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NOBEL PRIZEWINNER ALBERT CAMUS

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ALBERT CAMUS is still a young man, and his books mark a new step in Western bourgeois thought. He is one of the first to have nderstood—therein lies the significance of his writings—that from now n certain attitudes are out of date. One can no longer say: "our efforts e pointless, you will not improve man's state, you will not bring into eing a better society. . . ." He comprehends quite well that the theme: Socialism is all very well, but utopian!" belongs in the arsenal of obsolete eapons. Since the sputnik the superior snicker has lost its charm. hen what? Then—and this is what constitutes Camus' work—one must ow man to be doomed to eternal unhappiness. "I know positively . . . at each of us has the plague within him; no one, no one on earth free from it. . . . What's natural is the microbe." What is natural is il, war, murder, injustice. Therefore in order not to spread the con-gion, one should take care to remain null: "The good man, the man ho infects hardly anyone, is he who has the fewest possible distractions." *The Plague*) Therefore, do nothing that might increase the amount evil in the world, stay quiet, since one risks aggravating matters by ting. By all means, discourage action. And if that is impossible, if men e still tempted to change the world, then show them that their revolt unending—a hopeless eternal Nietzschean cycle. For Camus, injustice a thousand-headed hydra and one must rebel against revolt itself. short, once you have accomplished the Revolution, you will be obliged struggle against it. In the name of justice. "The ideal regime, based collective property, could be defined as justice plus electricity. In e final analysis it is only electricity without justice." (*The Rebel*) ch is the twofold course of Camus' thought: to inhibit action and then despair of the future.

Noble sentiments must not, however, be left to the Marxists; one ust stake a claim to courage and faith. Camus tries valiantly to appro-iate the heroic optimism of an ascendant class for essentially conser-tive ends. Men's love and the demand for justice must be diverted

from their obvious goals. Commitment is mandatory—provided it ineffective. A difficult objective. The contradiction is so flagrant th Camus makes no attempt to hide it; rather he emphasizes it. The pap on which one writes will stand for anything, even deliberate ambigui

STILL, the writer Camus takes off from a brutal awakening whi destroyed the calm of the young intellectual of Algeria; the awake ing of the war of 1939, similar to that which occured to his elders 1914 ("And then I was abused," said Eluard); he receives the blo of the world's horror full in his face. If there is one aspect of Cam work which seems close to us and whose pathos we feel, it is clea this: the laceration of the youth whose life, full of promise, is sudden stamped upon by collective misfortune and suffering: "I could not . go back in time, give back to the world the face that I had loved a that disappeared in a day, so long before (September 2, 1939)." (*l'Et* And Camus adds these much more revealing lines which show wh face it was the world had for him: "Raised in a vision of beauty, whi was my only wealth, my life had begun in fullness. Then came the barb wire—I mean tyrannies, wars, police, the time of revolt." Ripp untimely from a sheltered world where he might idolize beauty perceives "in the light of fires . . . the wrinkles and sores" of the wor What is strange is his unawarenes of the "tyrannies, wars, police' 'th others felt throughout the time of his happiness and peace. Curio insensitivity: could he have been ignorant of fascist prisons, concentrati camps? Had the sounds of the war in Spain not reached him in nea Oran, so full of Spaniards? And was he no more than an indiffer spectator of the misery of the Arabs? Other middle class youths w less deaf and blind to misfortunes that did not strike at them direc Was it his position as a young Frenchman in Algeria that prevented h from seeing clearly the effects of oppression?

What is more striking is that the sight of misfortune and oppr sion, which affected him so deeply during the war, did not open his e to the injustice inflicted upon his Algerian brothers. Two years after massacre of thousands of Arabs in Constantine, he wrote in *L'Eté* (194 "Because of its location (it is some distance from the sea), Constant offers less entertainment but the quality of its boredom is subtler." all of Camus' work there is not a word about the Algerian people. Arabs are represented only by the rather repugnant man who is kil by the "Stranger." No; I have forgotten the shoeshine boys of O "crazy about their jobs." Camus' guidebook descriptions of Algiers

ind one of Paul Morand in Shanghai: "I recommend to the sensitive aveler that he drink anisette under the arcades . . . listen to Arab music a little cafe in the rue de la Lyre whose name I have forgotten. . . ." etc.

Such blindness to a world so close to him detracts considerably from e force of the denunciation of evil and injustice in *The Plague*, which impressed our contemporaries. If this denunciation, in all its terrifying rshness, had been concrete rather than abstract, based upon what amus could not help knowing, what power this book might have had, ow grateful we would have been for the author's prophetic courage!

THE historic position of Camus, witness to a great convulsion in which for a moment at least (the resistance years) he was a participant, rmits him to convey with considerable power the anguish of a man rercome by events he does not understand—the mixture of discontent, nging, and regret which he calls "exile." He describes best the elemental nsation (as well as the kind of man who suffers from it) of *vertigo*: e terror, metaphysical and visceral, of a man who feels himself sud-nly caried out of the current of events, and flung up on quicksand. ugo's engulfed man ("sinister effacement of a man") is a Camus char-ter: he is the hero of *The Stranger* and *The Fall;* and most lucid of l, he is Tarrou in *The Plague,* who suddenly makes this profundly tter confession: "It is others who will make history."

And so, whether Camus speaks in his own name, as in *L'Eté,* or through s characters, he reiterates over and over the themes of memory, regret, e flight of time, the death of things he loves: "I was alive then," he ys of his youth, and evokes with pathos "the violent childhood the olescent reveries, the purring of the bus, the mornings, the freshness the girls, the beaches, young muscles always tense with effort, the int anguish of the evening in a 16 year old heart, the urge to live, the ory, and always the same sky athwart the years. . . ." (*L'Eté*) Ah, if e could turn back the stream of time, return to the world the face that had loved!" But the world has "suddenly grown old and we along th it."

"Oh, sun, beaches and islands under the trade winds, youth of which emory despairs." (*The Fall*) It is not by chance that Camus revives e romantic theme of nostalgia, of the lost paradise. And all at once utters the name that was on the tip of our tongue, that of Chateau-iand: "I regret the very grass of my youth. I had not the strength to ep the plants alive." It is the same melancholy in the face of the evocable collapse of the companionable world where one's shell is

safe. But Chateaubriand was after all, less egostistical; if he mourne the death of a world made for him, he did not condemn the futur even though it were a democratic one; his greatness lay in that he wante at all cost, to keep a place in history.

It is not at all surprising to find Camus writing a curious meditatio upon ruins: "I had always known the ruins of Tipasa were more rece than our industrial rubble (*L'Eté,* "Les Ruines re Tipasa") The them of ruins is traditional; it expresses a hopeless illusory desire to halt th flight of time, to arrest the fleeting moment. In the ruins of Tipasa, the brief momentary ecstasy that carries him beyond time, Camus find perfect happiness. "At last I cleared the barbed wire and found myse amidst the ruins. And . . . I found exactly what I had come to see despite time and the world, was offered to me, to me alone, in this fo saken landscape. . . . It seemed to me that I had at last reached port, only for a moment, and that henceforth this moment would never end Here is true romantic contemplation, with its loneliness ("to me alone" its illusions ("it seemed to me"), its denial of reality ('despite time an the world") its dream of eternity ("this moment would never end" And in the face of this mystical joy ("a boundles rapture," says Camus one thinks of Faust's cry: *"Verweile doch, du bist so schön!"* But wh the blind old engineer utters the fatal words: "Stay, o moment, thou a so fair!" he finds his supreme joy not before ruins, but in the conten plation most worthy of a human being: the happiness of his fellow ma a happiness that he has created. The bourgeoisie has come a long wa from Goethe to Camus.

Still, there is something touching in this youthful nostalgia for beau and happiness. But too often Camus succumbs to that same cult Beauty which Picasso destroys—a beautiful world arranged for the ma ters, where order and harmony prevail. His is the nostalgia of spoil children before the beauty of the world, a lonely contemplation like forbidden pleasure. And this beautiful, innocent, limpid world is terrible Algeria of the hungry and exploited. Ah, yes, Camus' childhoo kingdom, his lost paradise of tropical beauty, triumphant sunshine a swelling silence, is the hell of undernourished children ever-press hunger, and of humiliation. There is no doubt that Camus is aware of indeed, he admits that "the happy contemplation of the world is no lon innocent." He exaggerates, of course, in accusing himself of a venal he is suffering an attack of bad conscience.

"A LITERATURE of despair is a contradiciton in terms," cries Cam However, if there is one writer who not only expresses dess

it incites us to abandon ourselves to it, it is he. Camus defends himself protesting: "The idea that every writer necessarily writes about himself is one of the puerilities that romanticism has bequeathed to us." hat may be true. But then how is one characterize the writer who eliberately becomes a professor of despair? It is more just to assume at there is no artifice in this and that Camus is describing his own ama and that of his class.

Let us begin with loneliness. "Oh my friend, do you know those lonely d footloose creatures of the great cities?" (*The Fall*) This theme of neliness which derives from Romanticism and Baudelaire, who also andered through the great cities with "their infinite demands," acquires quite different meaning in the twentieth century—in this period when e masses are becoming aware of their united strength and are freeing emselves. If romantic loneliness once expressed protest against a world en to art and true feeling, today, among bourgeois writers, it represents e consciousness of being cut off from world-wide human solidarity. , in Camus, one finds those sad, lonely heroes whose pride ("I know erything of life") (*The Plague*) cannot help them to overcome the il of loneliness. The heroes say *I* in an eternal monologue, and the erary form (confession, diary, false dialogue, as in *The Fall,* where only single speaker talks) shows the impossibility of human communication. mbolic is the mad painter Jonas in the short story "The Artist at ork" (in the volume of stories, *Exile and the Kingdom*), who writes his canvas the single, half-legible word: "solitary" or "solidary." Symlic, too, the painful cry of the hero of *The Fall*: ". . . my career of lse prophet who cries out in the desert and refuses to leave it. . . ."

And what does the false prophet say? He prophesies nothingness, the surdity of all human activity and the impossibility of innocence. Of urse, one must not reduce all of Camus' thought to the notion of the ound. He is right to reject such pin-pointing; but the importance of is concept must not be minimized, since he himself sees it as a starting int. Hence, in Camus the huge role played by chance, which takes e literary form of an arbitrary juxtaposition of minutiae, trivial, disconcted, subjected to the vast irrational pressure of mischance (c.f. *The ranger*).

Hence the futility of action. This is how Camus meditates as he watches port being constructed: "Obviously, you can't destroy stone; it can only moved around. In any event, it will outlast the men who employ . . . There's not much point to it. But man's work consists in shuffling ings about; the choice lies in that or in doing nothing." Here we have

the rejection of the very idea of creation, the denial of any value to h man labor.

Hence, too, the taste for nothingness, which will abolish everythin "In every man there is a deep instinct which is neither destructive n creative. It is the drive to be unique . . . to be nothing. For thousan of years this great cry has rallied millions of men to revolt against pa and desire." Despite the absurd formulation, the echo of a real uneasine and aspiration are plainly audible. It might be called the fear of t future.

IT IS in this perspective, not of reflection, but of anxiety, that Camu atheism must be understood, an atheism that smacks of vertigo: "A my dear, for one who is alone with neither god nor master, the weig of the days is terrible." (*The Fall*) The absence of God is one void mo for the "lonely creature," on whose shoulders rests the whole weight the evil for which he is responsible.

One of the most powerful feelings in Camus' work is that of u versal guilt and of the guilty conscience. There is much that is va in this indictment of the "shocking morality of society," and it is neith vain nor useles for someone to force us to remember our daily respo sibilities, the sum of our ignorance, and the evil we permit to be done.

A writer may well confront too quickly satisfied consciences with t balance sheet of their errors and crimes. But the notion of *universal* gu is uttery confusing. If everyone is guilty, everyone is innocent; guilt a innocence lose all meaning. That is the rub. The moral analysis of Cam or rather his absence of analysis, ends by making a hodgepodge morality and putting faults which have nothing in common on the sa footing. When Camus appeals to us not to claim an "impossible in cence," when his hero shouts: "No excuses, ever, for anyone" (*The Fa* what is he doing but equating all faults and all crimes? He gives example: "Let us say that I hit bottom the day I drank the water o dying comrade . . . by persuading myself that the others needed me m than him. He was dying anyway, and I had to keep myself alive for the As if men placed in inhuman conditions were not strained to their lim to preserve their humanity, and as if the truly responsible ones were those who had placed these men in such a plight! And Camus res to the sophism that makes up the stock and trade of his ethics: "Un no circumstances do we have the right to kill our fellow man, or to c sent to his being killed." Camus poses the wrong question: we n have the right to consent to the death of our brothers; must we there

frain from defending them? Or should we wash our hands of them? 'e are engaged in a gigantic struggle. That doesn't make us indifferent the shedding of blood. It is right that Camus should remind us of at. But that he should disarm us—no. His attitude resembles that opted by our pacifists before the war, many of whom were subsequently d to accept Nazi domination. It is a similar rejection of the respon-ibilities involved in action that led Camus to abjure the memory of the esistance (in a preface to the book by Konrad F. Bieber, *Germany Seen Writers of the French Resistance*).

We know now that the theme of the guilty conscience does not pre-nt Camus from taking sides in what is, for better or worse, *the* conflict our time. No, he takes sides—against the Revolution, against the Soviet nion, and finally, as he himself says, against the future: "Suffering is ver temporary for one who does not believe in the future . . . in this ew Jerusalem echoing with the roar of miraculous machines, who ll still remember the cry of the man with the knife at his throat?" *The Rebel*) But does Camus ever wonder whether there is a choice tween passive suffering and revolution? People are killed very day, d not just in war. They die daily of hunger, destitution, bad housing, icosis, imprisonment, prostitution, in this world of soft, wooly lambs, d Camus blames the Communists for having introduced violence!

So, by a familiar paradox, the negation of everything leads to the ceptance of everything absolute non-conformism to downright con-rvatism. For Camus, evil consists in change; evil is the Revolution, and il is the threat of the future.

ONE should not be surprised, therefore, to see Camus ally himself with the most reactionary thinkers in their wrath against science and his-ry. "I do not believe sufficiently in reason," he tells us decisively, "to bscribe to a belief in progress, nor in any philosophy of history." (*The bel*) He attributes to reason the responsibility for all the evils in the dern world: "Our reason has created the void. Now, alone we will ish building our empire in a desert." (Ibid) This formulation is far m being wrong, but the word, reason, should be replaced by the word, pitalism. Camus' confusion is persistent; responsibility for evil inheres, t in the structure of our society, but in the insane arrogance of the man spirit. "We who have unhinged the universe and the human rit. . . . In a drunken sky we light up the suns that we want." (Ibid) is not thinking of the satellite . . . to what does he allude? The rry universe exists outside us: it is the very image of that part of

nature which we have still to conquer; the sky, which has no reas to be drunk, is the marvellous reflection of that universe whose thresh we are, indubitably, going to cross.

Camus resorts to arguments rehashed over and over by bourge idealists who despise science, and whom Lenin used to mock. He ca for an end to determinism: "One hundred years after [Marx] scien faces relativity, uncertainty and chance." (*The Rebel*) Camus apparen forgets that Einstein was a determinist. Death to determinism! And he is the conclusive argument that will slay it: "Pure determinism is a absurd. If it were not, just one single true affirmation would suffice order for us to pass, from effect to effect, to total truth." (*The Rebe* A fine train of sophistry (the entire reality of an object would be nec sarily contained in any one valid judgment made about it)! Such frivol in thinking is disconcerting. Has the "West" so few philosophers th it is reduced to destroying determinism with such a wooden sword?

Still worse is progress. Camus is full of scorn for "the credos of technological civilization"; he prefers "ruins" to factories. (*L'Eté*) is not far from the declarations of a Giono or the horror of a Duha in the face of technical achievement. Hear him condemn the subjugati of nature by man: "Our age . . . wants to transform the world bef exhausting it, to regulate it before understanding it!" Hear him evok a trip by plane and speaking of a country "across which one flees blin in the barbarous coffin of an airship." Barbarous, the most efficient w we have of getting to know the earth's people; the link between the gl and its dwellers, the possession of the world by man?

HISTORY is his pet hate, his *bête noire.* To begin with, it accou for nothing. "History explains neither the natural universe that exis before it, nor the beauty that transcends it." For Camus, then, there no history of men in their relationships, not only among themselves, to the natural universe (the conquest of this universe is called scienc or those involved in the education of their own sensibility (which is ca art). History is the enemy which bears the guilt of enslaving m "History is a sterile ground where no plants grow. . .. Instead of serving man, he daily consents bit by bit to being enslaved by it." (*L'E* History leads to oppression. "In setting history on God's throne, march toward theocracy." Camus should be more cautious. It is a sign when one spurns history; the hatred of history and the hatre freedom have always gone hand in hand, and tyrants have always bidden or put limits on the teaching of history.

