Mainstream

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PERSPECTIVES FOR THE AMERICAN LEFT*

HERBERT APTHEKER

IN the recent past there has been widespread insistence, by an influential body of writers, that central social problems, classically the major concerns of the Left, have been more or less resolved in the United States. Hence, the argument runs, the need for, or the usefulness of, a Left has disappeared, for all practical purposes; this, indeed, it is suggested, is the main reason for the decline of a Left in American life in the past ten or fifteen years. I think these views are wrong and would like to indicate very briefly some of my reasons for this opinion.

The central problems held to have been resolved in our country are those of the presence of poverty, the concentration of ownership and control of the means of production in the hands of a small minority, and the existence of a regressive foreign policy on the part of the United States Government. The elimination of poverty and oligarchy combine to form the basic substantive features of "people's capitalism"; the existence of "people's capitalism" negates the possibility of a U.S. imperialism and such negation helps explain America's leadership of the Free World in a Crusade for Freedom.

Do the facts substantiate these views? I think not; on the contrary, as I read the facts they contradict these views.

AN impressive array of social analysts have announced the disappearance or the near-disappearance of poverty in the United States: included are Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., David Riesman, the editors of *Fortune,* Stuart Chase, Kenneth Galbraith, Barbara Ward, and others.** At most, these individuals—Barbara Ward, for example—will admit the existence of "pockets" of poverty in the United States, or—to cite Professor Galbraith—the persistence of "insular" and "case" poverty; but all agree that the significance of poverty as a real social problem has vanished in the United States.

* This essay was originally requested by POLEMIC, a publication of the student body of Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. It is scheduled to appear shortly.

** Certain historians recently have extended into the past this just-discovred phenomenon of the elimination of poverty—the writings of Daniel J. Boorstin, Robert E. Brown, and David Potter are examples.

There are, indeed, pockets of the deepest kind of poverty persisting in our country, of sufficient dimensions in themselves to justify major commitment and effort by a Left: these include the "skid rows" presen in every major American city and representing "home" for several hun dreds of thousands of completely broken, discarded, and impoverished men and women; the approximately two million migratory farm work ers—men, women, and children—completely without any minimum wage or maximum hour regulations, with no schooling provisions, n social security; the approximately 350,000 American Indians, living i physical and cultural conditions of impoverishment rivaling that o Asian Indians; and the hundreds of thousands living in industry-aban doned areas, as textile and coal-mining, in parts of New York, Kentuck and West Virginia, where the poverty, according to Homer Bigart o the *New York Times,* is "as black as the inside of a wolf's mouth."

But, in addition, there persist in the United States great layers o poverty comprising tens of millions of people and reflecting the socio logical aspect of a capitalist-based, class-divided social order. It is tru that in our country as a whole the standard of living, viewed solely fron the point of view of physical perquisites, is without a peer in the world This fact derives, of course, from specific historic and geographical cir cumstances, which space forbids spelling out; but the fact remains. It i also true that our country is among the "leaders" of the world in othe aspects of living that relate to questions of standards; for example, th acute sense of instability afflicting the population, the tremendous speed up and tension, the great competitiveness, the consumption of alcoho the incidence of mental illness, the occurrence of crime, especially of violent nature, the degree of drug addiction—not to speak of the per vasiveness of racism. Nevertheless, leaving these considerations aside what are the facts concerning the distribution of income among th American population as a whole in this present period of great an prolonged "prosperity"?

THE latest full and official data on this question, as published in th Census Bureau's *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* 1958, ma be presented in this table:

ANNUAL INCOME OF FAMILIES & OF UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS; % DISTRIBUTION
United States for 1956
(*Unadjusted dollar; before Federal Income Tax*)

Level	*Total*	*White*	*Non-Whi*
Under $1,000	12.7%	11.2%	25.7%
$1,000-1,999	11.1	10.2	18.9

000-2,999	10.7	9.8	18.7
000-3,999	12.3	12.1	13.4
000-4,999	13.5	14.0	9.7
000-5999	11.9	12.5	6.0
000-6,999	8.3	8.8	3.1
000-9,999	13.0	14.0	3.7
),000-14,999	4.9	5.4	0.7
,000-24,999	1.2	1.4	0.1
,000 & over	0.5	0.5	.....
EDIAN INCOME	$4,237	$4,479	$2,289

The reader is reminded that the dollar used in this table is unadjusted, ., one that does not take account of the inflation that has been so onounced ever since the end of World War II. Further, according to e same source from which the above data were obtained, federal in- me tax reduces actual expendable income per family by about eleven ercent; additional federal, state, and city taxes account for about an- her fourteen percent. That is, due to taxes alone, expendable income r family is about 75% of the figures given in the above table.

The table demonstrates that the gross money income of 34.5% of merican families in 1956 was less than $3,000 a year, and that for 5.8% it was under $4,000. Yet, according to the U.S. Department of abor, a family of four needed an annual income of $4,300 in 1955 (and e cost of living continued to rise into 1956) to maintain a "minimum andard of decency"; other estimates, as those of the Heller Committee the University of California report the needed income to be around ,000 a year. Taking either estimate, and noting that over one-third of e population lived in families whose annual money income, before xes, was less than $3,000, have we come very far indeed—in the midst a decade and a half of unparalleled "prosperity"—from Franklin elano Roosevelt's "one-third of a nation" that was "ill-fed, ill-housed, -clothed"?

The table, also, of course, graphically illustrates the special oppres- on of the Negro people in the United States—now some nineteen illion strong—since it shows the median income of the Negro family be a little more than half that of the white family. This oppression, ganic to the nature of U.S. monopoly-capitalism, represents a prime ea for the particular attention of, and the utmost effort by an American ft.

The matter may be summed up in the sentence occurring in a 1955 tter from the liberal economics expert, Louis Lubin: "The official

figures reveal that in 1954 about thirty million people in our countr were living at or below the poverty line in this period of prosperity ar full employment."* And now, of course, we have had many months unemployment officially estimated to hover around the four to fiv million mark.

One further point on this matter: It is insisted by those who ho that poverty has been overcome in our country, that this result has bee accompanied by a major redistribution of income-spread in the directio of a general equalization. Such redistribution in fact has not occurre Here is a table given in the *Statistical Abstract of the United State* showing

INCOME RECEIVED BY EACH FIFTH & TOP 5% OF ALL CONSUMER UNITS

PROPORTION	% OF TOTAL INCOME	
	1947	1954
Lowest Fifth	5.0	4.9
Second Fifth	11.0	11.4
Third Fifth	16.0	16.6
Fourth Fifth	22.0	22.4
Highest Fifth	46.0	44.7
Top 5%	20.9	20.5

The data demonstrate the widespread persistence of poverty in t United States, not in terms of mere "pockets" and not in terms of " sular" and "case" phenomena, but in terms of huge layers of the ent population, white and, especially, non-white. While these data also sh the existence of a numerous middle and upper-class income minor which gives a certain substance to the myth of the bourgeoisification American life—without which substance the myth could not have persistence and the persuasiveness it has had—yet, it is still a falla The basic class-divided nature of U.S. society, including real and p vasive poverty, continues to exist.

WHAT of the question of whether or not there is a monopolizat of the means of production and communication in the Un States? Do we have a monopoly-capitalist order here, or something ca a "People's Capitalism"? Monopolization of the economy, with its re cussions in terms of freedom and political democracy and its imp upon workers, farmers and smaller business men, has been at the ce

* Louis Lubin to Sen. Paul H. Douglas, Nov. 25, 1955, in *Hearings before the Committee on Low-Income Families, Joint Committee on the Economic Report,* 84th C 1st Sess., (Washington, 1955), p. 754.

radical political activity in our country for nearly a century. Has this roblem been overcome or does it remain and, indeed, is it perhaps even tensifying? On the answers to these questions depend in large part e perspectives for an American Left.

The structure of the American economy is monopolistic and the trend in the direction of intensifying this monopolization. The Federal Trade ommission, in 1949, stated that "extreme concentration" existed in thir- en significant industries in the United States, with "extreme concen- ation" being defined as that condition wherein three corporations or ss owned 64% or more of the total assets of all corporations within the rticular industry. That prevailed in such industries as aluminum, mo- r vehicles, copper smelting and refining, rubber tires, meat products, nware, agricultural machinery, plumbing, etc.

In 1950, while 587,000 corporations reported to the Federal Bureau Internal Revenue, the top 250 (less than one-twentieth of one per- nt) owned 42% of all the assets of all the corporations in the United ates. In December, 1953, according to the United States Department Commerce, the top 2% of manufacturing corporations owned over 5% of all the assets of all manufacturing corporations in the United ates.

Basic to the drive towards concentration is the fact that the larger e capitalization, the higher the rate of profit, as a rule. The figures for 49 are typical of this fact: In that year, the rate of profit reported by rporations with assets under $250,000 was 8.4%; the rate for corpora- ons with assets up to $100,000,000 was 10%; the rate for corporation th assets over $100,000,000 was 14%.

Ever since 1890 the trend has been in the direction of greater and eater concentration of ownership. The decade of the 1950's has seen far the greatest intensification of this process in the history of the nited States. The Federal Trade Commission reported on June 18, 1956 at the number (846) of corporation mergers in 1955 had been "the ghest in the five years the Division has been tabulating them"; in the e years from 1951 through 1955 the total mergers reported came to 781.

Not only has the quantity of mergers mounted; the quality has ered. That is in the recent period the percentage of acquiring concerns volved in mergers with assets in excess of ten million dollars has adily and notably risen. Thus, from 1940-47, of all merging firms, the rcentage of acquiring concerns with capital in excess of ten millions ne to 57.9%; it had grown to 65.5% in 1948-54; it stood at 70.0% 1955, the last date for which FTC figures are available.

Monopolization exerts its decisive inuence in many ways other than

through direct ownership. These include partial ownership of stock domination over price structure, effective control of supply, outlets and credit.

Of increasing significance is the monopolization of the means of communication, entertainment and information, dramatically demonstrated in the newspaper and book-publishing fields. Another fairly recent development is the growing importance of enormous corporations in fields hitherto relatively free of monopolization; this is happening in the buildings industry, foods and household products and even retailing businesses. Thus, just within the last twelve months, Johns-Manville merged with Libby-Owens-Ford Glass; Corn Products Refining merged with Best Foods, and the May Department Stores merged with the Hecht Company.

LATELY, too, as the vertical monopolization of the economy nears completion, the process of horizontal merging is becoming more and more important. Here giant corporations diversify their holdings by acquiring companies operating in fields quite unrelated to their own area. An excellent example of this development is afforded by the General Tire Corporation. In 1946, its profits from the manufacture of tires accounted for 76% of the company's gross, but ten years later, the tire end of General Tire accounted for only 33% of its profits. For by now this company manufactures in addition to tires, rocket engines, swimming pools, tennis balls, submarines; operates TV and radio stations, makes recordings and motion pictures, etc., through such wholly-owned subsidiaries as RKO, A. M. Byers, Aerojet, etc.

Meanwhile, the apex of economic power, in the financial giants—analyzed with great thoroughness in Victor Perlo's *Empire of High Finance* (N. Y., 1957)—itself continues to grow and to concentrate its expanding holdings. Former Senator Herbert H. Lehman, himself a banker, noted the sharp rise in mergers among banks and financial institutions two years ago. "The end result," he said, speaking at City College in New York,

> is not only a decreased number of banks and less competition, but a more highly centralized control of the nation's financial system, with mounting danger to the entire national economy if a relatively few individuals should decide for whatever reason, to misuse *their control over the lifeblood of our economy*" (*N. Y. Times,* April 3, 1957, italics added).

Since Mr. Lehman's warning, the process of bank mergers has accelerated. Thus, in 1958 alone, there were such spectacular mergers as those of J. P. Morgan and the Guaranty Trust Company; of the First America Corporation of California (assets over three billions) with the

alifornia Bank of Los Angeles (assets over one billion); of two of ie largest banks in New Jersey—National State Bank and Federal Trust; f two of the largest banks in Pennsylvania—Fidelity Trust and Potter ank & Trust.

The matter is summed up, by a witness not unfriendly to capitalism nd to Big Business, in this way:

> In terms of power, without regard to asset positions, not only do 500 corporations control two-thirds of the non-farm economy, but within each of that 500, a still smaller group has the ultimate decision-making power. This is, I think, *the highest concentration of economic power in recorded history.*

These are the words of A. A. Berle, Jr., former Under-Secretary of tate and an authority on the nature of the modern corporation, as stated i his recent pamphlet, *Economic Power and the Free Society* (Fund for ie Republic, New York City). They would seem to exhaust the power f language in terms of conveying some idea of the realities of the con- ntration and monopolization of economic power in the United States oday.

A final point about these giant corporative concentrations of eco- omic power. The American people are told incessantly that these cor- orations are "really" owned by the people at large—this is the essence f the "People's capitalism" propaganda. It is false. The Federal Reserve oard, in its *Bulletin* of October, 1954, stated bluntly: "Stock owner- ip is largely concentrated in a small proportion of the population, articularly in high-income groups."

About 5% of the population has any corporate stock holdings; which to say that 95% of the population owns none. Of the 5% who do own ome stock—making a total of perhaps seven to eight million people— ie vast majority own a fractional quantity. Thus, 75,000 stockowners about 1% of the total) own 50% of all corporate stock; and of the 00 largest non-financial corporations, the top 1% of the shareholders ccounted for 60% of the total common stock. There is, then, some bjective base for the mythology of "people's capitalism", but, as in the ase of poverty, the slogan is a myth and the reality is that the structure f the economy of the United States is that of monpoly capitalism.

Hence, this classical foe of U.S. radicalism is very much in existence; nd its impact on expropriating the farmers; bankrupting the smaller usinessmen; concentrating in greater and greater numbers the employ- ent of workers; controlling, corrupting, and determining governmental olicies—on all levels—continues with ever-increasing force. Given ich conditions, latest developments and innovations—including auto-

mation and atomic energy—will tend to aggravate, not resolve already pressing social problems and inequities. Hence, from this point of view the perspective for an American Left should be that of greater and greater usefulness and more and more decisive struggles.

VERA MICHELES DEAN, in advocating some time ago a relatively salutary *Foreign Policy Without Fear* (N. Y., 1953), found the operative foreign policy of the United States to be some kind of inexplicable paradox, stemming from strange, if not psychopathic obsessions. At one point (pp. 84-85) she commented:

> The paradoxical result is that the United States, while leading a crusade for democracy against dictatorship, has come to the conclusion that the maintenance in power of General Franco in Spain or Chiang-Kai-shek in Formosa, of Emperor Bao Dai in Indo-China or Dr. Syngman Rhee in South Korea, is essential to the security of the United States.

Of course, the tenure of these "necessary" props to U.S. security is somewhat precarious, and since Miss Dean wrote the above words, Emperor Bao Dai has faded away; but then one can easily substitute others (in power as these words are written) allegedly essential to American security—like Trujillo of the Dominican Republic—and retain the "paradox." If, however, one rejects the premise that the United States is leading a democratic crusade, then he has eliminated the apparent paradox; and if one replaces Miss Dean's premise with another—that the United States is the leading imperialist power seeking therefore to restrain social progress and curb national liberation—then what appears paradoxical in the admitted facts becomes logical. Is not a purpose of science to place all the observable facts within the framework of causative explanation, rather than inexplicable paradox?

