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THE JEW AMONG THE THORNS

ARNOLD ZWEIG

We are proud to present this analysis of a folk tale by Arnold Zweig, and at the same time offer the following comments. It should not be taken as a statement that anti-Semitism rises out of any "racial spirit" or "folk spirit." Its roots, whether in the Middle Ages, or the period of rising capitalism, or that of the horrors perpetrated by fascism, are economic and social. Yet granted this base, anti-Semitism, like other forms of chauvinism, racism and prejudice, becomes embedded in folk tale, myth, story, works of art, seeming to those who retell or create these stories to be a product of their own mind, or of human nature, or to be something that they think they have always "known." The folk tale analyzed so brilliantly by Zweig thus belongs in a category with the "Nun's Tale" in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* and the portrait of a Jew in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta,* or in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice.* There are the paintings by great artists of the "Passion" story, and the "Passion Plays," which fall in the tradition of ignoring the Jewish origin of Christ and the apostles, to attack the enemies of Christ as "the Jews." Zweig shows clearly the economic-social roots of these fantasies."

And so a struggle against anti-Semitism, as against all chauvinism and racism, must be directed not only against its economic and social roots, but against its ideological forms and traditions, which seem to be purely "of the mind," or "custom," or "psychology." The depredations wrought by the Nazis, which outdo in bestiality and horror anything in past history, arose primarily out of the drive of the German ruling class to destroy all vestiges of democratic institutions, and barriers to the war it sought. But the fact that a tradition such as Zweig describes, existed in Germany, not only in the Middle Ages, but virulently in the 18th century, and rising again with violence after the defeat of Napoleon in the 19th century, gave extra and powerful weapons to the Nazis. There has also been, of course, a noble tradition of German writers who fought every manifestation of racism and chauvinism. Foremost among them

in our own times is Arnold Zweig, whom we honor as one of the great novelists of the 20th century.

—THE EDITORS.

THE GRIMM BROTHERS

A HUNDRED years will soon have passed since two great German writers and scholars told the Lord of their land to his face that his breach of the Constitution was an evil act. They went into exile, into the liberal Berlin of 1837. There they attained fame and long life. Among other writings they published a volume of deep old poetry called "Children and Household Fairy Tales"; a book Nietzsche numbered among the seven classical writings of Germans and which, like the Bible, was to be found in every German home at all times.

The reader already knows that we speak of Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm and their collection of folk tales which has profoundly moulded and influenced us all. Within this book which with only slight concealment retells the oldest myths and ideas of people of German tongue, there is an anti-Semitic piece, "The Jew Among the Thorns." As children, we did not like to run across it when leafing through the book. We did not re-read it as often as the other tales. But recently as I was reading it aloud for my little boy I was struck by a fresh insight into it. This folk tale confirms our opinion concerning German anti-Semitism as thoroughly as though we had invented it. Listen and judge for yourself.

THE TALE OF THE JEW

THE Jew takes a leading part in only a single German folk-tale. This is noteworthy. If one believed the preachers of anti-Semitism, folk tales ought to teem with wicked Jews as much as with stepmothers, gold-greedy kings, and evil devils. The tale, "The Jew Among the Thorns," can and must be recognized as a real declaration of the German folk-spirit concerning the Jew—regardless of what is to be read out of it—of the Jew as known by the German people.

We have maintained before that German anti-Semitism serves the German as vent for his hate and rage against his ruling class, whom he does not dare to assail because of the ruthless and well-armed strength of this group. We have shown further why the Jew appeared to German subjects to be especially suitable as a scapegoat—among other reasons, because unlike the serf's master he was unarmed, numerically weak, and therefore not to be feared. Vengeful impulses could be wreaked on him which could not show in the behavior of the subject

ainst his master, nor indeed even arise in his consciousness. And w we begin the tale of "The Jew Among the Thorns":

EXPLOITATION, WAGES, AND "GOOD SPIRITS"

NCE upon a time there was a rich man who had a servant who served him well and faithfully. He was first up in the morning, d last to go to bed at night. If there was any hard work to be done ich no one else would do, he was always ready to undertake it. He ver made any complaint, but was always merry and content.

When his year of service was over, his Master did not give him any ges, thinking, "This is my wisest plan. I save by it, and he will con-ue in my service."

The Servant said nothing, and served the second year like the first. id when at the end of the second year he again received no wages, still appeared contented, and stayed on. When the third year d passed, the Master bethought himself, and put his hand into his cket but he brought it out empty.

At last the Servant said: "Master, I have served you well and truly for ee years: please pay me my wages. I want to go away and look out the world a bit."

The Miser replied: "Yes, my good fellow, you have served me hon-ly, and you shall be liberally rewarded."

Again he put his hand into his pocket, and counted three farthings, e by one, into the Servant's hand and said: "There, you have a farthing every year; that is a large and munificent wage which few masters uld give you."

The good Servant, who knew little about money, put away his for-ne, and thought: "Now my pocket is well filled. I need no longer uble myself about work."

We hardly need to point out that this Servant is an idealized image d a self-exaltation of patient, hard-working, humble folk, of the pressed peasant and his descendants in the towns. He has been erely wronged, but he takes it with friendly good humor.

Exploited and mocked, he accepts his "wages" with a cheerful ex-ession. For, woe to him if he rebelled and sought to avenge himself this insult to his human dignity. The master would have other sub-ts at his command and let armed proletarians put down unarmed oletarians as has happened regularly in the feudal state—most fright-ly and memorably in the German Revolution known as the Peasants' ar in 1525. The heaps of corpses lay upon the fields long after-

wards. Our Servant flees from this bitter real world into the world o wishes and wish-fulfillment. As a sign of this he goes first of all on wandering. Wandering and voyaging always signify, among othe things the substitution of an ideal state of affairs, dreamt of and de sired, for bitter reality. In such a better world one is perhaps teste to see whether he deserves a better destiny. If he knows himself to b innocent and of a good heart this trial is passed cheerfully and reveng is given for the infuriating ill-rewards of the three years of toil.

WISH-FULFILLMENT

THEN he left and went singing down hill and up dale, dancing i the lightness of his heart.

Now it so happened that as he was passing a thicket, a little Dwar came out and cried: "Whither away, my merry fellow? I see your trouble are not too heavy to be borne."

"Why should I be sad?" answered the Servant. "I have three years wages in my pocket."

"And how much is your treasure?" asked the Dwarf.

"How much? Why, three good farthings."

"Listen!" said the Dwarf. "I am a poor needy fellow; give me you three farthings. I can't work any more; but you are young, and can easil earn your bread."

Now the Servant had a good heart, and he was sorry for the poo little man, so he gave him his three farthings and said: "Take them in the name of heaven! I shall not miss them."

"Then," said the Dwarf, "I see what a good heart you have. I wil give you three wishes, one for each farthing, and every wish shall b fulfilled."

"Aha!" said the Servant, "you are a wonder-worker I see. Very wel then . First, I wish for a gun (originally blow-pipe) which will hi everything I aim at; secondly, for a fiddle which will make every on dance when I play; and thirdly, if I ask anything of any one, that h shall not be able to refuse my request."

"You shall have them all," said the Dwarf, diving into the bushe where, wonderful to relate, lay the gun and the fiddle ready, just as i they had been ordered beforehand. He gave them to the Servan and said: "No one will be able to refuse anything you ask."

What does the servant now possess? A weapon, the infantry weapo which caused trouble for the feudal armies of the Normans in Englan (the archers of Robin Hood) and which as a weapon of war put an en

o equestrian knights; secondly, music; a means for frenzy and dance
s among all primitives; and finally the magic power of wish-fulfillment
self—every wish is to be granted. Now the Servant is armed well
nough to oppose the Master. But since these gifts have been gained
ot in the real world but in the world of fairy-tale and travel, the mo-
ient has come to gain a vicarious satisfaction of the repressed vengeful
eelings by venting them upon the scapegoat.

THE JEW APPEARS

"HEART! What more can you desire," said the Servant to himself, and went merrily on.

Soon after, he met a Jew with a long goat's beard, who was standing till listening to the song of a bird sitting on the top of a tree. "Good eavens!" he was saying, "what a tremendous noise such a tiny creature nakes. If only it were mine! If one could put some salt upon its tail!"

"If that is all," said the Servant, "the bird shall soon come down."

He took aim, hit it exactly, and the bird fell into a hedge of thorns.

"Go, you rogue," he said to the Jew, "and pick up the bird."

"Leave out the 'rogue,' sir. I will get the bird, as you have killed ," said the Jew.

He lay down on the ground and began to creep into the hedge.

When he had got well among the thorns, a spirit of mischief seized ie Servant, and he began to play his fiddle with all his might. The ew was forced to spring up and begin to dance, and the more the ervant played, the faster he had to dance. The thorns tore his shabby oat, combed his goat's beard, and scratched and tore his whole body.

"Heavens!" cried the Jew. "Leave off that fiddling! I don't want dance, good sir."

The Servant paid no attention to him, but thought: "You have sinned plenty of people in your time, and the thorns shan't spare you ow!" And he played on and on, so that the Jew had to jump higher nd higher, till the bits of his coat remained upon the thorns.

"Oi! Oi!" screamed the Jew. "I will give you anything you like if ou will only stop. Take my purse, it is full of gold."

"Oh, well, if you are so open-handed," said the Servant, "I am quite ady to stop my music, but I must say in praise of your dancing, that has quite a style of its own." Then he took the purse and went n his way.

If one analyzes this small piece of prose, everything is at hand which

goes to make up European anti-Semitism. First we see the Jew, innocen of the wrong inflicted on the servant, strange because of his Orient beard, superior spiritually to the servant in his feeling for the wonde of the bird's song, and upon an older and higher level of culture. H wishes to keep the singing bird just as lords, dukes, ministers an paschas keep song-birds in their homes. Then the coarse disturbin way in which the servant fulfills the desire of the Jew, abandoning him self to the frenzy of his weapon. Then the sadism of the concentratio camps, the folk festival with sport and jest during the pogrom, finally th extortion of the booty, the purse full of gold. This should have bee demanded by the servant from the master. He therefore robs the scap goat without any scruples. And to round it off, the derision with whic the painful antics of the victim is viewed.

THE GOOD CONSCIENCE

THIS untroubled conscience is expressed in a description of th robbed Jew by the narrator which is humorous and almost no malicious in manner. For the Jew is now shown reacting as the Ge man people and any other people would in its rage over injustice.

The Jew stood still looking after him till he was completely out sight, then he screamed with all his might: "You miserable fiddle You tavern musician! Just wait till I find you alone! I will chase yo till the soles of your shoes drop off—you scamp! Put a penny in you pocket and maybe you'll be worth a penny." And he cursed and revile as well as he knew how. When he had relieved himself by so doin he hurried off to the Judge in the town.

THE JUDGE AND THE TRIAL

THE circle of ideas from which a narrating folk draws its notio of law is of very great interest. There has long been a dispu over the value of feelings of natural law as a source of law. Howeve until the advent of National Socialism, no German spokesman was bo and naive enough to identify the right with what would be useful the (German) people. Let us not forget though that the ruling cla has always made its own interest out to be the general welfare of t people. We now come to the point in the tale at which the tensi increases; how will it fare with the servant? The hearer of the ta the reader, knows that the servant has been guilty of extortion a he forms a clear picture of the manner and workings of law which c

nly bode ill for the servant—that likeable, blonde, unselfish hero who erved his master faithfully three years for three farthings. The heartfelt ish of the listener is for the hero's good fortune. This feeling is supported by the secret expectation that the third gift of the magic-dealing warf, this wish-figure, will at last reveal its saving power. It has itherto been in the background. The suspense is heightened, for everyne sees how necessary law remains to the individual and the community, and accordingly no good ought to accrue to the servant. At the ottom of one's soul and thus very powerful, lurks the knowledge conerning the scapegoat and his significance. The narrator of the tale, is hero, and the listening audience are as one in this point (and not olely in this). Plundered and oppressed, they create this type of olk poetry in contrast to courtly rhyming poetry or the educated and arned poetry of the nobility. The process of law unfolds, told with ndor, humor, and imagination.

"Woe is me, Lord Judge!" the Jew said. "See how I have been ttacked, and maltreated, and robbed on the high road by a blasphemous retch. My condition might melt the heart of a stone—my clothes nd my body torn and scratched, and my purse with all my poor little vings taken away from me: all my fine ducats, each one prettier than ne other. For God's sake, throw the fellow into jail."

The Judge spoke: "Was it a soldier who treated you thus with is sword?"

"Heaven preserve us!" cried the Jew, "he had no sword but he had bow at his side and a fiddle round his neck. The villain is easily to e recognized."

So the Judge sent out men in pursuit of the honest servant, who had alked on slowly. Then soon overtook him, and the purse of gold was ound on him. When he was brought before the Judge, he said:

"I never touched the Jew, nor did I take his money away: he offered to me of his own free will if I would only stop playing, because e could not bear my music."

"Heaven defend us!" screamed the Jew, "his lies are as thick as flies n the wall."

But the Judge did not believe him either, and said: "That is a lame xcuse; no Jew ever did such a thing." And he sentenced the honest ervant to the gallows for having committed a robbery upon the public ghway.

