FEBRUARY, 1962
50 cents

Mainstream

CHALLENGE:
A ONE ACT PLAY
Theodore Ward

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Phillip Bonosky
ON
JAMES BALDWIN

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PORTRAIT OF
A SOUTHERN
RACIST
Mike Newberry

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REVIEWS OF
PLAYS ON
THE NEGRO

DREAMS ARE FOR FREE — *Phillip Evergood*

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE SPEECH

Vol. 15, No. 2

Mainstream

FEBRUARY, 1962

MAINSTREAM *is published monthly by Masses & Mainstream, Inc., 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y. Subscription rate $5 a year; foreign and Canada $5.75 a year. Single copies 50 cents; outside the U.S.A. 60 cents. Re-entered as second class matter February 25, 1948, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.*

Among Our Contributors

Albert John Lutuli was educated at mission schools and Adam College, where he later taught, in his native South Africa. He was elected chief by his tribespeople but the government deprived him of this office in 1952. He was president-general of the African National Congress until that body was outlawed by the South African government in 1960. He is 63 years old. *Theodore Ward,* the noted playwright, is author of *Our Lan'.* He lives in New York. *Mike Newberry* is well known for his exposes of the ultra-right, the most recent of which, *Inside the John Birch Society* (New Century Publ.) has gone through numerous editions.

Next Month

It has always been our feeling that *Mainstream,* as a progressive cultural magazine, has a responsibility to deal with the mass media, television and the movies, and as many of the performing arts as possible. If we have not always done so in the past it is only because, with our limited recources, financial and human, we were unable to do so. In a modest way we are now doing record reviews from time to time, as in the January issue, and theater reviews, as in this issue. In future issues we will have features dealing with movies and television, short items of interest and comments by the editors. We hope our readers will use our *Letters to the Editor* section for comments of their own, both on our longer articles and our reviews.

Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech

AFRICA AND FREEDOM

ALBERT JOHN LUTULI

IN YEARS gone by, some of the greatest men of our century have stood here to receive his Award, men whose names and deeds have enriched the pages of human history, men whom future generations will regard as having shaped the world of our time. No one could be left unmoved at being plucked from the village of Groutville, a name many of you have never heard before and which does not even feature on many maps—to be plucked from banishment in a rural backwater, to be lifted out of the narrow confines of South Africa's internal politics and placed here in the shadow of the great figures. It is a great honor to me to stand on this rostrum where many of the great men of our times have stood before.

THREE-FOLD SIGNIFICANCE

THE Nobel Peace Award that has brought me here has for me a threefold significance. On the one hand it is a tribute to my humble contribution to efforts by democrats on both sides of the colour line to find a peaceful solution to the race problem. This contribution is not in any way unique. I did not initiate the struggle to extend the area of human freedom in South Africa, other African patriots—devoted men—did so before me. I also, as a Christian and patriot, could not look on

The Editors are proud to publish here the complete text of the acceptance speech by Nobel Prize Winner Albert John Lutuli, dlivered in Oslo, Norway, December 10, 1961.

while systematic attempts were made, almost in every department of life, to debase the God-factor in Man or to set a limit beyond which the human being in his Black form might not strive to serve his Creator to the best of his ability. To remain neutral in a situaion where laws of the land virtually criticised God for having created men of colour was the sort of thing I could not, as a Christian, tolerate.

On the other hand the Award is a democratic declaration of solidarity with those who fight to widen the area of liberty in my part of the world. As such, it is the sort of gesture which gives me and millions who think as I do, tremendous encouragement. There are still people in the world today who regard South Africa's race problem as a simple clash between Black and White. Our government has carefully projected this image of the problem before the eyes of the world. This has had two effects. It has confused the real issues at stake in the race crisis. It has given some form of force to the government's contention that the race problem is a domestic matter for South Africa. This, in turn, has tended to narrow down the area over which our case could be better understood in the world.

From yet another angle, it is welcome recognition of the role played by the African people during the last fifty years to establish, peacefully, a society in which merit and not race, would fix the position of the individual in the life of the nation.

This Award could not be for me alone, nor for just South Africa, but for Africa as a whole. Africa presently is most deeply torn with strife and most bitterly striken with racial conflict. How strange then it is that a man of Africa should be here to receive an Award given for service to the cause of peace and brotherhood between men. There has been little peace in Africa in our time. From the northernmost end of our continent, where war has raged for seven years, to the center and to the south there are battles fought out, some with arms, some without. In my country, in the year 1960 for which this Award is given, there was a state of emergency for many months. At Sharpsville, a small village, in a single afternoon 69 people were shot dead and 180 wounded by small arms fire, and in parts of Transkei, a state of emergency is still continuing. Ours is a continent in revolution against oppression. And peace and revolution make uneasy bedfellows. There can be no peace until the forces of oppression are overthrown.

HISTORY OF CONTINENT

OUR continent has been carved up by the great powers; alien governments have been forced upon the African people by military

conquest and by economic domination, strivings for nationhood and national dignity have been beaten down by force; traditional economics and ancient customs have been disrupted, and human skills and energy have been harnessed for the advantage of our conquerors. In these times there has been no peace; there could be no brotherhood between men.

But now, the revolutionary stirrings of our continent are setting the past aside. Our people everywhere from north to south of the continent are reclaiming their land, their right to participate in government, their dignity as men, their nationhood. Thus, in the turmoil of revolution, the basis of peace and brotherhood in Africa is being restored by the resurrection of national sovereignty and independence, of equality and the dignity of man.

It should not be difficult for you here in Europe to appreciate this. Your continent passed through a longer series of revolutionary upheavals, in which your age of feudal backwardness gave way to the new age of industrialization, true nationhood, democracy and rising living standards—the golden age for which men have striven for generations. Your age of revolution, stretching across all the years from the 18th Century to our own, encompassed some of the bloodiest civil wars in all history. By comparison, the African revolution has swept across three quarters of the continent in less than a decade; its final completion is within sight of our own generation. Again, by comparison with Europe, our African revolution—to our credit, is proving to be orderly, quick and comparatively bloodless.

This fact of the relative peacefullness of our African revolution is attested to by other observers of eminence. Professor C. W. de Kiewiet, President of the Rochester University, U.S.A., in a Hoernle Memorial Lecture for 1960, has this to say: "There has, it is true, been almost no serious violence in the achievement of political self-rule. In that sense there is no revolution in Africa—only reform . . ."

Professor D. V. Cowen, then Professor of Comparative Law at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, in a Hoernle Memorial Lecture for 1961, throws light on the nature of our struggle in the following words: "They (the Whites in South Africa) are again fortunate in the very high moral calibre of the non-White inhabitants of South Africa, who compare favorably with any on the whole continent." Let this never be forgotten by those who so eagerly point a finger of scorn at Africa.

Perhaps by your standards, our surge of revolutionary reforms is late. If it is so—if we are late in joining the modern age of social enlightenment, late in gaining self-rule, independence and democracy, it is because in the past the pace has not been set by us. Europe set the pattern for

the 19th and 20th Century development of Africa. Only now is our continent coming into its own and recapturing its own fate from foreign rule.

SINGLE PURPOSE

THOUGH I speak of Africa as a single entity, it is divided in many ways—by race, language, history and custom; by political, economic and ethnic frontiers. But in truth, despite these multiple divisions, Africa has a single common purpose and a single goal—the achievement of its own independence. All Africa, both lands which have won their political victories, but have still to overcome the legacy of economic backwardness, and lands like my own whose political battles have still to be waged to their conclusion—all Africa has this single aim: our goal is a united Africa in which the standards of life and liberty are constantly expanding; in which the ancient legacy of illiteracy and disease is swept aside, in which the dignity of man is rescued from beneath the heels of colonialism which have trampled it. This goal, by means of books, representations, demonstrations, and in some places armed force provoked by the adamancy of White rule, carries the only real promise of peace in Africa. Whatever means have been used, the efforts have gone to end alien rule and race oppression.

There is a paradox in the fact that Africa qualifies for such an Award in its age of turmoil and revolution. How great is the paradox and how much greater the honour that an Award in support of peace and the brotherhood of man should come to one who is a citizen of a country where the brotherhood of man is an illegal doctrine, outlawed, banned, censured, proscribed and prohibited; where to work, talk or campaign for the realization in fact and deed of the brotherhood of man is hazardous, punished with banishment, or confinement without trial, or imprisonment; where effective democratic channels to peaceful settlement of the race problem have never existed these 300 years; and where white minority power rests on the most heavily armed and equipped military machine in Africa. This is South Africa.

Even here, where white rule seems determined not to change its mind for the beter, the spirit of Africa's militant struggle for liberty, equality and independence asserts itself. I, together with thousands of my countrymen have in the course of the struggle for these ideals, been harassed, and imprisoned, but we are not deterred in our quest for a new age in which we shall live in peace and in brotherhood.

It is not necessary for me to speak at length about South Africa; its social system, its politics, its economics and its laws have forced themselves on the attention of the world. It is a museum piece in our time, a hangover from the dark past of mankind, a relic of an age which everywhere else is dead or dying. Here the cult of race superiority and of white supremacy is worshipped like god. Few white people escape corruption and many of their children learn to believe that white men are unquestionably superior, efficient, clever, industrious and capable; that blackmen are, equally unquestionably, inferior, slothful, stupid, evil and clumsy. On the basis of the mythology that "the lowest amongst them is higher than the highest amongst us," it is claimed that whitemen build everything that is worthwhile in the country, its cities, its industries, its mines and its agriculture, and that they alone are thus fitted and entitled as of right to own and control these things, whilst blackmen are only temporary sojourners in these cities, fitted only for menial labour, and unfit to share political power. The Prime Minister of South Africa, Dr. Verwoerd, then Minister of Bantu Affairs, when explaining his government's policy on African education had this to say: "There is no place for him (the African) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor."

MYTHOLOGY OF RACISM

THERE is little new in this mythology. Every part of Africa which has been subject to white conquest has, at one time or another, and in one guise or another, suffered from it, even in its virulent form of the slavery that obtained in Africa up to the 19th Century. The mitigating feature in the gloom of those far-off days was the shaft of light sunk by Christian missions, a shaft of light to which we owe our initial enlightenment. With successive governments of the time doing little or nothing to ameliorate the harrowing suffering of the blackman at the hands of slave-drivers, men like Dr. David Livingstone and Dr. John Philip and other illustrious men of God stood for social justice in the face of overwhelming odds. It is worth noting that the names I have referred to are still anathema to South Africans. Hence the ghost of slavery lingers on to this day in the form of forced labor that goes on in what are called farm prisons. But the tradition of Livingstone and Philip lives on, perpetuated by a few of their line. It is fair to say that even in present day conditions, Christian missions have been in the vanguard of initiating social services provided for us. Our progress in this field has been in spite of, and not mainly because of the government. In this the Church in South Africa—though belatedly, seems to be awakening to a broader mission of the Church, in its ministry among us. It is beginning to take seriously the words of its Founder who said "I came that they might have

life and have it more abundantly." This is a call to the Church in South Africa to help in the all-round development of MAN in the present, and not only in the hereafter. In this regard, the people of South Africa, especially those who claim to be Christians, would be well advised to take heed of the Conference decisions of the World Council of Churches held at Cottesloe, Johannesburg, in 1960, which gave a clear lead on the mission of the Church in our day. It left no room for doubt about the relevancy of the Christian message in the present issues that confront mankind. I note with gratitude this broader outlook of the World Council of Churches. It has great meaning and significance for us in Africa.