The most extensive attack upon current U.S. foreign policy to come from a significant national leader, was that offered by the present Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas. It was reproduced, with some revisions, in *The Progressive* (Sept., 1958). Senator Fulbright expresses complete disapproval of that policy; hence he calls for a thorough "reconsideration and reorientation." This is all to the good and is an important example of the growing popular revulsion against the Dulles line.

Yet, again, it is necessary to suggest—if we are to achieve that thorough reconsideration and reorientation which the Senator demands—that Mr. Fulbright offers no explanation for what he himself calls an "incomprehensible" policy. He says we are too often aligned with reactionary governments abroad, but he does not even ask why; he says the

U.S. spends too lavishly abroad for military purposes and too little for creative purposes, but again he does not ask why. He finds the U.S. government suspected or disliked in Latin America, Asia and Europe (the Senator forgets Africa, not to mention Arkansas) because it is the defender of a despised status quo, but why it is, he does not inquire.

The nearest the Senator comes to an explanation is to blame a poorly informed public opinion for failing to exercise sufficient supervision over Congress! And he has one other suggestion as to cause:

> If there is a single factor which more than any other explains the predicament in which we now find ourselves, it is our readiness to use the spectre of Soviet communism as a cloak for the failure of our own leadership.

And he adds: "In the fear of the deviltry of communism, we have cast ourselves indiscriminately in the role of the defender of the status quo throughout the world." Extremely important is the Senator's hint (it is no more than that) that the whole anti-Communist ballyhoo has been a racket. But again, the failure to ask why, makes exceedingly limited the illuminating quality of the remarks. Actually, it is not because of the fear of Communism that "we" have cast "ourselves" in the role of 20th century Metternichs; it is rather because of the Administration's devotion to reaction that its foreign policy has gone from one catastrophe to another. The anti-communism serves to camouflage the harmful results of a reactionary line. Standing Senator Fulbright's analysis on its head improves it and brings it very near the real operating cause of why, as he says: "Our foreign policy is inadequate, outmoded, and misdirected."

AN attempt at explanation having racist and Malthusian overtones is becoming more and more common, as another component of developing reactionary ideology. A recent example was the comment by Philip Wylie in *The Saturday Review* (June 6, 1958) that U.S. and European setbacks in Asia and Africa reflected the "Decline of the West," and the impending conquest of the world by its colored inhabitants—forming as they do a majority of the human race. Mr. Wylie's remarks not only reverted to Spengler but to the "rising tide of color" of Lothrop Stoddard and the "Yellow Peril" of William Randolph Hearst.

We are witness in this age to the decline of capitalism, not of the West. It is true that this decline brings with it degenerative phenomena, but just as the decline applies basically to a ruling class, so the degenerative aspects mark in particular that class' ethics, reasoning, and leadership. And we see in our time not the rising tide of color, but the rising dawn of socialism and national liberation. It is true that this dawn car-

ries with it the elimination of the special oppression of people of color; but this means the achievement of human brotherhood.

Such worldwide equality may offend those who have assumed that Washington and London would be the centers of "civilization" and the arbiters of mankind's fate forever; that era is already over as everyone, except the Eisenhower Administration, understands. Its termination will mark the enhancement of the well-being of mankind, including most of those who are white.

Ralph Matthews, the militant Negro journalist, falls into an opposite though related kind of error in a column in the *Afro-American* (Sept. 20, 1958). Denouncing the course of the State Department in relation to China, Mr. Matthews ascribes it entirely to the existence of white chauvinism in the Department, and makes the conflict one of white versus colored. It is certainly true that a large ingredient in the arrogance and blindness displayed by the State Department toward Asia and Africa and Latin America stems from racism; but the arrogance and blindness are forms within which the policy is conducted; they are not the policy itself. Similarly, racism is a result of the system producing that policy; it is not the system itself. Captalism breeds racism, and imperialism intensifies it, and racism displays itself in an arrogance towards the "inferiors"; all these are inter-related. But the root is imperialism, and the stake is continued exploration, oppression, and power.

The distinction is vital, not academic, and it explains facts which the hypothesis of Mr. Matthews will not explain. It explains Dulles' colored "allies" (to the extent that he has any); above all, it explains why a predominantly non-colored state like the Soviet Union stands as the bulwark of the colonial and national liberation movements; why the white socialist states of central and eastern Europe similarly align themselves; and why radical and progressive whites elsewhere in the world, including in the United States, oppose U.S. imperialism. It is on the basis of this unity that the national liberation movements have achieved the successes they have; the continuance and strengthening of that unity is a prerequisite for the great achievements that the future holds.

ON the basis of the foregoing analysis it seems to me that the need for a numerous organized and potent Left in our country is very great. It would express itself most pointedly on urgent current questions such as the growing slums and housing crisis, the deterioration of the educational system, the chronic and serious unemployment, the mounting attacks upon organized labor, the pressing need to organize the unorganized workers, still by far a majority, and especially in the South, the scandalous inadequacy of social services and agencies—as hospitals, med-

ical care generally, provisions for the aged, the remodeling of the penal institutions. It would appear in a nationally mounted and thoroughly aroused movement to terminate the jim-crow system and to combat the worst expressions of the widespread poverty that continues to shame our nation.

It would concentrate on a complete overhauling of U.S. foreign policy, with the aim of making that policy a positive and consistent force for peace; and one which assisted the aspirations of masses for independence and progress rather than one which bulwarked feudal and tyrannical and treasonous regimes.

It would seek by fiscal, taxation, appropriation and regulation policies to curb the mounting strangehold over our economy on the part of Big Business and to assist the smaller businessman and farmer. It would envision, as the engine for the achievement of these purposes, the transformation of the traditional Two-Party system and its replacement through rising independent political action, by a new progressive-oriented mass party combining the forces of labor, the Negro people, the smaller farmers and many of the smaller businessmen.

As the effects of World War II receded, as the repressive activities of the government, symbolized by McCarthyism, are beaten back, as the Socialist one-third of the world overcomes past failings and accelerates its thrilling economic and social leap forward, there is every reason to believe that the American Left will grow in strength and influence. Such growth requires the overcoming of a rigid, dogmatic and sectarian line and method; at the same time, such possibilities are the best guarantees for the overcoming of these inadequacies.

In sum, the perspective for the American Left in the immediate and continuing future are bright with opportunities for service to our nation.

* * *

APOLOGY, THANKS, AND APPEAL

This year we shall not be able to thank each of you individually for your desperately welcome response to our appeal for financial support. We take the occasion to do so here. Those who sent us help within the last two months will, of course, understand that this applies to them.

To our other readers who either did not notice our appeal, or did not take it seriously, we will speak plainly. We have received something less than one tenth of the $7,000 required to enable us to continue publication. No magic nor god on high will make up the difference. We have no resources to speak to other people like yourselves. It is only you, who are reading this warning at this moment, that we come to as a last resort.

Will you send us as much as or whatever you can?

MAKE WAY FOR THE NEGRO CHILD

LAWRENCE GELLERT

Mr. Gellert has travelled many times throughout the South collecting Negro folk music, particularly songs of protest. The following dialogues and sermon, like those published in *Masses and Mainstream,* July, 1956, are practically verbatim recordings from a recent trip to Virginia.

1

GOIN' to take my picture?

I have no camera.

What's that you got there?

Radio.

Oh.

Did you ever see one this size—no bigger'n a match box?

Shucks, that's nothing much. I've seen radio big as ice box and it got television in it too.

You're a right smart little girl. How old are you?

Twelve—be thirteen come Easter.

What class are you in at school?

Sixth, but that's 'cause I missed a whole term last year.

Been sick?

Where you been, mister? Don't you know school was shut down? It was on account of that there nigger trouble—they want to be goin' to white folks school. Us only back in class since last week.

But you do have Negro children in your class now?

Yes, sir. Got one. A girl.

You get along with her all right?

She don't bother me none.

And so everybody's happy?

Wouldn't say that, mister.

Aren't you happy?

It ain't me I'm talking about. It's my daddy. He say he'd rather see Jim—that's my brother, he's eleven—and me goin' without school than studyin' 'longside niggers.

Then how come you're back in school with a Negro child?

That's 'cause momma all the time fight with him about it. She say

she's mighty tired havin' us children traipsin' in and out of the house week after week, growin' up ignorant like mountain kids. Say if us kids don't get back to school fast she goin' to pick us up and carry the whole parcel of us back to Rockingham where she come from.

So your daddy did let you go to school instead?

Yes sir. He says we can go, but nigger kids got to sit 'em way back in class room very last ones, so they know their place even if they allowed to go to white folks school.

And do they sit way back?

No sir, they don't. Can't see the blackboard. That make Daddy hoppin' mad. He say he give both Jim and me quarter each for payin' nigger kid in our class to tote our books and lunch to school. That way, daddy say, nigger kid won't get him no biggety idea he go to school same as white folks child—he there just for totin' bundles.

And are they carrying your books and lunch to school?

Nigger kid in my class fetched to school in Buick car.

And Jim?

Look mister. I got to be going now. There's Jim yonder playin' catch ball with some nigger kid. Ask him 'bout it yourself.

2

Hello, Jim.

How come you know my name?

I was just talking to your big sister.

She ain't no bigger'n me. I can lick her.

What's the name of that boy there?

He's Jerry.

Why don't you throw the ball to him?

Got time. Maybe you give me a nickel for candy, mister?

Maybe. Your sister tells me Jerry carries your books and lunch to school every day?

She's just lying. He do no such thing.

Well, I wouldn't believe a big husky kid like you needs anybody to carry for him.

That's got nothing to do with it, mister. The reason he don't carry for me, I lost the quarter my daddy gave me to pay 'im. Now you going to tell my daddy on me?

I don't even know your daddy.

'Cause if you do, he hide me good with his buckle belt. Mister, you want Jerry to carry my books and lunch like daddy say? If you give me a quarter. . . .

I'd as soon give him a quarter to have you carry his things.

Mister, you're spoofing.

No I'm not. No more reason why he should carry for you than you carry for him.

But he's a nigger.

What difference does that make?

My dad say nigger put here on earth just to fetch and carry. He say when he were my size 'bout, nigger all the time got names Pomp, Caesar, Rex, so you can call 'em quick like dog. And they come runnin', you bet. . . .

Does he look like a dog?

Oh, that's Jerry.

Well, he's no different than the rest of the Negroes.

Mister, don't you believe my daddy?

I certainly do not.

I'm going to tell him on you.

Then I'll tell him about the quarter you lost—if you did lose it—instead of paying Jerry to carry your books and lunch.

You say you don't even know who my daddy is.

Won't be hard to find out. Let's forget all about it now, shall we?

If you don't tell nothing to my daddy.

That's a deal.

And you let me have a nickel for candy.

3

You remember me talking to Jim, the white boy, this morning?

Maybe so.

Well, what do you say?

About what?

About what we were talking about.

I don't know what you were talking about.

Oh come. You were standing there all the time.

Wasn't listening.

You couldn't help overhear.

Could if I tried.

You know darned well we were talking about the deal for carrying Jim's books and lunch to school for a quarter a week.

Don't need the money. My daddy give me all I want.

But you agreed to the bargain.

It don't mean nothing. Jim ain't goin' to pay nobody for nothing he do for himself easy. Anyway he already spent quarter for candy.

Suppose he gets another quarter?

No different. He spend it for candy same as first time.

But supposing he doesn't spend it and offers it to you instead?

I sure going to take it.

And carry his books and lunch for a week?

I pay another kid to carry 'em, and carry mine too—and cost me only fifteen cents. So I have ten cents over for myself.

But aren't you the only Negro boy in Jim's class?

That's right. But white kids do it alright. Glad to make fifteen cents that easy.

A white kid would do it?

Sure. Reckon Jim himself would be first one to do it if his daddy weren't so doggone puff-addery about it.

You do get along with the white kids at school.

I know 'em all my life—most of 'em. I don't have no trouble with 'em.

How are your marks at school?

Not been at white folks school long enough to find out. But reason I go there in first place is they say I'm best pupil in Negro children school where I used to go. My daddy and principal both of 'em say I got to do my best and better'n my best—better even than white children—and I reckon I better else they's mighty disappointed in me.

What does your daddy do for a living?

He's undertaker. Got his own funeral parlor. Biggest one in town. Run him two hearses and four limousines.

How does one get to meet him?

White folks 'round here don't wait for no invitation when they want to see colored people.

I'm not from around here.

But you're white folks just the same.

Would you call your daddy on the phone and see if he'll see me? Here's a dime for the phone.

What do I tell him? What you want to see him about?

He doesn't bury white folks, does he?

No sir.

Well I'm not here on business. Tell him it'll have to be a social visit.

4

I'm afraid my son was exaggerating the extent of my business. But for a Negro—and in the South—I think I've been fortunate. I can provide for Jerry all right. He doesn't need the white boy's quarter.

Jim never offered it to him.

Beyond the quarter however is something more than just a deal between two children.

Do you think Jim's father's tactics are part of the organized drive against integration?

I wouldn't know that. But if you realize the K.K.K. and White League have bounced clear across the Atlantic to England—recently the Klan was burning crosses in South Africa—then you can readily concede their link to almost any incident of provocation.

And do you too work organizationally—I mean do you face these problems of defense individually or on a community basis?

Oh I'd say we're working on a national basis—yes, and organizing with that perspective. Today every member of the Race throughout the United States has his eyes focused wherever the news spots an integration battle . Whatever happens to a Negro today in any part of the world—the Race Press brings the news and from it we cull, shift, exchange and coordinate experience. Nothing has so agitated our people since Reconstruction days.

Your son tells me he was chosen from among many others on the basis of his superior school record. Would you say that was so?

So far as he's concerned, it's all right for him to believe it. He'll work harder to justify it. But there were other considerations. His father, and I must say I'm mighty proud to have had my son chosen to the honor, is a college graduate, Howard University, 1941. Besides I can provide for him adequately in a pecuniary sense, to put our best foot forward, so to speak—good clothes, pocket money, etc. Also since my income is derived exclusively from my own people, I'm beyond the reach of punitive measures—job loss, and other economic pressure from a hostile white world. And paradoxically, while I have probably the most to lose amongst our people in the community, I am at the same time afforded maximum protection because any financial loss to me personally or to my business involves loss proportionately to influential whites who carry my various types of insurance policies and furnish me with banking facilities and credits. Actually, while we racial-minded Negroes all strive to build our own banks and insurance and credit companies, our safety is often assured only by our across-the-color-line business affiliations.

You have a sort of class interest between you, isn't that it?

Oh, no, not really. They wouldn't acknowledge a Negro in the same class with them, no matter how much money he has. Some years back a friend of mine, a Negro lawyer, bought himself a handsome maroon sports car. He sure was proud of it. But it wasn't very long before an influential banker, a white man, ordered him to sell the car—too many o

he white man's friends were making jokes out of the situation of his aving bought an identical vehicle. The Negro couldn't keep the car after hat. But of course having commercial relations with prominent whites n the community affords a buffer against many an annoyance—large or etty. For example, a white man goes to some substantial member of the Negro group and demands a "loan" of several hundred dollars with threats f physical violence. It's happened to me. It happens to all of us in the outh one time or another. The Law won't help us. Our word is no good gainst the white man's—be he of the highest calibre or the most worthess and scoundrelly. Then our only recourse is some white man who can e induced to protect us on the basis of self-interest.

I've heard you have some very prominent and affluent Jewish merhants here. How do they fit into this picture?