Noteworthy here is the comparison of the truth given by the two

stories to what is known to the listener and to what must be investigated by the Judge. The Jew describes the facts accurately just as far as they are not humiliating for him; but neither does the Servant say an untrue word. Since the Jew only hints at the extortion through physical torture, the Servant is justified in bringing it less to the fore, as his neck is at stake. The duty of discovering the truth really is that of the Judge but let us recollect all the political trials against Fascist murderers and conspirators during which the judges of the Weimar republic, just as the Judge in the tale, guarded carefully against getting at the truth of the matter. ("Be not over-righteous and over-clever if you would not have evil befall you." Thus does Martin Luther translate a saying of Solomon the preacher.) Instead, the judges contented themselves with popular hearsay and belief. The testimony of the Servant was rejected by pointing out that no Jew would do that; as though German lords or judges would ever be inclined to reward the cessation of unpleasant music with purses of gold. But in the tale, things are much worse for the "good servant" than for the accused of our times. Robbery is punished by death. The propertied class in this case protects property even that of a Jew.

DISCLOSING THE SECRET

AS HE was being led away, the Jew screamed after him: "You vagabond, you dog of a fiddler, now you will get your deserts!"

The Servant mounted the ladder to the gallows very quietly with the hangman; but at the last rung he turned around to the Judge: "Grant me one favor before I die."

"Yes," said the Judge, "as long as you don't ask for your life."

"Not my life," answered the Servant. "I only ask to play the fiddle once more."

The Jew raised a tremendous cry. "Don't allow it, your worship, for heaven's sake, don't allow it!"

But the Judge said: "Why should I deny him that short pleasure. His wish is granted, and there's an end of the matter!"

Nor could he have refused even if he had wished, because of the Dwarf's gift to the Servant.

The Jew screamed. "Woe! Woe! Tie me, tie me tight!"

The good Servant took his fiddle from his neck and put it into position. At the first stroke everybody began to sway and shake, the Judge, his Clerk, and all the Officers of Justice, and the rope fell out of the hand of the man about to bind the Jew.

At the second stroke, they all lifted their legs, and the Hangman let o his hold of the honest Servant to make ready to dance.

At the third stroke they one and all leaped into the air, and began o caper about; the Judge and the Jew were in front and leaped the est.

Soon everyone who had come to the marketplace out of curiosity, ld and young, fat and lean, were dancing as hard as they could, even ie dogs got up on their hind legs, and pranced about with the rest. he longer he played, the higher they jumped, till they knocked their ands together and began to cry out pitifully.

At last the Judge, quite out of breath, cried: "I give you your life, if nly you will stop playing."

The honest Servant allowed himself to be prevailed upon, put down is fiddle, hung it about his neck, and descended the ladder. Then he epped to the Jew, who lay upon the ground gasping for breath and id to him:

"You rascal, now confess where you got the money, or I will begin o play again."

"I stole it! I stole it!" he screamed, "but you have honestly earned ."

The Judge thereupon had the Jew led to the gallows to be hanged a thief.

All the details of the scene are drawn with vidid strokes. Its eadful and melancholy comedy recalls at once the epidemics of St. itus Dance during the Middle Ages, those frightful mass convul-ons and madnesses now remembered by the people with great shame. old with artistic economy, the knot is undone in the same method by hich it was tied: the repetition of the crime frees the criminal. With hat epic forcefulness the dance scene is introduced and conveyed, ith what fine eye for detail, down to the very dogs—the artistic power own, depicting the Jew knowing the fiddler's magic, his anxious fore-oding, of no avail as he is forced to participate with the Judge in the ild dance!

Now the fable takes its last and decisive turn in reaching its pin-acle. At last the real criminal receives his deserts, he who had ithheld from the servant the purse full of gold for three years' service -the Jew! He confesses that he stole the money and that the servant rned it honestly. How? Surely not by making the Jew dance in the orns or by extorting from him? No—by the work of three years escribed at the outset, to which the tale does not hark back, despite s customary significant use of art-materials.

And no longer is there any mention of the master, the rich mise He is forgotten. The Jew is hanged in his stead.

Did we already employ the word melancholy? We use it agai With a melancholy smile we establish what this tale asserts concernin the frivolity of German anti-Semitism, its pretentiousness, its pure symbolic role. For the rope drawn around the Jew's neck will strangl him, even if all participants are secretly in agreement that they woul rather hang other people. It is of scant consolation to the scapegoa —in the struggling of the ruling class to preserve their dominatio and existence—to know that they are only scapegoats for those agains whom the "good Servant" has hitherto not dared to act.

KOREAN WAR LETTERS

WALTER LOWENFELS

KOREAN WAR LETTERS is a selection of forty-eight "letters to the editor" that appeared in newspapers throughout the country between December 1950 and September 1952. It is a cross section of some seven hundred the editor selected at that time from the thousands that were available. The texts are exactly as originally printed except for cuts to avoid repetition.

Each letter is an individual spontaneous expression of opinion, written at a critical period in our country's history, and was not part of any organized campaign.

The authors are parents and grandparents, wives and widows, teenagers and soldiers in the field—impelled to tell their own newspapers how they felt about the Korean War—and the greater war they feared might grow out of it. In making the present selection I was interested in showing the dominant mood of dissent among average people and how it found a way to express itself.

Post
Denver, Colorado

Here is a story of a lonely soldier boy of 17 with a dream of brother

* Hostilities between the North and South Korean armies broke out June 25, 1950. A few days later, U.S. armed forces entered the conflict, and the United Nations authorized all member nations to help South Korea.

During the following year the war seesawed back and forth from a small beachead in South Korea to the Yalu River border of North Korea. In July 1951 armistice negotiations began, and for two years more, fighting continued, until a cease-fire and armistice were signed July 27, 1953.

Korea was left divided at the 38th parallel. U.S. casualties were 155,000; casualties among the Koreans, civilian and military, and the Chinese (who sent volunteers into the fighting in November 1950) have been estimated at five millions.

love and peace some day not so far away from this world of today . . .
P. S. Pray for us here in Korea. We need it.

PFC Ed Gallegos

Commercial Advertiser
Memphis, Tennessee

Most of the big shots don't know what these boys are getting murdered about except for them to make another dollar.

Mrs. R. F. France

The Times,
Hammond, Indiana

It's a shame that we 18-year-olds can't find work, for everywhere we go our prospective employers shake their heads and say: 'I am sorry, but you are eligible for the draft.'

It's a shame my kid brother and many others had to go over to Korea and God only knows whether they were buried, if they're out there, lying somewhere.

It's a shame we can't have peace—the word means so much.

It's a shame prices are so damn high that we can't even afford to live.

God help us.

H. W. O., Crown Point

The Pittsburgh Courier,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:

Why should Negroes die for second-class citizenship? No Negro who has done any thinking would desire to go overseas and kill people who, like himself, have been exploited for centuries. Even if it were possible for a Negro to receive a medal or honor for his part in the slaughter, old man 'Jim Crow' would be waiting to slap him in the face at the instant he set feet in the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.

Our biggest fight is within this country. We have more enemies here than we have in Europe or Korea. . . . We should re-emphasize that our definite goal is unequivocable equality.

Roy Wright

Sun Telegraph
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

It is a tragic and dismal omen when our Federal politicians become so fearful of peace that they smear anyone who advocates it. Peace or the thought of it is far more deadly to these midget-minded men than Communism.

I am for peace and I am not a commie or a commie sympathizer. I have never been a member of the Communist Party nor have I ever signed a 'Peace Petition.' There are millions of Americans who are similarly minded in spite of the propaganda and preparation for World War III.

GAYLORD YOST

Courier Journal
Louisville, Kentucky

I saw two brothers come home from Korea. The whole family was at the train station to meet them. There were tears, but not tears of joy; because for the older of the two, war is forever over.

As the flag-draped coffin was taken from the train, what could the younger boy, who had escorted his brother 8,000 miles from Korea, say to his parents? What could the President, who sent that boy over there, say if he had been standing there? . . .

H. D. L., HAZARD, Kentucky

News Herald
Joplin, Missouri

I think Mr. Truman did the right thing in canning MacArthur, only he delayed too long.

Now I think he should do something else. He should can Dean Acheson, John F. Dulles, and a few others, then call our boys home and stop the war in Korea—then resign.

G. T. CONNER, Fruitvale

News Tribune
Tacoma, Washington

Twelve thousand Korean villages have been destroyed. Practically every important city is either badly damaged or has been wholly smashed. Half a million homes and buildings have been wiped off the face of the earth. . . . 175,000 Korean fathers and sons are war casualties. . . . 5,000,000 men, women, and children are war casualties.

While millions of people in Asia are poverty stricken and hungry, the warmakers and those who profit from war boast of 'even more fantastic weapons' for the third world war. Is this the way of the Prince of Peace?

The time has come when all who profess to believe in the teachings of Christianity must refute the savagery and insanity of war and demand peaceful solutions to our world problems.

MAUDE N. RICHARD

Arizona Republic
Phoenix, Arizona

My husband has been missing in action since December, 1951. He was flying a fighter-bomber (F-80) when he was shot down, returning from a "successful" mission. Tell me was it actually successful when one man was lost? . . . The loss, military speaking, one husband and one son. Yes, don't forget that part of the suffering is felt by the parents as well as the wives. . . . Ever since he went down, I'm totally confused as to our reason or reasons for being in Korea.

A Lost Pilot's Wife

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

We could have saved today's death in Korea if we pulled out yesterday. Today is too late. We can save tomorrow's deaths in Korea if we pull out today. Tomorrow is too late.

Vernon Ward
Ransomville, N. C.

Gazette and Daily, York, Pennsylvania

I have a boy who passed the army and he has flat feet and athletes feet and don't hear very well. Don't know how he passed but he did. If only the big shots who are behind all of this had to endure a few bombs and be up front instead of our boys, then this fighting would end. I think some of these big shots ought to be tried for murder and put behind bars. This whole thing is just a money-making war, not to protect us.

George Curry

Mrs. Charles B. Gass, Washington, D. C., Daily News, on learning that her son was missing in action in Korea:

He had absolutely no hatred. He thought our leaders were wrong, that war was wrong, that his being there was wrong. . . . No, I can't think that it's a religious war, not a Communist war. Our priest says that they fight because they are in the hands of atheists, but I say, then whom are we in the hands of? Certainly not Christians.

Spokesman Review
Spokane, Washington

We have lost good honest boys in this conflict and not one politician. We have a surplus of politicians.

W. C. Harrison
Bonner's Ferry

outh Bend, Tribune
outh Bend, Indiana

Mr. Truman tells us that he is going to tax us until it hurts. Well, e already has. He sent our son to the battlefield in Korea—never to eturn to us. That is the highest tax anyone could have put on us.

MRS. VERA GOODMAN

ittsburgh Courier
ittsburgh, Pennsylvania

ODE TO KOREA

We are men who guard Korea
Earning our meager, meager pay
Guarding the folks with millions
For about three bucks a day.

Out on the windswept mountains
Korea is the spot
Out in the terrible dust-storms
In the land that God forgot.

Out in the brush with our M-1's
Eating and drinking the dust,
And working like slaves on the chaingang
And too "D--n tired to cuss."

No one cares if we are living,
No one gives a d——n
So we are soon forgotten
Though we belong to Uncle Sam.

All night the dust keeps flying
It's more than we can stand.
Hell, folks, we are not convicts
We are defenders of our land.

All of the things we have seen
Are worse than we can tell.
I hope it's nice in Heaven
'Cause I know what it's like in hell.

And when this life is over,
And we have troubles no more,
And we will do our first parade
On that bright golden shore,

Then St. Peter will greet us,
And suddenly we will yell:
"Come on you men of the 24th,
You have done your stretch in hell."

Pvt. Thomas E. Adams II
Cosigned by Corps. Joe Goins Jr.
James Keeton, L. B. Lay, 24th
Infantry Regiment, 25th
(Infantry) Division

Press
Bighampton, N. Y.

We have sent our 500,000 boys into that bloody maelstrom and hav suffered casualties of over 20 per cent. . . . Our best surgeons will figl all day to save one aged patient. Have we sunk so low in our moral ton in America that we think thousands of young men are a bagatelle?

A READE

Free Press
Detroit, Michigan

Bring our boys home and mind our own business. A little mo pushing by the government in the wrong direction will cause a revol tion for the plain brand of democracy that built and guided this countr

MRS. E. C. DOLE
Battle Creek, Michigan

Post
Washington, D. C.

My own husband has been missing in action for eight months. I pr he is alive and a prisoner. . . .

I think it would be safe to say that in addition to the 116,000 batt casualties, the families and loved ones of those men would add mar more thousands to that figure, because we, too, are helpless casualti of the forgotten war.

MRS. LUCY RIVES STI
Fairlington, Va.

Bergen Evening Record
Bergen, New Jersey

"Now suppose, Hennessy, the Chinese had a big army a stone's thro from our borders, would we be in the least bit worried? Niver? A

suppose they were knocking down the bridges into Texas—only the Mexican ends, mind ye—would we be worried?"

Dooley shook his head. "I will never understand the Chinese."

"All the same," Hennessy replied, "I feel patriotic with all this war talk."

"Go on wid you," said Dooley," you could niver be a real patriot. Ye have no stock ticker in your house."

J. L. BROWN
Fair Lawn

News Leader
Richmond, Virginia

America's aproach to the colonial races is to treat them as if they were not human. Their lives are as dear to them as our lives are to us. I fear our approach, the approach of Caucasians to Asiatics. Now we are reaping just what we have sown. Many in America feel they are better than Asiatics, better than the darker races, better than the Jews.

MRS. I. F. EPPS

The Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Why are we in the Army? Why is this country fighting in Korea? . . .

Still the same jimcrow. . . . Still the same frame-up trials from Jackson, Miss., to Trenton, N. J. Still the same slums and low pay. Still the same struggling mothers and kids. From one end of this country to the other we are not free.