Besides, history avenges itself. It is dangerous, when one is on the uts with it, to write a work of historic synthesis, even if it be as "literary" s *The Rebel.* An entire issue of this magazine would be insufficient to numerate and discuss the errors of fact, the confusions, the reckless nterpretations, the hasty generalizations and, above all, the innumerable nproved assumptions that crowd this work. According to Camus, the reeks had a cyclical vision of the world: "Aristotle thought of himself s contemporary with the Trojan war." Without wishing to be presumpious on so delicate a point, I recall that Aristotle wrote *The Constitution f Athens,* a work that displays a rather lively sense of historic evolution.* iterary movements are deliberately given an idealistic treatment. Camus' ancor against Romanticism would not be disavowed by Baron Seillère -legitimist and reactionary. As for surrealism, it "is not action, but ather asceticism, a religious experience." (Compare this with Eluard's stimate in *L'Evidence Poetique,* 1938: "Poets worthy of the name, like orkers, refuse to be exploited.")

But it is the theme of revolution that Camus attacks with most gusto. irst, a series of generalizations reduces all revolutions to one. "Most evolutions take their shape in an act of murder." (*The Rebel*); for xample, the revolution of 1789 is branded by the death of Louis XVI, he public assassination of a weak and good man," followed, "it is well nown, by convulsive scenes of suicide and madness." Camus doesn't esitate to raise even the old reactionary slogans of the nineteenth cenury: "Revolutionary regimes are usually compelled to be war governents. The more the revolution spreads, the more is at stake in the war hat inevitably follows. The society that emerges in 1789 aims to dominate urope; that which was born in 1917 fights for universal domination. otal revolution thus ends by claiming world empire as its goal." (Ibid. his and the following six quoted passages have the same source.) A eries of gratuitous assumptions leads to a conclusion of "Soviet imperlism." Moreover, it doesn't take much to make a revolution. Even the Veimar Republic may lay claim to the title: "All modern revolutions ave ended in a strengthening of the State . . . the Weimar Republic led o Hitler."

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* Another amusing instance of Camus' pretentions to scholarship may be found in the llowing passage which appeared in *The Rebel*: ". . . the religion of humanity was effectively eached toward the end of the nineteenth century, and Marx, despite the fact that he had ot read Comte, was one of its prophets." Now here is what Marx thought of Comte, whom had, of course, read: "I am also studying Comte now, as a sideline, because the English nd French make such a fuss about the fellow. What takes their fancy is the encyclopaedic uch, the synthesis. But this is miserable compared to Hegel. . . . And this Positivist rot peared in 1832!" *Marx, Engels Selected Correspondence,* p. 209, International Publishers. -Editor's Note.

It is hard to say just what a revolution is, since "a change in property relations without a coresponding change in government is not revolution but reform"; but, on the other hand "a revolution, above all one that claims to be materialist, is nothing but an unbridled metaphysical crusade." A similar slipshod method is employed to trace influences; the phrase, "Socialism aims at the deification of man and has at times taken on the character of traditional religion," is explained as follows: "Saint-Simon, who will influence Marx, is himself influenced by Maistre and Bonald." It's as easy as that.

As for Marx and Marxism, the most brazen synopses do not frighten Camus. "Marx justifies the order that is established in its own time. Marx is anti-capitalist only to the degree that capitalism is outdated." The two sentences not only contradict one another; they are, of course, both false. One wonders whether Camus is dishonest or unable to understand historic evolution. I shall not dwell on the treatment to which he submits Marx' thought, transforming it into a vulgar sociology, for which "economic dependence is primary and sufficient." For Marx, in Camus' version, "The German rebellion against Napoleon is explained solely by the lack of coffee and sugar." Why be bashful? "Marx employed the crude philosophy of his age." Besides he inclined toward fatalism. "The logic of such an attitude requires that one approve of anything that will increase the misery of the workers." For such a caricature, one needs not only violent political prejudice but an unwavering indifference to truth!

TO oppose the revolution with at least a verbal ideal, Camus must revive the formulae of bourgeois idealism. Some are old acquaintances, such as the cult of Beauty, the cult of the Spirit, of which Europe is the priestess, and the cult of Greek Moderation. These themes of Valery are found in Camus, slightly adapted to current fashion. But Camus' novel contribution consists in affixing to each of these formulae its counterpart, thereby creating a moral conflict. Actually, we are soon aware that the choice was made beforehand; the alternatives are so many false windows, painted in for symmetry. They permit Camus to appear to be a tragic, divided, even dialectical thinker. However, this is not dialectics, but ambiguity.

Thus he sets against his cult of beauty the existence of what he calls quite improperly, the debased ones: "Yes, there is beauty, and there are the debased . . . no matter how difficult the effort, I should never want to be disloyal to the one or the others." An irreproachable formula, or

first sight, mark of a true humanism; but this posing the love of beauty against the struggle for justice in behalf of the oppressed is suspect; it presupposes that the victory of socialism, the triumph of the oppressed, could coincide with the defeat of beauty; it is to deny the free flowering of man in a socialist world, and the preservation of the most delicate nuances of civilization. No, one need not choose between justice and the rich, brilliant, and happy products of the human imagination. The conflict is false, an equivocation.

The contrast of Greek moderation and modern civilization is no better founded. It ends up as a pure verbalism: compared to the Greeks and their "gilded unhappiness," the modern world is nothing but "ugliness and convulsion." To which Camus adds a phrase that would be frightful—if it really meant something: "Europe would be unspeakable if pain could ever be so." His intemperate wordiness speedily leads him to excess: "Our Europe, by contrast [with Greek moderation], which is in quest of totality, is the handmaiden of immoderation. She despises beauty as she despises everything that she does not exalt." The reader who will soon hear Europe praised may have trouble finding his way through these abstractions. But if we add, as does Camus, that "Greece embarrassed Marx" (though no one ever spoke more highly of Greek art than Marx, an avid reader of Homer and Aeschylus), things become clear: an antithesis has to be erected between the Greek balanced mind and socialist "totalitarian" aspiration. Now if, à la Camus, we wanted to pursue these abstractions, we might remember that justice, democracy, science are words that had a meaning for the Greeks. In fact, if Camus exalts Greek moderation, it is to introduce, without its help, another notion, that of "limits." Every action is valid for him only if it is contained withn "just limits." This would appear to be reasonable. In reality, it opens the way to capitaulation; for how can one "make allowances' 'and struggle *"juxta modum,"* with moderation, against capitalism, war, and the oppression of man?

But there is one weapon in Camus' ideological arsenal that he can claim to have invented, and it is a find: the idea of Revolt. To oppose Revolt to Revolution is to appropriate the triumphant power of revolutionary thought, to divert it to one's own use, to extol the non-conformism of youth and confiscate it for one's own profit, providing an outlet for discontent—at no risk whatsoever. Revolt is eternal, while for Camus there has never been a revolution: "If there had ever once been a revolution, there would no longer be any history. There would be a happy unity and replete death." His entire *The Rebel* is a history of revolt, principally in the nineteenth century. Curiously there is hardly a mention

of capitalism in the whole book; the rebel attacks God more than he does the political and social regime of his time. The value of this theme is that it can be served up again and again; it permits the condemnation of the October Revolution, as a "guilty" revolution with dirty hands, in the name of pure, ideal, and uncompromised revolt. Camus' avowed hope is that by contrasting Revolt with Revolution, he will beget what one might call counter-revolutionary non-conformism. Thus he shamelessly appropriates the Russian nihilists of the nineteenth century who "gave a life for a life," as well as the revolution of 1905, because, drowned in blood as it was, it had no chance to "degrade itself." The only pure revolutionaries are dead revolutionaries. So Camus cites with rapture Kalyagen who "proposes to throw himself under the horses' hooves and perish with the Minister Plehve." What a pity that Lenin did not act similarly! But Lenin chose "total guilt," having decided (this is the great sin, according to Camus) "to save himself in order to serve the revolution." A revolutionary who prefers to stay alive? Such a one "sets himself above his ideal."

There may be something seductive in the picture of the human spirit constrained to struggle on, after each new victory, against a fresh aspect of injustice. Nor should Camus be reproached for not being a Marxist, that is, for not admitting the idea of a classless society where the oppression of man by man will no longer exist. One may readily agree with him that one cannot depict the advent of socialism as a pastoral idyll, a blessed consummation devoid of strife. But Camus' Revolt is opposed to the Revolution in its creative struggle, to socialism—not only as it exists already, but *en marche*. To 'rebel" in this way, must one not support capitalism and its retinue of misery and war? Has Camus' work any significance other than as an ideological prop for capitalism? What is he rebelling against? What does his anti-conformism signify? Nothing but anti-communism.

In short, Camus' philosophy is a justification for social-democratic reformism; the idea of abstract Revolt leads to the abandonment of the class struggle and the rejection of revolution, while it permits a dispersal of the energy of dissent. The notion of "limits" justifies every compromise, bad as well as good, indeed every surrender of principle.

CAMUS' entire literary output is characterized by the philosophical and political content whose general traits we have outlined. His overriding preoccupation is to have every detail of his work appear charged with meaning, hence the predominance of symbolism and subjectivity. Charged with their author's preconceptions, his novels must be slanted to express them, but in an indirect manner, hence the use of

symbols; a narrative founded upon reality would perhaps emerge with quite a different conclusion. Suppose that in Oran something other than a plague had broken out. We might then have a book which broke free of its author's intention, and which might say, who knows what? The very opposite! Reality does set such traps. Symbols are more tractable. But the writer plays a price for them in that he escapes from himself with difficulty. Camus is aware of this: "To the degree that it were possible, I should rather have been an objective writer." (*l'Eté*) But he cannot help constantly interfering, introducing into the plots of his stories and plays his own meditations, his vision, his concerns and even his personal predilection for certain landscapes, the sea and the night. This makes for a kind of monotony in his work; developments in Oran are very much the same, whether in *l'Eté, The Stranger* or *The Plague.* He fights this subjectivity, which threatens to rob his work of all life, by multiplying its material or psychological details, and by creating atmosphere with little touches here and there. But since he does not want to fall into a "realism" which might, as we have seen, prove dangerous, he must regale us with trivial, insignificant details which have no relevance to the story. This accounts for the astonishing pettiness of his factual rendition; the method is particularly noticeable in *The Stranger.* The most pedestrian naturalism rubs shoulders with great lyrical flights of fancy and the author's ideological obsessions.

Camus' personality intrudes in his choice of details, whence the mixture of horror, blood, pain, physical and moral ugliness, with the strange and extravagant. Many of his characters are singled out by idiosyncracies, such as the woman in *The Stranger,* who cuts notches in the pages of books and newspapers, or the judge in *The Plague* who knows his train schedules by heart, as well as the old man who spits on cats.

But most typical of his work—apart from the "tone" peculiar to him: a mixture of solemnity, pompous naivete, and sickly humor—is his way of fabricating an intellectual pseudo-consciousness for his character. His plays also suffer thereby, and that is why they are failures; the characters are all too clearly the author's mouthpieces. Caligula, like the criminal sister in *The Misunderstanding* is a bard of the absurd, the senseless, of the farcical vacuity of human life.

CAMUS' stories have the same quality; they are propaganda novels. His best work, *The Plague,* is an arbitrary construction. He wants to set his novel in the framework of Oran whose every stone he knows, and to give us a picture of it. Instead he presents us with the history and

pedigree of his heroes, which resemble the descriptions of men being sought by the police. The reader becomes confused and mixes up all these nameless, drab people who have the same outlook on society and love. Camus splits himself into two, three parts: he calls himself Tarrou, Rieux, Rambert, even Father Paneloux; but we always come back to Camus, the man who plays at imagining an epidemic so that he can symbolize the scourges of the modern world. And to imagine himself all alone in its midst, eternally alone like a cursed creative. He rambles on about love and friendship in every line, but there's not a woman in the book aside from the pale little ghost of old Mme. Rieux. Real tears, human tenderness, the true pain of absence and the death of those one loves, never enter to lend warmth to this cold and arid tale in which even the most primitive passions, anguish, panic and revulsion against death are blurred, as if seen through a fog. Camus has set himself an impossible task. In order for us to believe in tenderness, solidarity, love, his heroes would have to believe in just what he denies, that is, in the future. But they are born to embody denial of the future. How, then, are they to express what accompanies faith in the future—confidence. active goodness, solidarity with other men? Camus cannot say what he means; he can only repeat that he loves people, that they are not so bad, that one must have confidence in them, that even the horrible judge, M. Othon, is capable of self-sacrifice (one can easily see where this Tolstoyan affectation of clutching everyone indiscriminately to one's heart, can lead to). He can repeat this over and over, but the reader will not believe him, sensing that Camus is a prisoner of his basic contradiction: one cannot be a humanist and deny meaning to the long struggle of humanity for happiness; one cannot love men's happiness without working with them to attain it; in short, one cannot love man and remain neutral.

What remains then for the reader when he has finished *The Plague?* Even if he is easy going and does not demand too great qualities of credibility from a myth-laden tale, even if he isn't bothered by abstractions, only one memory will remain: that of a complacent description to numb one with horror, a sort of bath in the inhuman—with the multiform and lonely hero lost in his abstract meditations, face to face with the plague, horrible, repugnant, and destructive. This portrayal is utterly alien to real life, to the true depiction of men and social relations.

What results is a dearth of living characters. Sun-drenched Oran and populous Amsterdam emerge as deserted worlds, dead planets. Hence the obsession with night in the city, with the hour when the shell

inhabited by men is empty. Hence, too, the continually recurring evocation of walks through crowds, nameless crowds that the hero sees as alien to him, as infinitely distant, crowds of men with whom he has no ties other than a theoretical solidarity, intellectual but unfelt, and close to disdain.

These are not human beings, created, loved, cherished as are all the creatures of true novelists. Just once, in a curious short story in *Exile and the Kingdom,* Camus comes close to showing real men with their interests, needs, struggles, loves, and even their reactions as members of a class. The story is called *"The Silent Men."* It depicts the silent wrath of workers returning to a factory after an unsuccessful strike. Even here, however, the characters speedily fall apart, well before the conclusion of this 20-odd page story. Why? Because they don't know who they are or where they are going; because ambiguity, that malady of Camus' work, once more effaces their outlines; because the workers are suddenly conscience stricken, ashamed of their stubborn silence, in the face of their employer whose little girl is sick. So what? The reader asks. So nothing. The characters again vanish in mist, because it is hard for a novelist to create living people when they have no consciousness of themselves, and of whom he has little awareness. One cannot take real people and make them signify nothing. Camus' ideology makes his art sterile.

Camus might, like Balzac, have told the truth almost despite himself and his will. He might have had the luck to lose his head and so to let our fingers touch human pains and joys. His work might have run away with him, to portray the real world; then, no matter what else he said, we would have felt kinship with him. But though he thinks of himself as an artist ("I am an artist," he is quoted as saying in an interview granted to the paper *Demain,* October, 1957), Camus is not truly one. He is an abstract reasoner of the sort he claims to detest. His work is always calculated and constructed, without awkwardness, in icy perfection—if one may speak of perfection in a structure so removed from reality. Of course, anguish, loneliness and horror are present in Camus' work and the author cannot free himself from this nightmare world. Fear is the dominant note throughout; and I am not sure but that horror and disgust are not enhanced by the well-rounded, perfectly fashioned sentences so devoid of enthusiasm. Clinical, sharp, precise and authoritative description, which add a sort of glitter to the foulness, are juxtaposed with intellectual and abstract meditations. "Beauty" must not be missing, and so there are "beautiful" descriptions of the external world, Oran, the streets, the sea; or Amsterdam in *The Fall.* The intellec-

tual sees this beauty and he studiously scans the implacable horizon that encircles him: a job well-done, methodical and smacking of the rationa influence of Gide; its horror stands out all the more. It is what's called a literary effect.

ONE can't be angry at Camus for wanting to convey fear and horror, since they are the daily fare of so many men in the world. No, we really can't blame him for depicting them—if only he would denounce them, if only he would seek out those responsible for them, if only this gloomy work were an indictment. We could accept even the complacent sadism with which he describes disease, tortures, and physical and moral degradation, if he didn't drown everything in his nihilism, deliberately rejecting the great hope, the realities already revealed to the man of the twentieth century, and especially, if his class fears, his bias or lack of civil courage did not keep him from *disclosing the source of the plague.* Because we Frenchmen well know where the plague is, and Camus, born in Algeria, cannot pretend to have forgotten. Where are the tortures? Where are the 20-year old girls condemned to death? Oh Camus, so eloquent in the abstract against the death sentence, will you utter a word for them, you who "have decided to place yourself alongside the victims on every occasion"? (*The Plague*)

And the strugge for freedom, where is it waged, oh bard of freedom, for whom "without freedom one may perfect heavy industry, but not truth or justice"? (interview in *Demain*) And what have you done for the liberation of what you call your country, Algeria? You say—I cannot help offending you—with what must be called hypocrisy: "I did what I could. (sic) I will begin again when there will again be a chance of helping rebuild an Algeria freed of all hatred and racism." I will begin again, you say? And now? The plague—it is your word—does not wait, it kills; and you who want "to refuse to be with the plague," (*The Plague*) you who want to be "a slaughtered innocent," it is now or never, you "conscience of the Western World," you to whom the Nobel rize jury gave its award for "humanism" (their very word), you will never find a better moment to speak. Tell us, Camus, you who are revolted by the death of a child (ah, if we could really believe in that revolt, feel it in you!) tell us, what are you going to do to help stop the war in Algeria?