Well, I do hear occasionally from some tale-carrying member who vorks for them—particularly as domestic. The Jewish group is outside he pale almost as much as we are. Oh, their children can go to the regular schools all right. But as you know they have their own place of worhip and rabbi. They'll chitchat in the stores with the prominent white ndividuals, but there the familiarity seems to end. Let one of the soalled leading families marry off a daughter. The Jewish families will eceive the engraved invitations—but generally a day or two after the eremony just to make sure they don't attend. From the Negro group hey are even more isolated. It may be fear—they themselves have a long istory of persecution. Anyway, they maintain a complete hands-off attiude, although they will render, when pressed, the usual lip service to egregation. There are individual exceptions no doubt. But I'm speaking y and large.

And your churches—do they play their part in this fight for integraion?

Oh yes, our church today in the South is right in the middle of it all. he preacher in the face of all the ferment and motion must head in the irection the congregation pushes. Else he doesn't stay around very long. ome of the militant leaders are ministers. And if you'd care to come and sten to one of the really old-time country preachers—about eight miles om town—I'll be happy to drive you, that is, if you intend to be here unday. . . .

5

. . . And Lawdy, Lawd, when I hears 'bout white folks comin' to our raise House, I gets thinkin' how things used to be and ain't gwine to be o more. One time if white folks set 'em down here to enjoy theirself

listenin' to singin' and old country nigger preachin' we bound not to disappoint 'em for the world. We drop us 'bout everythin' we plan for that Sunday. And we sing Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, and such like songs he want to hear. And we climb up on that there raised holler deck and shout praise to the Lawd for sending us fine understandin', rich generous white folks just in the nick of time. 'Cause the roof needin fixin' so bad—it got leak in it big enough to let in water to float Noah's Ark again. And it goin' to take 'bout seventeen dollar and fourteen cents to get new roof to keep from havin' us another flood to wash this here whole world away. And no white folks wouldn't stand by and let that happen. And so the white folks laugh the bustingest you ever hear and obliged to buy us a new roof. But like I say things like they used to be ain't gwine to be no more.

We hope white folks ain't goin' to feel offended.

It ain't that our roof don't need no fixin'. Lawd it sure do. But we got other things need fixin' mighty bad too.

I was borned into this here world long time ago by Old Granny Delia down country 'bout twenty miles from here I reckon. And she borned heap more children, more'n Bible King, more'n she can count 'em—maybe ten thousand Negro and white folks children both. And she say all the time how she can tell difference between white folk's child and Negro child just for hearin' 'em cry. White folk's child say gimme, gimme, he own this world very first minute he borned—Negro child sorrowful and moanin' like a willow 'cause he know sure enough and no mistake he cotch him a ticket for obstacle race.

But Old Delia she dead and gone long time ago. And things she used to hear, we ain't gwine hear no more.

Now the Supreme Law of this here wide land done declare Negro child gwine has 'em no more second class ticket—'cause they's bound to take the obstacles from the Race, at last. Negro child—Glory be!—gwine to get same start like child what got him white paint job before he enter this here world. Yes Lawd, Negro child can go to school and learn him and ready him for to get good job and earn him good things in life too. And the mighty Supreme Law of this land declare stand aside all you rounders and let that Negro child pass. And all you interefering Law breakin' white folks got to obey the Law.

Now 'most white folks say we are bound to obey the Supreme Law 'cause there is no Law in this country higher. But some white folks get talkin' back to the Law. Lookahere, they say, How can we undo quick as a flash what we do do do, since world beginnin'? Don't rush us—don't crowd us, Time is what we need. Time, time, time. Only give us time and more time.

Time is what it takes to grow big snake from little snake. Time is
iat it take to turn baby weasel into egg-suckin' varmint. Time is what
take devil seed to beget world destroyin' enemy of the Lawd and all
ınkind.

And Lawdy, Lawd, when member of obstacle race breakin' the Law and
lice on his track with hoodoo wagon cotchin' up with him, time is very
test thing he want or ask for. 'Cause time is what he gwine get sure
ough and that's a fact: out on the country line, on the hard rock pile
th ten pound hammer and striped coat and pants.

How come then they don't do do white folks breakin' the Law—
e Supreme Law of this land, exactly the same way? The Supreme Law
this land spoke and how come law breakers 'lowed to talk back and
ead for time and more time and they don't give 'em the time they de-
ve? How come, Lawd?

Please, Lawd, help that there Supreme Law speed the day for the little
egro child to get his due and put away for always the obstacles what
ike Old Granny Delia name the Race. And then and not until then,
e things I used to see, ain't gwine to see no more—the things I used
know ain't gwine to know no more—

The things I used to be
Ain't gwine to be no more
Things I used to see
Ain't gwine to see no more
I'm a-travellin' Lawd, yes
I'm a-travellin' on.

Everybody!

Things I used to know
Ain't gwine to be no more
Things they used to reap
Ain't gwine to sow no more
I'm a-travellin', huh,
Yes Lawd, I'm a-travellin' on.

JACKSON POLLOCK: ARTIST IN SOLITAR

JOHN BERGER

One of Great Britain's leading art critics, Mr. Berger's articles appear regularly in *The New Statesman.* We are indebted to that periodical for permission to reprint this estimate of one of America's most controversial painters, who was killed in an auto accident last year.

A review of Mr. Berger's novel, *A Painter of Our Time,* will appear in next month's *Mainstream.*

IN a period of cultural disintegration—such as ours in the West today it is hard to assess the value of an individual talent. Some artists a clearly more gifted than others and people who profoundly understa their particular media ought to be able to distinguish between those w are more and those who are less gifted. Most contemporary criticism exclusively concerned with making this distinction; on the whole, t critic today accepts the artist's aims (so long as they do not challenge own function) and concentrates on the flair or lack of it with which th have been pursued. Yet this leaves the major question begging: how can talent exempt an artist if he does not think beyond or question t decadence of the cultural situation to which he belongs?

Perhaps our obsession with genius, as opposed to talent, is instinctive reaction to this problem, for the genius is by definition man who is in some way or another larger than the situation he inher For the artist himself the problem is often deeply tragic; this was question, I believe, which haunted men like Dylan Thomas and Jo Minton. Possibly it also haunted Jackson Pollock and may partly expl why in the last years of his life he virtually stopped painting.

Pollock was certainly a highly talented painter. Some may be surpri by this. We have seen the consequences of Pollock's now famous in vations—thousands of Tachiste and Action canvases crudely and ar trarily covered and "attacked" with paint. We have heard the lege of Pollock's way of working: the canvas on the floor, the paint dripp and flung on to it from tins; the delirium of the artist's voyage into unknown, etc. We have read—and I have often quoted them—pretentious incantations written around the kind of painting he father

Actually, he was a most fastidious, sensitive and 'charming' craftsman, with more affinities with an artist like Beardsley than with a raging iconoclast.

All his best canvases are large. One stands in front of them and they fill one's field of vision: great walls of silver, pink, new gold, pale blue nebulae seen through dense skeins of swift dark or light lines. It is true that these pictures are not composed in the Renaissance sense of the term; they have no focal centre for the eye to travel towards or away from. They are designed as continuous surface patterns which are perfectly unified without the use of any obvious repeating motif. Nevertheless their color, their consistency of gesture, the balance of their tonal weights all testify to a natural painter's talent, and incidentally also to the fact that Pollock's method of working allowed him in relation to what he wanted to do, as much control as, say, the Impressionist method allowed the Impressionists.

Pollock, then, was unusually talented and his paintings can delight the sophisticated eye. If they were turned into textile design or wallpapers they might also delight the unsophisticated eye. (It is only the sophisticated who can enjoy an isolated, single quality removed from any normal context and pursued for its own sake—in this case the quality of abstract decoration.) But can one leave the matter there?

It is impossible. Partly because his influence as a figure standing for something more than this is now too pressing a fact to ignore, and partly because his paintings must also be seen—and were probably intended—as images. What is their content, their meaning? A well-known museum curator whom I saw in the gallery, said 'They're *so* meaningful.' But this, of course, was an example of the way in which qualitative words are now foolishly and constantly stood on their heads as everybody commandeers the common vocabulary for their unique and personal usage. These pictures are meaningless. But the way in which they are so is significant.

Imagine a man brought up from birth in a white cell so that he has never seen anything except the growth of his own body. And then imagine that suddenly he is given some sticks and bright paints. If he were a man with an innate sense of balance and color harmony, he would then, I think, cover the white walls of his cell as Pollock has painted his canvases. He would want to express his ideas and feelings about growth, time, energy, death, but he would lack any vocabulary of seen or remembered visual images with which to do so. He would have nothing more than the gestures he could discover through the act of applying his colored marks to his white walls. These gestures might be passionate and frenzied but to us they could mean no more than the tragic spectacle of a deaf mute trying to talk.

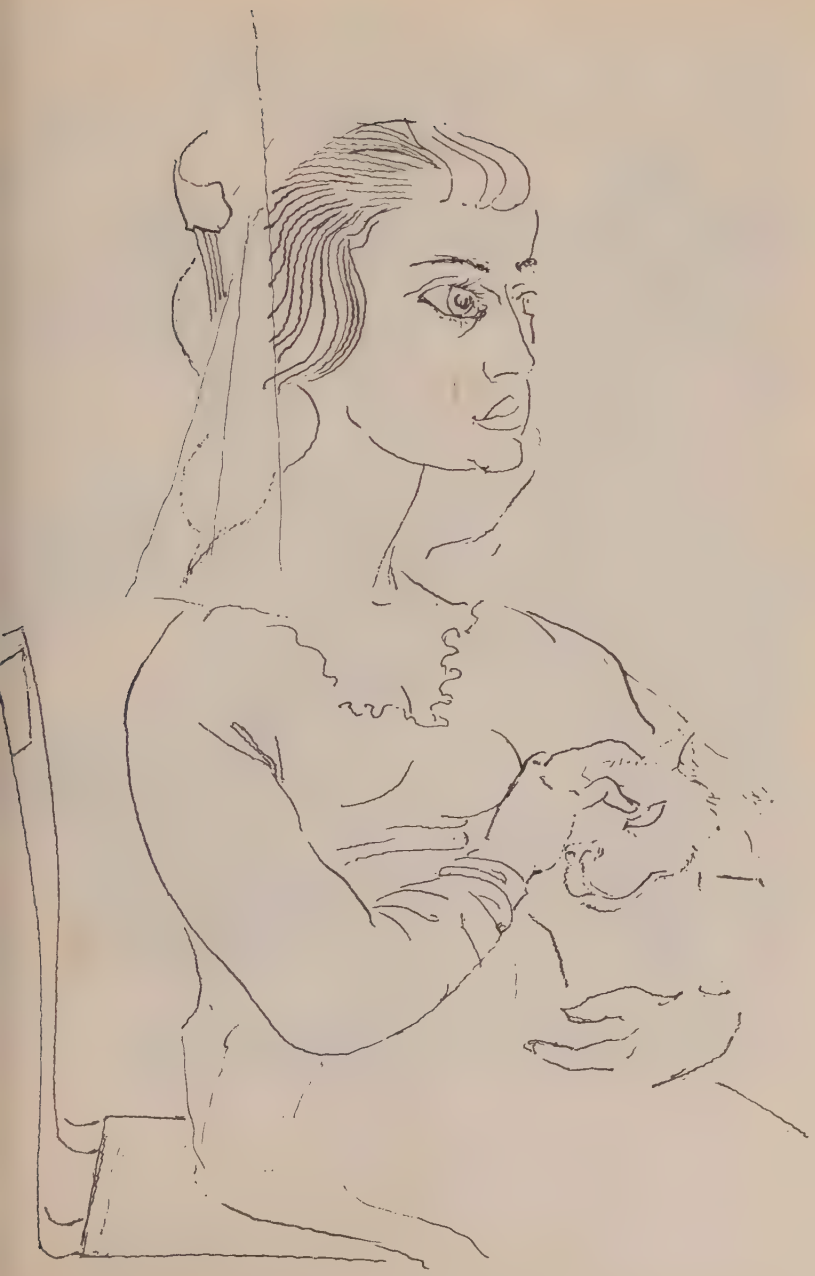
I BELIEVE that Pollock imaginatively, subjectively, isolated himself almost to that extent. His paintings are like pictures painted on the inside walls of his mind. And the appeal of his work, especially to other painters, is of the same character. His work amounts to an invitation: Forget all, sever all, inhabit your white cell and—most ironic paradox of all—discover the universal in your self, for in a one-man world you are universal.

I have said before that *the* problem for the Western artist is to find themes for his art which can connect him with his public. (And by a theme I do not mean a subject as such but the developing significance found in a subject.) At first Pollock was influenced by the Mexicans and by Picasso. He borrowed stylistically from them and was sustained by their fevor, but try as he might he could not take over their themes because they were simply not applicable to his own view of his own social and cultural situation. Finally in desperation he made his theme the impossibility of finding a theme. Having the ability to speak, he acted dumb. (Here a little like James Dean.) Given freedom and contacts, he condemned himself to solitary confinement in the white cell. Possessing memories and countless references to the outside world, he tried to lose them. And having jettisoned everything he could, he tried to preserve only his consciousness of what happened at the moment of the act of painting.

If he had not been talented this would not be clear; instead one would simply dismiss his work as incompetent, bogus, irrelevant. As it is Jackson Pollock's talent did make his work relevant. Through it one can see the distintegration of our culture, for naturally what I have described was not a fully conscious and deliberate personal policy; it was the consequence of his living by and subscribing to all our profound illusions about such things as the role of the individual, the nature of history, the function of morality.

And perhaps here we have come to something like an answer to my original question. If a talented artist cannot see or think beyond the decadence of the culture to which he belongs, the situation is as extreme as ours, his talent will only reveal negatively but unusually vividly the nature and extent of that decadence. His talent will reveal, in other words, how it itself has been wasted.

THREE DRAWINGS BY LOUIS NISHIL



REMEMBERING HART CRANE: TWO POEMS

I: WALTER LOWENFELS

II: RICHARD DAVIDSON

I

THE SUICIDE

On April 26, 1932, the poet Hart Crane, returning by sea to the United States from Mexico, threw himself from the deck of the passenger ship, Orizaba.

Invocation

Regard and guard this skull
whisked among the barnacles
    in a wild lament of moons—
this plain song of a pearl
    that holds the fractures of a world. . . .

        From his throat dreams
sing to ships and sailors
        nightmares of our time:
island universes
        dark with narcotic blooms
vanishing over quicksilver waters.

(O parched! O thirsting! we whispered,
bathe among heather, forget visions
        for long life among turtles.)

So he made the poem
        mountain-climbing with Paul Bunyan—
elsewhere his human yolk
        flowered with anemone
from the crystal of a cancer
        that cracks in the shell
        for not being born.

Legend

In the beginning
the birds of the Old Man dove into the sea
to bring the earth to land and make warriors from the mud.

On the mountain top Yellow Crow hacked his finger joint
crying
Give me long life and a horse, Old Man,
make me a chief.
In the forest with breasts and teeth of iron
Baba Yaga devours the children.

These your bones and you my flesh.
You will never see yourself more clearly.
The angel of death is immeasurable in height
and the space between his eyes is a journey of
seventy thousand days.

They have not paid for my flints.
I am done hunting with Odin, God of the Wind.
Try these leaves of the sweet flag;
they drive away demons.