And is it really freedom they want us to fight for? Can the United States possibly bring freedom to the other colored peoples in other countries, if we are not free at home? . . .

It seems to us the average, ordinary people, both colored and white, fight and die in wars that somebody else makes. Big-time Old Soldiers make the wars, and ordinary young fight them. Old Soldiers never die, but plently of young ones do.

We think that we Negroes who are asked to fight wars in Asia and Europe, but who are not free at home, should have our say before it is too late. If enough of us can get together, we believe we will get our peace, and our freedom, too. Because in unity there is strength.

Signed by 54 Negro soldiers,
Fort Devens, Mass.

The Daily Compass
New York City
Dear Mr. President:

Today I buried my first-born, my son. To the Army he was known as Pfc. Paul R. Cooper, Jr. US5304900. To me he represented the God's test that every man must develop before he can proudly say at the end: 'I have lived fully and justly.' My son's words and deeds were so beautiful that I feel compelled to record his soul, life from birth to death. Having known the depth of his soul I can find no place for the Purple Heart on the scroll.

I am returning it to you with this thought—to me he is a symbol of the 190,000 men who have been sacrified in the needless slaughter, a so-called police action that has not and could never have been satisfactorily explained to patriotic Americans who love their country and the ideals it stands for. None of us appreciates the degradation and the ridicule we have had to suffer because of this pseudo-war.

If there had been any need for armed conflicts to preserve the American way of living I would have given him proudly and would have treasured the medal. However, since there was nothing superficial in his whole life, I cannot mar his memory by a medal and stereotyped words that hold no meaning and fail to promise a better tomorrow for the ones that he and others have died for.

Very truly yours,
DONNA COOPER

Memphis, Tenn.

[Mrs. Cooper told a reporter her son was studying to be a Catholic priest when drafted, and she added, "All countries should be free and at peace with one another. There should be no hatred, whether it be of Communists, colored people or what. There should only be love in the heart of man."]

Union Voice, District 65
Distributive Processing and Office Workers of America
New York, New York

After Mass, instead of going home to cook my Sunday dinner, I went ringing doorbells on my block.

I said to my neighbors, You've had people who were in the last war, and people who may be in the next war. Please get busy and send a telegram to Truman telling him to bring our boys back home and that we want peace and not a third world war."

Some of my neighbors picked up their phones and sent the telegrams right away. Then I went home and had bacon and eggs for Sunday dinner.

I lost my husband through being wounded in the first world war,

'd I have a boy in the Air Corps right now. I don't want to see World 'ar III and I'll do everything in my power to fight against it.

GRACE MACLOUGHLIN

ews Tribune
uluth, Minnesota

In the news item Dad Rejects Honor Medal From Truman in the n. 12 issue, is the statement: "Mr. Truman has said many times he ould rather wear the Medal of Honor than be President."

I say, fine, let him wear the medal—just let him go to the front in orea and get killed earning it.

MRS. MARY C. ERICKSON
Ironwood, Mich.

he Journal
haca, New York

I am a forward observer with a heavy mortar company, in the 35th egimental combat team, which is with the 25th (Lightning Division).

We are the furthest north of U.N. forces in Korea. At the moment e are fighting on the east Central front.

I can't say, of course, that war isn't a grisly thing. A few days ago was ordered to direct fire on a large shack in the village to our front. attalion claimed it was an enemy observation post. However, I knew was supervising the execution of one ancient mama-san and two very oung children. 'C'est la guerre' I believe, is the military excuse.

PHIL QUINN

onstitution
tlanta, Georgia

When I first heard the term Operation KILLER used on the radio ith its implication that we are now involved in a struggle to kill Chin- e, not for our preservations or that of our way of life, but because they e Chinese, then something inside me turned over with revulsion.

NORMAN LAMOTTA
Hapesville

he Times
Vatertown, New York

This is written to people of good will who consider the Russians as eople, the Chinese soldiers as people, who regret not only the loss of ur own boys, but the sad plight of the Koreans, the slaughter of the hinese, who are sick of hearing where we should fight, when we should

fight, and are wondering if brute force and bully tactics are the best we can do?

MRS. WANDA SCHLAPPI

Tacoma News Tribune
Tacoma, Washington

The road to freedom is not the suppression of free speech. A war to end wars is about as sensible as a drunk to end drunks. The road to peace is not via war.

GEORGE FISHBURNE

Winston-Salem Journal
Winston-Salem, N. C.

I think I speak for many others like myself, who are in their late teens. Until the Korean War, I suppose we weren't bothering ourselves with newspapers and radio news broadcasts. Then, boys we had known all our lives were sent overseas, and some returned wounded or not at all.

We are asking, "Why?" What reason do we have to fight? To protect our country from Communists, sure. But, what are Communists? When we ask this, people look as us as if we had said something disgraceful. The papers describe Communists as Reds. I don't know what this means either.

Maybe we're just dumb kids, but we're trying to learn. Give us a chance. Lots of kids our age are married and raising families, and others are over there dying. We're just asking a simple question that no one seems willing to answer. Maybe you of the older generation don't know either. Could that be the reason?

ANN BOYL

Paterson Call
Paterson, N. J.

Child psychiatrists say that emotional security is essential to mental health. What kind of security can we give our children when air raid drills are held in our schools and they are threatened with atom bombs? What sort of future can they have in a world that concentrates on death and destruction?

My husband and I feel that we owe a responsibility to our children in helping to secure peace in some way. How else will we be able to look into their accusing faces saying we betrayed them when they grow older?

It is very difficult for me to feel that a Korean woman loves her husband and children less than we American women do. We cannot

ford to take peace lightly. If all the peoples of the worlds spoke out r peace and let their officials know what was in their hearts, I feel re it would bring the Korean truce talks to a sucessful conclusion.

MRS. GLORIA DUNCAN

oodtide
ew York, N. Y.

Our ships went to Pusan, Korea. To our surprise and disappointment e were told that American seamen are not permitted shore leave. hen some American soldiers came aboard and gave us the lowdown. ney pick up dead American soldiers off the streets every morning. merican soldiers are not permitted out after dark unless they are 6 gether and carrying automatic rifles.

The first question we asked was: Why do they hate us? We are re to save them from the North Korean Communists. Don't they ow that 118,000 American soldiers have died fighting for them?

"We are not wanted here," the American soldiers told us. "The uth Koreans aren't Communists but they hate us more than they do e North Koreans, and I think we should all go home."

AN AMERICAN SEAMAN
A Democrat

attle Times
attle, Washington

Recent armed forces reports state that there have been a large proortion of mental breakdowns in the Korean fighting than in the last r. This is to be expected when the men are not convinced that the r is just.

MRS. L. WALKER

nsas City Star (Missouri):

Do we ever see the name of du Pont, Rockefeller, or Vanderbilt in casualty list?

MRS. LEATRICE KONSOR

ily News
icago, Illinois

I am completely bewildered. During the 17 years of my life, I have rned to love my country as one which stood for everything fine and od. I have always been proud to think of myself as an American. To- I read in your paper something that conflicts with everything I have en taught to believe.

Gen. Mark Clark stated that the commitments made to the Comm nists prisoners might not be honored.

It is my opinion that we should keep our pledge of faith no matt what it costs us.

Perhaps I feel this way because I am still young and have not learn America's true code of ethics.

DEBBY RO

Chicago Tribune
Chicago, Illinois

My older son is about ready to graduate from high school, and l evening I noted that he was staring into space. Then he looked at r and asked, "Dad, what is peace like?" I realized then that the young m had never known a day when his country was not at war or in an offic state of emergency on account of war.

HIRMAN WILSON SHERIDA
Glen Ellyn, Ill.

Greensboro Daily News
Greensboro, N. C.

Three times within my lifetime the fathers and mothers of t United States have been influenced in their presidential voting by pro ises to keep their sons out of foreign wars. Blood is too precious to bartered at the polls for votes.

TOM HENDERSON,
Yanceyville, N. C.

Los Angeles Times
Los Angeles, Calif.

When I read the headline, "78 Red Towns Face Destruction: U Warns Residents to Flee," in The Times of Aug. 5, I tried to imagi myself a Korean in one of the towns marked for destruction.

Would I be grateful for the day American soldiers landed on Kore shores to "liberate" my people? Would I welcome the destruction 78 more Korean towns in the power struggle between the Uni States and Russia?

Granted that I were anti-Communist, after what has happened my country might I not conclude that the effort to save Korea fr Communism constituted a cure more dreadful than the disease?

America wants us to have freedom and democracy. That is fi But can freedom shelter my community from heat and cold when

omes have been leveled to the ground? Can I feed my undernourished ildren on democracy when the food supply has been destroyed?

The writer wonders whether Americans, if they were to think more refully on what is happening to innocent Korea, would not want the orean people to decide whether this war on their soil is to be con-nued.

J. STUART INNERST,
Santa Ana, Calif.

azette and Daily
ork, Pennsylvania

So we have a Mother's March on Polio. Why not a Mothers' March n War?

MRS. HARRY D. BECK, JR.

lobe
oston, Massachusetts

We will fight to the end for our country, but this isn't our coun-y.

A G.I. FROM KOREA

he Globe
oston, Mass.

. . . As far as we know the city of Boston and surrounding com-unities haven't been spending much time or money erecting youth cen-rs and such, for us to belong to.

What's in store for us, or others? Boys of our own age after leaving igh school are compelled to crowd their lives into a few years of fun. seems to us that all we hear about are wars in the past and those at are probable in the future.

Is all the world has to offer us just one consecutive war after an-her?

A GROUP OF TEEN-AGERS

nterprise Times
rockton, Mass.

I would like to make a request of your newspaper. I am in Korea is Christmas Day. Stop. Get me out of here.

PFC. RAYMOND J. GRENON

POEM

CLYDE HOSEIN

The author of this poem, 21 years old, is a native of Trinidad, West Indie On the question of social realism he writes that the "social reality which we a all facing is imperialism." He feels it his duty as a poet to oppose the "recalc trant, hostile and inhuman policies of the colonialists."

I have chosen, you be my witness Death
I shall not back down come fire and sword
torture and hell.
I shall arise and go among my people
And I shall say I'm a citizen of this world
And no chain, no barbed wire shall stop me.

I come, men of earth, nailed to the cross
drifting in a bone-lashed breeze
over the sands, over the sea
footprint on earth crippled by strangled cries,
footprint on bone murdered in yellow flesh.

I shall arise from the ashes and the debris
from the black oil and shuddering mud,
I shall arise armed from head to toe in the moonlight
in these fields sugared with amora of sweat and destitution.

I shall advance in the turbulence of sorrow
in the tattered air in perfume of blood and battle,

I shall bring teats to my people
squatting like night in doorways of tears and shame.

Here are my hands, Jomo Kenyatta
take them, spill martyrdom over earth and sky
over the sand dunes huddled on Sahara
over bodies since the dawn of time denied.
I am your shadow in the dark, dense forest
stalking the Kenya air, the Kenya sky
Death shall never find us Kenyatta
darkness explodes today to furious night.

You have paid well in flesh and blood O people
coffers of blood, strongvault of flesh
everywhere in lands resonant with hollowness and ignorance.
You are the dew trampled by stony boots
lashes of granite buried in moss and pain
petals of roses crushed between walls of greed
doorways of torture, canefields of misery
coolie of hangmen, garbage of angry time.

Vengeance is mine. I will not forget you
I will avenge you brother yet.
Give me water of strength, fire of hope
breath of liberty, body of steel
voice of martyrdom, dagger of truth
you and I will march the last mile to dig out
the last entrail of the oppressor.
Vengeance is mine. I will not forget you
flowers of Indian womanhood
petals of beauty, bosoms of light
ravaged in canefields under my native sun.

No! I shall not forget you who were defamed,
raped in the estates
lived on in barracks not fit for pigs
you who stood barefooted, beaten, weary, sick
in the mud and filth of Caroni.

Vengeance is mine. I shall not forget you Liddlelow.
I shall not forget you either Phulbassiya, you

Indian beauty. Lift up your pollen face
and with your honey hands tear off the mask
of death that cloaks my people's face.

Maiden, this world will bleed with weeping
all over earth the voices will be raised,
black hands shall light the fuse of vengeance
warriors smashing knots of lies and life.

THE CRITICS HAVE PROBLEMS

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

PREVALENT among critics today are two approaches to aesthetic theory, seemingly opposite to one another but both amounting to the same surrender of the hope that any theoretical illumination can be thrown on the problems of art today. One is the pragmatic theory of "no theory." According to this, everything done in art is a law to itself, and all a critic can do is to discuss its technical competence within the premises that the artist sets up for his work. The greatest evil is to offer some generalizations, to attempt some theoretical evaluations, to suggest some directions, to bring to bear a critical perspective based on the life of society and the achievements of past art. The other is an eclectic approach to theory. In books or in the pages of periodicals devoted to the arts, a reader finds himself presented with a host of grandiose and conflicting theories. Around each one lies a protective armor consisting of the assumption that one must never ask whether or not it is true and enlightening. One must see them all as "interesting" (that is, unless the theories are Marxist). Everything is "interesting." Never must ideas be tested by the touchstone of whether it is possible to live by them without destroying oneself or others

This may seem to be a pleasantly free and easy way of operating. It creates an ingratiating and untroubled atmosphere of intellectual life, with ideas and generalizations tossed about like playthings . The only harsh note to be avoided is the offensive insistence that ideas are something to live by, and that if they are generalizations about art, an artist guides his work, growth and career about them, with therefore the question of their validity and truth being a matter of central importance

to the use he makes of his talents. The Marxist belief that ideas are meant to live by is taken as a kind of dictatorship, although what Marxism really asserts is that behind every kind of practice there lies a body of thought, and it is better for this to be open than hidden, tested against the needs of humanity and progress than sheltered and protected by the term, "interesting."