Translated from the French by Martin Calder

* * *

The works of Camus available in English, from which passages have been

quoted in this essay, are the following: *The Stranger.* Knopf. $3.50. There is also a Vintage Book (paperbook) for 95c, also published by Knopf. *The Plague.* Knopf. $3.95. *The Rebel.* Knopf. $4.00. Vintage. 95c. *The Myth of Sysiphus.* Knopf, $4.00. *The Fall.* Knopf. $3.00. *Exile and the Kingdom.* Knopf. $3.50.

The translations of these passages are, in two or three instances, those of the Knopf edition. Otherwise, they are the present translator's own version.

Two full-length studies of Camus have appeared in this country. They are: *Albert Camus: The Invincible Summer,* by Albert Maquet, George Braziller, Inc. $3.75. *The Thought and Art of Albert Camus,* by Thomas Hanna. Henry Regnery Co. $4.50.

Both these books are wholly sympathetic in their estimate of Camus as artist and thinker. Maquet's work is lyrical with admiration, almost perfumed in its style. Hanna's is more analytic in its approach and also more scholarly.

There is also an interesting study by Sartre of *The Stranger* (here entitled *The Outsider*) in a collection of his *Literary Essays,* published by the Philosophical Library (95c).—The Editor.

THE SOCKS

EDITH ANDERSON

HAVING refused on principle to drape herself in hypocritical white, the bride stood before the rabbi in an apple green wool suit and a straw sailor with a brightly striped ribbon round it, resentfully clutching the groom's hand. He was a tall, strapping youth, his face a-bloom with optimism. The young rabbi, whose beard only consisted of a few black curls, thought sentimentally, "She's sweet, trying so hard to look strong-minded—the spring of life!" When she had a bit of love and a baby she would get over being a Communist. As for her strict instructions to omit the word "obey" from the ceremony, she was quite right, a modern girl.

She looked him in the eye and said non-committally, "I do."

The groom not only dropped, he dashed the symbolic wineglass to the floor and crunched it with such a will under his shiny shoe and with such a pleased look on his face that it made his wife's stomach sick. "Stupid mummery," she thought. "Reactionary twaddle!" She tried to console herself with the ring he had slipped over her finger .After all, she had chosen it herself and it was the latest wrinkle, filigreed orange blossoms intertwined between two narrow gold bands. "It's hooey too," she thought, "and it cost far too much."

It was not Susan's fault that she was getting married. She had wanted to live decently in sin. "Marriage *is* legalized prostitution, of course," Norman had agreed genially, "but why hurt the poor old parents?" If it didn't work they could get a divorce. It was only a little more expensive, that was all.

Gloomily she had assented, against her better judgment. His argument was both reasonable and kind. Yet she felt deeply that getting married was a fatal surrender to false mores, and that nothing but harm could come of it. How delightful it would have been to thumb their noses at all four parents and set up housekeeping, unblessed, in full face of their disapproval! What did this ridiculous solemn ceremony, these fatuous faces, this table piled with catered goodies have to do with the fun of going off alone with Norman? Nothing? Worse than nothing. It took all the fun out of it, it surrounded their relationship with steel

bars, and through the bars peeped prurient eyes.

As if things were not bad enough already, Norman's older brother Al took him aside after the wedding, briefed him on how to treat a virgin, and gave him twenty-five dollars to take her to Niagara Falls. Norman found this so funnily touching that he was quite taken aback at her reaction when he told her, "Virgin!" she exclaimed, burning with humiliation. "How could I be a virgin at twenty-two?"

"Well, some people are," said Norman humorously, thinking of himself, but he had too much sense to admit this. Anyway he was now twenty-three and had already managed brilliantly to conceal his disgrace from her.

"Niagara Falls! Sordid hotel rooms! Squeaking springs! Dirty jokes! Just *their* sort of idea of marriage!" There were tears in her eyes.

"Never mind, let's go to Washington and see the Lincoln Memorial!" Normal proposed buoyantly.

Unable to explain even to herself why this edifying plan offended her, Susan moodily agreed and they went to Washington on Al's money, arriving in grayish drizzle towards evening. It hurt Susan's feelings that they had to choose a hotel that looked cheap and that the view from their window was a narrow shaftway. Why, she wondered passionately, couldn't they have simply gone to live in their furnished room in Harlem, frankly poor and minding their own business? It was a large and sunny, oddly shaped, almost octagonal room with an unusually ample ailanthus tree glistening outside the window.

I suppose I'll get over it and manage to bear being married, Susan told herself, trying to look cheerful. After all, it wasn't Norman's fault. Or wasn't it? She was not sure. She felt like throwing a blop of soft mud in his beaming face, but she agreed to all his suggestions, stood respectfully at the Lincoln Memorial—she even liked it—and concealed her contempt and fear of the little plane that flew them over Washington for five dollars.

An imitation honeymoon. How degrading, she thought.

Norman was impressed by his wife. He knew that she was a higher class of being than he was. True, it was he who *knew* more and gave her political guidance. But hers was the better mind. What good, he admitted generously, was information without insight? His character was all nebulous and lumpy; Susan was a sharply outlined personality. Of course she was as definite in contradicting herself as she had been in asserting the opposite the week before, but her flashes of thought often left Norman far behind and her hatred of compromise awed him.

He respected Susan's principles in not wanting to get married and

was sorry he could not bring himself to do things her way. He pitie her when he saw her fresh face, so lovely and relaxed in sleep, gro bleak as she opened her eyes in the morning and became conscious the dark little room. "My God, I'm married. Hopelessly, finally married she said to the gray ceiling. He felt guilty at having brought her ther After all, what *did* Communists need honeymoons for? Al's gift ha only made her feel poorer; Al wasn't *her* brother, she couldn't apprecia his good intentions, she could only feel that he was a fat bourgeo gloating over her defloration and interfering in her plans. God know Al was bourgeois, he thought being a buyer in Gimbel's was the heig of glory, and she was perfectly right: Norman's not really caring abo strict privacy was undoubtedly a proof of immaturity. With shame I had suppressed the desire to say, "Hell, why shouldn't they have a goo time out of seeing us get married? They're nice people."

Nut to all that, he thought, jumped out of bed and splashed himse with gusto over the basin. "A-a-ah! Cold water! Try it!" he cried, slappin himself.

He looked at her and saw only a heaving lump turning to the wa and a hand pulling the cover higher. He suddenly noticed the smell the socks he had worn the day before, and he grabbed them from th back of the chair and stuffed them into the bottom of the valise le they offend Susan when she got up. Thank goodness for Uncle Benn he thought, taking a fresh pair from the top. Uncle Benno was in th sock business.

Once they started living in their furnished room, Norman was relieve to see Susan become much more lively—almost her old self—almo happy. When they came home in the evening, he from the Studen League and she from an office in Wall Street where she worked as secretary, she sang as she cooked her terrible little meals. After they h somehow managed to swallow down the mess, she avidly applied herse to the book on political economy and listened to his enthusiastic co ments as if they were important to her. When their eyes grew heavy s washed her stockings and her panties and followed him into bed in t friendliest possible manner.

She no longer turned the wedding ring around and around on h finger, looking morose. She was only glum on Fridays and Sundays aft they had dined or breakfasted with Mom, Pop, Al, Al's wife, and Unc Benno (Sunday breakfast was an elaborate rite at Mom's), or on t less frequent occasions when they had dined with *her* parents. T inquisitive solicitude of a relative seemed to affect her like the evil e It was generally silly of her, Norman felt, but he dared not say so to

girl of such firm principles. He had never resented his parents, never thought, as she did, that "bourgeois parents oppress and exploit their children." Far from being oppressed and exploited, he had been loved and overfed nearly to bursting, he had been provided with every conceivable creature comfort, he had been deliciously, gorgeously spoiled. He missed being spoiled. When he dragged Susan to Mom's, it was more for the pleasure of eating a good meal and the relief of sinking into a clean, well-upholstered armchair with deep springs than for "indulging Mom's possessive instinct," as Susan accused. He only wished she would let Mom come and straighten out their room, especially his laundry, which he never dared to mention.

"She just wants to tidy up a little," Norman pleaded one night, as they were going to bed.

Susan glanced coldly around the room. "It isn't tidy?" she asked. "Mrs. Hoffman cleans it every single day, we've done our dishes, what more is there to do?"

"Ah, she just wants the pleasure of feeling she did something for us. Maybe she wants to bring a plant or put some flowers in a vase. Why are you so mean?"

"I'm not mean! I'm tired of having my feelings trampled on!" Susan cried out. "I want love to be a romantic adventure and not a continual concession to other people's ideas! Trekking to the Bronx week in and week out! All that stuffing! It disgust me! I think it's awful how you all eat and eat and then sit in fat chairs for the rest of the evening in a stupor, unable to speak! And you—you treat me like a pal!" Tears came to her eyes. "I don't want to be a pal—I want——" She could not go on; the words for what she wanted were still too bold to be recognized.

Norman answered indignantly, "What's the matter with being a pal, I'd like to know? I thought you wanted women and men to be equals?"

"Yes, but not pals. Not being slapped on the back: 'Susan is a brick.' I'm not a brick, I'm a woman. I want to be adored."

"Adored!" he jeered. He could not help laughing loudly, but his laughter was bitter. "Isn't respect enough for you? A fine Communist, hates the bourgeoisie, but wants to be adored! Like an idol in a church! So that's what your principles look like underneath. I wondered."

"If Communism meant the end of love, if love were bourgeois, I never would have become a Communist," Susan said fiercely. "It's you, with your high-school brain, who think that! If you don't know how to adore a woman it's your loss—*you'll* never be adored. But what do you care as long as you can stuff yourself with smoked sturgeon at

Mom's and then spout about being a professional revolutionary!"

Astonished and deeply antagonized, Norman said, "I'm serious about being a professional revolutionary. I should think you of all people would understand it. Why a professional revolutionary shouldn't eat a decent meal when he can get it, I don't know! Lenin wasn't preserved by starvation."

"Never mind Lenin! Lenin is your excuse for everything! Because Lenin didn't have children, we mustn't have a child! I need to have a child!"

"An illegitimate child. Then you'd be really happy. Your idea of being revolutionary is spitting in your mother's eye. And I'm immature, eh? You're as bourgeois as your mother and mine, otherwise you'd understand why I have to devote myself to the movement and can't waste my time in what you call 'a real job.'"

Susan was silent. There seemed to be some sense in what he had just said. She wondered if it were true. Usually the discovery of a truth gave her satisfaction. This did not. But whose fault was that? Was the dream of romantic love a bourgeois trap? Was her secret, personal goal in contradiction to the revolution? Was it decadence on her part that made her feel so neglected during Norman's bluff love-making?

He ruffled her hair and said conciliatingly, "Let's not fight, Suse."

"No," she agreed. She picked up her stockings from the floor and carried them to the basin to wash them, while he settled himself under the covers and considered the cracks on the ceiling.

"Tomorrow we've been married exactly a month—thirty-one days," he remarked.

"Uh-huh."

She wiped her hands and came to bed, still thinking hard about their quarrel. He switched off the light and put his arms around her, but she pushed him away, saying, "No! For you everything is so simple."

"All right, to hell with it, good night," he said, turning away.

After a while she said softly, "Don't be hurt. You see——" and paused. He made no move. "Feelings are complicated, you can't just mix them up and then expect them to take their places, like circus lions on their boxes."

He was confused. His feelings were not complicated; hers were. What to do about it? "Not hurt, sleepy," he said in a deliberate mumble and began inhaling and exhaling regularly until in a very few minutes he was actually asleep. She lay awake for a long time, trying to find the flaw in her thinking.

When the alarm clock went off, earlier than usual, Susan leaped up

at once, climbed across Norman and rapidly got into her stockings and panties. "Hey you!" she remonstrated, as he continued to lie motionless. "We promised to sell Daily Workers this morning before going to work! Remember?"

"H-hm."

She slipped on a kimono and rushed to the bathroom, for although they had a basin in their room she considered it shameful to brush her teeth in her husband's presence.

He sat up immediately and took from under the bed the socks that he had been wearing for three days. They were stiff and they stank. He went to the big old-fashioned clothes closet he shared with Susan, and opened the heavy drawer at the bottom. Into this he hastily thrust the socks and kicked the drawer closed. In the top drawer of the bureau he rummaged without much hope for a pair of clean ones, but only discovered the same handkerchiefs, suspenders, shaving gear, and camera film that had been there the day before. He went back to the big closet, opened up the drawer at the bottom, heard Susan returning, kicked it shut and sprang into bed.

"Why don't you get up?" she asked, in wonder.

Words failed him.

When she was all dressed and brushing her hair she turned to him and said sharply, "Hey! Professional Revolutionary! I thought you pledged to sell ten Dailies! Get up, will you?" She went over to the bed. "Are you sick?" she asked.

"I've got no socks," he said.

He might have been speaking a foreign language. "No socks?" she repeated, without the slightest comprehension.

"No."

"Why, what have you been putting on your feet up till now?"

"Socks, but they're dirty."

"Have you been wearing one pair of socks for a month?" Susan asked incredulously.

"Of course not," he said, "I put on a clean pair every day—until," he added truthfully, "a couple of days ago."

Still more amazed, Susan demanded, "A clean pair every day for—for twenty-eight days? Where did you get so many?"

"Uncle Benno. It was his wedding present."

"But—but—then where are the socks?"

Voiceless, Norman pointed to the drawer at the bottom of the closet, and then raised himself on his elbows. There was an expression of total defeat on his face. Susan opened the stiff and heavy drawer and imme-

diately drew back.

"Kick it shut, kick it shut," he said miserably.

In a fury she whirled all fifty-six socks out onto the floor, regardless of the odor, and shouted, "Didn't you ever see me washing my stockings everynight?"

"Sure," he said, "but I was ashamed to ask you to wash mine."

She stared at him in astonishment; his eyes were actually imploring her.

She picked up her purse and started for the door. "You use lukewarm water and soap flakes, and rinse them twice, otherwise they're stiff afterwards. By rights you ought to soak them first, they take longer than silk stockings. There's some cord in the desk, you can make a washline in the bathroom. I'll sell your quota of Dailies." She slammed the door.

Norman opened the window wider and surveyed the mess in deep discouragement for some minutes. Finally he chose a pair of socks from the pile, put them on with distaste but firmly, got dressed, made a cup of coffee, and went to 145th Street to take the subway to the Student League. A Negro comrade selling the Daily Worker at the station nearly saw him, but he slunk behind an immense fat woman and squeezed into the train. This was the real disgrace, that he had not kept his pledge. He felt wretched about it.

Arriving at the office he plunged to the telephone and dialed. "Mom. Mom," he said, "don't tell Susan, but could you please wash a few little things for me? . . ."

THE DAY THE CHOW MEIN BRAIN WENT INSANE

JACQUES BARBICANE

Or, History's Purple Crow Is
Eaten for the Last Time

The Yellow Peril was an iridescent mule,
The Bright Red Menace was a neon ghoul.
The Ultra-Violet forces had a corruscating erg,
And the Dirty-Necked Irregulars sailed a big iceberg.
All the Green battalions sparked scintillating volts
And Chiaroscuro cannon fired opalescent bolts.

They charged across the Pure White Poles
And came up out of gopher holes.
They all cried Havoc for a Thousand Year Sway
And even Purple People Eaters ran away.

But the anodyzed robots who defended us
Had a Secret Weapon and a Blunderbuss.
The Blunderbuss exploded and the *cognoscenti* laughed
For the Secret Weapon had gone clean daft.
It ate Its noodles and It lifted Its muzzle
And Is asked for soy-bean juice to guzzle.

It wanted that juice and It wanted it plain,
And the High Technicians knew that *wasn't* germane.
For the Chow-Mein Brain was a know-how brain
And the Chow-Mein brain had gone insane.

It didn't know much and It couldn't know less,
And all of a sudden it was easy to guess
The hassel was over and the world was lost,
And General Kaleidoscope was named our boss.
We bowed the body and we bumped the head
And after that we buried our dead.
We wailed the sirens and we gnashed the streets
Loud as a cloud and empty as beets.
We hung the High Technicians
As the guys who had pampered
Our Secret Brain with a diet that hampered
The smooth chug-chug of the Mein synapses
And put us back where we've been ever since,
Bakered and Abled and Operationed Sapses.