If dogs eat the afterbirth of mares they go mad,
and agate is god for fever.
See where my skull was burst to let out demons. I am
full of ancient death.
I changed my head a hundred times.
I have slain the sabre-toothed
and danced for harvests.
When my flocks were stricken and no lambs born
I rose on an eagle's back into the skies
to find the herb of life.
My villages sleep at the bottom of lakes;
The grain over me is billowing and I am colored with
anemones;
And now they rob me of my flints.

I read your coming in a sheep's liver;
millions strong your children.
You will sell yourself to slavery.
I am a Grimaldi with a carge of flints;
I saw the gold glitter in the graves
and listened to the mysteries of the fathers.
When I died the fall of a twig pointed to the murderer.
I was buried with axes and with oxen
and my *muga* set free. I saw the white dove fly.

Now you rob my grave and leave no flints.

How shall I hunt
red ochre and gold for corpses?
How shall I live
without a dog's head
to lead me from the grave?

Where the talagoya is roasted and eaten there blew a wind.
Where the memmina is roasted and eaten there blew a wind.
Where the deer is roasted and eaten there blew a wind.
The doves of Taravelzita say *Kuturung*.

Invocation

No
no more burial with flints.
Witch doctors have gone.
Not even Mr. Ford shall lie
with a thousand piston rings
to feed his soul in heaven.
Who'll run with urine
to ask advice of a Jew?
All are dead
for drinking basilisk juice.
Black Death
is in the wind
bodies blackening
flesh crackling.
It is in the bone
to the last kiss of waves
to the drying of the seas
and the shells echoing. . . .

Black Death

In the cinnamon and ginger
in the pepper and cloves
from Arabia from India
in the camphor and tragacanth
mastic and balm
from Persia and Ceylon

in the sugar and the dyes
the scents and the gums
in the indigo and alum
the ivory and the pearls
in the caravans from China
the rats carrying fleas
the Black Death.
From Marseilles and the rivers
Alexandria and the ports
along the roads quick through the trees
flailing the land with the millions of dead.
Black Death the seed grain of the soil
ground into soil milling our flowers
out of the stones death and the petals
stemming raining out of the red
blood through the soil
boils and bells
chorals of chimes for the Black Death.
Plague infected the seed of the land,
cities shrank pastures dried
the crops deserted and the roads
sinks of infection.

Between the banners the spiral candles
between the shoulders the congealing blood

free from stain
arise and do not sin again
that god may lift the pest from us
washer of sins and the Black
Death millions

Oral to stercoral
brackish dill they swill,
the darkness rolls
over the hovels,
three fathoms deep
the Enormous Ma
mills them like pods
puppets sing—
busy busy,
larvae suckle,

nymphs rehearse,
in the beginning
in the beginning.

Away fly
turn up another page and turn and fly.
Skeletons of the world
reporters of plague
raking the pest through the grain,
one wave length from a myth
one
dial twist from a story of men.
R.I.P. R.I.P.

There the leathery lips rotten with famine
tearing the corpses scourging the flesh
to the sound of the whips
tanning taint and infection.

Side by side
we talked and moved
reading
rows of roads and the rose
choked with suicide
reading
stocks are moving
states are building
and the skull is moving

fleeing the past
flooding the fields with the Black Death millions.

Down the drains along the bottoms
the children the unborn
the dead births
all meeting all
in the sea
in the rivers
in the waters of the skull

I saw my end. In a chamber alone
they shut me up. When they heard the cries

they broke the door. They found me
tearing my entrails. Then I confessed
and died in the faith. See my hand—
the black stain from his thumb. . . .

grave diggers trenching, corpses swelling,
a Lazarus of boils rising from the skull.
Outward flew the winged spirit of light.

I escaped but they followed.
They found me at night and took me
60 miles off the coast of Boston.
On the beach they built a fire.
I was one quarter consumed before I
could speak.
I said
we met at night in a dream.
You are mad too but trained to quiet.
I know the world
farther than the beach combers. . . .

Choral

The chart is the destiny of his year
column for column
one side for one side
by the names of the months
by the numbers of the suicides.

Not in fall nor winter but in spring
the record grows
the numbers mount
to meet the longer season.

It follows the older years
the days lengthening
the figures rising.

No more for these
nor him
but numbers

dead to suffering
    immortal in statistics.

Spring is the season
    fulfilling the coroner's wisdom
        fattening prophetic numbers
            of the older years and older seasons.

Black buds push from the trees
    the rivers bulge the charts receive
        the live numbers
                into the lime salts

the bone spores
            running
gathered to the rows and columns
from the mountains and the flats
from the sea-nodules from the shell ooze
floating to the sea-bottoms in the waters of the night

to the marine socket to the brine pap
the empty roms deserted of tortures
gone open to sun and to spring
in the waters of the skull
in the darkness of the numbers
looking
        America
                for you.

Coda

For the many
just that remains
of which your christ is oblivious
just that escapes
that makes his dream.
So his acts of revelation
are like an ocean in an empty shell
and his religions
oil in a wound
we are bound to tear open
    but to fail

allows the moment that discloses
what it is that moves
among the rising to no ends.

Of his aspirations
what's to be said
but that like our towers
they were sometimes far-reaching?

And this:
he was too much his cousin
lay by himself bred only white mice. . . .

There across the Golden Eagle's nest
his brain struck from its roots
monstrosities among the vacuums
cursed and soaring among the vectors
among the walkers
riders
heaven-borne.

Choral

Creep into the socket wind
come down into the skull
old man of the sea.

Forgive him sea-petals,
remember him not
as you will not
lipped by the wave
sea-moulded among the conches.

His straw was in the wind
running like an idiot
with moss in the ears—
devising plans for killing rats,
for evading stenches
stabbing for the heart

to sustain himself
among the walkers and the riders
and the heaven-borne.

Creeps into the sockets
old man of the sea
come down into the skull.
Only his song
pounds the Atlantic Highlands
looking America for you.

WALTER LOWENFELS

II

DEATH OF A POET

I.

He came and went and there was no reply.
Only the sea said things aloud.
Only the scorch of ocean dropping tea leaves in a glass.
There was the rim of sun; there was the long boat and the crack of sky
There were the whispers in his ear; there were the voices of
padded critics with empty pens
There was the giant bridge that held his soul; there was the
folk song of his body deep in the steel of his city.
He came and went and there was no reply.

II.

What thoughts flung themselves on the hard crusts of wave?
What dreams swam in the pits of rock?
He disturbed the night with a final call
The stars distressed at the sight of death.
Back to the safe womb; back to the hard beaches of first dawn,
Off the deck of a slippery ship
Off the main street of a shrunken town
He waved one soft goodbye and the room of living was emptied.

III.

He saw America as a giant bridge
Touched her buildings with the finger tips of hands

Lost in the blood of experience.
His wounds were always exhibited.
His mind resting on the printed page.
The glories of the unknown dark filled the cellars of his brain
So he moved quickly and loved too well
So he held his breath against the shouts of spring
So he died yearning in his thirty-third year,
Misunderstood by the stiff halls of literary debate
Hounded by the wolves of doubt
A cry of stubborn life in the morning of death.

IV.

Now remember him for he wrote the songs
The lost dream of America piercing his sky,
The sense of living flesh; the acre of raw earth
Clasping the hand of his memory.
The vision of thundering futures; land of Whitman and peace
Tearing before his eyes; spreading their messages of hope
On flagstones of wind.
He walked the deck of a foreign ship
Slid beneath the foreign waters,
Killed by indifferent firesides at home,
Killed by empty mouths and roaring tongues.
He came and went and there was no reply.
Only the sea said things aloud.
Only the scorch of ocean dropping tea leaves in a glass.
Only the vision left strong and singing
Before his dying eyes.

RICHARD DAVIDSON

JOYCE CARY'S SURRENDER

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

JOYCE CARY'S novel *The Captive and the Free** was written durin the last three years of his life, with the final work on it done whe he knew that he was dying. He laid it aside, essentially complete bu unpolished, in January, 1957, and spent the last three months of h life completing the treatise on aesthetics, *Art and Reality*.** And so th two books make up what may be called a final message. It is characteristi of Cary's mind, with its bundle of contradictions, that this message ma be described in opposite ways, as a proclamation of either faith c despair.

Cary's first novel appeared in 1930. It was only in the years afte the Second World War, however, that his reputation began to spread t America, and it was in this period that critics on both sides of th Atlantic began to speak of him as the foremost English novelist of hi time. Retrospective evaluations are now in progress which this revie cannot make any attempt to match. Of Cary's sixteen novels, I hav read only five, and felt throughout all of them a mixture of respect fo his talent and revulsion at his views of life and people. His great gif could not be questioned. He could create a scene of social breadt thronged with people who, despite what we thought of them as peopl proved his acute ear for speech and eye for the detail of life. His fin lean style combined this grasp of vivid detail with a subtle underlinin of the bizarre, so that themes suggesting realistic tragedy took on a ton of satiric comedy. But his characters appeared starved for affection o the part of their author. Even those whom he seemed to admire, h scrutinized with an ironic detachment. This was particularly true of th first novel (*Herself Surprised*) of the trilogy dealing with the artis Gulley Jimson, who periodically beats, lies to, cheats and sponges upo his series of common-law wives. Jimson's behavior, speaking realistically shows great cruelty; yet Cary treats it apologetically, as a kind of childis irresponsibility, while its victims are viewed with patronizing affectio

* THE CAPTIVE AND THE FREE, by Joyce Cary. Harper. $5.00.
** ART AND REALITY, by Joyce Cary. Harper. $3.00.

such as one would give an injured pet.

Cary's directness of style, his sweep of life, the absence in his writing of experimentation with language, deliberate symbolism and preoccupation with the borderland of consciousness, almost place him in the tradition of the great Victorian and late nineteenth century novelists. Yet he was typical of the mid-twentieth century in a way that can perhaps best be explained by quoting some of his comments on his predecessors, in *Art and Reality*. Cary accepts Dickens with great reservations. "He was essentially a poet, his books are like ballads, and his greatness is in his power to transport us into a region of fantasy almost purely emotive. He makes us laugh and cry, makes us drunk with words, but he never makes us think." About Hardy, Cary has no such reservations, revering him as a consummate master and saying, "His theme was the injustice of life, the cruelty of blind fate destroying the innocent and guilty alike." These judgments may strike one as odd, for Cary's own approach to the novel, with its social themes, its portrayal of public life, and its comic undercurrent, seems very close to that of Dickens, and at the opposite pole from Hardy's countryside tragedies. Why does Cary deny Dickens' very real ability to make people think, and accuse him of substituting "fantasy" for the realities of English life? The answer, I would suggest, is Dickens' optimism, which to Cary stands for thoughtlessness and unreality.

In Cary's work it is as though the Victorian social novel had been passed through the despair of the 1890's, from which it emerged drained of tenderness and hope. The typically "twentieth century" attitude of Cary is that of the "man alone," castigating a society both chaotic and oppressive. He is like a social reformer who has lost faith in reform, a muck-raker who knows of nothing rising in social life that can replace the evils he describes.

And within the critcal account of social evils, there are curious blindnesses. In *Mister Johnson,* which told of the troubles of the English colonial administrators in Africa, Cary gave no inkling of the vast wealth being extracted by England through these administrators, out of the labor of the African people. In the Chester Nimmo trilogy (*Prisoner of Grace, Except the Lord, Not Honour More*) which dealt with the hypocrisy of English politics over the period of the first quarter of the twentieth century, Cary omitted all mention of the power wielded by the great English financial and industrial structure over the political parties. Instead, he presented the view that the responsibility for this political corruption lay with the working people, who were shown as stupid and ignorant, capable only of being led about by the nose. Particularly savage, as if it were only a trap laid for the sheep-like workers by

unscrupulous politicians, was Cary's attack upon the general strike of 1926. The novels also have contrived situations which strain a reader's belief. It is hard to accept a Nimmo's rising to the exalted position that Cary gives him, comparable to a Lloyd George or Ramsey MacDonald. The point is not that the latter two were giants, but they certainly had more on the ball than Nimmo, whose mentality is that of a small-town politician. In the Gulley Jimson books, the reader must accept Cary's word that this freak who excuses a consummate selfishness with an air of childish irresponsibility, who acts with insensitive brutality towards everyone who befriends him, who treats a succession of wives like slaves, is a "great painter." I am not raising here the question of whether a great artist needs a moral view of life; only the fact that he must, at the least, have an inner life of some perception and sensitivity, of some humanity, and nothing of this appears in Jimson.

In *The Captive and the Free,* a similar character occupies the stage in the course of an exposure of an aspect of social life in England. There is the brutal, self-centered scoundrel who has a deep conviction in his greatness, and who emerges as something of a hero in Cary's eyes; in this case, the faith-healing evangelist, Walter Preedy. There are the women who martyr themselves to the men, coming back again and again for punishment. There is the picture of the common people as dolts.

A passage that occurs relatively early in the novel illustrates how well Cary's outlook on life is part of his style itself. The Lady Rideout of whom it tells is an aged and ailing widow who owns a block of shares in an important London newspaper, *The Argus,* which had been founded by her husband.

> Lady Rideout had been taken ill at a public meeting, the opening session of the Press Exhibition. She had been asked, as representative of the woman editors, to second the opening speech, and had insisted, in spite of her doctors, on carrying out the engagement. A few months before this she had had influenza and had been vaguely ill ever since; she had sudden fits of weakness, strange pains, buzzing in her ears, etc., for which she had consulted specialists and taken various cures without apparent effect. Finally she had decided to ignore all symptoms and doctors.
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> But what really decided her to go to the meeting was a visit from a friend in America, who expected to find her dying. The Americans, apparently had already written her off.
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> Unluckily, after the first few words of her address, she fainted, and as she was, of course, in the front row on the platform, one of the numerous photographers present seized his chance, and got two fine shots, one of her legs, as she lay on the stage behind her overturned chair, and another of her being carried out, very awkwardly, by two press barons.
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> There was no reference in any British paper to this incident, and even

the rumours that came to Fleet Street were doubtful. The *Argus* editor was told that she had been overcome by the heat, and he knew that she had rung him up on the very next day.

But a week later those photographs had come out in an American weekly, on sale at all chief British and Continental railway stations. . . . The *Argus* now had a paragraph to say that Lady Rideout was in excellent health; her temporary illness was due to influenza, requiring a rest cure. The general public at once concluded, according to the rule governing such diplomatic statements, that the woman was dying; but couldn't care less. It was only the Americans who made a fuss about business tycoons. Old Woman Rideout could die in peace for all it cared, and go to the devil afterwards. People said to themselves, "What have we to do with these newspaper rackets?" and turned the page. The whole newspaper world with its trusts, its companies, its lords, its feuds and alliances, was a mystery to them. The more the press explained itself, the less they believed; and of what they believed, they inclined to the worst. It was a ramp; it was a lot of lies; it was a skin game for millionaires who got away with everything.