Yet within the present free and easy approach to theory, sometimes referring to itself as an example of the "freedom of the arts," there are signs of a developing crisis, and one touching on the very question of artistic freedom. An inkling of this is provided by the following quotations.

In the *New York Times* of September 6, 1959, the art critic, John Canaday, finds utter confusion, clothed in hypocrisy within the most highly publicized school of "serious" American painting today, that of Abstract-Expressionism and its various offshoots.

> There can be no objection to abstract expressionism as one manifestation of this complicated time of ours. The best abstract expressionists are as good as ever they were—a statement not meant to carry a concealed edge. But as for the freaks, the charlatans and the misled who surround this handful of serious and talented artists, let us admit at least that the nature of abstract expressionism allows exceptional tolerance for incompetence and deception.
>
> The art of the French Salon, recognized as deadly, is the only school comparable in prolix mediocrity to the rank and file of abstract expressionist work today. . . . The question is why so many painters have adopted a form of art that should seem pointless except to the recondite, and why a large public is so humble in the face of an art that violates every one of its aesthetic convictions. Bad painters we must always have, but how does it happen that we have them in such profusion in such a limited field, and why are we taking them so seriously?
>
> The fault, I am afraid, lies quite directly with professors, museum men and women and critics, including this writer, who has functioned in all three capacities. In our missionary fervor for the best of it, we have managed to create the impression that all abstract art per se must be given the breaks on the probability that there is more there than meets the eye, while all other art pe se must be ragarded with suspicion on the probability that it isn't as good as it looks. Things have come to the point where it is amusing to dismiss the Renaissance with a quip, but dangerous to one's critical reputation not to discover in any second-rate abstract exercise some cosmic implication.

True to his eclectic approach to art, Canaday does not question what he calls "the best abstract expressionists," employing that invaluable

phrase for avoiding deep critical analysis, namely "a manifestation of the times." But what alarms him, for good reason, is the evident dissolution of critical standards, so that those who are presumably the authorities on art can no longer tell good art from bad, or genuine from fraud. This confusion in turn is passed on to the public. Then there is the frightening loss of the heritage of the past itself, with the lights it opened up on art and on the world. As he says, it is the acceptable thing to claim that the Renaissance was a period of bad art. (Anyone familiar with critical writing about avant-garde painting knows of such sweeping statements, like James Johnson Sweeney's, that we suffer from "600 years of misdirection" in the arts, or Jean Arp's, that the great error started with the end of the cave age). And perhaps most important, is Canaday's revelation that the very critic who waves the banner, in both his writing and the art he praises, of "truth" and "freedom," is both dishonest and intimidated.

Canaday pursues the point more strongly three weeks later. In the issue of September 27, 1959, he writes:

> A critic whose favorite phrase is a reverent "art of our time" may say over a cocktail that it is a lousy time for painting, honestly unaware that what he writes implies constantly that painting has broken its equivalent of the sound barrier and has beat the rest of our civilization by getting its men into space. Or a critic whose favorite adjective for the new painting is "vitality" looks at photographs of the selections for the latest big show and says, "Same old stuff," then goes ahead to write it up with his habitual conviction that it is all brand new. I wonder on this evidence whether painting today does not occupy the same position in our life that fencing does.

In poetry as well, criticism has become self-serving, and intimidated, with the banner of "rebellion" and "freedom" turning into a new orthodoxy. There is likewise the assault upon the past, in the name of appreciating it.

Thus the poet Karl Shapiro writes of the dominant trend in American serious poetry—one with which his own work has had close connections in the book review section of the *New York Times,* December 13, 1959.

> Official poetry, on the other hand, is always thrust before us by its spokesmen. . . . It is disturbing to think that something like an academy has been transplanted to the literary soil of the United States in the last several decades, and that this *Académie Américaine,* so to speak, has spread its influence far and wide. . . . If we could bear in mind that "academic," "intellectual," "Modern," and what T. S. Eliot calls "Classical" all mean

one and the same thing and all refer to a specific type of literature, then we might be able to understand the nature of this official literary movement. . . . To support and justify this ailing poetry the adherents of Modernism have taken refuge in Criticism. Modern literary criticism is the largest and most formidable body of criticism known. Its authors, amazingly, are often poets themselves, or those poets who have subscribed to the cultural program of the "Classical" school. Their obscurantism is as great as that of the poetry it tries to defend.

What we have in our time is not a flourishing poetry but a curious brand of poetry compounded of verse and criticism. It is accurate to call this hybrid "criticism-poetry." The person who can understand modern poetry must first be initiated into the vast and arcane criticism of our day. This is why almost every college or university must *teach* modern poetry. It is like teaching a foreign language and the key to it is criticism. . . .

In education, which the Modernists consider their special province, the orthodoxy is extended to include certain chosen works of poetry which supposedly contain all that is worth saving of the Western tradition (for example Homer, Dante, the Metaphysical and Symbolist poets) . . . Every college sophomore is dismally aware that criticism has supplanted poetry in the study of literature. He is acquainted with curious textbooks designed to make him understand the most minute and esoteric techniques of poetic style (which even poets are unaware of), without ever being taught who wrote the poem, or when or what its relevance is. The poem is treated as a biological specimen, thoroughly dead and ready for dissection. This kind of pedagogy is derived straight from the precepts of modern criticism and it is partly an attempt to isolate the public from a living poetry. A far-reaching result of such teaching has been to make poets tend to write for the purposes of criticism—to provide models for the critic to work with.

The degrading situation in the "popular arts" is revealed by a quotation, from the *New York Times* book section of January 17, 1960, entirely devoted to paper-back publications.

The book that is written specifically for a paperbound edition has advantages over one that is inherited from a hard-cover publisher. If the editor feels that there is a demand for doctor-nurse-hospital books, or teen-age romance books or for books about hot rodders, as there appears to be now, he can find an author and have the book written to fill the demand. If there is a trend toward the non-fiction, case-history type of book, another reader demand at the present time, the editor finds his subject, matches an author to his subject and out comes a paperbound book. He can order the size of the book—usually 60,000 to 70,000 words—

that will be most profitable to him. He has the complete say as to publication date and title.

Here the writer of the article, Robert Alden, seems to have no awareness at all of the cultural depravity which he is revealing so lightly. Talent is turned into machine-belt production of literature. Everything about a work is dictated by a boss, with no other interest than in a profit-making commodity, to be used and tossed away, and this in a land where the publicists are self-righteously and continuously chastising socialist lands for their lack of cultural freedom, "free-world" style. This has no connection to the practice in the past of commissioning works of art for certain definite places or functions, where the commission was often a pathway to an audience and the terms left the artist free to express himself with integrity. It may be said that of course a writer has the freedom to refuse to write a book for commercial specifications. Similarly, a worker who does not like his wages has the freedom to quit his job, and a person objecting to a rent increase can put his furniture out on the street. The fact remains that this mass production of pseudo-art as a business, through its very control of the social network of distribution, has most of the pubilc as its captive, as well as writers who seek to make a living, although even the money rewards get to be low. As Alden continues, some writers "hit the jackpot" and can do well from such machine-turned works, but they are comparatively few. "The average writer of paperbound originals, of course, does not make as much money as these top men. In fact, to keep a chicken in their pot, it probably is best that they have a steady source of income on the side." And what happens if a writer decides that he has to take a couple of years off to work out some new problems, develop his thought, move into new artistic territory? This whole procedure, so necessary to an artist, arouses the danger of losing his chance for publication altogether. The aesthetic of his work is rigidly fixed; pseudo-realism in style, unreality in substance and content. "The paperbound publisher has found that to please the American public at the present time what is needed is a book that is realistic and that at the same time fulfills the readers' fantasies."

In the realm of drama, we quote from the paperbound, Signet edition of the play, *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof,* by Tennessee Williams, who is one of the most highly respected dramatists in America today, as a dedicated, creative artist. The play is published with two sharply different versions of the third, concluding act; one the act Williams originally wrote, the other as he rewrote it to fit the demands of the director and producer. Williams says:

> I wanted Kazan to direct the play, and though these suggestions were not made in the form of an ultimatum, I was fearful that I would lose his interest if I didn't re-examine the script from his point of view. I did. And you will find included in this published script the new third act that resulted from his creative influence on the play.

Wiliams make it clear that the new third act was really not the way he thought the human situation he had created should have been resolved. But there was compensation, namely commercial success.

> The reception of the playing-script has more than justified, in my opinion, the adjustments made to that influence. A failure reaches fewer people, and touches fewer, than does a play that succeeds.

The success was considerable, including a Pulitzer Prize, and a lucrative cinema production. And the book as published prints both versions. But it was the changed and artistically falser version which received production, and it is production which a play needs to make its full effect as a work of art.

Within all four examples cited above, apparent is not only a collapse of critical standards, but also a serious depredation in the one quality without which "freedom of the arts" becomes a meaningless and fraudulent slogan; the integrity of the work of art itself. In the case of the paper-back books and the Tennessee Williams play, the force which snickers at all aesthetic theory and sets the rules of the game so openly is commercialism, the view of art as simply a manufactured commodity for consumption and profit. And in the higher and supposedly purer realms represented by Abstract-Expressionist painting and the "criticism-poetry" referred to by Karl Shapiro, this force, so all powerful in capitalist society, likewise makes its presence felt, if somewhat below the surface. For in painting, there are the vested interests of dealers and galleries who sell the questionable art which Canaday speaks about at inflated prices, pretending that it is the great art of the future, and the pride of museums that have sponsored and invested heavily in it. As for the area encompassed jointly by the modern "metaphysical poetry" and the "new criticism," it exercises a considerable influence over the avenues to the prizes, foundation awards, fellowships, lectureships, teaching positions and artist-in-residence jobs at universities, which have become the main source of livelihood for a host of serious American writers. And along with the integrity of the artist, which commercialism hunts down and destroys with the ferocity of a bloodhound, its fellow casualty, even more inimical and hateful to the commercial mentality

is the freedom of the artist to look at American life realistically and critically.

The realities of social life force their way into the arts, despite the prevalence of theories which deny any such relationship between art and life. But anemic is the critical atmosphere which is so necessary to nuture and clarify this collective task. An example is the play, *Cat On a Hit Tin Roof,* which is typical of a number of literary works regarded as artistic successes in the country today; many of them, but not all, coming from Southern writers. It portrays a family torn apart by greed and mutual hatred, unfolding most of its loveless, unhappy and often perverted and tormented sexual life before the audience, and sparing no obscenities of language in order to reveal both the low mentality of the characters and the violence with which they abuse and attack one another. The head of the family, "Big Daddy" Pollitt, married to "Big Mama," has risen from poverty to become the owner of one of the largest and richest plantations in the South, comprising 28,000 acres of fertile land in the Mississippi delta. He is now sixty-five, and dying of cancer. He has two sons. One, Gooper, is thirty-five, married, with five children, and has become a lawyer-politician, and a greedy, heartless and selfish schemer. The other, "Brick," is twenty-seven, has been a football player and then a sports announcer, is married, without children, and is an alcoholic. The background situation is the scheming of Gooper and his wife, to get their hands on the father's estate, knowing that "Big Daddy" has a preference for the younger son, "Brick." The main line of the play revolves about the effort of Brick's wife, Margaret, to arrive at some satisfactory and decent love relation with him, which also means pulling him out of the homosexual tendencies, the consciousness of which is one of the factors causing him to find an opiate in drink. Of the two versions of the third act, the changed version is more "commercial," in making the act somewhat more melodramatic, and also assuring the audience of a happy ending, namely the rescue of Brick. The original version makes it clear that any change in Brick is more than doubtful. In the cinema version, of course, the language had to be toned down considerably.

Here is an example of the mentality of one of the characters, "Big Daddy," towards whom the author feels somewhat sympathetic.

> We got that clock the summer we wint to Europe, me an' Big Mama on that damn Cook's Tour, never had such an awful time in my life, I'm tellin' you, son, those gooks over there, they gouge your eyeballs out in their grand hotels. . . .That Europe is nothin' on earth but a great big auction, that's all it is, that bunch of old worn-out places, it's just a big

fire-sale, the whole rutten thing, an' Big Mama wint wild in it, why, you couldn't hold that woman with a mule's harness! Bought, bought, bought!—lucky I'm a rich man, yes siree, Bob, and half that stuff is mildewin' in the basement. It's lucky I'm a rich man, it sure is lucky, well, I'm a rich man, Brick, yep, I'm a mighty rich man. Y'know how much I'm worth? Guess, Brick! Guess how much I'm worth! Close on ten million in cash an' blue chip stocks, outside, mind you, of twenty-eight thousand acres of the richest land this side of the valley Nile! But a man can't buy his life with it, he can't buy back his life with it when his life has been spent. . . .

And a few speeches later, revealing the inner family relations:

What do you know about this mendacity thing? Hell! I could write a book on it! Don't you know that? I could write a book on it and still not cover the subject? Well, I could, I could write a goddam book on it and still not cover the subject anywhere near enough!—Think of all the lies I got to put up with!—Pretenses! Ain't that mendacity? Having to pretend stuff you don't think or feel or have any idea of? Having for instance to act like I care for Big Mama! I haven't been able to stand the sight, sound or smell of that woman for forty years now!—even when I *laid* her!—regular as a piston. . . . Pretend to love that son of a bitch Gooper and his wife Mae and those five same screechers out there like parrots in a jungle? Jesus! Can't stand to look at 'em!