THE MYTH OF THE NEW CLASS

CHARLES WISLEY

PRIOR to his expulsion from the Yugoslav Communist League in 1954, Milovan Djilas was the foremost ideological authority of that party, chairman of the International Affairs Commission of its Central Committee, and Minister Without Portfolio in the Yugoslav Government. His expulsion came some time after his proposals to "democratize" the party had reached a point, to quote a not unsympathetic observer, "where the party would practically have become a Social Democratic Party whose members shared the common aim of establishing a Socialist society and started with the Marxist analysis of capitalist society, but were free to differ on everything else, and even to argue about the exact meaning of their aim and analysis and how to apply either or both to current problems."* In the revisionist atmosphere of Yugoslavia, even this drastic attack on the fundamentals of the party might not have resulted in Djilas' expulsion, had he not proceeded to advocate the formation of a secondary party, which he quite unrealistically expected to be a sort of Loyal Socialist Opposition, while in fact, of course, it would have become a counter-revolutionary hothouse. Severed from the party and with an eighteen months' suspended sentence, Djilas wrote provocative articles for the Western press until the Hungarian uprising, which he hailed as the beginning of the end of Communism. As he also bitterly attacked his own former colleagues in the Yugoslav party, he was finally sentenced to prison for three years.

During this time, Djilas produced a book, *The New Class, An Analysis of the Communist System,*** which is so lacking in rationality as to suggest that he might be better cared for in a sanitarium than a jail, since his political desertion may very well be due to a mental derangement. However, such are our times that this foolishness was submitted

* Konny Zilliacus, M.P., *A New Birth of Freedom, World Communism after Stalin,* New York, 1958, p. 123.

** *The New Class, An Analysis of the Communist System,* by Milovan Djilas. Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher. $3.95.

not to a medical board for a finding in support of a plea for clemency, but to a publisher in the United States, the land where psychopaths are sponsored by the Mother Church and dipsomaniacs are tendered civic receptions, just so long as they are anti-Communist renegades. Sure enough, the book quickly went through nine printings here and was also translated into various foreign languages, probably with the assistance of the State Department and the United States Information Service. It must therefore, unfortunately, be treated with some seriousness.

The success of the book is no doubt due to the fact that at a time of widespread confusion Djilas brought out his anti-Communism under a new label, and in this field there is no agency to check the advertising against the product. His central contention is that Socialist society has given rise to a new despotic class of owners and exploiters. This is his personal discovery, for as he informs us at one point even Trotsky, researching the origins of the "Stalinist bureaucrat," did not detect this new class (p. 39). Since Djilas found it and seems to be the first to know about it (forty years after the October Revolution), he must needs describe it, and my discussion of the subject will proceed on his terms, as I lack the imagination for a comparable flight into fiction.

It is customary when talking about a class, old or new, to begin with definitions and figures to make at least some attempt to place its members within an economic, cultural or ethnic frame and to give some approximation of their number. This is hardly demanding adherence to Marxist standards. But Djilas excuses himself from this task right at the start: "It is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to define the limits of the new class and to identify its members" (p. 39). Next, it is reasonable to expect of a class a minimum degree of stability, even taking into account the process of circulation and movement among classes. But though Djilas tells us that his new class is "as exclusive as the aristocracy" (p. 60) and "closely ingrown" (p. 69), he attributes the difficulty of prescribing who belongs to it to the fact that it is in constant motion . . . melts into and spills over into the people . . . and is constantly changing" (p. 61).

By his own account, Djilas is in the position, hardly conducive to sociological inquiry, of a *Daily News* photographer trying to get a shot of the Abominable Snowman. Still, to make the story, he must catch this fickle new class on the run and capture its picture, before it is again out of sight, as it has been for the last forty years. Under the circumstances, he cannot perhaps be blamed that the picture is fuzzy and changes between the beginning and the end of a rather short book. Likewise, I am under no obligation to reconcile the contradictions, but merely

to catalogue the confusion. For this purpose I shall cull from his rambling account his statements as to what supposedly characterizes and who constitutes the new class.

Because of the very problem posed in projecting the picture of a new class in a Socialist society, Djilas is never quite sure whether his basic class criterion is "administration" or "ownership." To begin with he tells us that, "The new class may be said to be made up of those who have special privileges and economic preference because of the administrative monopoly they hold" (p. 39). But this definition is obviously so broad that it might include any regimental sergeant-major whose soup is spiked with an extra dumpling by his mess-sergeant pal. No, though Djilas continues to speak of "monopolists of administration," the class qualification must partake more of the element of "ownership" which Djilas defines as "nothing other than the right of profit and control" (p. 35). And he first tries this criterion on for size in the conventional way: "As in other owning classes, the proof that it is a special class lies in its ownership and its special relations to other classes. In the same way, the class to which a member belongs is indicated by the material and other privileges which ownership brings to him. As defined by Roman law, property constitutes the use, enjoyment, and disposition of material goods. The Communist political bureaucracy uses, enjoys, and disposes of nationalized property" (p. 44). And for proof, nothing more is needed than to cite the view of "the ordinary man who considers the Communist functionary as being very rich and as a man who does not have to work" (p. 45). Of course, who has not heard of that idle multimillionaire, Mao Tse-tung!

It is simply ridiculous to attempt to apply the ownership criterion in any conventional sense to the Socialist countries. Socialist society does not pretend to equality of wages and the spread has no doubt been unjustifiably wide in some cases. But such improper inequalities are neither inherent in the system nor do they rise to the level of constituting a special class.* Indeed, Djilas transmits the startling news that,

* Directly to the point are the on-the-spot observations of the economists Paul M. Sweezy and Solomon Adler who last year respectively visited Eastern Europe and China. In a not uncritical report, Mr. Sweezy said on his return (*Monthly Review*, February 1958, p. 331):

". . . There are not the disgraceful extremes of inequality in the Socialist world that there are in the capitalist world. I spent an evening in the Moscow apartment of the head of the Soviet Writers Union, visited some of the highest officials of the Polish Government in their homes, had dinner at the house of the chief of Tito's official household. They all live very modestly by the standards of, say, a successful American doctor or lawyer. The only signs that I could find of luxury and ostentation such as characterize the way of life of American corporate rich were the town palaces and mansions of the former ruling classes, but they are now used for other purposes and their very existence in the Socialist capitals of today is a constant reminder of the vast changes that have taken place. This is not to say that there are no inequalities in Eastern Europe. There are, and they are certainly greater in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia than they are in Poland. In the Soviet Union,

"The ownership of private property has, for many reasons, proven to be unfavorable for the establishment of the new class' authority" (p. 45).

So we come to a new definition: "The specific characteristic of this new class is its collective ownership" (p. 54). But this is plainly a contradiction in terms. Collective ownership has always been taken to mean ownership by society as a whole, not a section thereof. Unless ownership and adminsitration are to be equated, can it be said that the guidance and control that the Communist Party exercises over the economic development of a Socialist country convert it into an association of owners of the nation's factories, mines, utilities, and farms? *Mirabile dictu,* Djilas makes precisely this equation: "The ownership privileges of the new class and membership in that class are the privileges of *administration*" (p. 46; his emphasis). The idea that administration is a privilege and synonymous with ownership under Socialism ought to attract thousands of harassed American branch bank managers to the Communist Party.

And so Djilas hops back and forth between his definitions. Now it is ownership, now it is administration; now the ownership is collective, now it is highly personal. Thus, page 45: "The new class obtains its power, privileges, ideology, and its customs from one specific ownership —collective ownership—which the class administers and distributes in the name of the nation and society." But on page 207, it is not the class but "The government [which] both administers and distributes national property. The new class, or its executive organ—the party oligarchy—both acts as the owner and is the owner." And on page 47 we learn that, "The so-called Socialist ownership is a disguise for the real ownership

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for example, an academician holding several jobs at once may earn twenty or twenty-five or more times as much as an unskilled worker. I see no need or justification for such a spread; more than that, I think it may have dangerous implications for the future of Soviet society. But at the same time I cannot but recognize that it is absurd to compare it to the spread which exists between, say, a Texas oilman and even the highest paid worker in one of his oilfields. But I have no desire to argue in terms of statistics. I will only say that as a Westerner visiting the Socialist world for the first time, I was continuously aware that the people live poorly by our standards, but also that they are not subjected to the constant affront and humiliation of having to coexist with a class of wealthy parasites and exploiters."

And Mr. Adler wrote (*ibid.,* p. 344):

". . . While China is not an egalitarian society, the spread between incomes does not appear to be very wide. In the factories I saw, the highest basic wage for workers was about three times the lowest, with the per capita average falling just about midway between the two. As the most highly paid engineers and managers receive between two or three times as much as the most highly paid workers, there is a spread of between six and nine to one in industry. Needless to say, there is considerable vertical mobility, with skilled workers becoming technicians or engineers and with technicians becoming engineers.

"As for the agricultural cooperatives, the national average income per peasant family is around 300 yuan (not including income from the cultivation of individual plots or from individual subsidiary occupations), the lowest being about 200 yuan and the highest around 1,000 yuan. . . .

". . . A Westerner going through Chinese factories cannot help being struck by the absence of a gulf between workers and intellectuals. Similarly and on a wider plane, relations between individuals seem to be refreshingly direct and personal and to be free from the Western disease of alienation."

by the political bureaucracy," which led me to wonder how, if collective ownership is but a disguise for private ownership, it can be "the specific characteristic" of the new class.

With all this, it is not surprising that the new class itself should be rather confused and exhibit the schizophrenic traits of its inventor. It seems that the members of the new class do not even realize that their life is one long round of caviar and champagne. Unlike "every private capitalist or feudal lord," Djilas tells us, "a Communist member of the new class . . . is not conscious of the fact that he belongs to a new ownership class, for he does not consider himself an owner and does not take into account the special privileges he enjoys" (p. 59). The new class is "unconscious of its class substance" (p. 60). Yet in the same breath Djilas reveals that, "The new class is voracious and insatiable, just as the bourgeoisie was" (p. 60). And not only is this class tragically ignorant of any of its riches, though it greedily reaches out for more, but it is being decimated by the very source of its existence, its unique characteristic, collective ownership, which, according to Djilas, "acts to reduce the class" (p. 59).

Which brings me to the second question: Who constitutes the new class? Here the answers are equally unclear and contradictory. The fruits of a Communist revolution, Djilas asserts to begin with, do not fall to the masses that participated in it, but to "the bureaucracy [which] is nothing else but the party which carried out the revolution" (p. 27). Clearly, party and bureaucracy are here equated without qualification. But on the very next page he indicates a distinction by naming as the beneficiaries of the revolution "the revolutionaries and their allies, particularly the authority-wielding group" or the revolutionaries "and the bureaucracy which forms around them." At times it seems that the bureaucracy as a whole is the new class; then the focus sharpens on the "political bureaucracy" (pp. 38, 63). And the class takes on a real clubby aspect when Djilas speaks of "Communist strong men, who handle material goods on behalf of their own narrow caste's interests rather than for the bureaucracy as a whole" (p. 58). At another point he writes, "In reality, because of monopolistic aministration, only the narrowest stratum of administrators enjoys the right of ownership" (p. 66): Nor is Djilas more consistent when he links his new class with the Communist Party. Sometimes the party is equated and co-extensive with the new class (pp. 49, 60), e.g., "The use, enjoyment and distribution of property is the privilege of the party and the party's top men." At other times, it is only the core of the party which becomes the core of the new class (pp. 39, 48), and Djilas indeed asserts that "as the new class be-

comes stronger and attains a more perceptible physiognomy, the role of the party diminishes. . . . The class grows stronger, while the party grows weaker" (p. 40).

But whatever it may be, Djilas has argued himself rigrt out of court. Everybody recognizes today that many of the Communist Parties in both Socialist and capitalist countries have at one time or another been seriously affected by bureaucratism. It may even be said that this was almost inevitable under the conditions in which they struggle (and for some these conditions still prevail) and under the weight of the tasks they had to assume. But again it cannot be maintained that bureaucracy is inherent in Communist organization in view of the serious efforts being made to eliminate the problem both within the party and, in the Socialist countries, within the state, as shown, for example, by the sweeping reorganization of control in Soviet industry and agriculture. In any event, neither bureaucracy nor party, least of all "Communist strong men" or "the narrowest stratum of administrators" can constitute a class. At most they are a social group, which is an entirely different kettle of fish. But Djilas is apparently completely unaware of this fundamental distinction.

In the end, Djilas is left trying to raise himself, not even very artfully, by his own bootstraps. He seems to think that the mere repetition of the words "the new class" will finally induce belief. And like an ignorant monk he answers the sceptic, "But the new class is really a new class. . . ." (p. 54).

It remains to be noted that in this 214-page book, Djilas not only expounds his theory of a new class, but undertakes to demolish Marxism, Socialism and Communism in theory and in practice, ending up with a vision of a new capitalism in which the role of private monopoly declines while that of the government grows. The reader cannot complain that he does not get his money's worth in concentrated claptrap. To cite but a few of the more outrageous statements and contradictions: Marx was "a somewhat simple scientist" who proceeded "practically unaware" of the most important minds of his time, whose basic ideas were "borrowed" and whose conception of a new world was "unintentional" (pp. 1, 125, 128). Nevertheless, Marx "did clarify some social laws," made "important discoveries" as a scientist, "noted the significant intellectual phenomena" of his time, and "furnished the ideological basis for the greatest and most important political movements of modern history" (pp. 2, 4, 126). In the space of three pages we are told that there were no social forces on which Marx could rely, and that the strength of Marxist philosophy did not lie in its scientific elements, but in its connection with

a mass movement, without which it would have been forgotten and dismissed as neither profound nor original, though Marx's economic and social studies "are of the highest scientific and literary rank" (pp. 4-6). Communism dies out or is eliminated with industrial development, according to Djilas, and in the industrialized West the revolution became "nonsensical and unrealistic" (pp. 11, 14). Communist leaders are "no better acquainted than others with the laws which govern society," though admittedly they carried out a revolution, built socialism and created a new society in the Soviet Union (p. 21). "The Communist revolution cannot attain a single one of the ideals named as its motivating force. However, Communist revolution has brought about a measure of industrial civilization to vast areas of Europe and Asia" (p. 30-31). "No other revolutions promised so much and accomplished so little" (p. 31), but, "The Communist regimes have succeeded in solving many problems that had baffled the systems they replaced" (p. 100). However, "Communist regimes are a form of latent civil war between the government and the people" (p. 87), the Communist state is "in constant conflict with its people" (p. 95), "social groups are sharply divided" (p. 97), and there is "profound and far-reaching discontent" (p. 99), although "the Communist society is as a whole more unified than any other" (p. 97). Djilas is no better as an economist. If the standard of living has not kept pace with the increase in industrial production, it is "self-evident" that the new class seized the lion's share of the economic progress (pp. 49-50). Can it be that Djilas never heard of accumulation, re-investment and military requirements? Sometimes he sounds like a government witness in a sedition trial: "In the words of Communists, force and violence are elevated to the lofty position of a cult and an ultimate goal" (p. 22).

I could give another page of such citations to prove the warped mind of this man, but these should suffice. One thing that was particularly illuminating to me was the attitude of this former Yugoslav leader toward Germany and the war. He apparently feels no compunction whatever in writing that in pre-World War II Germany, "the degree of political and economic progress made revolution unnecessary" (p. 9). And in one of his rare references to the war, he asserts: "It might be said that if the U.S.S.R. had not done such planning, or if it had not concentrated on the development of heavy industry, it would have entered World War II unarmed and would have been the easily conquered slave of the Hitler invasion. This is correct, but only to a certain degree. For guns and tanks are not the only strength of a country. If Stalin had not had imperialistic aims in his foreign policy and

tyrannical aims in his internal policy, no grouping of powers would have left his country standing alone before the invader" (p. 116). Yes, if Stalin had been like Benes, Chamberlain would no doubt have risen from his grave to spread his umbrella over Moscow as he did over Prague. Needless to add that Djilas' views of the current world situation are of a piece with this bit of analysis.

Finally, I must confess that there are quite a few sentences in this book the precise meaning of which still escapes me. Just one example: "Countries such as France and Italy, which had relatively strong Communist movements, had a hard time keeping up with the industrially better-developed countries, and thus ran into social difficulties" (p. 14). Does Djilas really mean to say that the Communist movements of these countries retarded their development?

Djilas is either a charlatan or a man whose mind has become unhinged under the stresses of a difficult life. Since it is hard to believe that the Yugoslav movement elevated a charlatan to such eminent positions, the second alternative seems to me the more likely.

NO HARD FEELINGS

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

IN last month's NHF column I had intended to contrast Dürrenmatt's "The Visit" with a play in poetry by the American Ettore Rella, but could not do so for lack of space. I'll try to repair the omission now.

"Sign of Winter" opened in the Spring of this year at the off Broadway Theatre 74. Its production was given sympathetic consideration by Brooks Atkinson and a tarred brush-off by the reviewers of the Herald-Tribune, the Post and the World-Telegram. Ironically, Mr. Atkinson's remarks helped deprive the play of that audience to which it was closest in spirit. He made Rella's characters out to be "figures of fate, under the control of the planetary configurations in the night of November and marked down for destruction." Here again the custom of first-night reviewing did its grim work; if Mr. Atkinson had been given more than a taxi ride's time to think, he would have realized that the constellations were a decoy, not the live duck.