There is nothing new in South Africa's apartheid ideas, but South Africa is unique in this: the ideas not only survive in our modern age, but are stubbornly defended, extended and bolstered up by legislation at the time when in the major part of the world they are now largely historical and are either being shamefacedly hidden behind concealing formulations, or are being steadily scrapped. These ideas survive in South Africa because those who sponsor them profit from them. They provide moral whitewash for the conditions which exist in the country: for the fact that the country is ruled exclusively by a white government elected by an exclusive white electorate which is a privileged minority; for the fact that 87 per cent of the land and all of the best agricultural land within reach of town, market and railways is reserved for white ownership and occupation and now through the recent Group Areas legislation non-Whites are losing more land to white greed; for the fact that all skilled and highly-paid jobs are for whites only; for the fact that all universities of any academic merit are an exclusive preserve of whites; for the fact that the education of every white child costs about £64. p.a. whilst that of an African child costs about £9. p.a. and that of an Indian child or Colored child cost about £20. p.a.; for the fact that white education is universal and compulsory up to the age of 16, whilst education for the non-white children is scarce and inadequate, and for the fact that almost one million Africans a year are arrested and jailed or fined for breaches of innumerable pass and permit laws which do not apply to whites.

DARK AGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

I COULD carry on in this strain, and talk on every facet of South African life from the cradle to the grave. But these facts are becoming known to all the world. A fierce spotlight of world attention has been thrown on them. Try as our government and its apologists will, with

honeyed words about "separate development" and eventual "independence" in so-called "Bantu homelands," nothing can conceal the reality of South African conditions. I, as a Christian, have always felt that there is one thing above all about "apartheid" or "separate development" that is unforgivable. It seems utterly indifferent to the suffering of individual persons, who lose their land, their homes, their jobs, in the pursuit of what is surely the most terrible dream in the world. This terrible dream is not held on to be a crack-pot group on the fringe of society, or by Ku-Klux Klansmen, of whom we have a sprinkling. It is the deliberate policy of a government, supported actively by a large part of the white population, and tolerated passively by an overwhelming white majority, but now fortunately rejected by an encouraging white minority who have thrown their lot with non-whites who are overwhelmingly opposed to so-called separate development.

Thus it is that the golden age of Africa's independence is also the dark age of South Africa's decline and retrogression, brought about by men who, when revolutionary changes that entrenched fundamental human rights were taking place in Europe, were closed in on the tip of South Africa—and so missed the wind of progressive change.

In the wake of that decline and retrogression, bitterness between men grows to alarming heights; the economy declines as confidence ebbs away; unemployment rises; government becomes increasingly dictatorial and intolerant of constitutional and legal procedures, increasingly violent and suppressive; there is a constant drive for more policemen, more soldiers, more armaments, banishments without trial and penal whippings. All the trappings of medieval backwardness and cruelty come to the fore. Education is being reduced to an instrument of subtle indoctrination, slanted and biased reporting in the organs of public information, a creeping censorship, book-banning and blacklisting, all these spread their shadows over the land. This is South Africa today, in the age of Africa's greatness.

SPIRIT OF DEFIANCE

BUT beneath the surface there is a spirit of defiance. The people of South Africa have never been a docile lot, least of all the African people. We have a long tradition of struggle for our national rights, reaching back to the very beginnings of white settlement and conquest 300 years ago. Our history is one of opposition to domination, of protest and refusal to submit to tyranny. Consider some of our great names; the great warrior and nation-builder Shaka, who welded tribes together into the Zulu nation from which I spring; Moshoeshoe, the statesmen and

nation-builder who fathered the Basuto nation and placed Basutoland beyond the reach of the claws of the South African whites; Hintsa of the Xhosas who chose death rather than surrender his territory to white invaders. All these men and other royal names, as well as other great chieftains, resisted manfully white intrusion. Consider also the sturdiness of the stock that nurtured the foregoing great names. I refer to our forebears, who in trekking from the north to the southernmost tip of Africa centuries ago braved rivers that are perennially swollen; hacked their way through treacherous jungle and forest; survived the plagues of the then untamed lethal diseases of a multifarious nature that abounded in Equatorial Africa and wrested themselves from the gaping mouths of the beasts of prey. They endured it all. They settled in these parts of Africa to build a future worth-while for us their offspring. Whilst the social and political conditions have changed and the problems we face are different, we too, their progeny, find ourselves facing a situation where we have to struggle for our very survival as human beings. Although methods of struggle may differ from time to time, the universal human strivings for liberty remain unchanged. We, in our situation have chosen their path of non-violence of our own volition. Along this path we have organized many heroic campaigns. All the strength of progressive leadership in South Africa, all my life and strength has been given to the pursuance of this method, in an attempt to avert disaster in the interests of South Africa, and have bravely paid the penalties for it.

It may well be that South Africa's social system is a monument to racialism and race oppression, but its people are the living testimony to the unconquerable spirit of mankind. Down the years, against seemingly overwhelming odds, they have sought the goal of fuller life and liberty, striving with incredible determination and fortitude for the right to live as men—free men. In this, our country is not unique. Your recent and inspiring history, when the Axis powers overran most European States, is testimony of this unconquerable spirit of mankind. People of Europe formed Resistance Movements that finally helped to break the power of the combination of Nazism and Fascism with their creed of race arrogance and *herrenvolk* mentality.

Every people have, at one time or another in their history, been plunged into such a struggle. But generally the passing of time has seen the barriers to freedom going down, one by one. Not so South Africa. Here the barriers do not go down. Each step we take forward, every achievement we chalk up, is cancelled out by the raising of new and higher barriers to our advance. The color bars do not get weaker; they get stronger. The bitterness of the struggle mounts as liberty comes step by step closer to the freedom fighter's grasp. All too often, the protests and

demonstrations of our people have been beaten back by force; but they have never been silenced.

ROLE OF NON-VIOLENCE

THROUGH all this cruel treatment in the name of law and order, our people, with a few exceptions, have remained non-violent. If today this peace Award is given to South Africa through a blackman; it is not because we in South Africa have won our fight for peace and human brotherhood. Far from it. Perhaps we stand father from victory than any other people in Africa. But nothing which we have suffered at the hands of the government has turned us from our chosen path of disciplined resistance. It is for this, I believe, that this Award is given.

How easy it would have been in South Africa for the natural feelings of resentment at white domination to have turned into feelings of hatred and a desire for revenge against the white community. Here, where every day in every aspect of life, every non-white comes up against the ubiquitous sign, "Europeans Only," and the equally ubiquitous policeman to enforce it—here it could well be expected that a racism equal to that of their oppressors would flourish to counter the white arrogance towards blacks. That it has not done so is no accident. It is because, deliberately and advisedly, African leadership for the past 50 years, with the inspiration of the African National Congress, which I had the honor to lead for the last decade or so until it was banned, had set itself steadfastly against racial vain-gloriousness. We know that in so doing we passed up opportunities for an easy demagogic appeal to the natural passions of a people denied freedom and liberty; we discarded the chance of an easy and expedient emotional appeal. Our vision has always been that of a non-racial democratic South Africa which upholds the rights of all who live in our country to remain there as *full* citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities with all others. For the consummation of this ideal we have labored unflinchingly. We shall continue to labor unflinchingly.

It is this vision which prompted the African National Congress to invite members of other racial groups who believe with us in the brotherhood of man and in the freedom of all people to join with us in establishing a non-racial democratic South Africa. Thus the African National Congress in its day brought about the Congress Alliance and welcomed the emergence of the Liberal Party and the Progressive Party, who to an encouraging measure support these ideals.

The true patriots of South Africa, for whom I speak, will be satisfied with nothing less than the fullest democratic rights. In government we

will not be satisfied with anything less than direct individual adult suffrage and the right to stand for and be elected to all organs of government. In economic matters we will be satisfied with nothing less than equality of opportunity in every sphere, and the enjoyment by all of those heritages which form the resources of the country which up to now have been appropriated on a racial "whites only" basis. In culture we will be satisfied with nothing less than the opening of all doors of learning to non-segregatory institutions on the sole criterion of ability. In the social sphere we will be satisfied with nothing less than the abolition of all racial bars. We do not demand these things for people of African descent alone. We demand them for all South Africans, white and black. On these principles we are uncompromising. To compromise would be an expediency that is most treacherous to democracy, for in the turn of events the sweets of economic, political and social privileges that are a monopoly of only one section of a community turn sour even in the mouths of those who eat them. Thus apartheid in practice is proving to be a monster created by Frankenstein. That is the tragedy of the South African scene.

Many spurious slogans have been invented in our country in an effort to redeem uneasy race relations—"trusteeship," "separate development," "race federation" and elsewhere "partnership." These are efforts to side-track us from the democratic road, mean delaying tactics that fool no one but the unwary. No euphemistic naming will ever hide their hideous nature. We reject these policies because they do not measure up to the best mankind has striven for throughoht the ages; they do great offence to man's sublime aspirations that have remained true in a sea of flux and change down the ages, aspirations of which the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights is a culmination. This is what we stand for. This is what we fight for.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

IN THEIR fight for lasting values, there are many things that have sustained the spirit of the freedom-loving people of South Africa and those in the yet unredeemed parts of Africa where the whiteman claims resolutely proprietary rights over democracy—a universal heritage. High amongst them—the things that have sustained us, stand the magnificent support of the progressive people and governments throughout the world, amongst whom number the people and government of the country of which I am today a guest; our brothers in Africa; especially in the Independent African States; organizations who share the outlook we embrace in countries scattered right across the face of the globe; the

United Nations Organization jointly and some of its member-nations singly. In their defense of peace in the world through actively upholding the equality of man all these groups have reinforced our undying faith in the unassailable rightness and justness of our cause. To all of them I say: Alone we would have been weak. Our heartfelt appreciation of your acts of support of us, we cannot adequately express, nor can we ever forget; now or in the future when victory is behind us, and South Africa's freedom rests in the hands of all her people.

We South Africans, however, equally understand that as much as others might do for us, our freedom cannot come to us as a gift from abroad. Our freedom we must make ourselves. All honest freedom-loving people have dedicated themselves to that task. What we need is the courage that rises with danger.