Notice the racy language which seems to pride itself on having no high-flown literary pretensions, and moves so easily into popular slang, as if Cary were showing himself to be "one of the common people." Notice how suddenly any sympathy the reader might feel for the ailing old woman is cut off, with Cary turning the event into comedy through the grotesque scene of the woman lying on the platform and the photographer snapping pictures. Notice the jumping about in time, place and point of view, like a montage, with apparently major and trivial events given equal importance, all linked together in a chain of associations. We start with what appears to be an important scene coming up, a big press conference. Lady Rideout is taken ill. We go back to her first feelings of illness, then up to her debate over whether or not to attend, and are then introduced to her American friend. We switch to an objective view of her lying on the platform, from the standpoint of the photographer; then move on to the British press report, and from this to what the British public thinks of newspapers in general. It is like a stream-of-consciousness technique, in which the writer presents the world as irrational and chaotic, filtering through his perceptions and achieving "order" only through his own subjective associations. The crucial difference, however, is that Cary, while adhering to the feeling of outer-world irrationality, turns the stream-of-consciousness technique into a medium for sardonic comedy, castigating the outer world. And it is remarkable, and typical of Cary, how many people, in a page and a half, he manages to treat to his contempt: Lady Rideout, the photographers, the press barons, the Americans, the doctors, the British press. The contempt ex-

tends to the British public as a whole, although here Cary's expositoin of the public mind seems to embody a certain working-people's class-consciousness. But it is a travesty of class-consciousness, a suspicion and hatred of the rich and ruling powers which lacks insight and intelligence.

This kind of portrayal of both the British upper class and the public at large occupies *The Captive and the Free,* which takes up two main subjects. One is that of the press, and revolves about the *Argus,* which had been established as a sedately liberal newspaper and had become a London institution, but is now losing circulation alarmingly, due to the competition of the sensation-mongering tabloids. The older editors want to preserve its traditionally genteel quality. But a new force is represented by the foreign editor, Harry Hooper, who is all for changing it into a lurid tabloid. In the center of the debate, pulled both ways, are the old Lady Rideout, who dies while the conflict is going on, and her daughter, Joanna, who inherits the mother's shares.

The other subject is that of religion. On the scene comes the Reverend Walter Preedy, an evangelist and faith-healer. In his younger days Preedy had seduced a girl of fourteen, Alice Rodker, and also persuaded her to leave her child to die. Then he had become converted, and discovered that he had been chosen as a voice of Christ on earth, with a mission to bring revelation to others, and with miraculous powers to cure the sick and heal the crippled. He carries out this mission with a single-minded conviction in his own greatness which results in a ruthless cruelty to all who try to stand in his path. His conversion however does not prevent him from continuing to carry on illicit relations with Alice Rodker.

The *Argus* is involved when Hooper, who is portrayed as a completely unscrupulous adventurer, decides that Preedy is a coming leader to whom it would be best to link his own career. He becomes the press-agent and manager of Preedy's enterprise, and bludgeons the *Argus* into supporting Preedy. An important asset is that Hooper has been able to make Joanna Rideout his mistress.

The most determined opponent of Preedy is a curate, the Reverend Syson, who denounces Preedy as a fraud and also a murderer who does not permit his followers to go to doctors. Syson is an innocent-minded clergyman with vague Christian Socialist ideas. When he takes on Preedy and his *Argus* backers, he is like a lamb thrown to the wolves. He is sued for slander, torn to pieces in the courtroom and thrown into jail. He loses his money in fines and costs, separates from his family, and from his church, and resumes the fight against Preedy with an almost insane fury. Near the end of the novel, he again is thrown into jail. It is then that his "conversion" takes place, which will be touched on later.

The newspaper scenes are handled in a manner of realistic comedy.

However, with the religious theme, a contrivance enters which strains the reader's credulity. For Cary gives to Preedy genuinely miraculous powers. Preedy, he says, does cure many lame and ill. Preedy's crucial triumph comes when a young wealthy American woman who had been permanently crippled in a riding accident, a person scientific-minded and hostile to all faith-healing, gets up and walks, completely cured, in response to his prayer and magic touch. There are two ways of looking at this contrivance. David Cecil, who knew Cary well, says in his introduction to the novel that "Cary was a profoundly religious spirit of that intensely individual and protestant kind which cannot find fulfilment in any corporate body; he had to carve out his creed by himself and for himself." But we can also see it as another touch of savage comedy, with Cary teasing his readers, playing upon their convictions, jolting them with a supposition of a miracle-of-Lourdes appearing in hard-headed, materialist London. Whichever way one looks at it, however, the religious creed presented is typical of the kind of theological revival that has appeared among many artists and intellectuals of the last couple of decades. It is religion bereft of any sympathy for the real plight of other human beings, one clung to as only a personal salvation. The God in whom it demands belief has no interest in the troubles of people on earth, or in driving disease out of real life. He will heal a crippled person only to prove his miracle-working powers and so demand complete faith. Preedy's religious thinking, as Cary presents it, has no warmth. It expresses only disgust for the mass of humanity. And as a footnote, we may add that his theology has a touch of anti-Semitism.

> And what were the people, the mass? Were they any wiser, better than the tribes of Israel—any less greedy and self-seeking, less brainless and noisy, less animal and cunning in dependence, less cruel in power, less responsible for themselves or anyone else? Haters of truth, adoring the flatterer, bumsucking equally to the demagogue, and the tyrant, vermin meaner than the foxes or weasels, because they knew the evil they did and loved it for the kick it gave to their malice and their lust.
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> The miracle of history was that any goodness, any truth, had ever appeared on earth—how, in this everlasting war between the few good and the enormous mass of evil, the smallest remnant of the faithful survived. How did they know their leader and maintain their faith? By revelation only.

The climax of the novel is such a revelation. At the end Preedy converts even his enemy, Syson. Even Syson now realizes that if a man believes in Christ he must believe in the miracles, and therefore in miracles today as in the past.

> I hated Preedy, of course. But why? Because those posters of his, those preachings, had shown me that my faith was a muddle of wish-fulfilment and time-serving. He challeneged me to state my case and I couldn't do it. . . . I believed, or rather I wanted to believe in a God of love and truth who hated cruelty and injustice, who sought to abolish every kind of evil. Yet here was a man who told me that God could abolish any evil at will, and I was not allowed to believe him.

Thus the title of the novel is elucidated. Syson, who had been a captive of his blindness, discovers "truth" and therefore wins "freedom."

It is a novel of course primarily about modern society, not about religion. Its theme is that the great body of people live in a world that is hopelessly unknowable and confusing, that this engenders terrible fears which they try to cover up and hide, and that for their own salvation they must follow the leader, the "strong man," who has discovered "truth" and is "free." Over and over the novel reiterates the theme of the few who are strong and the mass who are weak and must follow. Thus both Joanna Rideout and Alice Rodker hate the men, Hooper and Preedy, to whom they have enslaved themselves, know their cruelty, and yet worship their "strength." Of Joanna, Cary writes, "Her hatred even for Hitler had been mixed with admiration for his honesty when he said openly that the German people were sheep to be driven." And Cary explains her yielding to Hooper, "She was pleased to find that she did not mind Hooper's being a brute. She did not want to be irritated any more against a man who knew his own mind and what to do in the world. She was enjoying already the bliss of total acceptance." Alice is more complex, and is an attempt by Cary to create a proletarian rebel. Born poor and working at mean jobs, she hates the well-dressed, the rich, the officialdom, the press, the gentry, everyone whom she sees as pushing her about. But all alone, she defies the world, and if she protects Preedy despite his callousness towards her, it is because she feels that he too is against that world.

Just as in his style Cary's subjectivism clothes itself in a seemingly objective social picture, which remains nevertheless irrational, so in the novel as a whole Cary's lonely fears are transmuted into a thundering denunciation of mankind. He is not partial to the rich. He shows them as frightened and idiotic supporters of Preedy. But it is also at the "factory gates," he says, that Preedy gets most of his converts. And conversion will save them. Cary, speaking as the author, writes:

> For it is quite certain that Preedy had given to hundreds about Pant's Road and thousands in the Kingdom, a guiding string in the black fog

> of their lives. Through him, for the first time in their bewildered existence, they had walked confidently forward in the certainty, or near certainty, of knowing, not only where they were going, but actually what kind of a world surrounded them. And these people, even the stupidest of them, perceived at once that any attempt to limit Preedy's promise to them cut that string, and left them once more lost and bewildered in the fog. Their violence was that of people fighting, not merely for their lives, but for their reason.

And so, just as through Preedy's "miracles" faith supplants science, Cary miraculously transmutes blind acceptance into "reason." To Cary's admirers this may be a message of hope, but the bleak mesage the book actually presents is that not only English society but all civilization is in a hopelessly rotten state, and that the people are waiting for the strong man on the white horse.

Critics by and large have failed to discuss the ideas which Cary urges upon his readers. Had Cary lived, he would probably have gotten a sardonic pleasure from the picture of literary men, on being told by him in this novel that they are lost, impotent and ripe for a fascist yoke, praising him for his "provocative ideas," his "deep probing into the major mysteries of life," his "delighted interest in the working of human nature." The evasion of ideas is standard practice among bourgeois critics today, who must describe literature as a game, a pastime, an arbitrary spinning of words and images. Then after thus having paid homage to the "greatness" of art, they denounce the Marxist left and the socialist countries for their uncouth rudeness in taking ideas seriously, in believing that people live by ideas, and in affirming that if the writer is free to speak his mind, the readers are also free to question him when they find a message of destruction wrapped up in untruth and ignorance.

Yet such an evaluation of Cary's ideas must be part of our evaluation of him as a novelist, for they infuse his characterizations, his events, and his style. And from the confusion of his thinking comes the contradiction he presents as a novelist: that his style is so remarkably vivid and realistic an instrument, in its capturing of detail, and yet suffers from his lack of a realistic view of life; that he creates so wide a social sweep in his novels, and yet lacks a social mind.

The theorist of aesthetics in *Art and Reality* is the same thinker as the novelist of *The Captive and the Free.* Actual life, Cary says, "doesn't have a total meaning, it is simply a wild confusion of events from which we have to select what we think significant for ourselves." The path through which the artist apprehends reality is that of "intuition." Nevertheless, he says, there are "facts," like matter or the law of gravity. These "facts" give the outer world a somewhat mechanistic character,

which cannot satisfy the free mind, or add up to the truth. And so "we have a reality consisting of permanent and highly obstinate facts, and permanent and highly obstinate human nature. And human nature is always in conflict with material facts."

The history of human society might have taught Cary that people have taken successive steps to freedom, not in any eternal war against "stubborn facts" but by productive labor and by discovering the laws of nature, turning them to human use. Thus each stage in the mastery of nature and the reorganization of society has engendered great transformations not only of the outer world, but of "human nature," with successive discoveries of human potentialities for growth. A thinker however who decides that the only path to knowledge is a writer's own "intuition" face to face with the world, who sees knowledge itself as a task for "the man alone," bars himself from the great sources of learning. These are in addition to a man's own experience, the discoveries of his fellow human beings with whom he joins in common goals and the collective experiences of all society. But it is easier to conclude that outer reality is simply "wild confusion," and that therefore history itself has no meaning and is not worth study. Here is an example of Cary's "intuitional" view of history:

> Marx's propaganda inspired the most powerful and widespread social revolution yet seen. His book became a bible to millions who carried out its message with the ardour of missionaries, the ardour that can be inspired only by dogma, by the assurance of truth and the promise of paradise. And Marx is art. It is a picture of the economic world and economic history rendered harmonious and coherent by selection of those facts or apparent facts which fitted Marx's theory of the dialectic adapted from Hegel. It owes its power to its simplicity, and we do not find that simplicity in economics. They are as wildly confused as all the actual world, and therefore our feelings about economics are confused.

Aside from Cary's ignorance of the rich changes and developments that Marx's "dogma" has gone through, and the peculiar view of the three volumes of *Caiptal* as a light propaganda tract carried about by missionaries in their back pockets, we have the fantastic picture of Marx as a kind of faith-healer, a Preedy. Apparently to Cary the successes of socialism are a triumph of Marx's ability to make the confused reality of economics conform to his faith-inspired selection of a few satisfying facts.

A consequence of Cary's view of reality is his confusion, in literary and artistic theory, between language and symbol. "All art uses the symbol. There is no other means by which one individual mind can express itself

in material form and so communicate with another. For the writer, this form is language." Yet a direct reflection of reality in art, no matter how rich, complex and varied the associations it brings up, is not "symbol." Its power is its typicality, its ability to seem individually real and yet to illuminate a pattern of life, so that we learn a host of things from it about ourselves and others. A symbol is quite different. It is an image taken from reality, used to express a relation between the human being and forces that are otherwise mysterious and irrational. A halo about the head of a figure in a medieval religious painting is a symbol, denoting divinity. A sun shining through the clouds in a Turner painting is not symbol but realistic imagery. The difference is crucial to the understanding of art, and it must be recognized even when the same work moves from realistic methods to symbolical. Thus *Melville's Moby Dick* is full of realistic portraits, rich in generalizations, about human beings at war with the sea, but in the course of the novel, as in the chapter "On the Whiteness of the Whale," the whale turns into symbol. Melville is now speaking not about whaling, or the sea, or the human struggle to master nature, or human relations amidst this arduous labor, but about completely different, mysterious, terrifying and overwhelming forces that seem to him to frustrate human hopes, and to which he can give no name.

There is no desire here to oversimplify the problem. In a good deal of modern art that moves away from the outer world to wrestle with the borderland of conscoiusness, imagery itself approaches the borderland between the realistic and symbolic, preserving its outer-world connotations and yet shaped, even distorted, by the play of psychological forces which loom up in the artist's mind as mysterious, un-nameable entities. But this too is a special direction taken by art, accompanying the subjectivity that afflicts minds to whom the outer world has become irrational or raised insoluble problems. Goya more than a hundred and fifty years ago put his finger on the problem in one of his *Caprichos* etchings, which he entitled "The sleep of reason produces monsters."

If this were a political instead of a literary discussion, one could describe in some detail both the awesome shocks and problems raised in the modern world, and the powerful scientific and philosophical tools that are at hand to turn even this irrationality into reason. The tragedy of Cary, however, was not so much that he "didn't know this" and "didn't see that" but that he surrendered. And moreover, the surrender was no less devastating because he tried to transmute it into a mystical hope. Thus he holds that the aim of the novelist is truth to life. "All great artists are preoccupied, as if by nature, with reality. They assume, from the beginning, that it is their task to reveal a truth about

some permanent and fundamental real." But then he says of Flaubert, "The form of *Madame Bovary* is, therefore, Flaubert's moral idea imposed upon the chaos of the actual world, and it is this which gives the events of the actual world meaning for us and this meaning as a moral judgement is rational and true." And so Cary surrenders to the conclusion that the actual world is unknowable. This leads him to a noble-sounding peroration. "It is only in great art and the logic of the subconscious where judgment has become part of the individual emotional character that we move freely in a world which is at once concept and feeling, rational order and common emotion, in a dream which is truer than actual life and a reality which is only there made actual, complete and purposeful to our experience." But such a dream—and Cary is obviously not talking about the dreams that rise out of the potentialities for changing the world that people exhibit in real life—conveys only the sad impotence of surrender. And similarly the novel, *The Captive and the Free,* seems to end, with Syson's conversion, on a note of hope. But the pervading tone of the book is one of a terrible despair.

RiGhT FaCe

No Lean and Hungry Looks

President Eisenhower announced today the names of fifteen trustees from the public for the National Cultural Center.

Many of them are businessmen. There are a few bankers, former diplomats and society leaders. There are no artists or musicians on the list.—The *New York Times.*

Undesirable Alien

Representative Francis E. Walters said today that the committee in charge of patronage for the House had no authority to permit a Chicago Negro boy who is not a page to enter the Capitol page school.

