant problems, unresolved as they finally remained.

But this second novel, with its interminable pseudo-naturalistic and completely sentimental account of an improbable writer and some twenty associates during his three year stay (1947-1950) in a prosperous Illinois town, is as pointless as it is dull. The best one can say for it is that the author is clearly writing in dead earnest and certainly believes he has some new and important truth about life to communicate. But as we conscientiously follow him through his enormously repetitive and laborious exposition of small town respectability, promiscuity and sudden death we not only never approach within guessing distance of his secret—we end by doubting that he ever did.

ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

Letters

Editor, *Mainstream*:

Re "A Word to Howard Fast" in the April *Mainstream*. It seems to me that this *kind* of attack, coming at this time, represents a misuse of criticism, weakens the principled base of the American Left, and inevitably repels potential allies and progressives. If the Left were in as healthy a state as we would like, the facts in the article, and many other facts, would have appeared openly years ago, and Fast would either have responded with improvement or would have left the ranks in such a way that he could not have used his voluntary departure as a springboard for the vicious attacks he has since made.

The fact that these criticisms were not satisfactorily aired and resolved when Fast was still on our side reflects a weakness. Their use now in a personal counter-attack degrades us all; they are made to serve not for the improvement of discipline and socialist ethics, but for *post facto* name-calling and bitterness. Anyone who is concerned with the development and practice of the principles of criticism and self-criticism must be appalled to find criticisms used in this infantile and unproductive way, reminiscent of the lowest of bourgeois political squabbles.

It simply is not in the interests of strengthening and expanding the Left to indulge in attacks designed merely for revenge or for the catcall of "you-

were-never-much-good-anyway." For evaluation of Fast's role is certainly called for, and one of the things we might learn from such an evaluation would be the use of criticism.

Editor, *Mainstream*:

We are not opposed to having E. E. Cummings removed from the Washington Asylum where he has been kept for twelve years. There are enough disturbed people in our Capitol with him.

What makes us sad is that it takes a psychopathic disciple of fascism to spur Frost, Hemingway, MacLeish and other leading literary figures to political activity. Their intercession on Pound's behalf is the first public stand on this controversial political matter of a kind that many of them have taken since they spoke out against the Nazis, and Franco's invasion of Spain.

We hope more of our fellow craftsmen will now join writers such as Waldo Frank and speak out for some of the political prisoners still in jail in this country. Many of these have a long record of anti-fascist activities. Gil Green, Robert Thompson, Herbert Winston are Smith Act prisoners who President Eisenhower can free. Others like Rosa Lee Ingram are in jail because they are Negroes. Morton Sobell is serving 30 years as a tragic reminder that the Rosenberg case is not dead.

WALTER LOWEN
PHILLIP BOND

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—SHIRLEY GRAHAM in *Mainstream*

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