Whatever may be the future of our freedom efforts, our cause is the cause of liberation of people who are denied freedom. Only on this basis can the peace of Africa and the world be firmly founded. Our cause is the cause of equality between nations and peoples. Only thus can the brotherhood of man be firmly established. It is encouraging and elating to remind you that despite her humiliation and torment at the hands of white rule, the spirit of Africa in quest for freedom has been, generally, for peaceful means to the utmost.

If I have dwelt at length on my country's race problem, it is not as though other countries on our continent do not labour under these problems, but because it is here in the Republic of South Africa that the race problem is most acute. Perhaps in no other country on the continent is white supremacy asserted with greater vigor and determination and a sense of righteousness. This places the opponents of apartheid in the front rank of those who fight white domination.

In bringing my address to a close, let me invite Africa to cast her eyes beyond the past and to some extent the present with their woes and tribulations, trials and failures, and some successes, and see herself an emerging continent, bursting to freedom through the shell of centuries of serfdom. This is Africa's age—the dawn of her fulfilment, yes, the moment when she must grapple with destiny to reach the summits of sublimity saying—ours was a fight for noble value and worthy ends, and not for lands and the enslavement of man.

Africa is a vital subject matter in the world of today, a focal point of world interest and concern. Could it not be that history has delayed her rebirth for a purpose? The situation confronts her with inescapable challenges, but more importantly with opportunities for service to herself and mankind. She evades the challenges and neglects the opportunities to her shame, if not her doom. How she sees her destiny is a more vital and

rewarding quest than bemoaning her past with its humiliations and sufferings.

The address could do no more than pose some questions and leave it to the African leaders and peoples to provide satisfying answers and responses by their concern for higher values and by their noble actions that could be

> ". . . footprints on the sands of time";
>
> "Footprints, that perhaps another,
> Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
> A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
> Seeing, shall take heart again."

Still licking the scare of past wrongs perpetrated on her, could she not be magnanimous and practise no revenge? Her hand of friendship scornfully rejected, her pleas for justice and fair-play spurned, should she not nonetheless seek to turn enmity into amity? Though robbed of her lands, her independence and opportunities—this, oddly enough, often in the name of civilization and even Christianity, should she not see her destiny as being that of making a distinctive contribution to human progress and human relationships with a peculiar new Africa Flavour enriched by the diversity of cultures she enjoys, thus building on the summits of present human achievement an edifice that would be one of the finest tributes to the genius of man?

NON-RACIAL DEMOCRACY

SHE should see this hour of her fulfillment as a challenge to her to labour on until she is purged of racial domination, and as an opportunity of reassuring the world that her national aspiration lies, not in overthrowing white domination to replace it by a black caste, but in building a non-racial democracy that shall be a monumental brotherhood, a "brotherly community" with none discriminated against on grounds of race or color.

What of the many pressing and complex political, economic and cultural problems attendant upon the early years of a newly-independent State? These, and others which are the legacy of colonial days, will tax to the limit the statesmanship, ingenuity, altruism and steadfastness of African leadership and its unbending avowal to democratic tenets in statecraft. To us all, free or not free, the call of the hour is to redeem the name and honor of Mother Africa.

In a strife-torn world, tottering on the brink of complete destruction by man-made nuclear weapons, a free and independent Africa is in the making, in answer to the injunction and challenge of history: "Arise and shine for thy light is come." Acting in concert with other nations, she is man's last hope for a mediator between the East and West, and is qualified to demand of the great powers to "turn the swords into plough-shares" because two-thirds of mankind is hungry and illiterate; to engage human energy, human skill and human talent in the service of peace, for the alternative is unthinkable—war, destruction and desolation; and to build a world community which will stand as a lasting monument to the millions of men and women, to such devoted and distinguished world citizens and fighters for peace as the late Dag Hammarskjiold, who have given their lives that we may live in happiness and peace.

Africa's qualification for this noble task is incontestable, for her own fight has never been and is not now a fight for conquest of land, for accumulation of wealth or domination of peoples, but for the recognition and preservation of the rights of man and the establishment of a truly free world for a free people.

THE NEGRO WRITER AND COMMITMENT

Phillip Bonosky

THE struggle of the Negro people in America, which has been going on since they arrived on these shores as chattel some 200 or more years ago, has noticeably taken a dramatic leap forward in the last decade or so. Not often since the Dred Scott Decision settled the matter presumably forever, has the Supreme Court found it necessary to stir up the sleeping causes of the Constitution as they applied to Negroes (apparently incompletely put to rest by that decision), and shake out a few of the democratic guarantees in them; which, somnolent so long, were then abjured to speed forth with all deliberateness.

draw near, in the same moment it seems to recede, like the ever- am-

Victory in Defeat

BUT the struggle still goes on, still unwon, and even as the goal of complete freedom seems to draw near, in the same moment it seems to recede, like the ever-ambulating mirage. Once the NAACP raised the slogan: "Free by '63." When it was first raised, '63 seemed so far away that it admirably served its purpose both as a goal and as a slogan. But not even the most starry-eyed optimist believes for a moment that the American Negro people will be free in a year. No, nor in 22 years, if progress is to be understood as some understand it; and not in 200, or 2,000 if James Baldwin is to be read correctly, for in this strangely perverse book, full of paradoxes, intellectual leaps and pirouettes, Mr. Baldwin proves, to the evident satisfaction of a large number of reviewers, that the Negro question, whatever it once may have been, today merges completely with the unclassifiable and irreductible general evil of the human race, Negroes included. In short, the Negro tragedy is mankind's general tragedy of original sin, against which it is essentially hopeless to rage or to combat. Victory lies in defeat. Mr. Baldwin puts it:

> For who has not hated his black brother, Simply *because* he is black, *because* he is brother. That fantastical violence which will drown in blood, wash away in blood, not only generation upon generation of horror, but which will also release one from the individual horror, carried elsewhere in the heart. Which of us has overcome his past? And the past of the Negro is blood dripping down through the leaves, the gouged-out eyeballs, the sex torn from its socket and severed with a knife. But this past is not special to the Negro. This horror is also the past, and the everlasting potential, or temptation, of the human race. If we do not know this, it seems to me, we know nothing about ourselves, nothing about each other; to have accepted this is also to have found a source of strength—source of all our power. But one must first accept this paradox with joy.

Mr. Baldwin, in his articles on the Negro question (and when he leaves that question his comments become abruptly banal) does—or tries to do—just that: "accept this paradox, with joy." One of his reviewers defines his intention aptly; his essays are ". . . nonpolitical in character, spoken more in the voice of anguish than revolt, and concerned less with the melodrama of discrimination than the moral consequences of living under the irremovable stigma."

Universalization of the Negro

MR. BALDWIN's philosophical approach to the Negro question is to empty it of all history and ideology, all meaningful struggle, especially class struggle. He substitutes for the resulting vacuum a doctrine which at first glance seems so much more "mature" and certainly much more appealing to the uninvolved: he displaces the Negro problem to the plane of universal evil, of the universal condition of man, his fall from eternal grace, his loss of vision and his descent to doom. All the actual content of the struggle of the oppressed —"the melodrama" of it—disappears in this weary, half indulgent, half-exhausted view of mankind's Sisyphean drag up and down the endless slope. Struggle seems naive; class struggle, if not vulgar, archaic. In any case, whatever is true of Negroes elsewhere, the American Negro has a special dispensation, after all:

> For what, at bottom, distinguished the Americans from the Negroes who surrounded us, men from Nigeria, Senegal, Barbadoes, Martinique . . . was the banal and abruptly quite overwhelming fact that we had been born in a society, which, in a way quite inconceivable for Africans, and no longer real for Europeans, was open, and, in a sense which has nothing to do with justice or injustice, was free. . . .

And between the African and American Negroes was

> . . . a psychology very different . . . at its best and at it worst—from the psychology which is produced by a sense of having been invaded and overrun, the sense of having no recourse whatever against oppression other than overthrowing the machinery of the oppressor. We have been dealing with, had been mangled by, another machinery altogether. It had never been in our interest to overthrow it. It had been necessary to make the machinery work for our benefit and the possibility of its doing so had been, so to speak, built in.

By "machinery," although Mr.

NOBODY KNOWS MY NAME by James Baldwin, The Dial Press, $4.50.

Baldwin does not say so, is meant "imperialism." Africans are different from American Negroes because they were the victims of imperialism — including, predominantly since World War II, American imperialism; somehow, however, that same American "something" which tormented and murdered and kept in ignorance and poverty millions of American Negroes, cutting even their life expectancy drastically lower than the average white's, was "another machinery altogether" which even, in some unspecified way, can be coaxed into working "for our benefit."

Hardly a schoolboy in Harlem doesn't connect his struggle for freedom with the struggle of Africa for its freedom: and he senses, even when it's not spelled out, that they are somehow the same. He senses, too, that if the struggle of the American Negro has reached new heights since the war, and has put the American ruling class on the defensive, it is not because, after 200 years of being so instructed, that ruling class has suddenly seen the light and acquired a conscience. The reason is more likely to be that in a world that is in tremendous motion, in profound upheaval, with the emergence of one-third of it socialist, and another third of it in anti-colonial struggle, that ruling class has become extremely worried that it will lose everything. These developments have confronted the American ruling class with a terrible dilemma, on the horns of which it has been impaled for quite some time now. It is a shabby assignment for any Negro to help get it off, whether in politics or art.

Attack on Uncle Tom's Cabin

MR. Baldwin's use and function, as a literary critic, become clearly visible when he tilts a lance (in *Notes of a Native Son*), some hundred years late, at Mrs. Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* which he manages, in a marvelously dextrous way, to change from a weapon that everybody has hitherto thought had something to do with winning freedom for the Negro slave into a book that "is activated by what might be called a theological terror of damnation; and the spirit that breathes in this book, hot, self-righteous, fearful, is not different from the spirit of medieval times which sought to exercise evil by burning witches; and is not different from that terror which activates a lynch mob . . ."

Mr. Baldwin thinks he is combatting Mrs. Stowe; but it seems he had also taken on Frederick Douglass who wrote, in 1853, when the book was viciously attacked:

> The most unwise thing which, perhaps, was ever done by slave-holders, in order to hide the ugly features of slavery, was the calling in question, and denying the truthfulness of *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Harriet Tubman, Soujourner Truth were moved by the book;

so, too, were Tolstoy, and Dickens, George Sand, Henrich Heine, and hundreds of others. But Douglass wrote again:

> One flash from the heart-supplied intellect of Harriet Beecher Stowe could light a million camp fires in front of the embattled hosts of slavery, which not all the waters of Mississippi, mingled as they are with blood, could extinguish. The present will be looked to by after-coming generations as the age of anti-slavery literature . . . when a picture of a Negro on the cover was a help to the sale of the book. .

Prophetic as always, Frederick Douglass' aside is borne out even in this instance, as we gaze on Mr. Baldwin's face on the cover—that semi-secret, sad, half-frightened look of a man contemplating unsolvable problems.