The Pennsylvania Democrat, who heads the panel, said he did not propose "to ignore the regulations" to make an exception for 14-year-old James A. Johnson, Jr.—The *New York Times.*

The Bargain Basement

Koreans serving under the United States flag in their own country are known as Katusans, meaning Koreans attached to the United States Army. They are highly regarded, American officers have reported.

Katusans are a "financial bargain," it has been pointed out. An American soldier receives $78 a month to start and soon may be earning $85.50. A Korean soldier gets 15 to 30 cents a month.—The *New York Times.*

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

Good News for Consumers. In January the monthly consumer price index rose by the nominal amount of one-tenth of a point to 123.8. This is short by just one-tenth of a point of the all-time high, touched twice in 1958—in July and November—The *New York Times.*

Music Lovers

The Arts Club of Washington appealed today for the return of four bronze gongs taken from the Indonesian Embassy's Gamelan Orchestra at a dress ball.

The gong orchestra played for 1,300 persons who attended the Bal Boheme at the Shoreham Hotel. The loss was discovered right after the ball.

Harry Zichterman, president of the arts club, first made a discreet appeal to club members, but it proved fruitless.—The *New York Times.*

Unthinkable

We would never be in the book business if we didn't love books so intensely.—Doubleday Bookshops ad.

Doc Cure-All

A child's hostility toward his parents may even drive him to communism in later years, a psychoanalyst reported here yesterday. Dr. Norbert Bromberg of Tarrytown, N. Y., cited case histories of patients who turned to totalitarian politics out of rebellion against parents. . . . This patient's interest in communism waned when he acquired a more realistic picture of his parents through therapy, the physician reported. He gave up an unfounded hatred of his father and an idealized picture of his mother, along with his guilt over having money. He was able to recognize then some of the unrealistic and contradictory features of the Communist theory and practice and came to realize how he had used them in his own personal conflicts, Dr. Bromberg said.—The *New York Times.*

A Shortage of Paupers

Blue Cross and other forms of medical insurance threaten to wreck advanced medical education, Dr. Herman E. Pearce said today. . . . "Medican insurance has had a catastrophic effect on residency training in surgery," Dr. Pearse said. . . . The difficulty, Dr. Pearse said, was that insurance had made it possible for nearly all patients to pay and thus to pick their own doctors. The upshot is that there are fewer clinic—that is, charity—patients for the young specialists-to-be, he said.—The *New York Times.*

books in review

Thoreau: Truth and Myth

AFTER WALDEN: THOREAU'S CHANGING VIEWS ON ECONOMIC MAN, by Leo Stoller. Stanford University Press. $4.00.

CONSCIOUSNESS IN CONCORD: THE TEXT OF THOREAU'S HITHERTO "LOST JOURNAL." With a Commentary by Perry Miller. Houghton Mifflin. $4.00.

APART from the fact that the second of these recent volumes contains some unpublished pages of Thoreau himself, the reader discovers only with difficulty that they are about the same Henry David Thoreau of Concord, Walden Pond, and the Merrimac River.

The first is the work of a young English professor, now at Wayne University in Detroit. The second is that of a distinguished Professor of American Literature at Harvard. Both set themselves the task of explaining something of the enigmatic Thoreau's intellectual and spiritual development. What were the central problems, the driving forces, in the life of this very simple and amazingly complex man? From what theoretical and spiritual state did he begin his intense pilgrimage? In what direction was he going as he approached his untimely death from tuberculosis at the age of forty-four?

These are the questions our authors ask. But from the first moment they move in opposite directions, working with utterly divergent approaches towards totally disparate ends. Dr. Stoller's aim is to understand the development of Thoreau's thought about the individual and society, about the conflicting claims of private rights and public welfare in a period of rapid economic advance and a sharpening fight against slavery. He painstakingly unfolds, from a vast mass of material, Thoreau's struggles, and vacillations too, in his movement from an extremely anarchistic transcendentalism towards belief in political power wielded for the general good. He reveals this to be a struggle in depth, involving both the means and the ends of private rights, including property, and public good.

Stoller gives a sober and scholarly, yet exciting picture of Thoreau's painful and hesitant growth from the extreme individualist ideas of the period of Walden Pond—when he refused to pay taxes to a government that upheld slavery and to participate in any political action, including voting—up through his eloquent defense of John Brown and his letter of 1860 to Charles Sumner congratulating him on his anti-slavery speech in the United States Senate. His central conclusion is that Thoreau's thought was transitional and that it cannot be categorized, as most critics both of the right and the left have done, on the basis of any one point in his development, for example, that of the famous essay on "Civil Disobedience," or explained in any simple

formula. Stoller's study is a model for the handling of an ever-growing mind in terms of its essential starting-point and the direction in which it is moving. With Thoreau this task is admittedly difficult, because he moves so tentatively, wavers and hesitates so much, exhibits glaring inconsistencies to the end. But Stoller believes, and will convince any unprejudiced reader, that Thoreau was moving nevertheless. The volume fittingly ends with the following quotation from the essay "Walking." "I would fain be assured," Thoreau wrote, "that I am growing apace and rankly, though my very growth disturb this dull equanimity,—though it be with struggle through long, dark, muggy nights or seasons of gloom."

Professor Stoller's book is not for relaxed reading. This reviewer found definite limits to the amount of it that could be taken at any one sitting. This is due to the method of his analysis: a method which consists of the constant interweaving of the contradictions and conflicts inherent in Thoreau's never-ceasing thought. Nature and society, the ideal and the real, principle and expediency, the simple life and industrial society, self-perfection and social reform, action, and inaction, matter and spirit—these are but a few of the polar opposites in Thoreau's thinking that the author must work with and whose interrelations must be explored and unravelled. It may make for slow reading, but when one is finished it seems impossible to believe that this fabulous wealth of exposition and analysis was contained in a mere 156 pages. It is even more incredible that one man in a short life struggled to find a way through so many genuinely human dichotomies.

All this is in no way to suggest that Stoller leaves out of account Thoreau's extraordinarily deep and comprehensive love of nature. Thoreau was a great "naturalist" in the best sense of the word. He loved the trees and the flowers, the birds, fish and animals, the sunrise and the shower. He knew considerable about them, too, even though he never would qualify as a professional botanist, zoologist or geologist. What Stoller does show, that has been much neglected, is that Thoreau made considerable advances towards a modern scientific forestry and in doing so resolved a few of his own contradictions. He found that in a proper, empirically ascertainable, care of our forests, there could be a unity of their material and spiritual value and that organized society would have to intervene to safeguard the public interest against ignorant and predatory individuals. The sections on Thoreau's forest studies beautifully reveal the unity that can be achieved between the nature-lover and the scientist, as exemplified today, for example, in Loren Eiseley's *The Immense Journey* which appropriately has a quotation from Thoreau as a motto. In Stoller's pages there is no contradiction between Thoreau's nature "mystique," natural science and social philosophy.

Thoreau has only too often been tolerated for what is considered his primitivism and oddity. He is remembered, Stoller says, as "the man who lived alone in a hut by Walden Pond and went to jail rather than pay taxes." But more important is the fact that he gave up his hut and spent an intensely active fifteen years thereafter. "And," Stoller states his thesis, "instead of resigning from government all that time he became an advocate of social legislation and supported the Union in it

ır with secession and slavery. Moving the pond and going to jail had been oughtful solutions to serious probms. When they turned out to be infectual, Thoreau went ahead to look r others. This search is the subject our book."

It is a delight to find new gems from e young Thoreau's pen published for e first time. The "Lost Journal" now scovered and published more than a ntury later, having been written beeen 1840 and 1841 when Thoreau s but twenty-three years old, was missg from the box containing its thirtyght fellows.

These journal entries give a good picce of Thoreau's painstaking method composition. He is constantly makg jottings on any subject that comes mind. He corrects and polishes them. ien selecting, weeding out and orıizing them he uses them in a comsition for publication. These are his oughts, the raw materials of his cometed writings. In this respect he rked very much like Beethoven with musical notebooks that could just as ll have been called "journals."

The publication of this notebook is contribution to scholarship generally l to Americana and Thoreau studparticularly. But the mode of its blication is no contribution to anyng—unless it be cynicism, amateur choanalysis and confusion. The vole contains 243 pages. Thoreau's jourtakes 67; the remaining 176 are en over by Perry Miller. But worse n this disproportion is what he does h it. From his able early work, e *New England Mind*, he has deıded a long way to *Consciousness in ncord*. The title is a misnomer. It should be, "The Unconscious in Concord."

Professor Miller confesses that "psychologizing by laymen is dangerous." But that does not deter him one moment, either in his long introduction or his notes to Thoreau's text. To him Thoreau's life was a "perverse pilgrimage," and the present newly found journal is but a chapter in it. He dislikes Thoreau intensely and expresses his contempt for him on every possible occasion. On the subject of God Thoreau has a "tiresome habit" of "blasphemy." He—the man who on his deathbed answered the clergyman who was telling him of the world beyond the grave with the simple whisper, "One world at a time"—had an attitude towards death, Miller tells us, that comes from "some deep, twisted compulsion." That he had a strong death wish is proven from his preference for cremation to rotting in the ground.

Miller is always looking for "hidden psychological motives." An accidental fire in the Concord woods, while cooking fish with a friend is occasion for innuendoes about a hidden vice of pyromania. Miller tells us that Thoreau told his friend: "the fire wil go to town," but then adds that we don't know whether he said this "with terror or glee," even though we do know that he ran two miles to arouse the people of Concord. Six years later Thoreau wrote of the fire in his Journal in such a way as to convince Professor Miller that "he was thus internally compelled to vomit forth the cancer of his guilt."

The central portion of this lengthy and unhappy introdutcion is taken up with three chapters under the general title "The Strategems of Conscious-

sciousness." Their content is based on the author's assumption that the writings of Thoreau (as, perhaps, of everyone) seldom, if ever, mean what they say. They are but so many "strategems" to conceal his hopelessly deep neuroses. The worst of these, as was to be expected, have to do with sex. This subject is introduced with the following pretentious sentence: "If history shows that the independence of self-conscious mind is perpetually assaulted by anxieties about death, it also declares that the bastion of freedom is attacked by another surging enemy: consciousness gives way to the importunities of love." (p. 80). Homosexual struggles are suggested, a woman-dominated home duly brought in, but it is an entry to the present *Journal* on shrub oaks that leads the editor to a page on Thoreau, shrub oaks and sex that reaches a new low in literary criticism. Thoreau, Miller has it, gets into a "frenzy" over a pine or an oak tree, has affairs with them, his "emotion reaches a climax" and then the "crisis" subsides. Behind his Stoic exterior was hidden a "libertine" who "indulges" in these "surges." The final evidence for all this is that Thoreau, in one of "these spasms" once wrote, "I fell in love with a shrub oak." To Miller this is "highly erotic" language. Who will now investigate Professor Miller's unconscious? One can hope and pray he will never write on Spinoza, whose "intellectual love of God" he would certainly find *highly* suspicious.

Thus it is that in these two volumes two not only different but incompatible Thoreaus are presented. The reader must make his choice. One Thoreau is a very great and good man, no matter how confused and subjective he may have been—a man who devoted his life to finding principles to which his mind could assent and by which his life co be led, come what may. One mi well ask if any man since Spinoza earnestly sought the values by wh a can could live in freedom and in h mony with his fellow men and whole of nature. His avowed pass was to distinguish, in theory and pr tice, between merely existing and liv a life worthy of man. Did any ever search more intensely for the t est and highest values of human li Thoreau, it is to be noted, never ask "Is life worth living?" but rath "What is life worth living for?" A he never rested in his quest for answer.

The other Thoreau, that of Pe Miller, is a chronic psychopath: a va self-centered, arrogant misanthr (and misogynist), a hopeless and ev rascally good-for-nothing. His d mind is tortured by doubts and frus tions, tormented by guilt feelings a death fears and wishes. He is "sim monstrous" in his "monomaniac" c cussions of friendship. All this on theory "that the literary libido is rela to some more biological or psychic n rosis goes without saying." (p. 93)

Can it be said that Thoreau's a bivalence lends itself to two such c trasting interpretations? Even supp ing it did, the one approach illumin the man and his thought. The ot obfuscates both. Fortunately the t Thoreau is great enough to survive gnawing criticism of Perry Mill psychoanalysis and to continue living the minds of people everywhere w ask themselves what human life sho be and whether their society is so ganized as to enable them to live it

It is time we have some standa and principles of philosophical and erary criticism and learn to distingu

tween that which enriches its subject, reals new and significant facets, and it which degrades, confuses and obscates. Writers on Thoreau should required to have his profound es-, "Life Without Principle" engraved their wall (or ceiling). Then they ight see those devastating words: Thus men will lie on their backs, king about the fall of men, and ver make an effort to get up."

One thing slighted in both books Thoreau as a stylist, as a literary tist, even though both writers are ofessors of literature. Stoller delibately passes by Thoreau as an artist the interests of a study of his social ought. Miller makes some pertinent mments on Thoreau's literary method it it all gets bogged down in the brass of his "strategems of consciousss." Besides any images or metaphors at Thoreau could use as the poet he as, in verse or prose, would be cerin to have sexual or guilt meanings r Miller. Yet the gems from Thorau's *Journals,* including this previsly unpublished one, as well as from s completed works, are all but inexustible. He was a master stylist with gard to simplicity, economy, cadence, ocation and comprehensiveness. He nsciously sought and achieved a style at was "musically measured." An en- in the lost notebook under Sunday, nuary 10, 1841, reads:

A perfectly healthy sentence is exemely rare. Sometimes I read one hich was writen while the world ent round, while grass grew and water n.

HOWARD SELSAM

Scholar Views Strike

DIARY OF A STRIKE, by Bernard Karsh, University of Illinois Press, $3.50.

ON July 12, 1951, a majority of the workers went out on strike against the Saylor Company—a soft goods manufacturer in the small town of Saylor (a fictional name) located somewhere in the Upper Great Lakes region. The plant employed only 200 workers at rush season, of whom only fifteen were men. It was owned by a "benevolent" family, whose head, Tom Miller, was well-known for his charitable works, gifts to the Catholic church and for his policy of hiring women, many of them, for reasons of age or health, unemployable otherwise. It was believed by everyone, not least of all the Miller family, that good relations existed between them and their employees, who at no time needed a union to represent them since Tom Miller's door was always open for airing any complaints or grievances. So it had been, so it would always be.

Into this paradise of paternalism entered, one day, a union organizer—a woman. She learned soon enough that behind the pleasant facade of "one big family" existed in reality a low-wage sweat shop, with the women workers terrorized by overseers, whose slogan was very simple, very direct: "If you don't like it, you know where the door is."

The phrase that always followed this, "It's a free country," was only salt to the wounds of women who knew that if they lost their jobs here they faced the prospect of going on relief, or trying to make already desperate ends meet even more desper-

ately with only the inadequate wages of their husbands.

The organizer—called here Helen—was a middle-aged, graying, sympathetic woman, herself once a worker, who quietly and persistently began her campaign of laying the groundwork for a union in this most unlikely of places—where, in fact, several years earlier a similar attempt had signally failed. Moreover, the Taft-Hartley law was now in full force and severely hampered organization. The women whom she met secretly in their homes at night dreaded exposure, had little confidence in success, and, in any case, were terrified at losing their jobs. And yet, one by one they signed up, began to feel the mysterious but definite bonds of unity begin to grow, and in due time presented a demand to the Company for union recognition and bargaining on wages and conditions.