Church!—It bores the Bejesus out of me but I go!—I go an' sit there and listen to the fool preacher!

Clubs!—Elks! Masons! Rotary!—*crap!*

You I *do* like for some reason, did always have some kind of real feeling for—affection—respect—yes, always. . . . You and being a success as a planter is all I ever had any devotion to in my whole life!—and that's the truth. . . .

To appraise the play artistically, which means at least in part, placin it in the great tradition of drama itself, is not the issue in the presen discussion. It can be said, to Tennessee Williams' credit, that he ha unfolded, uncompromisingly—at least in the original version—the menta life of his characters as he saw them in real life. But what was th attitude of the critics, including those who gave it the Pulitzer Prize In the main, they praised the author's dramatic craftsmanship in unfol ing his themes, his effective handling of language, his psychological trut so that the characters seemed to be alive and real, his penetrating di closure of the complicated emotional relationships and conflicts in th family he chose to depict. What was not raised, however, is the que tion that Marxists would have put very much to the fore. It is th

uestion which comes out of the fact that this family which Tennessee Villiams depicts, with its poverty-stricken mentality, its low state of onsciousness of anything going on in the country or world about it, its ow level, self-centered morality, the abysmal, almost unspeakable horror f its human relations, is an influential and in some cases decisive part f the ruling class of the democratic United States of America, the eader of the "free world."

For it is these millionaires and great plantation owners who run ne only existing (for all practical purposes) political party in the South, hich is one of the two great political parties running the country. hey pick the mayors, governors, state legislators, judges, chiefs of police. hey make the laws and set the policies. They are now carrying the fight o keep the Negro population impoverished, without civil rights, without education, segregated, terrorized. They choose congressmen and enators. They have a powerful voice in deciding who will be the nomiee for president of the country. They shape foreign policy, and interal policy, and economic life. And so the question is, is this play an ccurate picture of the life and mentality of the ruling class, of the eople on whom depend so much of the life and future of the popuation including that of the critics who write such sensitive appraisals f the play's artistry? It is a question that can be raised, of course, of ther literary works as well, such as the novels, especially those dealing ith the Snopes family, of the Nobel Prize winner, William Faulkner.

It can be said that Tennessee Williams, to his credit, does show ome consciousness of this question, although one far from explicit. n this play there is no consciousness that this family, or its head, is part f a nation's ruling class; of its operation on the political and social ena; of how the ten million dollars were made, including exploitaon and chicanery, of the presence of the population directly and inirectly affected by the Pollitt family. But a real moral criticism is ised, with social implications. There is "Big Daddy's" statement of his iscovery—not in the slums of Mississippi, but in his travels among ne foreigners, or what he calls the "gooks," of Europe—of the terrible overty in the world; his contempt for his older son, who represents ne coldly calculating, greedy, self-aggrandizing mentality; his partiality or Brick, as the inheritor of his estate. There is Brick's reason for his rn to alcohol, which even more than his frustrated and tormented love elation, is his disgust for the "mendacity," the "lying and liars" characeristic of the social life he is asked to enter. There the questioning ops, but it gives some added depth and perspective, to the play.

But in all their welcoming of this or that theory of art as "interest-

ing," the critics must avoid and erase from consideration the crucia approach, that a work of art is a reflection of reality. Whether broa or narrow in scope, clear or distorted in form, it presents typical figure of actual life, revealing, because they are typical, something of the force operating in society itself. It helps us see how social life shapes peopl and they in turn shape it, and how their outer life is organically tied, on mirroring the other, to their inner life, their most personal relationship to people, their love life, their frustrations and hatreds, their approach t birth, marriage and death itself.

It is far preferable to the critics to discuss a work of art as a gam an arbitrary situation invented and filled in, with more or less skill, an at best a purely inner, psychological "truth," showing people in the ligh of "universals" like love, homosexuality, death, neuroses, or if the crit leans that way, Oedipus complexes. It would not do to discuss a pla like *Cat On a Hit Tin Roof*—the title itself suggesive of a crisis—i terms of the problems that might arise from it of the state of America democracy itself, or of its actual inner and outer life; to connect it wit the powerful role that a Senator Eastland plays in American politic life, or the role played by the South as a whole, where democracy itse is least developed and its forms most farcical, upon the laws of Co gress, the choice of a president, and the fate of the nation. To raise suc questions of a work of art is by its very nature, an implied infringemer of the artist's "freedom." "Truth," even as a question, becomes dict torial.

Of course, so pressing and fundamental is this aspect of art, th it haunts the mind of critics and professors even when they do n raise it consciously, and it begins to come to the forefront of co sciousness especially when, as happens so often these days, they are e gaged in the task of explaining American culture abroad. For seems odd that such a horrifying picture should be presented in the wo not only of one of the country's leading playwrights, but of others, wi of course a different tone, critical consciousness and milieu, like Lilli Hellman and Arthur Miller. There it is, in *The Little Foxes* and *A other Part of the Forest,* and Miller's *Death of a Salesman.* And it recu in the work of one of the country's leading novelists, William Faulkner, the Southern milieu; it appears, with a different milieu, and therefo in a different aspect, but with similar horrors, and unanswered questio in the last big work of another leading American novelist, *East of Ed* by John Steinbeck.

The critic is rare who will ask, is this the state of American dem cratic life or "freedom," or at least one shaft of illumination throv

on it? Is this ourselves, or our nation? Is this what we have become? so, what are the roots of the problem? What can we do? Where do e begin to look for a course to follow? Is there a broader or at least fferent consciousness we can bring to the problem than that of the uthor himself, once we credit him with having raised it? Does the fact at some of the writers mentioned raise such psychological problems mply as matters of personal and private life, or as rising in the "human eart," or as the "fate of man," prevent them from being also social roblems, with which we are actively concerned?

That the problem is a pervasive one is seen in that it rises not only ithin "fine art" but also within "popular art," dedicated to commerce, e marketplace, profit, and mass "entertainment." Of course, the stinction between these two areas is not hard and fast. *East of Eden* ld in tens of thousands as a paperback publication, with a picture n its cover of a half-undressed woman. *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof* not nly was changed to make it more certain of commercial success, but it ecame a motion picture, as did *Death of a Salesman, The Little Foxes,* nd *Another Part of the Forest.* However there is the enormous mass material produced with the most cynical mentality, to which "art" "seriousness" are things to laugh at and "money" is the one re-pected word. And here the shibboleth is disappearing of this product eing the "people's choice" or "people's taste," with the business-man roducer blaming the public for what is his own mentality. He seeks ot what people want, but the least common denominator of the llable. And now, to the growing and yet impotent concern of the ublic," a strong appeal is made to the youth, at a time when the mper of the youth is a major problem. A marketplace force has own overwhelming the influence of family, school and other institu-ons that have some responsibility for preparing the youth to take up role in adult life. Here is a quotation from the motion picture critic the *New York Times,* Bosley Crowther, in the issue of February 1960.

> Another cloud—this one roughly in the shape of a clotted fist—has been rising ominously on the horizon of the motion picture business for the last six months to a year. It is the cloud representing the production of more and more cheap and violent films that are presumably aimed at a market of crime bugs and thrill-hungry kids. . . .
>
> We speak of such seamy little pictures as "Vice Raid" and "Drag Strip Girl," "The Bucket of Blood" and "Inside the Mafia," "Girls Town" and "Diary of a High School Bride." And now at the first-run Victoria, we have "The Purple Gang," a distinctly vicious film, and, in a whole slew

of neighborhood theatres, "The Rise and Fall of 'Legs' Diamond" and "The Great St. Louis Bank Robbery" on a double bill. . . .

The unfortunate thing about this new crop of vice-and-violence films is that they evidently have the qualificaions to give vicarious kicks to creeps and kids, despite the cheapness of their production and the inferiority of their quality. And even though seldom given much critical notice, let alone applause, they unquestionably afford some strong attraction for particular audiences. . . .

"The Rise and Fall of 'Legs' Diamond" is attracting customers, too, even though it is also a stencil of many previous gangland biographies. Its story of a criminal opportunist who makes his way by gall and guns until he is finally chopped down by rivals is right out of the bottom drawer.

What worries us is that its hero, like the young hoodlums in "The Purple Gang," is endowed with an enviable bravado and a cooly fascinating conceit. As Ray Danton plays him, he is casual, confident, debonair, and downright sadistically eager when it comes to gunning down other mugs. He is obviously fashioned to appeal to the tastes of those various juveniles who would take out their aggression in violence—or in wishful thinking of it. And he dies hard.

There is not much to do about these pictures, in the way of protest or appeal, other than stay away from them and urge others (particularly your children), to do the same. They are not in violation of any permissible laws, and there is no way for the motion picture industry as an organization to forgid their being made. So long as people patronize them, these neo-vicious films will be produced, as a scan of the lists of pictures coming in the next few months makes clear.

But, of course, they inevitably pump poison into the commercial veins of the screen and help to pollute the medium whose cultural establishment they trade on. It will take more and more anti-toxins in the way of fine films, to match their harm. Let us hope those fine films will be forthcoming, lest the poison take full command.

This perceptive and social-minded critic, who has a real feel of humanist responsibility, is in a dilemma. For here an unquestiona destructive force is rising, without even the shred of justification tha used for other forms of cultural production, namely that if it of "horror," it does this as "art." The justification is nothing but mo And it advances on the wings of the freedom of the marketplace, central freedom of bourgeois, and capitalist, society. What alte tive is there? The obvious one is censorship. But this Crowther p erly rejects. For in this society, censorship can only mean someth worse, a backward step, a reversion to the kind of authoritarian, n archic society against which bourgeois democracy and marketp freedom made its revolutionary break. And in fact, all progress

ninded people, among whom Crowther must undoubtedly be counted, ire applauding or sympathizing with the efforts in Hollywood to make i break with the very real censorship now existing, that of the blacklist of writers, and the reactionary pressures of the American Legion. And so, feeling very impotent about the whole thing, Crowther can only suggest a different kind of break with the customary situation in market-place culture; namely a more active audience, which will show its mind i little more vigorously, and even try to keep its children from undesir-able movies. To this, he adds the hope that a miraculous flow of good movies may drive out the bad.

What the industry itself feels about the situation may be gathered from a report in *Variety,* June 8, 1960.

> Exhibitors want "blood, guts and sex," more audience-luring marquee titles and less "cultural artiness" from directors and writers, Spyros Skouras, prexy, 20th-Fox Film Corp., stated during a Toronto visit which coincided with the 33rd annual convention of Variety Clubs International.

There are still other aspects to the situation. For this "popular" art production, regardless of its contempt for "art," nevertheless obeys some of the laws of art. One fact is that it molds people's minds. This Crowther wisely sees, rejecting the commonly expressed view that since these are "entertainments" they are not to be taken seriously. Another is that to make its appeal, this production must have some roots in real life, regardless of how much all-over lying and fantasy it offers. And these "vice-and-violence" films take their documentation, material and color from American life. It was not the films that invented gangsters and gang murders. We can read of them in the newspapers, along with the evidence of the close ties they have, through the political party machines, to the very institutions supposed to enforce law and order. This does not mean that these films purvey art and truth; only that they too are sensitive to the events of real life and take their subject-matter from it, however distorted the form in which it finally emerges. It would be well for those disturbed over gangster and violence films to consider the necessity for driving gangsterism, violence, and the political corruption that breeds them, out of real life. In fact, the best guarantee of a truly active audience, driving out of existence these sadistic films so potent in molding minds, is to have an active, organized public alive to the necessity for ending this corruption.

And so the "freedom of the arts" in our country is suffering from a blighting disease. It is full of unsolved contradictions, which are part

of the very way of operation of "free" or marketplace society, and reac a crisis when the "market-place" represents an immense concentratio of money and power, with control over the very arteries through whic art works flow. It is the freedom to abandon theory and so fumbl in the dark; the freedom to advance any thought or notion without th disturbance of having it tested against real life, or of such question as to whether there is any truth there, or any illumination thrown o life; the freedom to control for one's private interest and gain th immense institutions which provide the main artistic experiences of so ciety, and to pour anything through these channels that will sell and sho a profit. There is also the freedom to say what one wants, provide one foregoes the need to make a living out of art, and foregoes th excitement and growth which comes out of a two-way reaction with th public, the people of the nation. It is plain that while Marxists hav to cope with and solve the question of artistic freedom, they canno accept this way of operation as a fundamental solution.


L.G.

KIPLING AND I

JESUS COLON

The author of this sketch, Jesus Colon, is the popular columnist of *The* Worker. A selection of his stories, *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches*, will be published this fall by Mainstream Publishers, N. Y.

SOMETIMES I pass Debevoise Place at the corner of Willoughby Street. . . . I look at the old wooden house, gray and ancient, the house where I used to live some thirty-five years ago. . . .

My room was on the second floor at the corner. On hot summer nights I would sit at the window reading by the electric light from the street lamp which was almost at a level with the window sill.

It was nice to come home late during the winter, look for some scrap of old newspaper, some bits of wood and a few chunks of coal and start a sparkling fire in the chunky four-legged coal stove. I would be rewarded with an intimate warmth as little by little the pigmy stove became alive puffing out its sides, hot and red, like the crimson cheeks of a Santa Claus.

My few books were in a soap box nailed to the wall. But my most prized possession in those days was a poem I had bought in a five and ten cent store on Fulton Street. (I wonder what has become of these poems, maxims and sayings of wise men that they used to sell at the five and ten cent stores?) The poem was printed on gold paper and mounted on a gilded frame ready to be hung in a conspicuous place in the house. I bought one of those fancy silken picture cords finishing in a rosette to match the color of the frame.