Mr. Baldwin's *bete noire,* however, is Richard Wright, whom he attacks with malice aforethought as the chief opponent to his literary and ideological theories. He proves that *Native Son,* which burst upon the American literary scene in the late thirties with such explosive force, is actually the same poor thing as Uncle Tom because Bigger Thomas is Uncle Tom's exact opposite (which clinches the matter). "For Bigger's tragedy is not that he is cold or black or hungry, not even that he is American black; but that he has accepted a theology that denies him life . . ." and fights back as brutally as he is attacked. His mistake — which is Wright's — is not to know that "our humanity is our burden, our life; we need not battle for it; we need only to do what is infinitely more difficult—that is, accept it . . ."

Versus W. E. B. Du Bois

MR. Baldwin does not stop with Harriet Beecher Stowe or Richard Wright; he also finds an opponent in W. E. B. DuBois. Richard Wright was an opponent because, whatever else confused him, he understood that he lived in the *world*—that it existed. It is the eternal battle of Galileo and the Pope: there is a world, one mutters, outside of your theology. And the other: there is only *us*—and only spirit matters—and all else is evil, unknowable to all but God. Man should live in penance for original sin, welcoming death, accepting the paradox of life with joy.

The medievalism of that concept has re-emerged today among the extreme 'modernists' where the unchanging categories of feudalism make their last stand in literature —but most dramatically—in art. This essentially reactionary idea is brought to the world of ideas in the cloak of iconoclasm, of ikon-breaking; of the kind of "radical" attack upon progressive thought which expresses itself primarily in distortion of form, obscuring content, and concluding from the diffi-

culties of socialist construction that mankind cannot progress and therefore the better part of wisdom is to accept life as we find it.

Wright believed in the "protest novel" (which, put that way, is really Baldwin's straw man; for who has *not* written "protest novels"—from Zola to Tolstoy, from Dickens to Dreiser . . .). But Baldwin thinks it is out-dated; what is there to protest about? There is something aristocratic about this laughter at naive people who protest "at conditions," laboring under the delusion that "conditions" matter or make up life, which transcends them. In any case, only men in the field and factory protest, and men up in the big white house know that even if the field hands get their big white house they will not find peace and joy in it. And when —in fact—they did get into the big white houses after Liberation, didn't they plunder and loot them like the savages they were?

DuBois gave Baldwin a nasty turn by letting himself be arrested in the struggle for peace, and then exactly at the time when Baldwin and a few other American Negro writers were attending a conference in Paris on Negro-African literature, DuBois, who had been invited, sent a telegram in which he explained that the State Department had refused to issue him a passport, and then added: "Any American Negro travelling abroad today must either not care about Negroes or say what the State Department wishes him to say."

This was considerably below the belt, as every protest by a victim is below the belt, in Baldwin's curiously twisted values; after all Baldwin was in Paris primarily to learn that he was an American, and must go home again to tell us this great truth. DuBois' statement was also unjust because it prevented Baldwin and his six free-travelling Americans from telling the assembled Africans that "the American Negro is possibly the only man of color who can speak of the West with real authority, whose experience, painful as it is, also proves the vitality of the so transgressed Western ideals. The fact that Du Bois was not there and could not, therefore, be engaged in debate, naturally made more seductive his closing argument: which was that, the future of Africa being socialist, American writers should take the road taken by Russia, Poland, China, etc., and not be 'betrayed backward by US into colonialism.' "

Mr. Baldwin does not believe this. He believes that America is free. However, though it is free and open—and he wants the world to know it—he still cannot get around the fact that the Negroes still are not quite as equal as they seem to want to be. But he finds a role for them; a function. It is: "In a way, the Negro tells us where the bottom is: *because he is there* and *where* he is, beneath us, we know where

the limits are and how far we must not fall. We must not fall beneath him . . ."

In the "free" and "open" society which has "nothing to do with justice or injustice" the Negro has a place—at the bottom. And that is necessary for the whites because ". . . if the Negro were not here, we might be forced to deal within ourselves and our personalities, with all those vices, all those conundrums, and all those mysteries with which we have invested the Negro race." A hopeless expectation, which dooms the Negro forever to his special function of setting moral and economic cellars for the whites.

Mr. Baldwin's approach to life and history finally are succinctly put by himself. For Negro writers, art resides ". . . only within this web of ambiguity, paradox, this hunger, danger, darkness . . ." and only there "can we find at once ourselves and the power that will free us from ourselves." This is religion.

For Freedom Riders, for protesters, for socialists, he has this: "It must be remembered that the oppressed and the oppressor are bound together within the same society; they accept the same criteria, they share the same beliefs, they both alike depend upon the same reality. Within this cage it is romantic, more, meaningless, to speak of a 'new' society as the desire of the oppressed, for the shivering dependence on the props of reality which he shares with the *Herrenvolk* makes a truly 'new' society impossible to conceive. What is meant by a new society is one in which inequalities will disappear in which vengeance will be exacted; either there will be no oppressed at all, or the oppressed and the oppressor will change places. But finally, as it seems to me, what the rejected desire is, is an elevation of status, acceptance within the present community."

Apparently, then, Baldwin's answer to oppression is the organization man and wall-to-wall suburbs.

Mr. Baldwin took part as a spectator in the demonstrations at the UN over the murder of Lumumba, and he found, among the demonstrators, people whom he calls "Stalinists and professional revolutionists acting out of the most cynical motives . . ." They are also "cynical agents of a foreign power . . ." although he deplores the assumption of Americans that Negroes can be aroused to protest only by such cynical agents of a foreign power.

Since he names no names, it's difficult to know whom he means; but if he means Benjamin Davis, who was shoved and pushed by the police during that demonstration, then it would be of some interest to compare points of view, and even books, written by both: for Mr. Davis's book, as *Mainstream* has pointed out, is still in prison—literally behind bars—but Mr. Bald-

win's books are quite free. In fact, this might serve as some basis for a definition of freedom.

Henry James

MR. Baldwin, when all is said and done, is nevertheless a Negro, and his theories about art cannot change the color of his skin and therefore himself as a target of discrimination and oppression. The Southern racists don't read; but the Northern racists do. Mr. Baldwin wants to replace the main tradition in American literature, which is the democratic tradition of Whitman and Thoreau, Mark Twain and Theodore Dreiser with the secondary tradition of the "mighty Henry James." He wants us to "turn our backs forever on the big two-hearted river" because those naive writers, led by Hemingway, the early Dos Passos of the *USA* trilogy, Scott Fitzgerald, failed to see that America or the world—that is, humanity—could not be changed by their dream of a better world and a better human being. Their failure lay in this innocence, this lack of recognition that "evil had entered the American Eden, and it had come to stay."

Mr. Baldwin believes that we, and writers first of all, must accept this knowledge of evil, face up to it, as a nation, and resign ourselves to the possibility—no, the definite probability—that most things cannot be changed, nor should be changed; in any case, though surfaces and things change, man remains unchanged in his soul which is born evil. Mr. Baldwin enters the wide mouth of our times and great new problems, in which the emancipation of humanity is posed, and comes out of the small end of it—Catholicism and its concept of conceptual evil. Man faces his own liberation from all concepts of evil; that is, of limitation, both of his human nature and of his society. To this prospect, Mr. Baldwin offers only pessimism.

The "evil" that has entered (but it has never been absent!) "the American Eden" is not in our souls, however persuasively that notion is put. That evil has a name, and it is not Lumumba, nor Frederick Douglass, nor W. E. B. Du Bois, nor Africa's millions fighting to be free, nor the students in the South on their ride to freedom. And a writer will die with those forces whose dying today is seen, by some, as the death of culture and art and humanity itself. It should be of some interest to Mr. Baldwin that when the first world war broke out, Henry James complained with some sense of failure to one of his friends that in all his writings, there was no, not even the smallest, sign or awareness that he was writing of an era and a class that were approaching their demise in a great world war. Could any judgment be any more absolute both upon the man, the art, and the ideology?

HERMAN MELVILLE AND THE NEGRO QUESTION

Robert Forrey

HERMAN Melville, the nineteenth century American author, has been called anti-Negro. This accusation would not be surprising if it had been made by conservative academic critics, who have managed to convince a generation of college students that Melville was a mystic and neurotic. But it is progressive not conservative critics who, not intentionnally, have blown up out of all proportion the tinge of racism in his thinking. To offset this one-sided view, it would be useful to take another look at some of the Negroes in Melville's fiction.

The only Negro in *Typee,* Melville's first novel, is Mungo, the cook, and he is only mentioned in passing. The only Negro in his second novel, *Omoo,* is also a cook, but he plays an important part in the action. Baltimore, a runaway slave, is one of those crew members who allowed Melville, the literate among the sailors, to sign his name to the document protesting conditions on the ship. Toward this Negro Melville shows not animosity but unpatronizing affection.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION

MELVILLE'S third novel, *Mardi,* published in 1849, gives us some indication of his anti-slavery feelings. A group of travellers visit different countries of the world. In keeping with the allegorical cast of the novel, the countries are given Polynesian names, but each is a European or American nation disguised with palm trees and grass huts. The travellers touch on Vivenza or the United States near the end of their journey. As they near shore they see inscribed over an arch:

"In this republican land all men are born free and equal . . ." and added in a tiny postscript: "except the tribe of Hamo."

The travellers' first stop is "The Great Central Temple of Vivenza" or Washington, DC. As they approach the Temple their guide says proudly: "We are all kings here; royalty breathes in the common air." Melville then describes what was called the "great Temple of Freedom."

> Upon the summit of the temple was a staff; and as we drew nigh, a man with a collar round his neck, and the red marks of stripes upon his back, was just in the act of hoisting a tappa standard—correspondingly striped. Other collared menials were going in an out of the temple.
>
> Near the porch, stood an image like that on the top of the arch we had seen. Upon its pedestal, were pasted certain hieroglyphical notices; according to Mohi, offering rewards for missing men, so many hands high.

The "collared menials" are Negroes and the "regards" for runaway slaves.

Vivenza was supposed by the travellers to be a land where labor laughed. In the "Extreme South Vivenza" they find, on the contrary, that "labor has lost his laugh!" From a description of the conditions under which the slave labored we see why.

> It was a great plain where we landed; and there, under a burning sun, hundreds of collared men were toiling in trenches, filled with taro plant [cotton]; a root most flourishing in that soil. Standing grimly over these, were men unlike them; armed with long thongs, which descended upon the toilers, and made wounds. Blood and sweat mixed; and in great drops fell.

The most outraged of the travellers protests this cruelty:

> "Oh fettered sons of fettered mothers, conceived and born in manacles," cried Yoomy; "dragging them through life; and falling with them, clanking in the grave:—oh, beings as ourselves, how my stiff arm shivers to avenge you! 'Twere absolution for the matricide, to strike one rivet from your chains. My heart outswells its home!"