Though this was the first of his plays presented in New York, Rella is, to say the least, no literary novice. His poems have appeared in numerous publications, among them the *California Quarterly, Contemporary Reader, New Masses* and *Masses and Mainstream.* He has now 12 plays behind him (this, written in 1948, is the seventh); and he is pre-medalled with options taken and then surrendered by producers who were impressed by his craft but worried about the verse. In short, he is at that traditional moment of a dramatist's career when he is about to acquire an audience, though many will not for some time know what he is after and quite a few will resent the fact. *Sign of Winter* was subjected to the most diverse interpretations. Some praised it for its forthright materialist outlook; others criticized it as having a distinctly mystical slant. The images and the four-beat line (which Rella believes to be the rhythm of idiomatic eloquence in American speech) were felt as inseparable from the play's action—or obtrusive to the point of delaying its development and denouement. The posing, in a key situation, of the accomplished fact of love instead of its more "believable" unfolding offended certain spectators, while it gave others a welcome

sense of directness. Whatever the virtues of these judgments, the play finally succumbed to their clash and closed after six weeks.

As a partisan of "Sign of Winter," I was struck by the fact that certain of its qualities and apparent meanings, which the action was intended finally to negate, proved too much for many members of the audience. Accepted as marks of the author's intention, they became obstacles to understanding. I have mentioned Mr. Atkinson's being taken in by the business of the horoscope. Equally deceptive was the alcoholism of the central character, which fixed her as a Tennessee Williams victim, though she is the very opposite of the latter's lost ladies. One's almost inclined to charge Rella with unworldliness for not foreseeing that this would happen.

Rella's play is a genuine tragedy. Its people possess knowledge of their individual and cross-purposes and the gift of articulating in more than wails, grunts, and groans. Its outcome is the result, not, as in "The Visit," of the collective surrender of individual wills, but of their irreconcilable opposition. This difference does more than describe the two plays; it also defines them. Dürrenmatt's is critical of the bourgeois social order, portraying its decay rather than envisaging its replacement. That is why his hero's slow self-awareness is expressed in resignation rather than resistance to his fate. Schill knows what is going to happen to him, but this awareness is quite negative. He cannot affect the turn of events nor throw light on them for others because his will is broken. Rella's perspective is revolutionary; therefore he can endow his heroine with active insight, first into her situation, and then into the demands which it makes upon her, that is, into the consequence to which the use of her awakening will power must lead her. Schill is a dying man when he goes to his death. Henrietta was never more alive.

One can grasp the difference in the underlying outlook of the two writers even better if one compares Henrietta with Claire, the avenging figure of Dürrenmatt's play. The author has rightly pointed out Claire's resemblance to Medea, noting the rigidity with which she adheres to her purpose. It will be remembered that the Colchian princess is so obsessed with the injury done her by her lover, Jason, that she kills her own children because they are also his. In Henrietta's killing of her former lover, Jackson Thorpe (is the similarity of names pure coincidence?), the elements of jealousy and retaliation are subordinated to her desire to *preserve* her children from him. The emergence of this and other positive motives in her tragedy is the distinguishing feature of Rella's play. Hers is the alternative and the answer, in dramatic terms, to the destructive intelligence in a predatory society.

When we first encountered her, she is almost overcome. Frustrated by Thorpe's rejection of her, helpless to halt his corruption of her son, dreading his infatuation with her daughter, she has taken to drinking and consulting the stars for help.

Thorpe, a Southerner, has been a boarder in Henrietta's New York house for more than eighteen years. Once dependent upon her love and generosity, he has become her creditor and threatens to take possession of her home if she will not countenance her daughter Flora's surrender to him. As a figure in local politics, he has turned her son, Jimmy, into a goon and, inadvertently, a killer. He is the man of whom Henrietta says that he can kick the stars around and that, when she is worn out, his shape fills the sky.

Yet the agent of his undoing is coming onstage. Homer Jones, as he calls himself before the "recognition scene" in which his name, John Troy, and his story are revealed, is a young Negro student and keeper of the furnace in Henrietta's house, a job he has taken in exchange for his basement room and in order to be near Jackson, whom he has tracked down and intends to kill. For it was Jackson who, when sheriff of a small Georgia town, opened his jail to a lynch mob, allowing them to kidnap Homer's father who trusted him as a friend.

The fourth key figure is Flora, whose declaration of love for John, as we shall now call him, bolster her mother's determination to strike down Jackson herself, after stealing the gun which John has concealed in his room.

In fiction, transformations of character are depicted at relative leisure, though they must still be achieved by means of nodal scenes. In Rella's austere drama with its overtones of Greek tragedy (are the names, Homer and Troy, coincidental, too?), the happenings take place from six-thirty in the evening to midnight. Not only must the action be telescoped beyond normal belief, but the consciousness of the chief character, Henrietta, is heightened with a swiftness that violates all naturalistic convention. The relationship between John and Flora matures just as arbitrarily, and with equal justification. Here the poetry operates not as decoration, but as the very medium of compression. That is why the close attention of the audience to the language and not just to the incidents is so vital. For example, Henrietta is quite aware that her drinking is to Jackson's advantage. She says to him:

> You want me to defend myself
> so I won't see what's really on your mind.

She senses that she is not weak by nature, but because she has allowed

her energy, like her security, to be drained away by Jackson:

> I observe, first of all,
> that without my help you couldn't have destroyed me.
> That's where my will power went,—into *you,* in the form of money.

And with the awareness of loss, she has an intimation that she can restore to herself what Jackson has stolen from her:

> I could bring in these walls like the feathers of a bird, a big, black bird,
> and smother you in your sleep.

But where is her strength to come from? Not from her son, whom she describes as "green wood with poison in him. All he does . . . is smoke and smolder." From Flora, then? Partly; for in her daughter she sees not so much innocence as purity of feeling, and decision. Flora's desire to remain a worker rather than accept the offer of an easy life, her contempt for Jackson, and her uncomplicated choice of John freshen the stale air of calculation and second thoughts which so many are forced to breathe today. She relieves Henrietta of her fears by taking moral courage for granted.

It is John's will, however, which, in becoming hers, releases her to do what he set out to perform. The proximity of irony is hinted at quite early when John, teasing her about her horoscope, asks:

> Wouldn't you rather be surprised
> than to be told exactly what to expect?

and Henrietta answers:

> It's never exactly.

At the moment of this exchange John *would* be surprised to know that he will not kill Jackson, for that is what he firmly expects to do. Later, the irony tightens when Henrietta cries out to John:

> . . . you are giving the hunter your eye——
> he is dropping to his knees, scared stiff——

and is near bursting when John tells her that she dreams of his doing what is continually on her mind.

For John has begun to question whether his vengeance will have any other positive effect than the relief of his rage:

> This thread through my life,
> could I leave it now if I wanted to?
> has it led me only to a trap

carefully laid by myself, ——
self-destruction and the illusion of justice,
while one more black man—how many since my father?—
swings from a tree?

He tells Henrietta that his mother counseled him not to look for revenge:

. . . she said
if I waited I would find
many people to believe in . . .

Political consciousness is stirring in him. But he is impatient:

I've got to make my own time.

Whereupon Henrietta revives the tragic irony:

That's what I like to hear!
It's what I cant say for myself.

Neither knows it, but she has taken over his mission. Later that night, John, to whom Flora has given her love, feels that he can let life take care of Jackson, then mistrusts his fortune, and decides to replace the gun which Henrietta has taken from him. By then, though, Henrietta is prepared to deal with the enemy of her family's happiness and to bequeath freedom to John in return for his gift of will.

"Bequeath" has no social connotation here. The Negro people are no one's beneficiaries when it come to liberty. Nevertheless Rella's characters do lead a kind of double life. Apart from their human individuality, their moving on the indispensable plane of action, they also wear the masks of their social meaning. The harmless joke of the telegram from Ike in "The Visit" is matched by the somewhat more portentous dating of Rella's events: the eve of November 7, anniversary of the Russian Revolution. To put it roughly, Jackson is the embodiment of capitalist exploitation. He is cruel, parasitic, intelligent in his own interest, unsentimental, quick to promote the failings, prejudice, and superstition in others which will tighten his control over them. Yet he is also a "paper tiger." An ugly disclosure can rock him; a weakness brought to light can bring on panic. Frustrated by Flora's not keeping an appointment he has foisted upon her, he confesses to her brother:

I seem to scatter myself all over the place
nothing in the center to make me a person.

The arbiter of the present, he will not survive the armed knowledge

of those who have learned that a different tomorrow is possible for their children if not for them.

It would be pointless to look for exact social equivalents for the characters at whose hands Jackson suffers defeat. If Rella had attempted so specific a correlation of action and meaning, he would have been committed to writing a ludicrous, pedantic allegory. Yet one is justified in finding in Henrietta, Flora and John shifting views of the class, the people, and the kind of men and women who will in the end abolish the system which threatens all earthly happiness and life. In John's pursuit of Jackson, followed by his reasoned indecision about killing him, there is no compromise with racial oppression, but the recognition that individual reprisal is self-defeating and that successful resistance depends on Negro and white and working class solidarity. This realization is fortified by Flora's love:

> *John.* Everybody with black skin is looking for himself . . .
> *Flora.* Why don't you look for me?——

Flora has elected to remain a worker. Her choice is not romantic; it is made in healthy honesty. She will not accept the kind of bondage into which her lumpen brother has fallen. She follows her innermost right feelings, disentangled of hypocrisy, fear of what others will think, or the demands they would like to make upon her. Her clear-eyed nature identifies her with that class whose triumph depends upon its willingness to cope with reality, no matter how arduous the necessity imposed thereby. She is the future in the sense that she reminds us what human beings can be like.

And Henrietta? I think one might say that she stands for "the people," for all those who work and do not oppress, exploit or corrupt their fellow man; but who are held back by illusions it is fatal though comfortable to cherish, and who look for shelter from the storm of the world, for some Father to defend them against undeserved blows. Yet Henrietta's is more than the capacity to suffer. In her we see the strong and generous human animal, the thinking plant that slowly turns from the stars that cannot nourish it to the sun. At last, she too attains the strength to choose. Her sacrifice brings about the destruction of "the fittest" and humanity's regeneration.

I have still not mentioned the first speaker in the play: the boarder, Henry Stone, a dried up little man through whose street telescope passers-by can look at the constellations of the season. I've held off describing him because he is hardly a dramatic figure at all in the conventional modern sense. (That's what mixes up the audience, a con-

fusion compounded by his occupying the stage with Henrietta for a considerable initial stretch.) Like his customers, or the mythical Tiresias, he is an observer, powerless to prevent or effect what he can foresee. He speaks of himself as an old bone. Henrietta tells him: "Oh I love the earth—I don't think you do." He feels strange at the sight of his own body. Yet this lonely, alienated and helpless figure is a bearer of wisdom, if only by negative example. For one thing, he assures Henrietta that people are little by little learning not be tricked by the Sign of the Swan,

> The Swan, you see, sails round the sky near the edge of
> the Northern Coalsack,——
> that's the great black hole in the Milky Way,
> no stars whatsoever—nothing—nothing——
> he leads the people by the star on his tail
> to the very edge of the Coalsack—
> he's a bird—he's got wings—when he gets to the hole all he
> has to do
> is rise and fly——
> but the people, no wings—they run through the night
> grabbing for the star on his tail-feathers, not expecting
> the sky to give way,
> bottomless and black——
> so they topple headlong,
> down, down, into the Coalsack!

The Swan is a symbol of cosmic necessity, of causality, of the universe whose laws cannot be contravened by human caprice or yearning. But just for that reason, men are lost if they look for the stars—immutable law—to decide their fate. That is falling into the Coalsack. Henry, on the other hand, is comically ineffectual because he is so absorbed in the non-human world that he has lost touch with mankind and with passion. What makes him stern at times is the knowledge of his loss. Aware of his emptiness, he urges his friends to nurture their freedom, not let it lie idle nor hope that others will care for it. He warns Henrietta against playing with necessity or finding her wishes and fears accounted for by some illusory chain of cause and effect so binding that she is absolved of all responsibility. And gradually Henrietta gives up her stars, which from then on serve as metaphors rather than signs of destiny.

The one-time spectator, particularly if he is not a materialist and a dialectical one to boot, cannot be blamed if he has trouble with Henry. For Rella has made him the occasion for a serious assault on the posi-

tions of idealism and of absolute determiniism, according to which freedom of will is not even relative and the role of individuals in history —and history itself—is a bloodless masquerade of protons and electrons, He has attempted a poetic, if not fully dramatized, affirmation of man's ability to enter the chain of causality as more than a mere bundle of effects; as, in fact, a partial cause of whatever follows upon his advent. What happens thereafter is the result of this and that act, of a striving and fighting of wills none of which is utterly determined by the past. It is a victory of such circumscribed but nevertheless real willpower that is celebrated in the outcome of the play.

Nevertheless, something in Henry's spirit broods over this spectacle. His melancholy shows itself at the very moment when he is trying to rouse Henrietta:

> You should listen to the noise in the house,—not to me.
> You're a mother, Mrs. Taylor—first of all you're a mother,——
> look for your children—always look for your children—
> they keep the house going, generation to generation—
> otherwise it's god-awful quiet!
> I should know—
> I'm out there every night on a star,
> cold as blazes,
> no people, no names, no noise,
> and the greenness of the world
> all burned away—or locked in ice.
>
> Life is high, like giraffes and trees—
> and tangled like vines and spider webs.
> I'm low—everything stoops to reach me,—
> and that's when they vanish—in the fire—in the ice—
> and the ice, by the way, is gaining on the fire.

It's as though we heard the second law of thermodynamics speaking. Well, he will make a joke of it. He sees himself as a doorman before

> a little old door, lower than a mouse hole
> where all the giants of time must go hunchback.

Henry's speech may be heard to take, but it is impossible to refute. In any case, though death is not the spur, neither is it what keeps us from living. The victim-hero and the obsessed heroine of "The Visit" are united at last in breathless vengeance, while a chorus of collaborators accompanies the coffin and the lady to the train. But when Henrietta fires her "scorpion" at Jackson's heart, she acts in praise of consciousness and because life is so precious to her.

EPITAPH FOR A SINGING FRIEND

WALTER LOWENFELS

Not just the Big Death but the little inbetween one that stops you and you don't know it because the body holds together—because you still move with your finger tips like the nails on the corpse that keep growing in the casket.

That's the first death is the only death you might know if you could know yourself as you move two ways backward forward like a clock with two faces in the mirror of your real self.

I remember it was not a memory once but the latest five star red hot extra saying—This Is It—giving us all of tomorrow today before it was history of wasness parading in death mask of isness.

The first death is the one we really taste and the one we hate most because of what we dreamt of—life eternal on the Salt Lake Line on the Sante Fe Line on the Rock Island Line before the Buffalo Skinners got off the trail and you became a fixture over the folkways like Custer's Last Battle used to be over the bars of yesterday's beer.

So this is the way we say good-bye—not with whimper—not with dying fall—but as you marry your youth to the glint of your perpetual fixation in being what was without ever anymore going to catch up with singing tomrrows somebody else's youth will make up and you will not be listening to anything except the dominants of your sub-dominants twanging on the infinite compassion of your technical perfection whispering to us—did you ever hear such glissandos?

RiGhT FaCe

Misers

The reluctance of consumers to go on buying sprees is annoying more and more Streeters. The consumer is being labeled "the new American tightwad," and some in the Street suggest that Madison Avenue should goad on the recalcitrants with some such slogan as: "The bucks you insist on saving are costing your neighbor his job."—*Business Week.*

For the Love of Art

LONDON—One of the most controversial works of sculpture by Sir Jacob Epstein was bought today for display at a waxworks in the west coast resort of Blackpool.—The *New York Times.*

Freedom Fighter

Aly Khan, long a playboy, is head of the Pakistani delegation to the United Nations. Diplomats familiar with the mission from Karachi spoke for its members sympathetically: "The old Aga Khan was a statesman and if any of his influence, any at all, has rubbed off on the son he should be able to do a fair job of it without being outstanding." But he'll have to overcome his reputation. For the most of the last twenty-five years Aly Khan has been busy building a name as a fabulously wealthy, hard riding, fast driving, restless man of the world with a liking for parties and beautiful women. . . .

Scornful of danger, he found plenty to do during World War II. . . .

The young officer was assigned to liaison post with the United States Sixth Army during the invasion of southern France in 1944. He was awarded the French Legion of Honor, Croix de Guerre and the United States Bronze Star. There is a story that his last act in uniform was to liberate at gunpoint some of the best horses the Nazis had taken from the Aga Khan's stables.—The *New York Times.*

Security

More than a third of the members of Congress traveled abroad last year.

Whether this was a record could not be learned, nor could the cost to the Government. Such data are a professional secret.—The *New York Times.*

Modesty

The Bentley is made by Rolls-Royce. Except for the radiators. they are identical motors cars, manufactured by the same engineers in the same works. The Bentley costs $300 less, because its radiator is simpler to make. People who feel diffident about driving a Rolls-Royce can buy a Bentley.