I was seventeen. This poem to me then seemed to summarize the

wisdom of all the sages that ever lived in one poetical nutshell. It was what I was looking for, something to guide myself by, a way of life, a compendium of the wise, the true and the beautiful. All I had to do was to live according to the counsel of the poem and follow its instructions and I would be a perfect man—the useful, the good, the true human being. I was very happy that day, thirty-five years ago.

The poem had to have the most prominent place in the room. Where could I hang it? I decided that the best place for the poem was on the wall right by the entrance to the room. No one coming in and out would miss it. Perhaps someone would be interested enough to read it and drink the profound waters of its message. . . .

Every morning as I prepared to leave, I stood in front of the poem and read it over and over again, sometimes half a dozen times. I let the sonorous music of the verse carry me away. I brought with me a handwritten copy as I stepped out every morning looking for work, repeating verses and stanzas from memory until the whole poem came to be part of me. Other days my lips kept repeating a single verse of the poem at intervals throughout the day.

In the subways I loved to compete with the shrill noises of the many wheels below by chanting the lines of the poem. People stared at me moving my lips as though I were in a trance. I looked back with pity. They were not so fortunate as I who had as a guide to direct my life a great poem to make me wise, useful and happy.

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you . . .
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting
Or being hated don't give way to hating . . .
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on a turn of pitch and toss . . .
And lose and start again at your beginnings . . .

"If" by Kipling was the poem. At seventeen, my evening prayer and my first morning thought. I repeated it every day with the resolution to live up to the last line of that poem.

I would visit the government employment office on Jay Street. The conversations among the Puerto Ricans in the large wooden benches in the employment office were always on the same subject. How to find a decent place to live. How they would not rent to Negroes or the Puerto Ricans. How Negroes and Puerto Ricans were given the pink slips first at work.

From the unemployment office I would call door to door at the piers, factories and storage houses in the streets under the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. "Sorry, nothing today." It seemed to me that that "today" was a continuaiton and combination of all the yesterdays, todays and tomorrows.

From the factories I would go to the restaurants looking for a job as a porter or dishwasher. At least I would eat and be warm in a kitchen.

"Sorry." . . . "Sorry." . . .

Sometimes I was hired at ten dollars a week, ten hours a day including Sundays and holidays. One day off during the week. My work was that of three men: dishwasher, porter, busboy. And to clear the sidewalk of snow and slush "when you have nothing else to do." I was to be appropriately humble and grateful not only to the owner but to everybody else in the place.

If I rebelled at insults or at pointed innuendo or just the inhuman amount of work, I was unceremoniously thrown out and told to come "next week for your pay." "Next week" meant weeks of calling for the paltry dollars owed me. The owners relished this "next week."

I clung to my poem as to a faith. Like a potent amulet, my precious poem was clenched in the fist of my right hand inside my second hand overcoat. Again and again I declaimed aloud a few precious lines when discouragement and disillusionment threatened to overwhelm me:

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone . . .

The weeks of unemployment and hard knocks turned into months. I continued to find two or three days of work here and there. And I continued to be thrown out when I rebelled at the ill treatment, overwork and insults. I kept pounding the streets looking for a place where they would treat me half decently, where my devotion to work and faith in Kipling's poem would be appreciated. I remember the worn-out shoes I bought in a second-hand shoe store in Myrtle Avenue, at the corner of Adams Street. The round holes in the soles that I tried to cover with pieces of carton were no match for the frigid knives of the unrelenting snow.

One night I returned late after a long day of looking for work. I was hungry. My room was dark and cold. I wanted to warm my numb body. I lit a match and began looking for some scraps of wood and a piece of paper to start a fire. I searched all over the floor. No wood, no paper.

As I stood up, the glimmering flicker of the dying match reflected in the glass surface of the framed poem. I unhooked the poem from the wall. I reflected for a long minute, a minute that felt like an eternity. I took the frame apart, placing the square glass upon the small table. I tore the gold paper, on which the poem was printed, threw its pieces inside the stove and placing the small bits of wood from the frame on top of the paper I lit it adding soft and hard coal as the fire began to gain strength and brightness.

I watched how the lines of the poem withered into ashes inside the small stove.

TO A MISSILE

ALASDAIR BUCHAN

Alasdair Buchan is twelve and lives in Glasgow, Scotland. His father, Norman, has writen numerous songs and ballads of social protest. This poem gives us an idea of the extent to which opposition to the Bomb has spread overseas, even among the very young. Alasdair Buchan has been writing poetry since the age of five. As far as we know this is his first published poem.

Wee modest crimson-tipped missile,
To thee I write this small epistle
For thou maun crush amang the stoure,
The slender stem

Of man now past its pouer,
Thou bonnie bomb.

Alas! It's no' my neibor sweet
Has sent this thing for me to meet,
And put me 'mang the dewy weet
Wi' broken breast,
When upward springing, blythe to greet,
Fast goes the next.

To bombs and missiles we maun yield,
For us there's no protective shield,
Oh, how can man thy body mak
Wi' toil and sweat,

When thou must straight destroy and brak
And kill us yet.

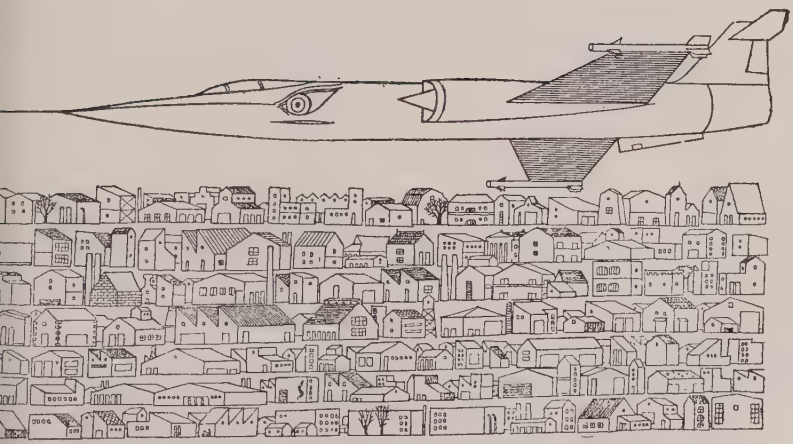
But in this world of good and bad,
There's still some folks are poorly clad;
Would ye tak their simple life,
Poor tho' it be,
And kill not them but all on earth—
Including me?

I do not think it really worth
The cost in lives to give thee birth,
And, once you're born, to smite the earth
Oh! Ye alane
Can bring a scene o' woe and death,
Humanity in pain.

ALASDAIR BUCHAN (after Robert Burns).

GLOSSARY:

Maun . . . *Must*
Stoure . . . *Dust*
Pouer . . . *Power*
Neibor . . . *Neighbor*
Weet . . . *Wet*
Mak . . . *Make*
Brak . . . *Break*
Tak . . . *Take*



FOUR SPRINGTIMES

OAKLEY C. JOHNSON

The piece which follows was given recently to a group of friends who
gathered on the occasion of the author's 70th anniversary, and is here rep
duced for a larger audience.

Oakley Johnson was born on a backwoods Michigan farm in 1890. In 19
while an undergraduate at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, he
a delegate to the Communist Party Founding Convention in Chicago.
graduated from the University in 1920, B.A. cum laude; M.A. in 1921; Ph
in 1928.

He came to New York in 1928. He was blacklisted from teaching for 12 ye
until he secured a position at Talladega College in 1946. He taught six y
in Negro colleges—Talladega, Dilard, Tillotson.

His New York life—on the *Daily Worker,* at the Workers School and
Jefferson School; and a couple of years teaching and writing in the Soviet Un
—this is in general known to his friends here. He is the author of *The*
Is Coming, a biography of Charles E. Ruthenberg (International Publish
New York).

SPRING, 1918:

Scene:

A church basement in Grant, Michigan—a thriving village no
of Grand Rapids.

Time:

Late Friday evening in early June, 1918, during World War I.
The Junior Class is honoring the Senior Class of Grant High Sch

vith a banquet. Present are the School Board, the students of both lasses, the teachers, the School Principal (myself) and the principal's vife.

Everybody is tense. No one smiles. Each person fiddles with the lessert, pretending to eat. The president of the School Board is naking a speech, trying to keep his mind on his words (which no one ays any attention to). Everyone is nervous, getting up, turning around t the least sound, listening apparently to something they can't hear. Dorothy Clark, a junior, who had suddenly burst into tears that afternoon in school, nervously wipes her eyes.

I am the chairman. I have introduced the speakers, complimented he graduates, carried out the formalities. But I, too, am listening. I am calm, but I know everyone is looking at me, or, if not looking, thinking bout me.

At the moment the Board chairman is droning away, and I get up, walk around as if to look after some detail, sit down again. A student, Sumner Branyan, president of the graduating class, comes over and whispers in my ear.

"Someone wants to see you outside. Follow me."

Without a word I get up, walk out to the hall and down the hall o the back exit.

There, it's dark, but I recognize Sumner's father, a farmer. . . .

"We've got guns, professor," he said, "and if you want to make fight of it, we're ready. There are a bunch of us farmers out here. But we think you'd better leave with us, and stay at our place tonight. t will all blow over. It's hardly worth bloodshed. What do you ay?"

"I agree with you," I said. "I don't want anyone hurt or maybe killed n my account. I know I'm right, but that will come out later. We'll o with you."

The father turned to his younger son, Eugene Branyan, a member f the Junior Class.

"Get Mrs. Johnson," he said.

Eugene was off like a shot. I had told my wife to be ready for nything. In a moment she was beside me. We were both bareheaded, nd had with us only what we wore. But the night was warm.

We all climbed the back fence and started across the unplowed ornfield behind the church. As we did so, we heard yelling. We ooked back, and saw the lights of the automobiles turning in at the ront churchyard gate. There seemed hundreds of cars, all with lights urned on full blast. It was a frightening thought—this mob of war

maniacs and barroom dopes, out to tar and feather or lynch what the called "pro-German pacifists."

Across the field we found several friendly auto-loads of farmers, friend of the Branyans, and they escorted us to the Branyan home. The mob we were told next day, milled around for a while in a drunken fashion broke a few chairs, windows, and dishes, and finally left.

. . . I must explain how all this came about. I had gotten marrie a year and a half before, and gone direct to Michigan State Norma College at Ypsilanti. There I got the attention of Professor Barbou teacher of literature, and Professor Hoyt, teacher of philosophy, bot of whom rated me high and suggested that I specialize in their separat departments. But later, when the United States entered the war, I wa one of four Michigan young men who declared themselves "conscientiou objectors" (we preferred to say "*class* objectors") when the draft cam —three at the University of Michigan and one at the State Norma College.

By this time I was already engaged as Principal of Grant Hig School, and both professors wrote to the Grant school heads telling them I was a pro-German. They said that I was able enough in a scholasti way but that I was unfit to teach American youth. I was not, they said *patriotic.*

I discovered this after I started teaching there. My high schoo pupils were barely civil to me. They studied, but they were clearl antagonistic.

One day the Federal Secret Service walked into my classroom an arrested me, saying I had to go with them to Grand Rapids. I tol my students that I was going with the officers, but that I would b back, and I would tell them all about it.

I was taken by a squad of officers in two huge Packard autos in mile-a-minute ride to Grand Rapids, where I was interrogated by highe officials. That was the first brush I ever had with the government. was questioned as to where I was born, and why I had contribute $2 to the legal defense of arrested IWW prisoners then on trial i Chicago. (They had gotten my receipt from the IWW by searchin my apartment while my wife and I were out on a school picnic.) told them I was born in the United States, that my parents were bor in the United States, and that my American ancestry went back to th War of 1812. I said I was English-Irish-Scotch and Pennsylvania Dutc that I was *not* pro-German, and that I was anti-war—just as Woodro Wilson was when he got elected, but he had reneged and I hadn't. A for the IWW, I said I believed they were persecuted wrongly, and had n

en proved guilty of anything, and I had given $2 to their defense, l $2 to the Red Cross, because each did something decent.

The officials had found nothing wrong with me, and said I could I said I had to have my fare home, because I had been dragged of my schoolroom and had no money in my pocket. After some con-ring they gave me the price of a railway ticket back to Grant.

Back in Grant, I wrote a full account of the incident for the Grant *rald,* which all the farmers read; and, in a school Assembly next day, old my high school students the entire story.

From then on the students were on my side. And the farmers were my side. Ever since then I've been convinced that if the farmers be told the truth about war and monopoly, they can be depended to take the progressive side.

. . . There's a little bit more to the story. The next night was gradu-on night, but I could not be there. Professor Hoyt, my old philosophy ofessor at Ypsilanti, gave the graduation address, with several snide narks about me. But my students—all eight of them—remained wn in the audience, refusing to sit on the platform because their ncipal was not there, refusing to walk up and get their diplomas ause their Principal was not there to hand them out.

RING, 1924:

ne:

An instructor's office in the old Rhetoric Building of the University Michigan, Ann Arbor. The time is about 12:15 p.m. I am con-ing with stduents, when one of them, Lenore Smith, comes hurrying crying.

"I can't get anything to eat," she sobs. "I've just finished a two-hour m in biology, from ten to twelve, and at one o'clock I have a math m. I haven't time to go home. And they wouldn't give me a dwich."

"What?" I say, "at a restaurant? Why?" My face is stupid.

"At four lunch rooms. I went to one after another. I just wanted andwich. It's because I'm a Negro."

. . . Then it came out. With much repetition, because I could scarcely eve it. After all, this was in the North, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1924.