The slaveholder admonishes him with arguments Southern politicians were using in the decades before the Civil War:

> "Peace, fanatic! Who else may till unwholesome fields, but these? And as these beings are so shall they remain; 'tis right and righteous! Maramma champions it!—*I* swear it! The first blow struck for them, dissolves the union of Vivenza's vales. The northern tribes well know it; and know me."

Undaunted, the Abolitionist-minded Yoomey says:

> "Pray, heaven! . . . they may yet find a way to loose their bonds without one drop of blood. But hear me, Oro! were there no other way, and should their masters not relent, all honest hearts must cheer this tribe of Hamo on: though they cut their chains with blades edged, and gory to the haft! 'Tis right to fight for freedom, whoever be the thrall."

Among the travellers, even the mild philosopher is convinced that so great a wronug as slavery cannot continue indefinitely. Slavery, he says, is,

> a blot, foul as the crater-pool of hell, it puts out the sun at noon; it parches all fertility; and, conscience or no conscience—ere he die—let every master who wrenches bond-babe from mother, that the nipple tear; unwreathes the arms of sisters; or cuts the holy unity in twain; till apart fall man wife, like one bleeding body cleft:—let that master thrice shrive his soul; take every sacrament; on his bended knees give up the ghost; yet shall he die despairing; and live again, to die forever damned.

After leaving Vivenza, with its blot of slavery, the travellers approach but do not land at Hamora, or Africa. Having found oppression in the heart of Vivenza, where freedom is supposed to flourish, they know that only worse could be expected in the slaves' homeland. Of Hamora, Yoomey says:

> "Poor land! curst of man, not Oro! how thou faintest for thy children, torn from thy soil, to till a stranger's Vivenza! did these winds not spend their plaints, ere reaching thee, thy every gale would echo them. Oh, tribe of Ham, thy cup of woe so brims, that soon it must overflow upon the land which holds ye thralls. No misery born of crime, but spreads and poisons wide.

In *Redburn,* published in 1849, Melville devoes Chapter XVII to two Negroes, the cook and the steward. In exploiting the comic potentialities of the evangelical cook and dandyish steward Melville is guilty of a degree of patronizing. The scene in which Thompson, the Bible-reading cook, admonishes Lavender for his rakish behavior is unfortunately reminiscent of the portrayal of "darkies" on the vaudeville stage. If there is patronizing, there is still no active dislike on Melville's part. On the contrary, he thinks the handsome Negro steward has as much right as any whiteman to see whatever color woman he chooses. The equalitarian basis of Melville's thinking on the race question is expressed clearly in another chapter of *Redburn,* in which he writes of the steward:

> Speaking of negroes, recalls the looks of interest with which negro sailors are regarded when they walk the Liverpool streets. In Liverpool indeed the negro walks with a prouder pace, and lifts his head like a man; for here, no such exaggerated feelings exists in respect to him, as in America. Three or four times, I encountered our black steward, dressed very handsomely, and walking arm in arm with a good-looking English woman. In New York, such a couple would have been mobbed in three minutes; and the steward would have been lucky to escape with whole limbs. Owing to the friendly reception extended to them, and the unwonted immunities they enjoy in Liverpool, the black cooks and stewards of American ships are very much attached to the place and like to make voyages to it.

> Being so young and inexperienced then, and unconsciously swayed in some degree by those local and social prejudices, that are the marring of most men, and from which, for the mass, there seems no possible escape; at first I was surprised that a colored man should be treated as he is, in this town; but a little reflection showed that, after all, it was but recognizing his claims to humanity and normal equality; so that, in some things, we Americans leave to other countries the carrying out of the principle that stands at the head of our Declaration of Independence.

There are at least three Negroes among the Pequod's crew, in *Moby Dick,* Pip the cabin-boy, Fleece the cook, and Daggoo, the harpooner. Each suffers from stereotyping. Pip is the obedient and easily-frightened Negro; the cook is the shuffling, tongue-tied Negro; and Daggoo, along with the other dark-skinned harpooners, the diabolical Negro. Though Melville starts with stereotypes, he goes on to create Negro characters of unquestioned courage, loyalty, and humanity. Pip ends up as one of the most sympathetic members of the Pequod's crew. The cook Fleece is forced by the arrogant second mate to play the white-man's Negro by preaching a sermon to the sharks ("Stubb's Supper" Chapter LXIII). But Melville does not allow the Negro to be vanquished. The gluttony that the cook sermonizes on is Stubb's gluttony, as well as the sharks. The cook is not the white man's happy-go-lucky fool, any more than Pip. He says about Stub: "Wish, by Gar! Whale eat him, 'stead of him eat whole. I'm blessed if he ain't more a shark dan Massa Shark hisself."

Before the white officers had come to their senses, Daggoo, the Negro harpooner had already gone into action to save his comrade, the Indian Tashtego from drowning. Despite their association with deviltry, Daggoo and his dark-skinned associates, Tashtego and Queequeg, emerge from the novel as morally superior to the white officers who command them. When the third mate Flask stands on Daggoo's shoulders to command a better view from the boat, a social criticism is implicit in the positions of the two men. Melville does not fail to point it out.

> On his broad back, flaxen-haired Flask seemed a snow-flake. The bearer looked nobler than the rider. Though truly vivacious, tumultuous ostentatious little Flask would now and then stamp with impatience; but not one added heave did he thereby give to the negro's lordly chest. So have I seen Passion and Vanity stamping the living magnanimous earth, but the earth did not alter her tides and her seasons for that.

NEGROES IN THE NAVY

THERE are a number of Negroes on the man-of-war *Neversink,* in *White Jacket,* published in 1850, and Melville was fraternal toward

all of them: Old Coffee, the cook, and his assistants, Sunshine, Rose-Water and May Day; an old sheet-anchor man named Tawney, "a staid and sober seamen, very intelligent, with a fine frank bearing, one of the best men in the ship, and held in high estimation by everyone"; the captain of Gun No. 5, "a fine negro"; and Guinea, the purser's bondsman and handservant, who refused to join the rest of the crew in witnessing floggings. Melville was thankful the purser treated Guinea kindly, even in the United States, "under circumstances peculiarly calculated to stir up the resentment of a slave-owner." The captain treated the crew, especially the Negroes, far worse.

He was fond of Head-bumping, which consisted "in two negroes (whites will not answer) butting at each other like rams. This pastime was an especial favourite with the captain." The Negro Rose-Water "abhorred the pastime" but the "captain must be obeyed." "I use to pity Rose-Water from the bottom of my heart," Melville's fictional counter-part White Jacket says. "But my pity was almost aroused into indignation at a sad sequel to one of these gladiatorial scenes." Melville is referring to the flogging of the two Negroes. The captain had discovered them fighting on their own, not at his request, and he ordered them punished. Melville's heart went out to the wronged Rose-Water.

> Poor mulatto! thought I, one of an oppressed race, they degrade you like a hound. Thank God! I am white. Yet I had seen whites also scourged; for, black or white, all my shipmates were liable to that. Still, there is something in us, somehow, that, in the most degraded condition, we snatch at a chance to deceive ourselves into a fancied superiority to others, whom we suppose lower in the scale than ourselves.

There are no Negroes, to speak of, in *Pierre* (1852) or *Israel Potter* (1855) but there is a Negro, or more correctly a Negro disguise, in *The Confidence Man.* There is no adequate proof that Melville, any more than the other skeptical passengers on the steamboat, accepted the stereotype Guinea as an authentic Negro.

Melville reminds us throughout *The Confidence Man* that things are not what they seem. The happy-go-lucky Negro Guinea is not necessarily happy. He is not even necessarily a Negro. To the whites a Negro is a dog, so the confidence man gets down on his knees in Chapter 3 and plays the part of a cripple, "a dog widout massa." He hobbles about, his "honest black face rubbing against the upper part of people's things," and they pitch coins at him. They cannot attribute any but simple, happy feelings to so low a creature. Even a white who claims never to have seen the Negro concurs in this opinion in Chapter 11.

> He knew nothing about the cripple, nor had seen him, but ventured to surmise that, could one but get at the real state of his heart, he would be found about as happy as most men, if not, in fact, full as happy as the speaker himself. He added that negroes were by nature a singularly cheerful race; no one ever heard of a native-born African Zimmermann or Torquemada; that even from religion they dismissed all gloom; in their hilarious rituals they danced, so to speak, and, as it were, cut pigeon-wings. It was improbable, therefore, that a negro, however reduced to his stumps by fortune, could be ever thrown offff the legs of a laughing philosophy.

In *The Confidence Man* and "Benito Cereno" Melville tried to dispell the idea that the Negro is a good-natured fool. Unfortunately he does so in the context of an indiscriminate criticism of American society that takes in all classes and races. Everybody seems contaminated by commercialism. The confidence man assumes all shapes and colors in his disguises, but it is not apparent that Negroes are singled out for special obloquy.

In 1854 Melville published a story, "The Happy Failure," in which there is a "grizzled old black man," Yorpy, a Negro servant. Again Melville shows a sympathy for the Negro even though he satirizes him as a stereotype of "the faithful servant." It is inconceivable how this story could be interpreted as pro-slavery. The uncle, with his inconsiderate treatment of Yorpy, is heavily satirized; so to a lesser extent is the other white in the story, the nephew.

STORY OF A SLAVE REVOLT

DESPITE the obvious sympathy Melville showed for Negroes and other colored peoples in *Typee, Omoo, Mardi, Redburn,* and *Moby Dick,* the Marxist critic John Howard Lawson feels the story "Benito Cereno" is pro-slavery, anti-Negro. Lawson sees the story as "propaganda for slavery."* What Lawson fails to note is that the story reflects not so much Melville's as the shallow New England sea-captain's thinking on the Negro.

"Benito Cereno" is based on a slave uprising on the slave-ship *Tryal,* off the coast of Chile, in 1805. The slaves on the ship had revolted, killed their owner and a good part of he crew, and then forced the Spanish captain, Cereno, to pull into a lonely bay. The ship *Perserverance,* under Delano's command, appears, and he pays a personal visit to the slave-ship to see what the matter is. He talks to the Spanish captain who tells him a concocted story of sickness and bad weather. The whole exchange is made under the watchful eyes of the Negroes, who continue to act as

* John Howard Lawson, *Our Hidden Heritage,* (New York, 1950). This view of Melville appears in an otherwise excellent chapter on the Negro in literature.

slaves to allay suspicion. The captains finally escape from the ship and retake it and the slaves. The Negro leaders are tried and executed. But the Spanish captain, Cereno, never recovers from the experience. He retires to a monastery and soon dies. The New England captain recounted these events in his autobiography, which Melville probably read, *Narrative of Voyages and Travels,* trying to justify the whites and show the treachery of the Negroes. In re-telling the story Melville had different motives.