PRICE. The car illustrated in this advertisement is $13,550 f.o.b. principal port of entry.—Ad in the *New York Times.*

The Bars and Bars Forever

The acquisition of original manuscripts and letters of all the makers of the Constitution was announced today by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The two most noteworthy manuscripts deal with the opposition to the Constitution that forced addition of the Bill of Rights. . . .

The D.A.R. took under consideration some of the most drastic resolutions ever put before its annual meeting.

These resolutions call for United States withdrawal from the United Nations; withdrawal of recognition from the Soviet Union; abolition of the income tax; curbing the Supreme Court, and earliest posible termination of foreign aid and of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act.—The *New York Times.*

Self-Evident

The British differentiate between Arab nationalism, which they assert they have helped to promote since Lawrence of Arabia led the Arabs to throw off the Turkish yoke in World War I, and "Arab imperialism," led by President Nasser and supported by Soviet money, propaganda and arms.—The *New York Times.*

Obstinate

Thousands of Senegalese yelled "Independence" at Charles de Gaulle tonight and he cried back at them that they could have it if they wanted it. . . .

The impasse was symbolic of the situation that has developed since General de Gaulle began to tell Africans they could get their independence by voting no in the Constitutional referendum September 28. The impetus of nationalist agitation, goaded from the political Left, is such that parties in several territories have continued to demand what General de Gaulle has offered.—The *New York Times.*

books in review

Flowering Wasteland

THE DOUBLE BED, *from the feminine side,* by Eve Merriam. Cameron Associates. $3.50.

IN the home of the girl I married and I married her nevertheless—there was a solemn engine of repose. The headboard of it rose in a pointed arch almost to the ceiling; the footboard was scarcely to be found, but it unfailingly performed its supportive work. The ensemble had an ecclesiastical air, entirely just, for this monument, like the Church itself, gathered within its amplitude the great affairs of birth and death and the disturbances preparatory to both.

Such was that Victorian institution, the Double Bed. My parents and most of their contemporaries were born in it, and were very probably conceived in it. When my time came, however, culture had fallen from its height; metallurgy had triumphed over carpentry. I was born in a double bed of brass, whereof the roving tubular forms, rather graceful indeed, were a system of conduits through which no nectar flowed.

At the same time when I rescued my beloved from her Gothic sanctuary, the double bed had gone impossibly out of style. My marital happiness has therefore been erected upon Twins, which, like the American Constitution, sustain a separation of powers. I have some fear—and Miss Meriam's poem confirms it—that twins are now in their turn old-fashioned. Congress has intruded upon the judiciary.

However, I speak without an expert's authority: analysis has disclosed that I know no more of these matters than Oedipus knew of Jocasta. Perhaps this will be a merit in a reviewer of poetry, who needs a certain innocence of mind and ear. The trouble with reviewers very generally is that they are old enough to be employed.

Now, Miss Merriam is a good deal younger than I (in years, at any rate), and the Double Bed means something rather different to her. I think of my ancestors; she, of her contemporaries. I think of old engagements, long lost or won; she, of present stress and present trouble. And she thinks of these, not as a theme for homily or reportage, but as a theme for song.

How accurate the choice, and how few there are who could make it! All people (except officials) speak more or less poetically, because they are trying, not only to describe the world, but to express how they feel within it. But

one doesn't become a poet simply by speaking poetically. One has to submit the native gift to discipline, rid speech of superfluity, and compress eloquence within the bounds of rhythmic speech. Then the sounds move and the imagery glistens—a constellation of all the senses, showing how the poet stands to his word, or, it may be, how the world stands toward him.

I suppose that, having chosen poetry as the medium, Miss Merriam next had to decide what sort of poem this would be. Her theme, the relation of the sexes in marriage, is very large: it is personal, sociological, historical. Its grandeur suggests something Lucretian. Yet love is also part of the theme, and love suggests the lyric and Sappho. The result is here an adroit synthesis: Miss Merriam is extensive and philosophical like Lucretius and lyrical like Sappho, and she gives us a sequence (so to say) of odes, of various lengths, styles, and atmospheres, all shrewdly laid like little stones to rear the building. Remember, then, as you enjoy each stone, that you are always moving higher.

Moreover, Miss Merriam is an inquirer, a searcher-out of things and relations. She wants to know the state of the case, the history of it, and the cure of it. Her discoveries she lays before us in some four parts, wherein we pass from the exquisite hopes of wedding day, through the building of the household and the strains of settled companionship, to an ultimate union of the two partners at last made equal by love. I gather she thinks we could do all this more swiftly and easily under socialism, but that nevertheless we *can* do it now. I want to tell her that I think so too.

The decision to be Sapphic in style and Lucretian in length has entailed certain other problems. For example, Sappho, in a famous poem imitated by Catullus and by many other poets, describes how the lover feels in the presence of the beloved. The tone is personal and (presumably) autobiographical. Lucretius, however, gives us not so much the feelings of the poet as the vast landscape of the cosmos itself, and he doesn't tempt us to find sources of the poem in events of his own life. In *The Double Bed* there are passages where the personal reference seems explicit and passages where the sociology is explicit, but there are also passages where a blending of the two leaves us (or leaves me, at any rate) in doubt how the emphasis really falls. This is not a stylistic defect, because poetry ordinarily gains from a fusion of meanings. Nevertheless it makes it hard for me to report all that the poem says.

Moreover, Miss Merriam doesn't wear her heart on her sleeve, nor her meaning either. She loves everything about words—their sense and their sounds— even to the point of punning: "Master my Mister," says the wife ironically to the husband, or "Does straight suggest / a phallacy?" These devices remain always pat to the sense and the feeling, and they lead me to think that, just as mathematics is one vast tautology, so poetry is, in essense, one vast pun. Carol as you may, you cannot do without wit. This is the warning of the Augustan Age to Romanticism.

For myself, I am rather Augustan in taste (or, it may be, rather schoolboyish), and I would prefer not to labor after meanings, just as in music I would prefer not to labor after tunes. This leaves me somewhat behind the present advances in all the arts—unless they be those very advanced advances,

which the latest anthologies reflect, of poetry with a hard eighteenth-century precision. I am free to admit that it was only after a third reading (and a little help from the publisher) that I felt I had penetrated to the heart of this poem and could commune there with the poet herself. But if perspicuity of sense be any criterion, she still ranks high, for there are several poems of Yeats and Eliot which, after many readings, I have penetrated not at all.

I mention these things by way of suggesting how you should read the poem. You mustn't skip and you mustn't stop. If you skip one section, you won't understand the next; and if you stop, you will lose the endearing drama of the whole. Therefore, you must read this poem entire, and, if possible, you must read it at a sitting. Then you must read it again, at another sitting. Your reward will be true music and the music of truth, and friendship with a sweet, sensitive mind.

Human institutions, however monolithic they may appear (and they all love to appear that way) are in fact vortices of events. Every one of them is more or less unsteady, because every one of them more or less fails to satisfy the need (or needs) for which it was created. The institution of marriage ("an honorable estate," as the Prayer Book says) shows a remarkable permanence, considering the forces which whirl around it, and the multitude of failures which occur within it. Miss Merriam has no doubt (nor I either) that it is the best state for men and women to be in. The problem is, not how to supersede it, but how to make it work with a universally attractive beneficence.

Primitively, men are polygamous, just because they have appetite; and women are monogamous, because they need stable, continuing help in the bearing and rearing of children. Some conflict is thus laid down in the very biology of the sexes. Upon this eruptive base has been laid historically a series of absurd property relations, profitable to a few and impoverishing of the many. There followed a preposterous dialectics —rational in view of its sources, irrational in view of ideals—by which the stability requisite for the survival of our race became the stability requisite for the transmission of property, whilst at the same time the privileged males were enticed into promiscuity and the subject males denied, by poverty, the chance at a settled married life. Contrarily, the privileged females were, or were supposed to be, chaste out of economic duty; and the subject females were abandoned to various forms of the *droit du seigneur*.

Thus the double bed grew infected with the double standard, the true ground of the standard being economic. "The man," said the great Dr. Johnson, "imposes no bastards upon his wife," that is to say, the property-holder cannot falsify the biological descent of property. And, as the greater Dr. Marx said, "Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives."

Exploitative economic systems have thus considerably increased the conflict between stability and instability in marriage. There are other operative causes with much the same effect—in particular the influence of parents upon children. By the time you have pried Pop and Mom loose from your marriage, the

marriage is half over and may have already collapsed. You find you chose your spouse not (or not only) because she (or he) was a good and seductive person, but because there was a resemblance (or a happy contrast) to Pop or Mom. Nature is damnably blind; it is only we who are intelligent. Hence our problems, our defeats, and our triumphs.

All these influences (personal, parental, sociological) have long made marriage a hell aspiring to heaven, a heaven teetering upon hell. Somehow the institution survives, and somehow remains, though incredibly, a workable ideal. Perhaps the case is that decency (though you would never guess it from the behavior of our rulers) is for decent people the great instrument of survival, and that decent people remain (though they may not rule) in the majority. Through the smoke and clamor of conflict they stretch out their hands to one another, and here and there, and everywhere indeed, they join hands and arms and bodies in the ennobled, healing, propagative embraces of the double bed. Every marriage is an experiment in socialism, and every victorious socialism is an experiment in matrimonial joy. Indeed the "socialist" critics of achieved socialism are very much like spouses who expected to live happily ever after, when what comes "after" is really only the chance to build a settled happiness—a chance you don't have until you first are married. And so these critics seek once more the old bachelor society of pimps and bawds which it was once the essence of their zeal to abolish.

Well, as you can guess, in these last remarks I have taken you far beyond anything that Miss Merriam intended to assert. But this is part of the price she must pay for being a poet. No poet, and no artist, can confine the outer bounds of his effects, the suggestinevess of his language, the power of his inspiration, whereby the reader mounts as the reader lists into realms of private specularion. But, short of the socialist analogy, Miss Merriam does, I think, assert what I have asserted, and I have the impresison of having learned it all from her. At the very least, she has confirmed what I already suspected; and, since I like to base opinions upon people as well as upon science, I feel myself fortified.

It would be pleasant to list the several beauties of this long poem, and to give excerpts by way of proof. But as the reader, you deserve freedom to find all these for yourself. I simply bear witness that the beauties are there, and, further, applaud the prophetic insight which named our poet Eve. This isn't Mother Eve, the parent of temptation; it is Eve as Milton's Adam saw her, with grace in all her steps and in every gesture dignity and love. A second and redemptive Eve, she calls forth flowers upon the wasteland and makes it habitable once more.

BARROWS DUNHAM

Conflict of Values

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE RICH, by C. P. Snow. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.95.

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE RICH is the latest link in a series of novels called *Strangers and Brothers* placed in the time and the world of the middle Twenties to middle Forties. It is the real world of that period as those of us who are mature enough

recall it: a world of political awareness and political action, of revulsion against Hitlerism, of the Second World War, and of the birth of the atomic age. C. P. Snow in this latest work has retained Lewis Eliot as the narrator but he has fulfilled the promise made in *Time of Hope* to relate the story of Charles March separately from that of his hero. In doing so he has created a work billiant enough to stand alone yet rich enough to greatly enhance the series of which it is a part.

Read for itself, apart from the series, Eliot is merely a narrator, not quite in the static stylized manner of Conrad's Marlowe, but equally uninvolved in the selective drama of the March family. It is only the reader familiar with the earlier novels who will catch the rich suggestiveness of repeated themes and recognize that this is Eliot's story as well as Charles March's. Snow has engendered enough mystery and animation in Eliot's background however to send the innocent reader to fill in the blanks. Each of the novels in the series may be read alone, though the group which relates most closely Lewis Eliot's personal story are best read in order.

The Conscience of the Rich returns Lewis Eliot to the mid Twenties as a young law student and ushers him into the closed world of the March family through his friendship with young Charles March, a fellow law student. The Marches have been for 200 years one of the great Jewish families in England and a powerful part of its upper class structure in finance and in government. Both Charles and his sister Katherine long to escape the confines of their opulent and stifling life. Charles particularly determines to live a "useful" life and in abandoning a brilliant career at the Bar and severin himself from the world of rich and in fluential Jews into which he was born he comes into violent conflict with hi father.

It is the aware handling of the con flicting social values in *The Conscienc of the Rich* which sparks the drama c father and son. Leonard March, th father and Charles March his son ar brilliantly portrayed individuals—bu beneath the colorful characterization lies the deeper vein of clashing ideologie which Snow is working in every scene

There is a scene describing a Frida night dinner party given by Leonar March at which his niece says that sh doubts if she would ever have an children—"when you think of wha the world may be." She is referring t the rise of Hitlerism. Leonard Marc says, "I suppose you mean the worl may not be a tolerable place for peopl of our religion?"

Margaret March nodded. Leonar March cried out, ' I wish the Jew would stop being news!' It was a shou of protest: but somehow he said it a a jingle, as though they were doin it on purpose. 'I admit I never expecte to see my religion getting this deplor able publicity. I never expected to spen my declining years watching peopl degraded because they belong to th same religion as myself. But I do no consider that these events should compe any of my relations to cripple thei lives. I refuse to credit that they can b affected. And if they should be affected which I repeat is not possible, the would be better off in the compan of their children—if their children tur out to be a consolation—and not source of grief.'

It is a reply perfectly drawn to th turns of the character's speech and th turns of the plot—yet how well i mirrors an upper class Jewish vie which virtually blinded itself to the an

ihilation of millions. It is one of in-umerable examples of Snow's gift for laying a role in the individual and the ocial key simultaneously. Though this s a long established rule in literature, nd a particular grace of English liter-ture, our own contemporary novels uffer its loss so intensely that we must ake time to admire it here.

That the point of view of a Com-nunist should be presented in the form f Ann, Charles' wife, again requires ome marvelling. Ann is a young Jew-sh woman, not so rich as the Marches ut wealthy, elegant in dress, in man-er and in looks, intelligent and strong-villed. She loves Charles deeply and hares his determination to lead a useful" life, helping him to abandon he Bar and the life which that repre-ents to become a practicing doctor. he is one of the editors of "the 'Note' —a private news sheet, cyclostyled like n old-fashioned school magazine, distri-uted through the post. . . . It was run y a Communist, but he had been born nto the ruling world and still moved ithin it. In fact, the charm of the Note' (it was subscribed to by many ho had no idea of its politics) was hat its news seemed to come from ght inside the ruling world. Some of he news was provided by Ann."

Ann's position on the "Note" makes a possibility for her to save the larch family from a scandal which ill cost Sir Philip March his position the Government. But to do so Ann ould have to give the Government formation which would allow for e suppression of the "Note." It is to harles that she turns to make the de-ision. Charles is forced to choose be-ween one of two intolerable cruelties to his wife or to his father. Though harles does not share Ann's political affiliation, he will not ask her to betray her friends or her beliefs, and an inevitable rift results with his family.

After the total break between father and son, Charles talks to Lewis Eliot about what he has done. "I've done this. Sometimes I can't believe it. It sounds ridiculous, but I feel I've done nothing. . . . At other times, I feel re-morse." Eliot recalling his own act of cruelty against his wife tells him he understands what he is feeling. Charles says, "Did yours seem like mine? Did it seem you were bound to make a choice? Did it seem you had to hurt one of two people, whatever you did?"

" 'I hadn't any justification at all,' I said.

'With me," said Charles, 'it seemed to be wrapped up with everything in my life.' "

It is difficult within a review to dis-play the wealth in this novel. It is rich in colorful portraits and dramat-ically direct scenes. It combines qualities of intimacy and objectivity in its por-trait of a Jewish milieu unexcelled in literature. Relationships are complicated and just and the plotting is most skill-ful. All this is conveyed in a style which is rapid, lucid, smooth—flying by like a landscape seen from the open window of a first-class train on a won-derfully clear day.

It is difficult to render the essence of Charles March's striving for a "good" life without overstating and distorting it. Charles March is one of a brotherhood of men created by C. P. Snow all of whom elect to turn away from the world of power: George Pas-sant, Lewis' brother Martin in the *New Men,* Eliot himself, etc. These are all men eminently fitted to cope with the power world, yet they take on the cloak

of "failure" in a search for values not common to today's society. Is Snow then equating their personal rejection with a generalized indictment? Certainly there is indictment in Charles March's lightly said, "For success, you know, intelligence is a very minor gift." And however cleverly the successful men of *Strangers and Brothers* conduct their affairs, there is no question of the author's touch of contempt or of the higher value he places on his brotherhood of "failures."

What then is it which draws C. P. Snow again and again to this theme? He is of course greatly at home in the world of power, wielding it fictionally with the greatest assurance and validity. But it seems to be more than the joy of rendering a scene of which the grasp is sure. He is obsessed with the question of the values by which men live in the real world. His work is a long examination of this question and he tests it over and over again in varying situations. The answers are not always the same. In *Homecoming,* Eliot defends his part in the trial of Sawbridge (a Communist who admits transferring atomic information to Russia) from a position more practical than idealistic. "You ought not to think that I like what we've done. Or a good many other things we're having to do. People of my sort have only two choices in this situation, one is to keep outside and let others do the dirty work, the other is to stay inside and try to keep off the worst horrors and know all the time that we shan't come out with clean hands. . . ."