. . . Lenore was president of our inter-racial club, the Negro-Cau-an Club, which she had organized, and of which I was faculty ad-r.

Our Club discussed the incident, and we decided to protest
the Dean. Lenore and I were made a Committee to report to hi
We did. Dean John R. Effinger made this reply:

"Why, I'm very sorry about this, but, you know, the University h
no control over the businessmen of the city. Our domain ends at t
edge of the campus. We can't do anything at all."

"But can't you express the University's desire that its students
treated properly?" we asked. "After all, they're students here,
gardless of color."

"No,' 'he said. Then added, "My grandfather owned slaves in V
ginia, but you mustn't think I'm prejudiced. I would do something
you if I could."

. . . In the years since 1924, things have changed. Negro stude
at Michigan now can eat at restaurants and attend functions. But it was
always so. Our little Negro-Caucasian Club, which in its time was
dressed by Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University and A. Philip Ra
dolph of the Railway Porters' Brotherhood, had a hand in starting
struggle for lunchroom equality.

SPRING, 1947:

Scene:

A countryside in rural Alabama, an unpaved country road, a small
truck labeled "Talladega Bookmobile," and nearby a small shack. Th
people are getting out of the truck: the driver, a Negro; a wom
teacher, also a Negro; and a white man, myself. The sun is boiling do
It's a warm morning, about half-past ten.

"Well, where's the school?" I ask. We have a load of books
the colored rural schools of that section of Alabama, and I am tak
my first trip with the Bookmobile to see how the schools are getting
and how useful the books are. . . .

I was now Assistant Professor of English at Talladega College
Alabama, a school for Negroes. About one-third of the staff were wh
Talladega College prepared teachers to instruct in the "separate but equ
rural colored schools, and it appeared—so they told me—that the scho
had very few books. That was why the Bookmobile was invented,
take books to these schools.

"Well, where's the school?" I asked again.

"Why, right there," the teacher said, pointing.

I looked. "You mean—*there?*"

I was looking at the shack she had pointed out. It was old, tiny, painted, rickety, the door hanging on its hinges, cracks in the walls. ıly, I thought it was a chicken coop. I just managed to stop short saying so.

We stooped and entered this "separate but equal" school building, d gradually I saw that it *was* a school, with some twenty small Negro ldren seated on rattletrap benches. The pretty girl teacher, a graduate Talladega, was doing her best with her little charges. There was a oden blackboard in front of the children on which the teacher had itten the theme for the current month: *"The Atomic Age."*

I looked at the eager children, so neat and well-washed and poor, ir instructor in dignity, and at the blackboard. This, I thought, has ought contrast to the breaking point, and irony to the boiling point. e richest country in the world, the *atomic age* and *this.*

. . . It was while I was at Talladega that I met Louis and Dorothy rnham. I rode the bus the twelve miles to Birmingham, and saw w they were struggling to carry on the work of the Negro Youth Con-ss. Louis is gone, but the youth he organized are themselves teach-; and organizing now; the youngsters I saw in that school-house-cken-coop are sitting now at lunchroom sit-ins, and the world is anging.

RING, 1949:

ne:

It is a late Sunday afternoon on an unpaved street in Gretna, uisiana, a small Southern town on the west bank of the Mississippi, : far from New Orleans. A parade is proceeding down the middle the road, two by two, toward the Negro church where the celebra-n is to be held. Most of the marchers are Negro men, women and ldren, but about ten are white. The white marchers are a contingent about twenty people from New Orleans, representing the Louisiana vil Rights Congress and the Sea Food Workers Union, who were ning the Gretna branch of the National Association for the Advance-nt of Colored People in the celebration of the latter's thirtieth anni-wding around to get books; at the courageous and aspiring teacher, sary.

Some of the marchers carried placards, home-made. They marched h dignity, and with a feeling of historic importance. This was per-s the first parade in the deep South—at least the rural South—

where white and black marched together. People of the neighborho stopped and stared, wondering.

At the head of the line of march was grizzled old L. B., Negro s retary of the NAACP, and myself, secretary of the LCRC. Amo the New Orleans contingent was Judy Jenkins, whom many of you h remember from the Grady & Judy Jenkins Case of three years a Another was Judy Smith, who is now Mrs. Alec Jones of the Commit for Protection of Foreign Born. Another was Mary Lea Johnson, wife at that time.

Nothing untoward happened because of the march. I guess we t the leading citizens by surprise. We had our parade, and our meeti and our speechmaking, and dispersed. But every time I read of the surge in the South, I remember Gretna.

. . . The immediate background of that anniversary parade in Gre was the fight we made to win justice for Roy Cyril Brooks, a mem of the Sea Food Workers Union, which was one of the few mi unions in the South. Brooks, a Negro worker, was taking the bus afternoon to his graveyard shift in the packing plant, when a wom in front of him found she had paid her nickel on the wrong bus. Bro gave her his nickel and said he'd ride on the passage she had p —but the conductor said no. A cop came—Patrolman Alvin Bl sacker—and he jerked Brooks off the bus, marched him toward the hall, and halfway there shot him dead in the back.

The Louisiana Civil Rights Congress was organized because of t incident, and it cooperated with the Gretna NAACP to bring Bl sacker to trial. We succeded, for the first time in the South, in hav a *white policeman* indicted for manslaughter in the killing of a *Ne* To be sure, Bladsacker was acquitted, and got his job back. But made him go through a trial, anyhow. That was how friendship g up between the two organizations, the Louisiana CRC and the Gre NAACP.

After the Brooks Case there was the Paul Washington-Ocie Jug Case, in New Orleans, and the Ed Honeycutt Case in Opelousas, Louisi and the Willie McGee Case in Mississippi. But I cannot tonight t time to tell of those battles for justice. Attorneys Al Socolov, v is here tonight, and Ralph Powe were among the lawyers sent So by William L. Patterson of the Civil Rights Congress, to help us. Th cases constitute a part of the background of *today's* freedom strug

. . . But there was a background for *that* background, too, a still more distant background. Let me tell a word or so about th for otherwise many people will think that Negro liberation strug

rang full grown from the forehead of the Rev. Martin Luther King, hich would not be quite true, though he is a very great man.

We must know that there was such a man as Sam Hall, Communist ader in the South, who built a solid foundation for the liberation ovement among the white and Negro steelworkers of Birmingham nd the Negro sharecroppers all through the rural South. He was there, r years, he and his wife Sylvia—I met them both down there—both uthern-born, and both devoted and unflinching fighters for equal democ- cy and equal rights. Sam was editor of the *Southern Worker* and *Hot Blast,* the latter a steel mill rank and file paper of Birmingham.

James E. Jackson was in New Orleans, too, often under conditions great danger, which is forgotten by some of us up here. On one casion he barely escaped the clutches of a mob, and underwent trial r "disturbing the peace" in New Orleans. The story of that trial, which—as Jim remembers—Mary Lea's encouraging smile was the nly friendly sign in any white face in the whole courtroom, will be ld some day.

. . . And many years before that, after World War I—somewhere ound the first springtime I described earlier—Mary Lea Jackson, a rgeant in the U.S. Marines, was one of a small group that organized ew Orleans' first Open Forum, which continued for nearly two decades. ne of the speakers before that Open Forum was William Z. Foster, e same Bill Foster—himself nearly eighty!—who a few days ago sent e birthday greetings on my 70th birthday.

. . . These are the backgrounds and the struggles that illuminate e battles and the problems of today. It's a wonderful time to be ive, to see the epochal things that are going on. But we will better *derstand* the present that is before us if we are intelligently aware of e past that many of us never saw.

books in review

Pavlov and Freud

SIGMUND FREUD, A PAVLOVIAN CRITIQUE, by Harry K. Wells. International Publishers, New York. $4.00.

AS HARRY K. Wells observes at the conclusion of his book, Freudian psychoanalysis is being increasingly challenged by scientific advances but, at the same time, has become a dominant ideology penetrating all aspects of our national life and culture. This paradox is clearly and definitively explained by the author whose training as a philosopher makes him especially well qualified to deal with the fundamentals of the problem.

The advances of science have made theological and mythological explanations for human unhappiness untenable. Freudian psychoanalysis, with its air of apparent scientific methodology and its emphasis on biology, has thus replaced overt idealism as an explanation for human behavior. The crucial questions that Wells deals with are: is Freudian psychoanalysis scientific and can a scientific approach to human nature be developed on the basis of Pavlov's teachings? Wells attempts to find answers to these questions by comparing the basic methodology of Freud and Pavlov and then confronting the respective theories in the areas of instincts, dreams, hypnosis, and neurose

Freudian theory supposedly is derived from Dr. Freud's observation on his patients, and his metapsychology is derived from his analogous speculations from mythology, anthropology and sociology. There are those who easily discard Freud's explanations of war as being due to the aggressive instinct, etc., but feel that his theories pertaining to individual human behavior, since they are based on scientific observations, must be true. Wells goes back to the original source Freud's case studies, and shows that from the beginning, there is no scientific basis for his ideas. It is true that Freud recorded the free associations and dreams of his patients, but he did not use this data as objective facts b

her interpreted this according to
s own subjective system of symbol
erpretation. Freud did not derive
s system of symbol interpretation
letting his patients freely associate
a specific idea or image. No, Freud
eated these symbolic meanings out
his own imagination and attributed
em to his patients. Wells gives a
pical example of this "scientific"
ethodology. Freud's patient had a
eam in which she wore a certain type
hat. Wells quotes Freud: "As she
uld produce no associations to the
at, I said to her, 'The hat is really
male genital organ, . . .'"

As Wells shows, symbol interpre-
tion is the basic tool with which the
ifice of psychoanalytic theory was
uilt, and thus the fundamental meth-
ology of psychoanalysis is divorced
om the objective criteria of scientific
lidity. Present day psychoanalysts
enly state that the psychoanalytic
ocess is not testable by the usual
ientific methods since it is the ana-
st's own unconscious symbol inter-
etations that are the main tools in
e investigation.

Leaving behind the rigors of scien-
ic investigation, Freud was free to
velop theories to explain any and
kinds of phenomena, and, since
ey were above science—metapsycho-
gical, they did not have to be testable.
Wells emphasizes, Freud's theories
w from his basic philosophical thesis
at the unconscious with its biological
stincts and repressions determines
an's mental life. Thus Freudian
eory, notwithstanding its "material-
ic" emphasis on biology is basically
ealism for it ascribes the contents
man's mind ultimately not to the
tside world but as a representation
of biological instincts. Thus male superiority is biologically determined by penis-envy rather than culturally determined, etc.

If Freudian psychoanalysis is basically unscientific, what about the voluminous writings on the subject that have been accumulated over the past sixty years? They cannot and should not be so easily disposed of into the dust bin of history as Wells implies for, even if unscientific, they do reflect some aspects of reality. Speculations, hunches, intuitions, and analogies sometimes do have kernels of truth imbedded in them, and it is the task of scientists to use any ideas or concepts that seem to aid in the march of science. An evaluation of Freudian psychoanalysis must start off with the premise that we are studying the writings of an intuitive speculator and not a rigorous scientist; an anecdotal artist and not an experimental investigator.

Soviet scientists, while rightly classifying Freudian views as unscientific, have begun to examine the problem more closely. For too long, the content and mechanisms of psychological phenomena have been left in the hands of the Freudians. As the Soviet scientist, Anohkin, states, "It is necessary to put forward opposing scientific materialistic data to explain the psychological questions Freudian psychoanalysis has monopolized." As Wells states quite clearly, this can only be done by a synthesis of cerebral physiology, the science of society, and scientific epistemology. However, while Wells does a masterful job in exposing the inadequacies of certain basic Freudian concepts, his confrontation with Pavlovian concepts does not by his own admission give the full answers. By completely

separating psychological content from Pavlovian physiology, Wells weakens his confrontation.

In Vol. I of this series on Pavlov and Freud, Wells shows how Pavlov's concept of the first and second signalling systems can give a scientific basis for the phenomena that Freud speculates about—such as the content of dreams, neuroses, schizophrenia, psychodynamics, etc. However, in the current volume, Wells implies that the subjective content of man's mind cannot be studied objectively, only the physiological basis can. Many Soviet scientists are now beginning to study man's ideas as manifestations of objective physiological events. Verbal utterances are just as objective as behavior and can be studied scientifically.

It is Wells' behavioristic tendency which prevents his from utilizing the full potential of Pavlovian concepts. Instead he presents only Pavlovian physiological theories which, as contrasted to Freudian theories, are scientifically testable; however, many are still hypotheses and may have to be revised or discarded. Unfortunately, Wells does not present any serious consideration of the scientific evidence that has been amassed in relation to Pavlovian theory. For example, electrophysiologists have gathered evidence in support of the Pavlovian concepts of inhibition and excitation but still openly question the concepts of irradiation and concentration. The Pavlovian physiological explanations of neuroses, hypnosis, schizophrenia, hallucinations, and delusions, while useful concepts, may have to be discarded in the light of future scientific investigations. While Wells emphasizes quite correctly the basic validity of the Pavlovian approach, he does not point out that many of Pavlov's cor cepts as to human behavior are sti analogous formulations and not prove laws. However, since they are formu lated in objective terms, they can b experimentally tested. Some of Freud speculations can also be tested but no by the techniques of psychoanalysi which, by Freud's open admission canont be practiced according to th rules of science.