In Melville's story Delano makes a number of reflections upon the Negroes, whom he refers to as "cargo." He sees the Negroes as easily amused, easily distracted, simple creatures, lazy, docile, loyal as pets, without discipline or character. He is described as taking to Negroes "just as other men take to Newfoundland dogs." He is particularly impressed by Babo, Cereno's manservant. Babo is actually the leader of the slaves, and sticks close to Cereno to prevent him from exposing the rebellion. Blinded as he is by prejudice, Delano can only see Babo as a faithful "shepherd dog." In reality Babo and his fellow slaves needed to carry off the revolt all those qualities the New England captain denied to them, courage, intelligence, and a fierce desire for freedom. It is the central irony of the story that we do not see the Negroes as they are but as what Delano thinks they are. Most of the events are filtered through his consciousness.

It is hard to see how Melville could have had any sympathy for either Captain Delano or Captain Cereno. The one is the New England commercial mind at its shallowest, and the other an effete offspring of a rich and decaying Spanish family. Cereno is the product of a dying feudal order, and his refusal to face Babo at the trial, his retreat to a monastery and subsequent death suggest the break-up of the old order. In Babo if we do not have anything else we have a refutation of the docile, stupid Negro. He is beheaded and his head stuck on a pole in the Plaza but even there he "met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites."* There is a lot of room for interpretation in "Benito Cereno." It is not easy to say exactly what Melville's attitude toward the Negro was, judging just from this story, so it should be placed alongside the rest of Melville's writings in which the question is dealt with. It is not an obvious abolitionist story but that does not make it, by default, pro-slavery propaganda either.

NEGRO IN "BILLY BUDD"

THERE is no reason to think that Melville went off the deep end on the Negro question late in life. In *Billy Budd,* written shortly before

A Negro critic thinks Babo "is the most heroic character in Melville's fiction." While excessive this evaluation is going more in the right direction than those who see Babo as Melville's vicious stereotype. C. L. R. James, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* (New York).

his death in 1891, he created his ideal sailor. The "Handsome Sailor," Billy, is blond and fair, with distinctly Anglo-Saxon features. Given the emphasis on Billy Budd's fairness, the question poses itself whether the handsome sailor is not a white chauvinist ideal. Melville avoids any such interpretation when he offers as the first example of the handsome sailor not a white but a Negro. He writes:

> In Liverpool, now a half a century ago I saw under the shadow of the great dingy street-wall of Prince's Dock . . . a common sailor, so intensely black that he must need have been a native African of the unadulterate blood of Ham. A symmetric figure much above the average height. The two ends of a gay silk handkerchief thrown loose about the neck danced upon the displayed ebony of his chest; in his ears were big hoops of gold, and a Scotch Highland bonnet with a tartan band set off his shapely head.

The good looks of the handsome sailor were not important in themselves but rather indictative of leadership qualities.. "The moral nature was seldom out of keeping with the physical make." In the "Handsome Sailor" category Melville placed only the noblest of men, men like Bulkington, Jack Chase, Billy Budd. He obviously felt that Negroes were as qualified to lead and be admired as anybody else.

CIVIL WAR POETRY

IN 1866 Melville published a volume of poetry, *Battle Pieces* and *Aspects of the War.* One looks in vain in them for any anti-Negro bias. On the contrary one finds a poem like "Formerly a Slave," in which he speaks, perhaps not without sentimentality, but certainly without antagonism, about an elderly Negro woman.

"FORMERLY A SLAVE"

The sufferance of her race is shown,
  And retrospect of life,
Which now too late deliverance draws upon;
  Yet she is not at strife.

Her children's children they shall know
  The good withheld from her;
And so her reverie takes prophetic cheer—
  In spirit she sees the stir

Far down the depth of thousand years,
  And marks the revel shine;
Her dusky face is lit with sober light,
  Sybylline, yet benign.

Inasmuch as this poem is about a Negro it is not typical of *Battle Pieces.* Many of the poems deal with Southern whites and deal with them sympathetically. There is no point in ignoring this. But one must remember that these poems were published in 1866 when Melville, and even strongly anti-slavery poets like Bryant, were, along with much of the rest of the country, looking ahead to the problems of Reconstruction and the healing of the wounds of the war.

In an important prose Supplement to *Battle Pieces* Melville candidly expressed his views on these problems. We can see from the Supplement that he wrote his poems out of a great love of the American Republic and in the hope that the ideals of democracy, "those expectations which kindle the bards of Progress and Humanity" would not be jeoparodized by lingering animosity. He did, not, however, extend an open hand to unreconciled seccessionists but only to the mass of Southern people. It was Melville's conviction that the average Southern white was not the guilty one. The real traitors were the slaveholders and their spokesmen who had misled the Southern people into thinking that the war was being fought not to defend slavery but to insure "certain inestimable rights guaranteed by the Constitution" which "were directly menaced" by the North. In this way, he explains, "the people of the South were cajoled into the support of a war whose implied end was the erecting in our advanced century of an Anglo-American empire based upon the systematic degradation of man."

The sympathy Melville showed for the average Southerners should not be misconstrued as sympathy for the Southern cause. Rather, the poems should always be seen against the background of Melville's larger loyalties, his love of freedom and faith in democracy, and his sympathy for the Negro people. "Those of us who always abhorred slavery," he wrote in the Supplement, "as an atheistical iniquity, gladly we join in the exulting chorus of humanity over its downfall." The same might be said of Melville's career as a whole. Despite waverings and pessimism, it must be seen against the backdrop of his over-arching commitment to justice and liberty. Any other perspective distorts this great democratic and humanistic writer.

While not questioning Melville's integrity as Mr. Lawson did in *Our Hidden Heritage,* Sidney Kaplan's analysis of "Benito Cereno" arrives at similar conclusions about Melville's anti-Negro feelings.* Mr. Kaplan relies his case too heavily on an examination of imagery, and too little to

* Sidney Kaplan, "Herman Melville and the American National Sin: The Meaning of 'Benito Cereno'," (*Journal of Negro History,* XL11, 1957).

the passages dealing explicitly with the Negro in Melville's writings. At times he does not see the obvious meanings for the imagery.

MELVILLE'S BELIEFS

MELVILLE sprang from a background that was politically and socially conservative. But after the bankruptcy and death of his father, he was forced to sea, where he rubbed elbows with men of all colors and creeds. As a result of this working-class experience, he greatly outgrew the conservatism of his past and class. He was already well along in life when the issue of industrial revolution was raised by the proletariat. On the question of socialism he was a conservative. But about the rights of workers in pre-industrial employments such as sailing, and about the rights of people oppressed by feudalism and colonialism, whether they were Polynesians or Negroes, on these questions Melville was a true son of the great bourgeois revolutions of the 18th century, and an heir to the Age of Reason.

Our society is so infected with the disease of racism that we can not let the slightest trace go undetected. But in the middle of the Negro liberation struggle of the 1960's, we must see that writing when he did, Melville was far ahead of many others in combatting racism and fighting for the equality of all peoples.

A lively new poetry magazine, *Crazy Horse,* made its first appearance last month. Edited by Thomas McGrath, it sells for fifty cents. If you can't find a copy let us know and we will send your letters on to the editor. Write *Crazy House* % Mainstream, 832 Broadway, New York 3, New York.

Under Kent Courtney's direction Southern racism is using more sophisticated techniques. Who is he and how does he operate? Here is an authoritative report.

LYNCH ROPES -- ON -- BIRCH BOUGHS

Mike Newberry

THE house of Kent Courtney is innocuous.

Unpretentious and properly neat is its lawn, hedged by its neighbor's driveways. The exterior glitters like a TV commercial. Petunias do not blossom in its windowboxes, but you expect them to do so at any moment with glistening plastic flowers.

On this quiet Southern street there is nothing to distinguish this house from its undistinguished neighbors, but a tiny American flag, which waves apathetically, night and day, from its livingroom window, in the sloth of New Orleans' petulant heat. One looks for small signs to reveal the character of its owner before going further. Of these there is only a shooking orange bumper sticker, on the station wagon in the

driveway, that jars the sub-suburban propriety of the scene with its immoderate slogan: "CASTRO DEAD OR CUBA FREE!"

For the moment I was puzzled by the grammatical illogic of the terms placed in opposition by this slogan, but reason told me to discard logic.

Here, in this lower middle class splendor, resides a "big man" of the New South's segregationists. Logic is not a calling card one carries to such a home.

Kent Courtney is indeed a phenomenon of the New South. His style of politics is not that of the "Old Manse," nor is it that of the back country Court House mob of past memories. There is a persuasive air of respectability about him, as there is about his house, that indicates the urbanization and middle class morality with which he clothes his modernized racism. His language, in public has been cleaned of the old-style racist vocabulary for his thoughts are Babbitt's, not the KKK's.

Courtney is the John Birch Society "Coordinator" for Louisiana. But he is more important than this intriguing title promises.

His is a growing prominence in the "Conservative revival," nationally, and in the "Conservative Coalition," that rightwing united front of archaic Dixiecrats and hidebound Republicans in Congress. Kent Courtney has been a prime mover of Birchdom's legislative agenda in the South.

ENTER GOLDWATER

NONE other than Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, the Hamlet of the Birchite drama, has paid ebullient tribute to Courtney's efforts in this, though he seemed uncertain of whom he was honoring.

"Some [anti-Communists] are first rate, like this fellow in New Orleans, Ken Courtney," the Arizona Senator told Gore Vidal in that famous *Life* interview: "He publishes a magazine down there. He's quite a guy." He tried, but could not, remember the name of "Ken's" magazine. "The magazine's called *Independent American* and his name is Kent, not Ken, Courtney," Goldwater's secretary politely corrected her boss's enthusiasm, though she evidently didn't dampen it; for the forgetful Senator's fond, if confused, memory of this "first rate" guy from Louisiana may have been a glory in gratitude for Kent Courtney's work in his behalf, Goldwater's "Conservative" cause. It seems it was his good friend "Ken," who in August, 1960 was credited with setting up and managing the Goldwater For President Rally at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago during the Republican National Convention. That Rally set in motion what has since become known as the Goldwater Boom.

It was on one of his periodic trips to Chicago, usually to tie tightly the knots of the noose he has helped fashion out of the loose, but a bit frayed, ends of the ultra-right groups, that Kent Courtney did this chore for Goldwater. Usually his jaunts to the North have the more practical and immediate objective of strengthening his segregationist activity. One such, last April, took the form of a conference in the same Morrison Hotel, in which he sought to unite about his magazine, and his projected "New Party" of the right, a spectrum of opinion ranging from those to the right of Golwater to those left of McCarthy's memory. Gathering at this conclave were Congressman Edgar Hiestand, an open member of the Birch Society, Medford Evans, a Birch Society "Coordinator" in Texas, Lafayette Hooser, of the National Right To Work Committee (which is staged and financed largely by Southern industrialists and textile tycoons), Willis Stone, head of the National Committee For Economic Freedom (the group intent on abolishing the income tax), Congressman August Johansen, of the House Un-American Committee, and Tom Anderson, a National Council member of the Birch Society, reputed leader of the Citizens' Councils, and publisher of the *Mississippi Farmer, Georgia Farmer, Alabama Farmer,* and *Arkansas Farmer.*

Thus did—and does—the clan gather at the beck and call of Mr. Courtney.