Intelligence in Sir Charles Snow himself is a very major gift. It is a type of organizing, practical intelligence rare in creative artists and it is not to belittle this gift that one longs as we for a less conrolled hold on the artis hand. The complaint is not that v have failed to find another *Remem brance of Things Past,* but that with its own aims and promises some fla of genius might have bound the sepa ated volumes into a blended poet which it just misses.

Yet one parts from Snow with mu the same feeling Lewis Eliot records he takes stock of Charles March, aft the painful parting with his father.

"Did it make nonsense of what had tried to do with his life? . . . him the answer would sometimes, as perhaps often, be, yes. Sitting with hi in the drawing-room I could not fe it so. Not that I was trying to jud him: all I had was a sense of e pectancy, curiously irrelevant, but rea suring as though the heart were bea ing strongly, about what the futu held." HELEN DAV

Break Down That Wall!

THE WALL BETWEEN, by Ann Braden, Monthly Review Press. $5.0

ANNE BRADEN'S account of wh happened when a Negro boug a house in a white suburb has be described variously as "exciting as detective story," and the "best book the South since the Court declared t Separate but Equal doctrine uncons tutional." For a clue to the boo tremendous impact on the emotions, y must turn to the author's own exp nation of how she came to write it:

". . . when so many 'objective' c servers are attempting to analyze t sources of racial conflict, some ad tional insights may be gained if t

story of one of these incidents is told . . by one who was deeply involved . . . and might well have been on either side of the conflict."

Mrs. Braden, like Lillian Smith and Wilma Dykeman (*Neither Black nor White*) is a southerner; she was reared in the conservative town of Aniston, Alabama. But unlike most of the authors writing about race relations, Mrs. Braden was a protagonist in an epic struggle to change the status quo. In this case, the conflict occurred when the black world of Andrew Wade met the white world of segregated Louisville, head on in the Rone Court real estate development. It was she and her husband, Carl Braden, who bought the house and transferred title to a Negro ex-serviceman.

The book has the tenderness and pathos of *Proud Shoes*. It is profound, where *Proud Shoes* was merely moving and ironic because it is pivoted on one central theme—the bombing of the Wade house and the tragedy compounded when the authorities, instead of arresting those responsible, threw the Bradens and some half dozen other white friends of the Wades in jail, with the excuse that the whole thing was a Communist plot to stir up hatred between the races."

Because of the way Mrs. Braden has handled this part of the story, in the chapter she calls "The Great Exorcism," the book goes beyond a study in race relations to encompass still another problem of our time: the use of name calling to halt progress—a pattern, developed by Senator Eastland, as Mrs. Roosevelt has pointed out on the book's jacket.

The book's greatness stems not only from its motivation, but from the sensitive way in which Mrs. Braden has drawn the participants in the struggle —all of them. The compassion of her pen extends to her husband, the newspaperman and former Federated Press correspondent Carl Braden, for whom the 1922 railway strike was a "traumatic experience"; the defense attorney Zollenger who became a tower of strength after wavering between taking and not taking the controversial case; Mark Etheridge, publisher of the Courier-Journal, who had fought the Ku Klux Klan in Georgia but would not give Carl his job back, even after his savage prison sentence had been lifted by the Supreme Court ruling in the Nelson case; James I. Rone, the builder, "everybody out here is blaming me"; the prosecutor Scott Hamilton, whom the author "could not really know; we met as opponents. . . . I saw him as the man who had sent my husband to prison," but who, she felt, might have been her dinner partner at the Country Club had her life followed the pattern cut out for her by her parents; the parents themselves—their complacent world crashed into ruins when their daughter was arrested on a sedition charge—the father wept when he told a minister he was afraid Anne Gambrell "does not want me to have her children" (even if she goes to prison), but "I, would never, never give them my prejudices."

But it is in the portraits of Andrew Wade and of his wife, Charlotte, who hated and mistrusted all white people; and in the portrait of herself, a white woman with a "neurotic compulsion" to do something about racial inequality in the South ("I grew up in a sick society; and a sick society makes neurotics") that this book rises to heights of genuine characterization. And the central figure in the book is

not the newsman Carl Braden nor the woman behind him, Anne Braden, who took much of her strength from the hymnals of the Episcopal church, but the Negro, Andrew Wade.

From the moment the Bradens were indicted, the prosecution had pursued "one major strategy. That was to get Andrew Wade to turn against us . . . to testify it was we who had conceived the idea of purchasing the house on Rone Court." They never succeeded; but in the very moving chapter, "The Shadow of the Wall," Anne Braden recounts how the tension and terror which preceded the trial caused Wade momentarily to doubt his friends. When she read, in the transcript of answers Wade made to an Un-American Activities Committee representative in Louisville, that he felt he had been "used," by both sides, she felt that "all of the fight had been drained out" of her.

Later, she talked to Wade about it. . . . "No, I don't have any doubts of you and Carl . . . I never did really . . . but . . . Hamilton had me in his office sometimes for hours at a time . . ."

Wade's testimony was not damaging to the defense; he had called regularly at her home, after Carl's arrest, to see what he could do to help. Through the agony she felt when she read the un-American transcript, she was able to see that his mistrust had stemmed from the Wall's shadow. Had they been "colored, he could not have doubted" them even for a moment, no matter how the prosecution obscured the issue, which was "bombing, not beliefs."

It is a tribute to Mrs. Braden's status, both as a writer and as a human being, that the young man who returned to Louisville from the armed forces, b lieving he had a right to live in an house he could afford to buy and wh told the reporters, after the house H did buy was bombed, "I'll live he or die here," is the hero of her boo The story of his struggle to live in th house, and to re-insure and re-finan it after the bombing, is finely detaile

The Wall ends on a hopeful not Louisville is not the same place 1957 it was in 1954. The town "h won national acclaim as it began des gregating its schools. . . ." As to wheth she and her husband went "too fa in helping a Negro move into a whi section , . . nothing, Mrs. Braden say is going to stop the Andrew Wade "You would have to change the histo of three hundred years of oppressio to change this factor now." She se Wade as a symbol of Negroes all ov the South; and it is among the Neg people, and not their white friends th the movement for change has becom a crusade; it is they "who must set th time-table."

The book ends as she looks ba to the day when Wade came to pic up the property deed and "walked o of our house on his way to Rone Cou and three years of hell. I watched hi as he went down our front walk—h head held high, walking into the fa of a hostile white world." She was remember, how he had looked the "his pride and his dignity in that m ment." Somewhere, she believes, the is a solution to the "problems in h man relations that beset . . . our n tion. . . . But no solution will lo survive the tests of life or the cha lenges of the future if it writes that pride or ignores that dignity."

KATHLEEN CRON

Forward from Darwin

NEW BOTTLES FOR NEW WINE, by Julian Huxley. Harper & Brothers. $4.50.

THIS volume brings together a noteworthy collection of thirteen lectures and essays by a distinguished biologist. Written during the last eight years, they range over biological, social and philosophical subjects. The most persistent topic is that of the relation of science and a scientific approach to theories of progress, the nature of a free society, ethics and ideology generally. At the same time there is an essay: "What Do We Know about Love?" that definitely belongs here and another one, entitled "Natural History in Iceland," the inclusion of which is questionable.

Fundamentally, the essays fit together and cover different aspects of closely related themes. Unfortunately, separate essays rarely make a good volume for the simple reason that they remain essays and as such cannot become a unified book. There is an enormous amount of repetition here, of over-lapping, and the return in many places to a few pet themes—something almost inevitable in a compilation of addresses prepared for delivery at particular times for specific occasions. There seems little doubt that Thomas Henry Huxley succeeded better in the publication of collections of essays than has his grandson, the present author. It would be good to have Julian Huxley's key themes thought out and organized at full book length.

The central focus of Huxley's thought and outlook is his belief in science and scientific method as the sole dependable means for securing human progress. He is thus at once a scientist and a humanist in the tradition of the best of the Victorians. If there is one subordinate theme that runs through his writings it is his belief in the excitement, beauty and wonder of the universe as science increasingly reveals it to us. This is worlds removed from the sad cry of the Existentialists: "Isn't it terrible? There is no God!" In these pages there is ably and beautifully presented a world of nature of which man is a part and to which he contributes values which are *his* but which are nevertheless natural. Man is a wonderful creature, Huxley believes, with infinite potentialities and wonderful too is the nature that has produced and sustained him.

In his basic philosophy Huxley resists using the terms "matter" and "materialism." His reasons are twofold. First, that for modern physics matter and energy are revealed as inseparable and interchangeable. Second, that matter is commonly opposed to "mind," whereas it is now apparent that "when organized in certain ways—as, for instance, in the form of human bodies and brains—it is capable of mental as well as material activities." (p. 290) Any argument with this, from a materialist standpoint is largely semantic. The central question is whether we are going to make words serve our purposes in accordance with historically evolved usages, or are to be governed by popular misuses, abuses and misconceptions. That Huxley's position is a purely materialist one—and dialectical, to boot—is revealed in the following paragraph quoted in its entirety.

In the essay entitled "Evolutionary Humanism," he writes:

I submit that the discoveries of physi-

ology, general biology, and psychology not only make possible, but necessitate, a naturalistic hypothesis, in which there is no room for the supernatural, and the spiritual forces at work in the cosmos are seen as a part of nature just as much as the material forces. What is more, these spiritual forces are one particular product of mental activity in the broad sense, and mental activities in general are seen to have increased in intensity and importance during the course of cosmic time. Our basic hypothesis is thus not merely naturalistic as opposed to supernaturalist, but monistic or unitary as opposed to dualistic, and evolutionary as opposed to static. (p. 286)

It is a little sad to reflect that a third generation Huxley still has to defend Darwin and Darwinism. One might wonder why and if this is necessary were it not for the recent re-issue in a popular paper edition of Jacques Barzun's 1941 work, *Darwin, Marx, Wagner*. Barzun makes natural selection "a poetic metaphor."

Huxley, in one beautiful essay, "Life's Improbable Likenesses," strikingly reveals the role of natural selection in a delightful survey of mimicry, protective coloration and other protective characteristics of a wide assortment of animals and plants, beginning with the Japanese crab that is not eaten because it bears on its shell the face of a medieval Samurai. This essay shows beautifully the wonders of nature and how scientific explanation serves only to make them more wonderful. It concludes with the sentence: "Nature is indeed orderly, but its order transcends our most disorderly imaginations: that is the lesson to be learnt from life's improbable resemblances." (p. 154(

This essay, together with the one, "New Light on Heredity," sufficiently suggests why Huxley was awarded a special prize by UNESCO in 1953 for Distinguished Popular Writing in Sc ence. Here there is an incredible lot c material packed into nine pages an yet with extraordinary clarity. And wit his typical sense for the dramatic Hux ley opens this brief discussion with th statement that when Darwin publishe *The Origin of Species* in 1859, pra tically nothing was known scientifical about either heredity or reproductio

The greater part of the volume given over to an interesting and cha lenging series of essays and addresse that can best be described as philo sophical-social. They deal under variou titles, with the meaning of a scientifi or naturalistic humanism for man's so cial life at the present stage of histor They contain much that is significan and vital and reveal either the pervasiv influence of Marxist thought or the in dependent development of many Marx's and Engels' key ideas. It unfortunate that they suffer from conscious or unconscious mis-readin or mis-understanding of Marxism. Mar is never referred to without rather shar criticism and the meaning of dialectic and historical materialism is alwa distorted. Sigmund Freud, on the con trary, always comes off with honors an without the slightest trace of any critic judgment. Huxley completely ignor political economy and throughout th volume society and its problems poverty and productivity are treate without any reference to capitalism, im perialism and colonialism, or the cha lenge of socialism. He has learned on that the world's population must b limited. Time after time the world pressing social and economic problem are stated but overpopulation, not scientific-social analysis, supplies th explanation.

The essay, "Population and Human Fulfilment," contains much that is of value. It is soberly written and the case for world-wide birth control is well argued. Certainly a problem confronts us in the present leap in population growth due to the rapid and radical lowering of the death rate in most of the world. Simply to brush aside the raising of the question as "Malthusianism," and deny that there is any possible problem, is to act like the proverbial ostrich. On the other hand, to seek world action to counteract the present rate of population increase without consideration of poverty, ignorance, superstitution and Catholicism; and without reference to economic organization and the base of political power, is to treat the question in a vacuum. China today illustrates how a socialist world can readily handle the population question. An imperialist world never can. Huxley has the whole problem upside-down. Only a rationally organized world can solve the problem; a predatory one can only aggravate it and "solve" it along racist lines. One sometimes suspects that those who make "overpopulation" the world's most pressing problem and ignore virtually all others are thus covering up their desire to avoid facing the basic problem of capitalism and imperialism.

Putting the population question aside, together with the all-too-frequent gratuitous and false statements on Marx and Marxism, Huxley has many valuable contributions to make. He is excellent on the unity of man and nature. He has a dialectical understanding of the different levels of science, as with chemistry, biology and anthropology and he makes a valuable analysis of the differences between biological and cultural evolution. He manifests a real understanding of the unity of biology and anthopology while never minimizing the difference. His work suggests some of the rich and as yet unexplored possibilities of a genuine fusion of Darwinism and Marxism. Marx believed he was doing for social forms and institutions something similar to what Darwin did for biological species. An invaluable contribution to thought could be made by a person thoroughly trained and equally at home in both areas. Julian Huxley suggests what some of the fruits of this might be. His anti-Marxist bias and his apparent ignorance of political economy unfortunately prevent him from achieving an all-embracing science of life that would include man and his whole social-historical development.

HOWARD SELSAM

Portrait of a Leader

THE DAY IS COMING, by Oakley Johnson. International Publishers. $3.00. Paper cover, $1.90.

THIS excellent book is an account of the earliest years, as well as those preceding, the founding of the Communist Party in 1919. The protagonist is its leading founder and first Secretary, Charles E. Ruthenberg, who remained in this post for eight years until his death at the age of 44. The book is more a political than a personal biography, since Ruthenberg throughout his adult life was wholly absorbed in the cause of socialism.

Ruthenberg's boldness and courage, his steadfast devotion to his principles under ferocious attack, disregard of self and willingness to sacrifice, his abilities as a man of action, an untiring organ-

izer and eloquent mass speaker—without the aid of amplifiers—are well portrayed. The picture is a bit too austere, perhaps because the author did not know Ruthenberg personally. There are only slight glimpse of the tall, slender, blond and blue-eyed man, whose pleasant simplicity and courtesy won the affections of thousands of people, who was a real leader, because he was also a warm-hearted human being.

Ruthenberg once wrote to a friend from prison: "My greatest impulse always is to transform theory in action." As soon as he joined the Socialist Party he began to speak at street meetings. This provided him with effective training, since, unlike a hall audience, which is to a large extent "captive," and which even though bored will stay to a meeting's end, a street audience is free to stop, linger, or depart if the speaker fails to command its interest. He also had a strong bent for organizational work and became increasingly active on Socialist Party committees. Next to Debs, he was the party's most effective candidate for public office. He did not scorn popular methods of appeal. In 1912, when he and Bill Haywood spoke in Cleveland's Luna Park at the annual Socialist Party picnic, the placards read: "Baseball, Races and Balloon Ascensions." This open-air rally opened his campaign for Governor of Ohio, an effort which netted him 87,709 votes. It was his work in the main which earned for Ohio the title: The Red State.

Almost from the beginning Ruthenberg was identified with the left wing of the Socialist Party, which strove to make it a fighting working organization. The cleavage within the party deepened with the outbreak of war. Ruthenberg unswervingly demanded that it adopt a clear-cut anti-war position. In April, 1917, an emergency convention in St. Louis adopted a watered-down manifesto of his, entitled "A Manifesto against War." When war was declared, he soon became known as "the most arrested man in the country." He was under bail on appeal from a criminal syndicalism charge at the time of his death.

While he was at liberty on bail in September, 1919, Ruthenberg went as a delegate to the Socialist Party convention in Chicago. Unfortunately, Dr. Johnson does not elaborate on the details of this important gathering, out of which the American Communist Party was born, but refers the reader to the *History of the Communist Party of the United States* by William Z. Foster.

I believe this omission constitutes a serious gap in the book because the sequence of events leading up to and culminating at Chicago in the birth of the American Communist Party is an inextricable part of Ruthenberg's life. The emergence of the Communist Party was inevitable. It came through the refusal of the old-line leadership led by Morris Hillquit, to seat the left-wing delegates from all the major states. A wholesale expulsion campaign, which affected 55,000 members, had preceeded the convention. A particular target was the language federation of 40,000 which was predominantly militant workingclass, in the states of Mich. Ill., Mass., Penn. and N. Y. Were it not for these expulsions and the barring of their delegates, the Left Wing would have controlled the Socialist Party convention of 1919 in Chicago and events might have taken a differen

turn. But the hour had arrived and the Communist movement entered the stage of American labor history.