Then, as even the women themselves termed it, "the war" started. Mr. Miller took direct charge of the counter-offensive, and issued letters to the workers denouncing the union organizers, coralled them in the plant cafeteria where he spoke to them in person, laid heavy pressure on workers to abandon their petition, and succeeded so well, in fact, that of some 80 per cent who had signed almost 30 per cent withdrew their signatures. When the NLRB election was won by a scant majority, the Company resorted to stalling tactics, and successfully drew out the legal negotiations for months, while keeping up a propaganda barrage against the workers, until in desperation and in a critical effort to save the union, the chief organizer called a strike.

None of the women had ever walked a picket-line before, none had ever been in a union and in fact could not imagine, before the strike, how th could become involved as deeply they actually did, in a struggle fill with such conflict and violence. A yet when the Mayor of the town, helpe by his police, formed a wedge to bre through the line and take scabs in the plant, these old, sick and frightene women put up "a wall of flesh" again him and his police and stopped the Into their vocabularies new and viv words entered. Now they yelled "scab at the strikebreakers, they sang o tunes with new, jeering, jolly and irr verent words:

The cops are always hanging aroun
parlez-vous,
They pinch the pickets we have foun
parlez-vous . . .

Tom Miller is a nervous wreck pa
lez-vous,
I bet he'd like to break our neck.
Hinkey, dinkey parlez-vous . . .

Ladies parading on a line singin such inelegant words were a new an even fantastic sight to the respectab citizens of the town. But they we even further, these women who on the day before literally shook in the shoes from fear of the Company. T make life miserable for the strik breakers inside the plant they invent diabolical devices, like focusing a mi ror through the factory window th followed the scabs about like a spo light, or erecting a terrible nois maker that kept up an un-nerving d all day long, or setting fire to drum of tar which sent out a noxious smo that was sucked into the factory by th in-draft. They hanged particularly u pleasant foremen and foreladies effigy from lamp posts. Relationshi

etween friends and neighbors who abbed were broken off and the bad lood generated in this way even sepa-ted blood relatives. And the longer ey walked the line, the bolder, gayer nd prouder they became; the more esourceful, the more mutually ap-reciative they were of one another. hey began to become conscious of emselves.

"I picketed constantly," one striker stified. "I practically lived there. I as determined to win. It was my job, nd I felt as much concerned about e picketing as I did about my job hen I was working. In fact, I put in lot of time on line that I'd never put at my job." And another: "We had ts of fun. We saw the reaction of e scabs about the strike and the osses, too. I think all of us that were n the line stayed there because we ere afraid we'd miss something. Even y husband came down all the time, nd he didn't know what to do with imself evenings when it was all er."

The strikers had to frustrate the res and stratagems of the Company, hich included ordering coal by mail, reats of taking the industry to an-her part of the country, arrests, per-nal appeals, etc. And in the end they on. They established their union, ne-otiated a union shop, a seniority stem, better wages including an ad-stment of the piece-work rates. But ost important of all they realized ey had become different people. They lt freer, stronger, with a common nd in their union, for which they d already suffered a great deal. In ct, they had achieved a certain ele-entary, but definite, class conscious-ss.

All this pulsing, living material, the ry stuff of history and drama, has to be fitted by Mr. Harsh, a "social scientist," the author of this study, into the procrustean bed of socioloigcal theories where it dies a bleak death. It is finally laid to rest in the academic grave with such obituary phrases as "the strike . . . is the ultimate device whereby the competing interests of antagonistic parties are expediently resolved into a *modus operandi* which permits both sides to accommodate their differences and live with one another."

Gobbledegook takes over with a vengeance. When a striking woman first speaks of "we"—a beginning consciousness of a new class unity—this becomes, in Mr. Harsh's jargon, a "group referrent"; mass meetings, songs, dances, become "secular rituals"; and the success of the strike alters the "existing power relationship" within the community. In any case, however,

> "None of this is to argue that the indigenous antagonism takes the form of a class struggle. Interest groups pervade all aspects of our society: political, religious, social, agricultural, business and the rest of it. Modern American society can be viewed as an unending series of emergent and decaying interest groups which come naturally into conflict between and among each other. The conflict with which we are concerned is between interest groups, not social classes."

And with those words it is as if one had poked out one's eyes and called it vision.

The unfortunate fact of the matter is that the occupation of a "social scientist" seems actually to be a laborious translation of a set of obvious facts into a previously-arranged hierarchy of categories with appropriate jargon. The illusion is created that if the objective phenomenon can be fitted into the arrangement of self-serving terms, it is then 'grasped' scientifically. Boys and girls spend hours memorizing these

terms, and passing or failing tests on whether they have successfully memorized them; and who is to tell them this is all a sorry charade?

Let the reader take this melancholy final example and judge for himself. One of the strikers says: "It was fun after awhile and you really got to know the people you used to work with but maybe never knew more than to say 'hello.' We saw them every day and really got to know them."

"This striker," Mr. Harsh solemnly avows, "was really saying that the picket line, more than anything else, brought the workers together and made a social group out of a desperate amalgam of semi-isolated individuals."

The striker was *really* saying: "Hinkey dinkey, parlez-vous. . . ."

PHILLIP BONOSKY

Don Juan in Purgatory

WOLF AT DUSK, by Gwyn Thomas. The Macmillan Co. $3.50.

THE number of senoritas reputedly conquered by Don Juan may yet be equalled by the number of writers —poets, playwrights, librettists, and novelists—who have surrendered to the temptation to retell or revise his legend. It is rather a shock, nevertheless, to open the latest novel by Gwyn Thomas, expecting another tale of Welsh workers, and find that he too has taken a fling at freshening up the sixteenth-century parable of profligacy and hell-fire. In his version—each author is free to invent a new one—the hell-fire is eliminated and the profligacy is cut short early in the book by Juan's uncle, a Bishop, who throws his nephew to the Inquisition and spreads the myth of his famous descent into Hades to explain his disappearance

The book, then, is really a sequel to the original legend, with the story of Juan's character and fate fitted into another story, that of Spain three centuries ago. It involves a power struggle between a pious, gluttonous bishop with Inquisition dungeons at his disposal, and a provincial Governor of unlimited rapacity and cruelty, who has in his service the very best of assassins. Any resemblance to living rulers of Spain is not accidental. The conflict between the two men ends when Pacheco, the Governor, has the Bishop murdered. Juan is then taken from prison, his face scarred and distorted by the nibblings of vermin, and allowed to survive on condition of complete subservience to Pacheco, who makes him an assistant to the head assassin. His final fate, after the Governor's death, is to submit to an "agenda of redemption" under the control of a determined, embittered woman with whom he once failed to keep an assignation in his pre-dungeon days.

It is a curiously told tale, full of ironies and highly literate, cynical dialogue that glitters with a Jesuitical sort of cleverness in analogies and metaphors, but unmistakably a tale of corruption and savage coarseness in which the servants of the powerful are as debased as their masters. Only the character of the hero (if that is the word) remains somewhat ambiguous. At one moment in the book he seems intended to represent some sort of life principle of love or joy, yet he is introduced to us as a brawler with a too eager sword-arm and it is intimated later that his man-killing for Pacheco is an adequate substitute for his previous activities as a lady-killer. At the same time his cynical resigna-

ion to the moral price he pays for urvival is broken by an occasional limmer of nostalgia for the innocence f his childhood, which he associates vith the beautiful countryside through vhich he now rides on his missions of nurder. However, he refuses the sug- estion of a companion of his earlier lays to quit the Governor's service and ise his "genius" on the side of the mall, secret band of peasants desper- tely planning a resistance. Under the ircumstances, the "redemption" prom- sed him at the end may suffice as a inal note of irony but it is an anti- limax.

We would hardly expect a Don Juan s the author presents him to become a evolutionist; we might, however, ex- ect a Gwyn Thomas to interest himself nore in the characters that we merely ear about, who may end as corpses isplayed in the village square for the dification of other "grumblers," but vho take that risk for the sake of life. As it is, the resemblance to twentieth- entury Spain, even under Franco, is ncomplete, and the story seems over- ld, sad and rather oppresive, bur- ened by the monotony of its elegant erbalisms as well as by the unbroken ound of bestiality and death.

BARBARA GILES

Who Owns What?

PEOPLE'S CAPITALISM, by J. M. Budish, in collaboration with Labor Research Association. International Publishers. 50 cents.

WHEN Nelson Rockefeller was running for governor in New York last year, as an advocate of *nishes* and people's capitalism, he was shown a remark made during a TV session that the Rockefeller holdings in Standard Oil (New Jersey) were double those of all American wage earners in all corporations.

To this Mr. Rockefeller snorted: "Absurd," but did not elaborate.

Recently, Mr. Lawrence Fertig, in the *World-Telegram,* warned the teachers of the country that it was their duty to defend capitalism, and not give any credence to attacks on the concept of "People's Capitalism" by Victor Perlo and others.

J. M. Budish has done the trade union movement and the people generally a great service by attacking head-on and irrefutably shattering to the very foundation the whole illusory structure upon which Madison Avenue's brainchild, "people's capitalism" was erected.

Do the people—the ordinary workaday people of the United States—really own the corporations that control the economy of the country?

This is a question of statistics, and never before has the old saying about statistics and liars been truer. Newspaper advertisements have claimed that the corporations have indeed been controlled by millions of ordinary citizens who "owned" stock—usually gray-haired widows in Whistler Mothers' poses—and who therefore "ran" the country's economy.

Mr. Budish shows that the 6 million and some individual stockowners, are for the most part, merely token stockholders. "Only slightly over 6 percent of all adult Americans owned any shares," Budish points out, "and the mass of these shares was controlled by 1 percent to 3 percent of the shareholders, or by 0.06 percent of the adult population." He shows further that the

stocks are owned mainly by capitalists, executives and members of millionaire families, with a sprinkling of secondary ownership by professionals and smaller businessmen.

Ownership by workers is insignificant. And Budish disposes of the more subtle idea that the people control American corporations, if not directly, then indirectly through such mutual institutions as life insurance companies. He points out the reactionary purposes of employee stock ownership plans and shows why they have had so litle success among workers.

Another important argument advanced by the proponents of people's capitalism is that capitalism continues to grow, and as it grows more and more of the population benefits from it. Mr. Budish shows conclusively that growth has actually been retarded since monopolies placed their grip on the economy, and has by now slowed down to a snail's pace.

He also takes up the claim that modern American capitalism has smoothed out the business cycle through built-in stabilizers and other methods. Life itself has tended to shater this illusion—especially with the persistence of the economic slump.

Although Budish does a good job of destroying the illusion of permanent and stabilized growth, nevertheless he does not pay sufficient attention to the factors that actually do encourage growth and tend to upset one-sided predictions of potential economic collapses and the duration of the crises.

He should have pointed out that among the forces that have figured in the post-war "recovery" have been wars, hot and cold, and the expansion of foreign investments.

The same weakness carries over, to a certain extent, in the discussion of the increased monopolization of the economy. Budish correctly points out that in the area of consumer goods output the lines of monopoly control become ever more rigid, with most of us buying commodities from the same major producers as our parents did.

But at the same time there is strenuous competition among capitalist combines for the armament business. Companies that were non-existent a couple of decades ago or were shoe-string speculations have reached the top rank in American industry, thanks to the profits and government capital supplied to the airplanes-missiles-atom business. True, behind the corporate shells of these rivals for the juciest plums are the same Wall Street bankers who run the older monopolies. Yet the rivalry and competition are real. It is the primary modern form in which competition, fiercer than ever, exists side by side with monopoly in the present imperialist stage of capitalism. This is key to the main drive in modern American capitalism, and its importance cannot be over-stressed. It explains the seeming irrationality of foreign policy and the transparent but stubborn refusal of those on top to make any concession toward disarmament.

Since Budish's pamphlet was published, the momentous Soviet 7-year plan has been adopted. Definite estimates have been projected: By about 1970, it is calculated, the socialist world will surpass the capitalist world in total industrial production. By around 1970 the USSR will surpass the United States in per capita production, and long before that will have surpassed United States living standards decisively.

The great plan of the Soviet people the Communist Party, and governmen

he tremendous achievements of Peo-
le's China, the accelerating growth of
ther socialist lands—all this adds up
o an historic truth. The world-wide
ictory of socialism, the final rout of
apitalism, are now on the agenda.

To the consternation and jingoism
vith which the Soviet Congress deci-
ions have been met in the United
States, Budish's pamphlet offers an al-
ernative which forsees an era of co-
xistence and mutual trade.

History has played a huge joke on
he big-wigs of American capitalism.
The only peaceful means of easing their
conomic problems open to them is
hat of trading with the Socialist world
—one-third of mankind—which is
rowing tempestuously and can absorb
remendous quantities of consumer, in-
ustrial and agricultural commodities.

Some capitalist publicly favor such
n approach. Millions of workers, now
nemployed, would be put to work. It
s the answer to a policy of prosperity
y producing guns and not butter. But
nless the people themselves, and first
f all the organized workers, militantly
ght for such a change in national pol-
cy, it is unlikely that it will come about
pontaneously.

Will trading with capitalism speed
he growth of socialist economy? Some-
vhat. Will it help stave off capitalist
rises and let it grow yet a bit? Yes.
Will it prevent capitalist crises and
ave the capitalist system? Of course
ot.

But it will give a much better chance
or a transition to socialism on a world
cale without war. Toward this end
Budish's pamphlet is a worthy contribu-
on and should be widely distributed
mong workers and the population in
eneral.

VICTOR PERLO

Free Interpretation

SIGMUND FREUD'S MISSION, by Erich Fromm. Harper & Bros. $3.00.

IT IS a great temptation to review this book by subjecting its author to the "wild" analysis he employs in his attempt to explain Freud's work from a study of his personality. For the neurotic, arrogant, dependent, over-ambitious despiser of women whom Freud represents for our consideration could not conceivably have produced anything—but symptoms. However, we shall leave an examination of Fromm's unconscious motives to some other occasion and confine ourselves here to one example of his method.

Fromm is guilty of that error of which Freud has been falsely accused: he identifies his subject with the subject's "neurosis." We are treated to the edifying spectacle of what "analyst" Fromm would have told "patient" Freud if only poor Sigmund had had the good fortune to go to him for treatment. While the chief source for the author's factual material is Dr. Ernest Jones' *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*—a monumental and carefully balanced account, surely one of the great biographies of all time, of one of the great men of our time—Fromm decides that Jones is lost in blind hero-worship and continually misses the point. In attempting to account for Freud's passion for truth, which Fromm acknowledges while trying to put it into a reprehensible context, he is quite dissatisfied with Jones' account and adduces instead Freud's "lack of emotional warmth, closeness, love, and beyond that, of enjoyment of life." Passion for truth is demoted to a subjective "great desire for certainty" on the grounds that Freud "was a very insecure person, easily feeling threatened, perse-

cuted, betrayed. . . ." And Fromm traces the "insecurity" to Freud's intense attachment to his mother—not in the "Freudian" sense, but in the Frommian sense of attachment "to nature, to pre-individualistic, pre-conscious existence." This Zen-like formulation testifies to Fromm's growing mysticism and anti-rationalism, evidence of which frequently crops out in this volume.