KLAN TO CLAN

OF COURSE this clan should be differentiated from the Klans of the past in that these gentlemen all wear business suits. The bed sheet is out of fashion. Nowadays it's black tie and tux. The "Banquet Room" of the Morrison Hotel differs in the social etiquette of its requirements from the clandestine meeting in the woods of yore.

Yet, Klan to clan, what is the difference?

The difference is personified by Kent Courtney of Zimpel Street in the once luxurious, still shady, though somewhat seedy, old Carrollton section of New Orleans.

Surrounding his prosaic house are the grandious mansions of a bygone era, of merchants grown fat on the cotton trade of the nearby Mississippi River, whose rooms are now furnished for Tulane students, and whose verandas tilt beneath their own inert weight. Amidst this declining splendor the house of the "first rate" guy from Louisiana shines like a Sears Roebuck jewel.

Like the Babbittry in which he lives, our man in New Orleans emulates Babbitt's habits. He is a joiner. Not only is he a member of many of the

groups he seeks to unite, under his rightwing, but is state Chairman of some, such as the National Committee For Economic Freedom.

Courtney is in fact a prairie lad. He was born, not in the South, but, of all places, in Minnesota.

His strongest tie to his adopted state of mind is a degree in Business Administration from Tulane University, where he has, on occasion, been employed as an instructor in economics.

Still and all Kent Courtney is a Southerner now. His heart is devoted to the traditions of the Lost Cause (which after all was slavery). His house is devoted, in singularly un-House-and-Gardenish fashion, to seggregationist causes, newly lost and newly found, and is a vast factory of propaganda and organization that belies its placid exterior.

RACIST OGAN

The Independent American, of which the wall-to-wall carpetbagging ex-Minnesotan, and his wife Pheobe, are sole owners and publishers, uses his house as its office. It is printed nearby, in a small, job-printshop, housed in a single story frame building. Such "togetherness" would seem to give his politics a homey touch, yet it has occasioned some curiousity. Why, it is asked, cannot a movement that is nothing if not wealthy, afford the usual naked-bulbed downtown office? Or rather, why does it prefer to conduct its business and stash its files behind the chintzy curtains? Whatever the reason *The Independent American* issues forth from a desk in the cozy confines of Courtney's unassuming house.

What is *The Independent American?* It is neither fish now fowl, magazine nor newspaper, but serves as an unofficial clearing house of information, editorial opinion, and organizational activity of the Dixiecrat and Birchite groups of the South.

In his *Independent American* Courtney reprints dozens of editorials of the diehard press and his "Radio Edition" is in turn rebroadcast by nineteen key stations in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Utilizing this two way communication Courtney seeks to coordinate rightist thought and activity throughout the South. He propagates this via an appeal that urges: "ATTENTION! Civic Clubs, New Parties, Patriotic Organizations, States Righters, Political Clubs, Citizens Councils, Up To 100 Free Copies of THE INDEPENDENT AMERICAN Available To You. Write Us Your Needs." Besides this he offers a "What's On" of rightist goings-on that tells the readers where to purchase their "IMPEACH EARL WARREN" bumper stickers, when the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade is coming to town, and what the Bossier High School Chapter of the Louisiana

Young Americans for Freedom are offering at their next get-together (what they offered was fellow Birch Society "Coordinator" Medford Evans) . . .

The house organ of the Courtney's is thus, in a literal sense, both more and less than a newspaper. It is a glorified agenda.

Through his sheet Kent Courtney sought to build the States Right Parties, that coalesced about Senator Strum Thurmond, and which he now seeks to revive on a national scale. With perhaps this in mind Phoebe Courtney donned Cassandra's gown and in March, 1961, wrote a dire warning to States Righters to beware of a double-cross by Senator Goldwater who, she predicted, might be angling for "A Rockefeller-Goldwater Ticket in 1964." "No one can underrate Senator Goldwater's political 'savvy'," Mrs. Courtney declared; but the Arizonian was toying with the heresy of "progressive Conservatism," which, she thought, bears increasing resemblance to a "middle of the road philosophy." And this warning, written by Phoebe so that Kent might plead his innocence of guilt by association, was counterposed to a headline "SEN. STROM THURMOND BLASTS BOTH PARTIES."

It would seem that that "middle of the road" philosopher, Senator Goldwater, has not quite created a mutual admiration society among the Southern wing of Birchdom.

"We believe there is no difference between a New Deal Democrat and a Socialist-Internationalist Republican," states Courtney's sheet in its "Our Policy" statement. Though having found Senator Goldwater an incipient fellow-traveler of "progressive Conservatism" it has not yet accused him of being a "Socialist-Internationalist Republican." Not yet!

CHANGE IN TACTICS

HOWEVER wild and wooly Courtney's opinions may be on national and international problems his activity is sound, financially sound, when it comes to guarding the Jimcrow profits of segregation. Thus, though he may have been in the forefront of the "massive resistance" campaign against school integration (remember the New Orleans disgrace concerning the vilification of that 6 year old Negro child not long ago, a racist hysteria within cursing distance of Courtney's house?) Kent Courtney, like other segregationist leaders, appears to have decided that the uses of hysteria are limited when faced with the enforcement powers of the Federal Courts and Washington.

Political action has therefore replaced the cursing mob. In a change of tactics, not lacking in political acumen, Courtney now devotes himself to tightening the rigid "Conservative Coalition" and to electing "100% Conservatives" to Congress. ----

"The U.S. Senate is dominated by Liberal-Socialists," he says. And until these "Liberal-Socialists," otherwise known as "progressive Conservatives," are defeated, segregation is not safe. Should this political labelling somewhat bewilder, it has been clarified both by Courtney and by his favorite theorist, William F. Buckley, Jr.

If Congress can be won for the Right, rather than divided along old party lines, Buckley prophesies in his *"Up From Liberalism,"* then the white community in the South may yet achieve "the first radical reversal of the long drive to universalize suffrage," by not merely denying the vote to the Negro population, but by disenfranchising half of the "white community;" "The restriction of the vote by such means should allay Southern fears that their society will end," Buckley writes. And this thesis has become one of the hopes and impelling forces behind the increasing political activity of the segregationists.

Should this dream turn to dust then Buckley succinctly threatens the alternative of "Sometimes the minority cannot prevail except by force; then it must determine whether the prevalence of its will is worth the price of using force. . . ."

Endowed with neither the Machiavellian ironies, nor political sophistries of Buckley's world view, Kent Courtney interprets this with simplified dichotomy. "The United States is at a critical stage," he writes in his *"The Case Of General Walker";* Either this nation moves all the way left and becomes a *totalitarian democracy* (my emphasis—M.N.), or it shifts to the right—toward Conservative Constitutionalism." Just what is meant by "totalitarian democracy?" Total democracy? Democracy of the total? His phrase, and his use of it, would suggest that Kent Courtney is haunted not so much by the spectre of Marx's "Manifesto" as he is by the 16th Amendment to the Constitution.

Until the IBM tabulated results of the '62 and '64 elections are in, however, Courtney, and his States Righters, and just plain Right, followers appear to be intent on foisting their undemocratic ideas upon the voter—democratically. He is proceeding in a highly organized, itemized fashion, buttressed by a well-oiled (Texas oil and Carolina textiles) political machine, and a coordinated (Birch Society) agenda. It is the sort of planned campaign that would make any School of Business Administration proud of its graduates.

THE NEW RACISM

Huey Long's ghost may frown from the wings, but it is the Kent Courtneys who now have the center of the Southern stage.

Hidden is the genial Old South's brutality. Made respectable is the

Klan, for the time being. The lynch ropes have been hung upon the Birch bough . . . Where is the scent of jasmine, sweetly sick with the perfume of rotting flowers on the fecund earth of fallow plantations? It is gone, gone beneath the stench of factory soot. The honeysuckle fragrance on the porch, as it caresses the washing machine, does not benumb the air where the likes of Kent Courtney walks. Not Tennessee Williams, nor William Faulkner, would be at home in his home; nor would they know him if they saw him.

Kent Courtney, they say, wears a white shirt and tie on even the hottest days. One doubts he has ever walked barefooted, or held the dirt in his fingers. His South is a political equation and his segregationism is measured on a chart from the School of Business Administration.

Yet and yet—curiously, the house of this "big man" of the Birch Society of Louisiana is built on the thin edge of a Negro community of New Orleans that has burst its segregated seams and moves, inch by inch, block by block, year by year, nearer the nerve center in Courtney's livingroom. Peering out of his windows does not Kent Courtney see the impending doom of his moribund philosophy?

One wonders if in the School of Business Administration they have no course in history.

A one act play on John Brown

CHALLENGE

Theodore Ward

CHARACTERS

John Brown
Mary, his wife
Ruth Thompson, his eldest daughter
Anne, Ellen, Watson, Oliver —offspring of John and Mary Brown
Bell, wife of Watson
Martha, wife of Oliver
Emperor, a fugitive slave

* * *

SCENE: Home of John Brown at North Elba
TIME: Late Summer, 1859

It is near sunset. The Spectator faces the unfinshed Living-room-dining-room, the Left wall of which is but a frame, revealing the front porch and a wide section of the distant range of the Adirondacs. Both other walls are unplastered, the one in the rear showing the outside clap-boards on each side of a brick, funnel-shaped fire-hearth and mantle.

There are benches at right-angles in each corner back there, and a door on the Right leads out to the kitchen and sleeping quarters beyond view.

A long, hand-hewn table occupies the Center, with a master chair at the Left end, a smaller one at the foot, and benches along both sides of it. Down-Right is a stool and Claret-Colored Plushed Arm Chair. As the Curtain rises, Anne, aged 15, is behind the table working at a pattern of some dark woolen material; while her mother, Mrs. Brown, is seen seated on a bench at a hand-loom, her back toward the porch, as she is engaged at weaving.

THERE IS THE SOUND of an axe in the distance, and the baaing of sheep is heard nearby.

ANNE

(HEARING SHEEP)

There's Watson with the herd.

MRS. BROWN

(AT LOOM)

It's high time.

ANNE

(CROSSING TO PORCH)

He must've taken the drove over Carrol's way this morning.

(SHE SURVEYS THE HORIZON)

MRS. BROWN

At least he's in time for supper, which is more than I can say for your Father. Sometimes I wonder if it isn't his curse to roam and never abide in his own house.

ANNE

The sun is setting, but from the looks of the clouds to the South, I think we may have a storm.