Many differences had existed as to how and when to launch a Communist Party and they were not resolved by the sudden birth. For two years two parties existed with basically the same principles but split on tactics. Ruthenberg worked unceasingly for unity, and in 1921 this was consummated organizationally at a convention in Woodstock, N. Y. He was elected the Executive Secretary. All of his trials were conducted not as a personal defense but as part of "a campaign for full legalization of the Party," as all his political campaigns were not just part of vote-getting elections but of the struggle for Socialism. Dr. Johnson's book does a splendid job in portraying Ruthenberg as a socialist agitator, a feerless fighter, a gallant hero; but I do not think enough stress is given to Ruthenberg as a wise political leader, organizer and strategist.

Ruthenberg's faith in the working class and his party were boundless; his far sighted optimism under all conditions was steadfast. His speeches in court on class justice are revolutionary classics. They answered all the false charges against the Communist Party and eloquently explain its principles in full details. I believe it is correct to say he was the first and outstanding Marxist-Leninist leader of the early days of the American Communist Party.

In spite of the noted omissions I deeply appreciate this painstaking and devoted book by Oakley Johnson. It is a fine tribute to C. E. Ruthenberg. I hope it will help to revive his memory, which should be kept alive and green.

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

Irish Labor Defender

JIM LARKIN: IRISH LABOR LEADER, by R. M. Fox. International Publishers. $3.00.

IRELAND'S history is a 700-year record of English oppression from its earliest colonialist stages to modern capitalist imperialism. The Irish people, in their persistent struggle against the genocidal policies of English kings, queens and prime ministers, have given birth to a valiant breed of fighters for the cause of Irish liberty. Throughout centuries of subjugation Ireland's beloved heroes, Wolf Tone, Robert Emmett, John Mitchell, Michael Davitt and Charles Parnell mark the high points in the nationalist struggle. And in the twentieth century the Irish working class came to the forefront in the fight for liberation. Two men militantly spoke the cause of socialism, internationalism and national liberation: James Connolly, leader of the 1916 Revolution, and James Larkin, militant trade unionist, founder of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and passionate rouser of working class identity.

Larkin and Connolly awakened a new sense of pride among the workers and rekindled the spirit of nationalism among the middle classes. The great upsurge inspired and led by them led directly to the 1916 Revolution, when the Irish Republic proclaimed, "We declare the right of the Irish people to the ownership of Ireland." Although the Republican Government was defeated and the leaders shot and hanged, the spirit for freedom continued to grow. In 1919 the Republic was again proclaimed. The Irish people battled

to save their new nation, but in the end the Irish bourgeoisie accepted a humiliating treaty with England. The most determined republicans refused to accept the treaty and civil war resulted; and with the help of the British the Republican Nationalists were suppressed.

In his biography of James Larkin, R. M. Fox, who has also published volumes on James Connolly and Louie Bennett, presents a strong and sympathetic estimate of this key figure in Irish labor history. It must be said, however, that he tends not to give him his full stature, and that he does not delineate sufficiently the forces against which he struggled—English imperialism and Irish capitalism.

In a pamphlet published in 1948, which is entitled, with unconscious irony, *Years of Freedom*—1921-1948, Mr. Fox has already stated his position. He depicts a struggling but commendable state-subsidized Capitalism busy building itself, unfortunately at the expense of the workers. He apologizes for some of its unpleasant traits and asks only for a more human distribution of its wealth. It is not surprising, therefore, that while he presents Larkin as a brilliant leader and socialist orator, he understates the significance of the working class struggle during the crucial years 1907-1913.

All the political, sectional, religious and class differences which split Ireland were fostered and utilized by the British and pro-British to maintain His Majesty's colonial domination. Larkin's ability to unite Catholics and Protestants, Home Rulers and Unionists, working class and bourgeois, and even police, through his organizing and strike activities, posed a serious threat to British rule, for the Irish workers clashed not only with employers but with the political and military might of Britain. In the Belfast strike of 1907, 500 men of the Battalion Royal Sussex, and the Fourth Battalion Middlesex, were among the "no less than 7000 troops drafted in to the city." Nevertheless, Mr. Fox shies away from admitting that these were foreign troops occupying a colonial country and that they were used to suppress a movement that was nationalist in character and socialist and international in viewpoint.

Larkin's activities in America are not well covered, but the author does narrate fairly completely his trial for "criminal anarchy" in 1919. However his conviction and imprisonment appear as little than a common miscarriage of justice. Like "Sacco and Vanzetti as well as many other lesser known 'radicals' . . . Larkin came up against the dominant prejudices of the time." This somewhat vague characterization minimizes the significance of the widespread repressions against the socialist movement and its leaders in the United States.

Larkin returned to Ireland in 1923 after a 10-year stay in America. Momentous events—two major revolts and a civil war—had taken place. But Fox does not describe these changes and how they affected Larkin during his absence and after his return. The ITWGU had dismissed James Connolly from leadership in 1916, and disowned Larkin, its founder, in 1923. But Larkin's bitter opposition to the new leaders of the ITWGU, who had taken a subservient position to the new "Irish" government, is presented here as a personality clash.

In spite of its shortcomings, this

book reveals a deep affection and admiration for Larkin and is most effective when he speaks for himself: "We will continue the struggle for freedom, full and complete freedom, economic and political freedom for the Irish working class."

LEO PAUL

Giraudoux and Jouvet

JEAN GIRAUDOUX: THE MAKING OF A DRAMATIST, by Donald Inskip. Oxford University Press. $4.75.

JEAN Giraudoux was not a "modern playwright," in the sense in which Brecht, a Cocteau, a Pirandello is "modern." In his view of life, his outlook on the world he lived in, he was —as this illuminating study reveals— somewhat outside his own times. A classical scholar of some ability, he had sought to fuse ancient Greek concepts of harmony, beauty, order with what he felt to be the "simplicity" of French country life. Yet, together with his actor-director friend and collaborator, Louis Jouvet, he came to produce a series of human images tinged with fantasy so appealing to his times that not only have French audiences responded warmly to them, but we have seen as many as five plays by Giraudoux running at one time on the New York stages.

From the charming *Intermezzo* to the helplessness of *Tiger at the Gates,* from the bitter *Sodome et Gomorrhe* to the dazzling fantasy of *The Madwoman of Chaillot,* the growing consciousness of the realities of life emerges. In them become embodied the hopes and the fears of two deeply sensitive men of art, unwillingly—and without full understanding—living through an era of imperialism, power diplomacy, the stunting of all human relations—and finally, the rise of Nazism. Thus one may trace in turn, in the joint artistic passage of Giraudoux and Jouvet, the sharp revulsion against the ugliness of a world between two wars, the pessimistic denial of all hope, and then—almost at the very end—the angry opposition, expressed in fantasy, of "the mad ones" against the ultimate brutality of the profit-makers. It was in the winter of 1943, in occupied Paris, that Giraudoux died, sick to the heart with what he saw men doing to one another, doing to his country; yet, before the curtain came down, the Madwoman could still exclaim, "One woman of sound sense is enough to frustrate all the madness of the world."

It is this deep-rooted faith in the ideal of the human spirit that made Jouvet, for whom the artistic illusion was the important thing, the enthusiastic collaborator who brought to life the playwright's visions through his theater "magic." The plays were written, as it were, in rehearsal; part rewritten to get particular actors; scenes transformed to express ideas worked out in conference; and in one instance —the *Siegfried,* to which Professor Inskip devotes almost a chapter—the play cut to half its original length, and its basic situation entirely changed. In the creative harmony of playwright and acting company, one is reminded of Shakespeare, Moliere, the best of our

Group Theater. That Jouvet's "necromancy in company with the author," as he put it, moved at the end to fantasy is not for the moment the question; it is the parnership and its illuminations that make for the Giraudoux-Jouvet story, and a very thought-provoking story it is. Our times have had better, and far more conscious spokesmen, perhaps; in the theater, at least, it has not had many with more imagination.

J. H. RICHMAN

Nation in Chains

ALGERIA—THE REALITIES, by Germaine Tillion. Alfred Knopf. $3.00.

THIS is not a work of fiction, but a report by an ethnologist who did field work among the Algerians for several years. Mme. Tillion left Algeria in 1940 and upon her return in 1954 was greatly shocked to find the further deterioration that had taken place in the condition of the people she once knew so well. She has hit upon precisely the right description of this condition: pauperization; but her explanation for it is strangely naive. In her conception, colonialism is a worn-out nineteenth-century term, a "hoary soapegoat" which cannot be blamed for the present conditions because "there is not and never has been a French settler living nearer than sixty miles." She also notes that "undernutrition in the parts of Algeria where there have never been settlers [i.e. French] seems more of a threat . . . than it is in the areas where settlers abound." She candidly reports the following statistics for the non-Moslem population:

The "real settlers" number abo 12,000, of who 300 are rich and dozen or so extremely rich: this han ful of millionaires probably have mo money among them than all the re put together.

The exploitative, one might sa rapacious, character of these "real s tlers" seems patent from the above co ments, but is not specified by Mm Tillion. Instead she raises the ancie shibboleth of over-population—und production and seeks to explain t increasing pauperization only as Malthusian consequence of a high bi rate exacerbated by the advent of an biotics. The basic failing of her bo is this beclouding of the essential cau of the impoverishment of Algeri maldistribution of land and wealth b tween a few thousand "real settle and over 8 million Algerians. Althou she is bemused by the concept "guardianship," (that imperial euphemism for control) Mme. Tilli does have a plan to alleviate a sitt tion which she sincerely deplores. H courageous proposal to rescue the A gerians from ruin and decay calls f "a minimum of 300,000 additional jo . . . universal education and a reaso able measure of agrarian reform . the investment of more than 2,000 b lion francs of capital, spread over fo or five years." This would indeed co stitute a noble beginning but to ask its implementation by the French c onial administration is about equivale to asking Consolidated Edison to u the expansion of the TVA.

Mme. Tillion believes that the pr lem of Algerian poverty is partly m gated by the employment of 400,0 Algerians on the French mainla

Since these send a considerable portion of their wages back to their families in North Africa, the misery of the latter is somewhat alleviated. The benefit proves to be only apparent, however, if one sees the matter in a larger social context. The employment of these men in France is no act of kindness; their labor is quite simply a source of superprofit to French capital, since it is extracted from "second-class" citizens who are in no position to defend themselves against more-than-normal exploitation. Even more important, however, is the fact that such labor does not contribute to the building up of that industrial plant which Mme. Tillion herself considers indispensable to progress in Algeria. Mme. Tillion implies that the alternatives are employment in France or hunger at home. A somewhat similar quandary faces the Puerto Rican people. However, the solution does not lie in the continuation of the political relationship which now exists between the exploiter nation and those who suffer its depredations. It is to be found only in an independence coupled with the right and the possibility of a free country to seek help wherever it can to achieve economic independence.

ELLEN LANE

A Sheaf of Stories

THE HABIT OF LOVING, by Doris Lessing. Thomas Y. Crowell Co. $4.00.

IT would be pleasant to be able to join the chorus of almost unqualified approbation which greeted the appearance of this volume of short stories in England last year. *The Observer, The Spectator,* and *The {London} Sunday Times* were all most enthusiastic with such comments as: "For sheer poise I don't think there has been a writer to touch her since Jane Austen"; "Each story gives an impression of an experience that is true on more than one level, and the best of them are magnificent"; and "You feel the dynamic-like thob of a formidable talent." I too greatly admire Mrs. Lessing's talent as well as her critical intelligence, but for that very reason I found this collection a most disappointing one.

The stories are almost all well written, many of then achieve their purpose with a real economy of detail, and most of them are much more warmly compassionate than their opposite numbers in American fiction would be. Yet the total effect is very similar to that of a typical volume of short stories culled from the New Yorker and any number of our expert but academic literary quarterlies. There is here nothing of the lyrical quality or the profound cumulative emotion which characterized Doris Lessing's early South African collection, *This Was The Old Chief's Country,* and very little of the genuinely sophisticated insight evident in her recent short novel, *Retreat To Innocence.*

With a few exceptions, like the brief ten-page South African incident ("A Mild Attack of Locusts") or the rather over-long seventy-five page account of a week in "de-nazified" Germany ("The Eye of God in Paradise") the individual stories seem unilluminating and fragmentary, and the collection as a whole becomes wearisome in its failure to create any deliberate over-all impression.

ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

Letters

Editor, *Mainstream*:

R. M.'s letter in the September *Mainstream,* raises important and highly controversial questions, not only concerning *Sayonara,* but related to larger issues of cultural theory. I am struck by what seems to me a fundamental difference between R. M. and myself in our approach to the film: R. M. is looking for a message. I am concerned with the picture as an artistic whole, a system of human relationships which expresses a view of life that illumnates and deepens our experience.

This is the nature of art, and I cannot view it in terms of a supposedly "progressive" message, any more than I can define a human personality by describing the individual's political opinions. I must confess that the brief paragraphs devoted to *Sayonara* in my article do small justice to this approach

But R. M.'s interest in the social significance of every situation leads him to misunderstand what I tried to say about the work as a whole. I did not suggest that the suicide of the married couple "was a mere repeat of *Madame Butterfly.*" I said nothing about "imialist overtones" to the scene in which the crowd assemble with signs. I never proposed that the story "take up the problem whether American military personnel should be in Japan at all."

I wrote that the climax, the development of the central love story, "is haunted by the ghost of *Madame Butterfly* and there are the same imperialist overtones." R. M. transfers my comment to other scenes, apparently because he wants to interpret these scenes in his own political terms.

The theme of the film is concentra in the love story, and especially in characterization of the hero as a wh upperclass Southerner. It is this ch acterization, which embodies the "m sage," that I find objectionable. I wo prefer not to have this "message" all, because I consider it is pretenti and false, and superimposed on story in order to give it a sort of se ousness and weight which it does really have.

This is a common tendency in c rent Hollywood films, and I mention *Sayonara* as a striking example. Bran plays the hero in a very artificial ma ner, because he is an artificial creati The mannerisms are those of his cl and background, but his personality unrelated to either.

I am not opposed to the portra of a white, upperclass Southerner a man of generous impulses, provid there is some authenticity, some warm and depth in the portrait and its c cumstances. But I object to aimiabil that is stereotyped and salted with j enough prejudice to keep the st going.

When the genial Southerner fa in love with a glamorour Japanese s who appears on the stage in a hi hat and dress suit, do we really ha to wait for Socialism before we dema a little more integrity, a little m humanity and passion and taste a respect for people, from American fil makers?

I refuse to accept such a pessimi view of an art that I love.

JOHN HOWARD LAWS

Editor, *Mainstream*:

A copy of your July issue has just been sent me by a friend, or I would have written sooner concerning John B. Roberts' article "The Frisco Beat." There are a number of flaws in this much-needed article, but permit me to point out one concerning myself.

Mr. Roberts mistakenly calls Ferlinghetti "the most active publisher" in San Francisco. The truth is that Inferno Press Editions, founded by my wife and myself in 1949, has published 11 issues of a literary magazine, 11 books of poetry (both hardcover and soft cover editions), 4 limited portfolio editions of local poets. These items, incidentally, have been reviewed and/or mentioned in at least 10 foreign countries as well as in numerous journals or newspapers in the U.S. We also published a 12" LP recording, *Pacifica,* which presented 6 California poets reading from their work and which successfully went into two editions. Even the book *Four New Poets* which Roberts quotes so often from is a product from our press. Of course we have printed writers with whom we do not necessarily agree, but we have never published any work that was harmful to either freedom or human dignity. We will continue to practice our independent and responsible publishing, aiding those talented men with an ability to think intelligently as individuals, and show the creative results in their writing. It was for this reason that we rejected Mr. Rexroth's hysterical "Thou Shalt Not Kill," as well as the then-untitled *Howl.* By this combined record we prove that Inferno Press Editions is neither beat, beaten, nor bleating.

LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY,
Editor, Inferno Press Editions

Editor, *Mainstream*:

Congratulations on the July issue. It is one of the best in some time.

Of all the pieces, I liked John Robert's best. It was cleverly and, in spots, even beautifully written. And it showed an intimate and thorough knowledge of Beat Generation writers.

"The Housewarming" was entertaining but, to me, oftimes unbelievable. Lawson's piece was good, but Alvaro Cardona-Hine's "Bulosan Now" was a bit too "far out" for me to "dig."

I enclose $5.

A. KENT MACDOUGALL

Editor, *Mainstream*:

We have very much enjoyed the past year's *Mainstream.* The magazine's balance and emphasis seems much improved. Especially commendable, it seems to us, is Barbara Giles' writing, and the recent issue "7 Californians." The one feature that never goes unread is the book review section. Although from time to time one of the reviews still strikes a doctrinaire and unperceptive pose, most of the reviews stimulate an interest in the books reviewed and allow the reader to make a somewhat independent judgment about whether to read the book at hand or settle for the reviewer's treatment.

Our hopes are high that *Mainstream* will be around long after most of the rest of the current crop of literary magazines have faded from memory. Then, when a resurgence of radical thought occurs, *Mainstream* will be there to provide the leadership that it has provided through the years of "retrenchment."

R. D. LARKIN