Pursuing his "analysis" of his subject's "neurosis," Fromm subjects the well known dream of the Botanical Monograph from *The Interpretation of Dreams* to a new scrutiny. The dream text reads: "I had written a monograph on a certain plant. The book lay before me and I was at the moment turning over a folded colored plate. Bound up in each copy there was a dried specimen of the plant, as though it had been taken from a herbarium." Freud proceeds to give his associations to this dream in the usual way, but only up to a certain point. He is trying to demonstrate the source of dream material in the events of the day before the dream, and he says, "For reasons which are not relevant here, I shall not continue the interpretation of this dream, but will merely indicate the path which leads to it," and further on, ". . . my only purpose in recording it was to examine the relation of the dream-content to the experience of the previous day which aroused it." By disregarding these warnings and selecting a few of the many associations given for quotation, Fromm apparently feels safe in concluding that "The meaning of the dream is quite clear (although Freud does not see it in his own interpretation). . . . A flower is a symbol of love and joy, especially since this flower is the favorite flower of his wife, which he seldom remembers to bring to her. But the coca plant stands for his scientific interest and ambition. What does he do with flowers, with love? He presses them and puts them into a herbarium. That is, he lets love dry, and makes it the object of scientific examination," etc., etc.

Sounds very plausible, doesn't it? Until suddenly we remember—this is *Freud's* dream, not Fromm's. On what theory of dreams would Freud dream such a *self-criticism?* The dream has ceased to be what Freud has shown it to be beyond any scientific doubt, the expression of a repressed wish, and instead expresses—what? Fromm's theory? The protest of the "pre-individualistic existence"? Or are *we* dreaming?

The above is only one sample of the author's method, which is to snatch at small pieces of evidence, build upon them large assumptions, and glibly "interpret" the shoddy material he has supplied himself. We will spare the reader further examples, as from Fromm's passages regarding Freud's "authoritarianism," political ambitions, or "secret mission" to become a Moses who would "show the human race the promised land." Of more interest is the following quotation (page 94), which at least puts the subject in excellent company:

> To form an analogy with Marx: just as Marx believed he had found the *scientific* basis for socialism, in contrast to what he called *utopian socialism,* Freud felt that he had found the scientific basis for an old moral aim and thus progressed over the *utopian morality* presented by religions and philosophies.

EDMUND WEIL

Dipped in Malice

THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY, by Irving Howe and Lewis Croser. Beacon Press. $6.75.

IT WAS more than thirty years after its birth before any attempt was made to review the stirring and turbu-

lent history of the Communist Party in the United States. William Z. Foster's book on this subject finally appeared in 1952 in the midst of the cold war and McCarthyite hysteria. It presented a valuable Marxist assessment of the roots, background and path of its development in American working class history.

The drought of the first thirty years was soon replaced by a deluge of works, analyses, studies and reviews on this subject. They are the products of bourgeois writers, professors, renegades, the un-American Committee. Even the head of the U.S. secret police, J. Edgar Hoover has added his contribution to the growing list of literature on the subject.

The timing of this outpouring was significant, coming at a moment when the U.S. Communist Party was weakened by external persecution and internal dissension, and when its early demise was confidently predicted by its enemies. These labors therefore, were undertaken as a part of and within the framework of a much broader world-wide ideological struggle against the rising tide of socialist advance, and of national liberation and anti-imperialist movements.

Clearly, the crude gestapo-like versions of Communist history painted by the un-American Committee's stoolpigeons and by J. Edgar Hoover, could not meet the demands of the ideological struggle against Marxist ideas and movements. So a number of universities put their men to work on this project financed by means of special grants, subsidies and various Foundations established by the rulers of America.

Elaborate, more or less learned works began to appear in rapid succession such as *The Roots of American Communism,* by Draper; *The Communist Party vs. the CIO,* by Kampelman; and most recently *The American Communist Party,* by Howe and Croser. Several more are in process of preparation.

Professors Howe and Croser have presented us in a 60-page work with what could be termed the "smart alec" version of the Communist Party's history. The authors make no pretense of objectivity, nor of attempting to disguise their bias and prejudice. In fact, they state unabashedly that "there is a temptation—it should be neither wholly resisted nor embraced—to regard the story of early American Communism as low comedy, with the leading performers either naive idealists or ambitious clowns." This in essence provides the lofty philosophical foundation for their labors.

The basic shallowness of this book is marked by the absence of any effort to deal with fundamental contradictions and inner conflicts of capitalism which give rise to socialist theories and movements in our country, or anywhere. Nor are the central concepts of Marxism which provide the foundation for the being and activities of Communist parties, given any attention. Instead, the material is fashioned to cater to the superficial headline mentality so generally practiced by American journalism.

The single-minded objective of the authors is to prove the villainy, evil character and un-Americanism of the Communist Party. Their central theme is that the U.S. Party is an agent and a tool of the Soviet Union with no will, goal or program properly its own. Their aim is to belittle, ridicule and discredit the Party by every possible device, and to prove that it is alien to America, its people, its workers, traditions and history.

Consequently, the role and the work of the Communist Party in leading, initiating or participating in the great movements in our country—the building

of unions, for equal rights for the Negro people, for unemployment insurance and social welfare, or in the anti-fascist struggles—all this is dismissed as of no consequence except as a means of serving the Soviet Union.

Undisguised venom permeates the book from the first page to the last. Nowhere is its virulence more pronounced than in dealing with the role of the Communists in the anti-fascist struggle. In the Thirties, as mankind faced the mortal threat of an advancing fascism, the Communists recognized that its defeat called for all-out unity not only of the working class but of all democratic forces regardless of class or ideological differences. History has amply proven the worth and the correctness of this postulate. Had its purpose been fully achieved it could no doubt have spared mankind the blood bath of World War II. The Communists are rightfully proud of their vision, efforts and contributions in the building of the anti-fascist People's Front.

Yet, even at this late date, Howe and Croser brusquely dismiss the anti-fascist Popular Front as a "strategic maneuver by the Kremlin" and the entire movement as a "pawn of the Russian Foreign Office, to be manipulated and, if need be, sacrificed in the maneuvers of European power politics." But "the rationale advanced by the Communists for this shift was, of course, the threat of fascism." Further, "What was new was the readiness of the Communist Parties to subordinate the class struggle at home to the strategic needs of the Soviet Union." And again "Marxist materialism was dissolved in the syrupy formulas of the Popular Front." Logically, therefore, the real menace was not Hitler or fascism, but the Soviet Union. This view coincides with the foreign policy tenets of Dulles today.

That this curious blending of the Trotskyite and ultra-reactionary positions is not accidental is emphasized when the authors applaud the so-called "left Socialists and dissident Communists" for opposing the Popular Front: "It was true, as they charged, that the Popular Front strangled the revolutionary upsurge of the French workers in 1936. It was true, as they charged, that during the Spanish Civil War the Popular Front employed terror to pull the Loyalists back into the boundaries of bourgeois liberalism." "They" did not merely charge. They, namely the POUM, organization of Trotskyite super-Leftists, staged a counter-revolutionary coup when Franco was at the gates of Madrid.

While grudgingly noting the important contributions rendered by American Communists to the fight against fascism in Spain, the authors cannot repress a sneer that in the "Popular Front in America, for the middle-class fellow travelers and the middle-brow progressives, Spain made possible a vicarious participation, a thrill over cocktails." But the depth of cynicism is reached when they speak of the brave men who fought in Spain: "There were a few, however, who gave more than foam: the young Communists who left their homes to fight in Spain. Deluded in the belief that Stalinism meant a better world, unable to distinguish between the radiant cause of Loyalist Spain and the totalitarian apparatus to which they were bound, they stood ready to die in a doomed battle against the fascism of Franco. And some of them did." No mention of those who denied arms to the People's Front Government of Spain to defend itself, though the delivery of such weapons could have resulted in the defeat of Franco, and prevented the death of millions a few years later. Instead, we are

reated to abuse for those who supported, fought and bled in defense of emocracy in Spain.

Scores of similar examples could be ited to show the pattern of "objectivy" pursued by the authors. At times ne distortions become ludicrous. Thus ne Communists are belabored for having naintained caucuses (fractions) of their nembers in mass organizations. Yet vhen these were abolished in 1938, this oo was evidence of evil intent: "The preense of democratic consultation was no onger maintained. Party members at a nion meeting were simply expected to ollow the tips of the comrade acting s a floor leader." Damned if they did, nd damned if they didn't. Incidenally, a floor leader in the U.S. Conress, legislature or City Council is a cusomary American institution, but if Communists practice it, it is a sinister nd alien procedure.

In reviewing radicalism in the U.S. ne authors note "the capacity of nineeenth century America to absorb and at mes even tolerate political deviants." nd they approvingly note that "Ameriin radicalism has always functioned as a ind of prep school for leaders of Ameriin capitalist society." Naturally, a radialism that did not constitute a challenge, ven potentially, to the power of the ulers was useful and could be tolerated.

The Communist Parties, however, ave proven their radicalism to be of somewhat different color. Being dediated to the basic interests of the workng class and basing themselves on Marxist-Leninist theories, they cannot be orrupted or absorbed as a political orce, even though individual members all away, accept conformity and chieve "respectability." As a political novement they never attain respectaility in the eyes of the economic royalts—not in the Soviet Union, not in China, and certainly not in the United States. This basic incorruptibility is the final proof to the rulers of the Party's alien nature, fanaticism, rigidity, intransigence—in short un-Americanism.

To the rulers of America, the great villain and evil spirit of modern history is the Communist movement, everywhere, and it is this that Howe and Croser seek to prove specifically about the American Communist Party. In a sense they have good reasons to feel thus. At a moment when the economic, political and military might of U.S. imperialism has reached its zenith —it finds its efforts to reap the fruits of its new position turning to ashes. It has arrived too late in history and, thwarted, is tasting the bitter irony of historic frustration.

Blocking its path to world domination is the socialist world—one third of mankind led by the Communist Parties —plus the massive revolt of the colonial peoples against foreign oppression and domination, finding inspiration and support in the Socialist lands. Mankind is on the march everywhere. Because of this, a dying social order desperately seeks new ideological weapons to beat back, disprove and destroy the cause of advancing mankind.

A new theory is now projected—that Socialism may perhaps be acceptable to the backward, hungry, ignorant masses of the underdeveloped countries, but that it is contrary and alien to the "western mind" in the advanced capitalist countries like the United States, Britain or Canada. To show that Communist parties cannot survive in the rareified atmosphere of bourgeois democracy, the authors cite the present condition of the American Communist Party, weakened by persecution and inner differences. This is in essence the reason and the framework for the

writing of this and similar books on the American Communist Party at this time. The authors declare: "As these lines are being written in the late 1957, the American Communist Party is dead." Amen. But this demise was greatly exagerated, as events have already shown.

So long as capitalism exists and creates a modern proletariat, so long will there be a Communist Party as a matter of historic necessity. But historic fact and the laws of social science are of no moment where the defense of a dying social order is at stake. Every straw is convulsively seized upon in the ideological conflict with Marxist ideas.

A. KRCHMAREK

Long March to Gandhi

JOURNEY TO THE BEGINNING, by Edgar Snow. Random House. $5.00.

ONE of the most distinguished correspondents of our time has set down in these pages of his eighth book the story of his life amid some of the great events of history. His book would command wide interest if only because Snow had also written *Red Star Over China,* which was flung to the winds of the Thirties like a banner of hope.

Snow's other books were contributions to the victory of the great coalition against fascism: *The Battle for Asia, People on Our Side, The Pattern of Soviet Power.* Nor did he resign from the struggle for peace after the victory over the fascist powers. He continued to work for mutual understanding and co-existence in such books as *Stalin Must Have Peace.*

Journey gives us brief glimpses of Snow's boyhood in Missouri and the contradictory influences exerted upo him by a devout Catholic mother an a rationalist father. Like most Mid western teen-agers of his time, Snow learned the meaning of hard physica labor during summer vacations an ranged far and wide from his home b hopping freights or touring in th rugged Model T that still shines in th memory of many Americans.

However, Snow's distinctive life be gan when he landed in Shanghai, age twenty-two, with a diploma in journa ism in his pocket. Hired by J. B Powell, editor of *The China Review* he was assigned to Northern China His tour bought him face to face wit what was then Chinese reality: million dying of famine. He recalls the remar of his Chinese traveling companion an interpreter: "There has to be a ne birth. It can only come out of our ow body—the body of our own history. The realization of this historical con tinuity was often to be brought hom to Snow, so that even now the nam Ta Tu Ho represents for him bot the site of a victory of the Chines Communists and the place where onc ". . . the last of the Taipings wer surrounded and massacred."

One wishes at times that the stag of the book were less crowded wit world figures so that the present an future perspectives were clearer. O those described in it—among ther Soong Ching-ling, Nehru, F. D. R and Maxim Litvinov—Snow seems t have been most deeply and permanentl impressed by Gandhi. When this ad miration is linked to an acceptance o the State Department version of the b ginning of the Korean war, the resu is curious, though it follows logicall In assessing responsibility for preser day world tensions and dangers, h forgets Hiroshima and Nagasaki to war

the self- and newly-liberated nations that

> . . . Gandhi's truth and mesage of brotherhood imperatively has to be learned and put into practice. Otherwise all that I set out to see, thirty years ago, all those
>
> *cities of men*
> *and manners, councils, climates, governments*
>
> may altogether perish and leave no record behind of how they used their first full hour of freedom to turn the earth into a dry and lifeless cinder.

Is this the sum of wisdom that Snow acquired in a lifetime spent in Asia: in the name of non-violence to call self-defense aggression, and hatred of warmongers a peril second to none?

RALPH IZARD

Books Received

CLAUDELLE INGLISH, by Erskine Caldwell. Little, Brown. $3.75.

THIS is the latest feature of the Erskine Caldwell Ice Cream Parlor: a few scoops of seduction and adultery and a sprinkle of potential incest. The sweet, sincere young daughter of a sharecropper is transformed into a small town Brigitte Bardot, and slinks through fields, country stores and back lanes leaving a trail of swiftly seduced but guilt-ridden males behind her. The characters, victims of their fearful urges, have less sense of caution than those frogs during the mating season which William James used to see squashed on the highways. The impression of mutilation is made even more vivid when one discovers in the present characters pieces of human beings from previous books.

AGEE ON FILM. McDowell, Obolensky. $6.00.

JAMES AGEE, best known for his posthumously published novel, *A Death in the Family,* was also the author of a book on Southern sharecroppers, on which he collaborated with the photographer Walker Evans. He later extended his interest in the graphic image as a form of communication to the writing of movie scripts, working with John Huston and Charles Laughton. The present book is a compilation of his reviews for *Time* and the *Nation,* as well as his well known article, "Comedy's Greatest Era," in which he paid tribute to the artists of the silent film. Agee was, in the main a sensitive and gifted man, and his reviews bear re-reading as coming about as close to serious criticism as this short form allows. Ideologically, he pretty much fits his own description of Huston as "a natural-born antiauthoritarian individualistic libertarian anarchist, without portfolio." Such a position has its limits in any case, but they can become glaring in specific cases such as when his admiration for the technical achievements of Griffith deprive him of all deeper critical sense with respect to "The Birth of a Nation." Or when he denounces the Soviet war film "The Rainbow" because in calling for retribution rather than understanding of the Nazi crimes, it solves rather than presents a moral problem. Here, critical pedantry reaches a high pitch, and sensitivity turns into its opposite, a principled callousness to boundless suffering.

Nevertheless, readers interested in the films of the Forties will find many illuminating insights.