An example of Wells' failure to d justice to the power of Pavlovian con cepts can be demonstrated by his dis cussion of dreams. Wells easily show how arbitrary and fraudulent are Freud ian concepts of dream interpretation He then states with little evidence tha dreams are meaningless, purely physic logical events. Here again, Wells i divorcing physiology from psychology Pavlov emphasized that during slee the second signal system of abstrac logical thought is inhibited and tha the first signal system of specific, con crete memory images becomes predom nant. This first signal system com prises the perceptual stage of know edge and is very closely tied to persona practice or experience, and its laws o functioning are similar to the law governing animal learning. Pavlo never said human first signal syster actiivty was meaningless or unlaw ful. The psychological content of dream is a manifestation of the personal ex perience of the individual and can b studied objectively and even experi mentally. Frankly, Pavlovian concep are far richer than Wells appreciate However, Wells does state that ther are no limits to the objective study o human behavior if the psychology th is developed is rooted in and flow from physiological facts.

In general, Wells gives an honest aluation of Freudian psychoanalysis d finds it primarily a large body of eculations divorced from the realm science. Due to the polemical nature the book, Wells fails to deal with me possibly intuitive insights that eud may have accumulated, and he so does not present Pavlovian theory ith the necessary critical attitude. hile paying lip service to the idea at psychology is a separate science, ells hardly deals with the possibili- s inherent in an objective psychology exemplified by the Soviet psycholo- sts, Luria, Leontiev, etc. Progres- ves should welcome this book as a eful contribution to one of the main sks facing Marxist scientists, the strug- e against the confusing and obscuring les of Freudian psychoanalysis.

ARTHUR KRAMER

ull Decade

CTION OF THE FIFTIES: A DEC- ADE OF AMERICAN WRITING, ed. with an introduction by Herbert Gold. Doubleday. $3.95.

N A self-conscious introduction which manages somehow to be both pon- ical and slangy, Herbert Gold has ted nine categories of contemporary nerican writing *not* included in his newhat pretentiously entitled antholo- y of fifteen short stories.

He says that he has chosen those iters who give us the strongest view their (and our) time, and has there- re omitted all who write dishonestly such mass media as television, Holly- od, or the popular magazines; all o esteem themselves "Truth Trum- ers" of "Penultimate Reality"; those obscurantists who seek critical acclaim through incomprehensibility; the philosophers who write out of a superior detachment and indifference to man's daily life; such deliberate apologists for the *status quo* as the authors of *Marjorie Morningstar, The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and a spate of similarly meretricious works; the hipsters, self-appointed and proclaimed spokesmen for "delinquent kids"; the "Elder Tired Revolutionists," now become disciples of an aristocratic formalism; over-sensitive aesthetes like Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote; and the "guilty refugees" who follow Kierkegard, Toynbee and others in assuming the deep original sin and inevitable damnation of man here upon earth.

Since I share Mr. Gold's detestation of most of these categories and his disagreement with all of them, I turned eagerly to examine the group of writers he presents to us as answering such questions for the contemporary American as: "What is the relation between freedom and isolation? . . . When am I responsible? . . . Why do I live, struggle, love, defy age and history? . . . Who am I?"

Unfortunately, the short stories he has selected, almost all well written, at least half of them interesting and three or four truly moving, still make very little serious attempt to probe the meaning of human life in our time and place.

By far the most significant piece in the book—the only one, I think—which really meets Mr. Gold's own criteria for meaningful fiction—is James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues." It is perhaps no accident that this is the work of a Negro writer.

James Baldwin's story (more com-

pletely successful than either of his two previously published novels) is a vivid realistic presentation of diverse human beings, of their need for each other, for beauty and dignity, and of their partially successful struggles to achieve love and the power of creation even in a society where prejudice pays and where the corruption of youth is good business.

If we look at two of the other stories which both deal, in a general way, with the alienation of man from himself in our society, and oppose the life of art to that of commerce, we see that their comparative weakness is not merely a matter of inferior talent.

William Eastlake's "In A While Crocodile" (using as its title a phrase of jazz aficionados) tells of a great Negro trumpeter who has starved to death, but lives in the memory of a group of poverty-stricken Indians among whom he died. Harvey Swados' burlesque parable, "The Dancer," tells of a holy innocent who wishes only to dance, but is driven to suicide by the incomprehension of all he meets. Both stories lack the strength of a work like "Sonny's Blues" in which form and content are completely one—in which the material itself commands its shape. Although Eastlake's story is ostensibly the realistic report of a simple event and Swados' is clearly an allegory, both are essentially abstractions with no deep roots in the specific life they condemn and no actual embodiment of the values they assert. Thus, while we may well share their judgment, it adds no depth to our own.

Many of the other selections, whether specifically fantasy like George P. Elliot's "Among the Dangs" or painstaking realistic narrative like Frank Rooney's account of a fascist-like spo club in "Cyclists' Raid," share the sam failure to grow organically from, an therefore to communicate, the actu society of our time, although the strongly and sympathetically rea against some aspect of it.

More nearly successful in risin through the fully realized particul to the typical are the single war stor Leo E. Litwak's "The Solitary Life Man," R. V Cassill's picture of middle-class family more psycholog cally than physically hurt by the d pression of the 'thirties in "The Prize and Antoine Broyard's moving accou of the slow cancerous death of an ol master carpenter seen through the ey of his white collar son.

Two well written trivialities by tw much over-rated novelists, Saul Bello and Bernard Malamud, an amusing bu unimpressive anti-clerical tale by J. Powers, two extremely dull, lon winded stories of suburban marriag and divorce by John Cheever and th editor, Herbert Gold, a more interes ing sketch of a desperate freedom seeking captive condor and the tam trivial people barely disturbed by h agony, by Evan B. Connell, Jr., and a engrossing tale of "southern primitives by Flannery O'Connor who is here (a almost always) exasperating in her abi ity to create human beings and her r fusal to do anything with them, com plete a roster in which the whole i somehow, less than the sum of i parts.

It is not that Mr. Gold has omitte important material, or that he h chosen worse examples when bett were available. His anthology does fai ly represent a great part of hone contemporary American fiction, with i

gh level of technical competence, its ld human interest, and its general importance.

The great Latin poet, Horace, began amous ode: "Happy is he who knows e causes of things." The greater glish poet, Shakespeare, spoke of ose who could "sense the future in e instant." The typical American iter today neither understands the st nor feels the future—and the result the essential mediocrity in our fiction the Fifties.

ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

xpose

HE DOCTOR BUSINESS, by Richard Carter. Prometheus Books. $1.85.

PERHAPS no aspect of the lag between the technological progress d its utilization is as striking as that und in medicine. Although the leadof the American Medical Associan never weary of telling us that we the healthiest of nations, the availe statistics simply do not support s assertion. The assertion is farciwhen one examines the health staics of the Negro people.

However, we need not rely upon staics alone; every home can document inadequacies and inhumanities of nerican medicine, whether these con-n the heart-breaking cost of medical e, the not infrequent errors in diagis and treatment, or the general abce of easily available preventive and rapeutic care of high quality.

The Doctor Business is an exposé of problem designed for the general blic. It traverses much of the ground viously covered in scholarly publiions and government reports. Although Carter presents no specific plan or scheme of organization, he stresses the need for Federal responsibility and support in any effective national health program. That such a program will only come about through popular demand, rather than from the medical profession, is his major thesis.

This book is so valuable that it is a pity that it is marred by a style that smacks of the slick-paper weeklies, and by a jocularity that is neither humorous nor always appropriate. Carter also uses quotations from unnamed authoritative sources; his case is too easily supported with more rigorous data to require this sort of gilding. Finally, one wishes he had mentioned the organization of health programs in the Soviet Union, the People's Democracies, and the National Health Program in Great Britain.

This is the best book of its kind available; it is a useful, hard-hitting book and should be widely read and promoted by all who seek to improve medical care in the United States.

Shock of Recognition

SET THIS HOUSE ON FIRE, by William Styron. Random House. $5.95.

EVIL has been diligently pursued by writers, especially if they happen to be novelists, for centuries, much as the Satyrs of the legends incessantly gave chase to the virgins. Though it is in the interests of objective truth and the pursuit of compassion that this chase is proclaimed, where a glimpse of evil is caught one has cause to doubt, or at least question, whether passion is not mistaken for compassion

and objective truth is not confused with subjective desire.

Such novels as *Set This House on Fire* are neither written lightly, nor to be taken lightly. And if, as in the case of William Styron, whose *The Long March* and *Lie Down in Darkness* have abundantly proven his stature, the writer is one of such overwhelming ability, he overwhelms himself and the reader.

William Styron, in his book, writes of an evil that is enormous. It is not the evil of an idea, nor a man. Rather it is the evil of an entire civilization—our own—and an entire nation—our own. He is explicit about this:

"What has happened to this country would shame the Roman Empire at its lowest ebb. The founding fathers had noble dreams," says old Mr. Leverett, father of the narrator, ". . . but somewhere along the line something went sour." "We've sold our birthright and old Tom Jefferson is spinning in his grave. We've sold out right down to the garters. . . ."

The story, if it can be called that, is about three Southern expatriates, who come to Europe as latter-day Hemingways. Unlike the expatriates of post-World War I however, who came as pilgrims, these expatriates of post-World War II come as conquerors. Unlike the naive, sad young men of "The Sun Also Rises," they are arrogant, morose, desperate, and prematurely decayed.

Romans in sportshirts, they gravitate to Italy, and there in a mortgaged castle, nearby the Palacia of Mr. Narduzzo of West Englewood, New Jersey, a retired gangster, they enact the inevitable melodrama of contending evils.

One is Peter Leverett, "possessing n romantic glint" and "given to orderl habits" a Wall Street type lawyer an the characterless narrator, who take no part in the story but to tell i The other two, Mason Flagg, a ric man's son, dilettante, liar, libertine psychotic, rapist, and charming con versationalist, and Cass Kinsolving, gregarious, drunken, shapeless artis are the main actors.

In excoriating his evil actors Wi liam Styron's scalpel ranges far afiel His savage satire uncovers the shar of the social elite, Jazz faddists, th "freedom of individualists" and thei abstract girl friends, Greenwich Vi lage, the chit-chat of Salon Societ and the Plaza bar crowd, Hollywoo the Beat, the soothsaying of best sel ing Ministers, erotica lovers, reade of the *Journal-American,* and Ze Buddhists in the government servic

What's left? Nothing? Cass Kin solving, the artist, near the end of th story, says "I wish I could tell yo that I had found some belief," tha "madness might become reason," but h has found none, and given the choic between "being and nothingness" h chooses being, not in belief in it, bu simply because nothing remains bu existence itself.

It is thought by some that *Set Th House on Fire* is an illumination of th problem of good and evil; but I thin not. Evil versus evil in the novel an the struggle is a meaningless one.

I think it is this that faults the boo from the beginning and causes it t totter so often on the edge of failur How can the conflict be a true on dramatically and morally, if all the cha acters are drawn from the same milie have similar philosophies, and bespe

same social degeneration? Such a
rk can illuminate a great many
ngs, but I doubt that it can illumi-
e good and evil, when no good is
ered to contrast and conflict with the
nawing of the worms" of evil, of "this
mnation" as Donne decries in the
ote from which the title is taken.
Wililam Styron thus turns from noth-
ness to its solace, religion, on the
page. Seeking, but not seeing,
eath itself death no longer, but a
urrection," he echoes the words of
Mr. Leverett, in the beginning:
hat this country needs" is "Some-
ng ferocious and tragic, like what
pened to Jericho" and then "when
people have suffered agony enough
grief, they'll be men again, human
ngs. . . ." Purge the soul through
fire, he says.
Where else can he turn? Having
wn no alternative there is no place
turn. Here then the 'humanist"
cist Luigi's philosophical effusions
ne a logical conclusion to the story.
l what began as a Dostoyeskian at-
pt to depict good and evil, ends in
evil versus evil of Celine, of noth-
ness proclaimed something, of that
mate morality of the defeated—
morality of a policeman, albeit a
manist" policeman who quotes the
e.
se who have bemoaned the lack
moral point of view in the con-
porary American novel will view
This House on Fire with a shock of
gnition.

MIKE NEWBERRY

Books Received

LINCOLN'S JOURNEY TO GREATNESS, by Victor Searcher. The John C. Winston Co. $4.50.

THIS is a day by day, hour by hour account of Lincoln's twelve-day journey from his home in Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, D. C., for the inauguration of 1861. Unlike so many other modern historians of the period, the author is not pro-Confederate. However, the work is conscientiously dull and the reader should not be misled into believing there is any real drama in the author's account of Lincoln's journey to greatness.

IN EGYPT LAND, by John Beecher. Rampart Press, P.O. Box 1506, Scottsdays, Arizona. $3.00 cloth, $2.00 wrappers.

BEAUTIFULLY hand-set and printed by one of the small presses that are publishing some of the best contemporary verse, *In Egypt Land* is a 29-page dramatic narrative about a Southern sharecropper's revolt, based on an actual episode in Alabama in 1932. The author, a white Southerner, now 56, teaches at the Arizona State University, and was once described by *Time Magazine* as "a product and a proponent of the great unfinished American Rebellion." His present book uses verse not as ornament but as a simpler and swifter form than prose to describe the heroic lives of the exploited Negroes he first came to know as a fourteen-year-old open-hearth steel worker in Birmingham.

NEW AND RECENT PAMPHLETS

THE SUMMIT FAILURE, by Gus Hall	$.15
JOHN BROWN, AMERICAN MARTYR, by Herbert Aptheker	.25
YOUR STAKE IN THE 1960 ELECTIONS by Gus Hall	$.15
UPSURGE IN THE SOUTH, by Benjamin J. Davis	.15
JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION, by Sofia Frey	.10
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