MRS. BROWN

If so, it will hardly be more than lighting, though it is time for the rains to begin—

(CALLING)

Bell!

(ANNE GOES BACK TO HER PATTERN)

BELL

(A PREGNANT YOUNG WOMAN OF 22, APPEARING IN DOOR RIGHT)

Yes, Mama?

MRS. BROWN

Will you please light the lamp?

BELL

(GOING)

Yes, Mama.

(EXIT)

ANNE

(WARNINGLY)

There is very little kerosene.

MRS. BROWN

Your eyesight, Anne, is more important than an empty oil can.

ANNE

We've only two candles left, and the dreening crock is bare.

MRS. BROWN

Nonetheless, I want the room bright and cheery this evening—as miserable as I feel.

ANNE

You miserable? Why—and what's so special?

(AS BELL ENTERS WITH LIGHTED LAMP TO SET IT ON TABLE)

Your Father is leaving for Virginia.

BELL

(WHIRLING IN SHOCK)

Virginia?

ANNE

Oh, Mother—So soon?

MRS. BROWN

Something has come up.

BELL

Oh God!

MRS. BROWN

He's had news, and I'd like the whole family together.

BELL

(SADLY)

I suppose that would be something we'd all appreciate.

MRS. BROWN

Yes. But it's not to be—scattered as we are before the winds of creation!

ANNE

Does Abbie and Salmon know?

MRS. BROWN

Don't mention Salmon to me!

ANNE

Now, Mother!

MRS. BROWN

I'm trying my best not to give him up. But he and Jason are a scandal on this house.

ANNE

Father says we shouldn't be surprised if every house has its share of Sunshine Patriots.

MARTHA

(APPEARING, a pregnant young wife of 17)

Has any one seen the Emperor?

ANNE

He's outside, somewhere—

MRS. BROWN

Let the Emperor be!—He's tried my patience enough this day.

MARTHA

But I thought you were fond of him?

MRS. BROWN

I am. But I'm in no mood for his champing at the bit.

ANNE

You can't blame the poor man, Mama. If you'd been in bondage, as he has, you'd be as anxious for Father to get started.

MRS. BROWN

It is a bloody business, and no trip to the County Fair!

MARTHA

(TO BELL)

What do they mean?

BELL

Father's leaving, Martha.

MARTHA

(SURPRISED)

Oh!

ANNE

What'd you want with the Emperor?

MARTHA

There's no more wood for the cookstove.

MRS. BROWN

Send Oliver!

MARTHA

He's trying to give the children their supper.

ANNE

I'll get it.

MARTHA

(GOING)

Never mind. I'll go myself.

ANNE

No. Not in your condition!

MARTHA

You Goose! Activity is good for me—isn't it, Mama?

MRS. BROWN

So long as you're careful.

MARTHA

(GOING)

What's an armful of wood—

(EXIT)

ANNE

(HEARING MUTTER OF DISTANT THUNDER)

It is going to storm.

BELL

(CROSSES TO LOOK OUT)

Here comes Ruth.

MRS. BROWN

Is Father with her?

(SHE GETS UP FROM HER LOOM)

BELL

No. She's alone.

MRS. BROWN

She might at least have brought Henry along.

RUTH

(APPEARING on porch, a tall beautiful woman near 30)

Hello, Mama—

(ENTERING TO CROSS DIRECTLY TO DOOR LEADING INTO REAR OF HOUSE)

Where's Father?

ANNE

We thought he was at your house.

RUTH

(PERTURBED)

He left an hour ago—So Henry said!

MRS. BROWN

(EYEING HER)

Then he must've stopped in to say "goodbye" to our Colored neighbors—How is it, you missed him?

RUTH

(WALKING ABOUT RESTLESSLY)

I spent the afternoon with Lucy Greer.

BELL

(TAKING OVER LOOM)

How is Lucy?

RUTH

She's mending.

MRS. BROWN

(SHARPLY)

Sit down, Ruth. You're not in a cage!

RUTH

(SITTING IN MASTER CHAIR)

I'm sorry, Mama.

ANNE

You act as though the world had come to an end.

RUTH

(IGNORING HER)

Mama, I need your help.

MRS. BROWN

How?

RUTH

I want you to speak to Father.

MRS. BROWN

Is that so—Why?

RUTH

I need Henry.

MRS. BROWN

(UNDERSTANDINGLY)

Oh—Well, dear, so does the Cause.

RUTH

But, Mamma, Henry's suffered enough. Father knows it. Yet he's gotten Henry to commit himself to rejoin the Company, and God only knows what will be the end of it!

MRS. BROWN

(IN SILENCE SHE GOES DOWN RIGHT TO STAND BEHIND CHAIR)

Have you spoken to Henry?

RUTH

What was the use? You know him. He's given his word.

ANNE

(INTERPOSING)

But, Ruth. So have you!

RUTH

(SHARPLY)

You shut up! I'm talking to Mama.

MRS. BROWN

You know very well, Ruth, there's nothing I can do.

RUTH

I know nothing of the sort, Mama. You can help me if you want to!

MRS. BROWN

(QUIETLY)

But Anne is right. You've forgotten your promise.

RUTH

(RISING AND COMING DOWN)

Mama, Henry has already shed enough blood for the Cause. You know I encouraged him to do it.—He would never've gone to Kansas if it hadn't been for my willingness—And you can't deny: I've stood by Father and as earnestly well as the rest!

ANNE

Even so, Ruth. We've a duty to Freedom.

RUTH

(ANGRILY)

Nevermind! A man owes something to his family.

ANNE

(CONTRITELY)

I didn't mean to be unsympathetic.

RUTH

I know you.—So just keep your mouth out of this!

MRS. BROWN

Still, Ruth, if you're going to be fair—

RUTH

I'm a grown woman, Mama. I don't need a 15 year old brat to advise me. I've done what I could for the slaves!

BELL

(HEARING AXE)

Oh, I do wish whoever it is who's felling those trees would stop!

ANNE

I guess it's Thomas Jefferson trying to get in his winter's wood.

MRS. BROWN

(TO RUTH, AFTER A MOMENT)

I may only say, dear: To take half a step and halt is no better than to have stood still.

RUTH

But there's a limit, Mama, as to how far anyone of intelligence can go on abetting an impractical dream!

(THERE IS A FLASH OF LIGHTNING FOLLOWED BY A ROLL OF THUNDER FAR OFF)

MRS. BROWN

(SYMPATHETICALLY)

You're not alone, Ruth. But there are some things which loyalty forbids.

RUTH

(DISAPPOINTED)

Loyalty!—Ha! But I knew you'd take this attitude!

MRS. BROWN

I have looked long and hard at our life, Ruth, and I cannot tell you that I'm happy about it. But I believe in what your Father is trying to do.

RUTH

(CROSSING UP TO TABLE, THEN SUDDENLY NOTICING CLOTH)

Look at thlis cloth. Look at the patches—It's typical of the life he's led us.

MRS. BROWN

Your Father's purpose is far more important than any frills.

RUTH

(SHARPLY)

His purpose. Ever since I can remember, it's always been: "You can't have this; you can't have that. Father's got to save, so as to help the poor slaves"!—

(Gesturing in despair)

Through his incompetence he's made back-woodsmen of us all.

MRS. BROWN

That is not true. Your Father is the last man to be charged with incompetency. He has always had the understanding,—yes, and the grit, to make a go of anything he has had a notion to turn his hand to!—You know nothing about him. It was ever so, even on the day when he buried your mother and took me to wife, back in Pennsylvania—

RUTH

(SARCASTICALLY)

He has bewitched you!

MRS. BROWN

(DISTRACTEDLY)

Ruth, I will not be drawn into bickering. I'm too sick at heart. But I will tell you this: when I met your Father he owned the largest tannery in the State of Pennsylvania, and until the bubble burst on the Ohio canal, he was a director of the bank at Elmyra.

RUTH

YES, but where is his wealth now?—All gone for the benefit of the slaves!

MRS. BROWN

As you do not understand, I have done!

ANNE

(AFTER A MOMENT, with a sense of annoyance, indirectly, because of Ruth)

Mama, there's no way I can get two skirts out of this material.—Unless I cut the pattern sideways!

MRS. BROWN

That won't do, Anne.

ANNE

I will have to. The material is too narrow for the flair.

MRS. BROWN

It can be pieced.

ANNE

But they'll never hang right, pieced.

MRS. BROWN

They will, if you're careful and match the design of the material—

OLIVER

(A YOUTH OF 17, some 6 feet tall and built like a wrestler, appearing in door Right, WITH ELLEN in his arms)

Mama, will you please—

(SEEING HIS SISTER)

Oh, hello, Ruth—

MRS. BROWN

What's wrong?

OLIVER

Sarah has eaten and gone to bed. But this naughty brat won't eat her supper.

MRS. BROWN

(JOINING HIM)

I blame you for her tantrums.

OLIVER

So I'm the goat?

(TAKING ELLEN FROM HIS ARMS AND GOING)

Yes, you and your tales about the Border Ruffians.

(EXIT WITH ELLEN)

OLIVER

Well I like that!

HE CROSSES TO PORCH To eye sky which is growing studded with stars)

RUTH

(Pouncing on Bell)

When's the baby due, Bell?

BELL

Next month.

RUTH

And yet you haven't opened your mouth?

BELL

How do you mean?

RUTH

You heard what I said to Mama

BELL

What's that to do with me and the baby?

RUTH

Watson's going with Father, isn't he? I should think it gives you a perfect right to object.

OLIVER

(RETURNING FROM THE PORCH)

What're you up to, Ruth—Are you trying to create a stink?

RUTH

Nevermind. If you can't see what you're doing, then it's up to us women.

OLIVER

Is that so?

BELL

(QUIETLY)

I'm not opposed to Watson's going—

RUTH

Really—?

BELL

(SADLY)

I don't say I'm happy about it. But that's only because I'm so near my time.

RUTH

But that's the whole point—Your baby's going to be born, and for all you know, Watson may never live to see it!

OLIVER

(STUNNED)

Oh, Ruth; that was rotten!

RUTH

(WITH A NOTE OF HYSTERIA)

You've got a right to speak!—Doing the same to Martha!

OLIVER

(APPROACHING HER ANGRILY)

Have you said anything to my wife?

RUTH

(BRAVELY)

I'm telling you to your face!—You and Watson both pride yourselves on being so sympathetic toward the slaves. But when it comes to the ones you claim you love, you're as unmerciful as hawks.

OLIVER

Gooseberries! Martha's known all along I belong to the Company.

RUTH

So what? What freedom has she had to object in the midst of this tyranny?

ANNE

"Tyranny?"

RUTH

Yes, "tyranny!" Martha and you, Bell, you're both in a family way—But do you dare open your mouths?—And what about Father, old and sick as he is? What chance has he to challenge the whole South?

OLIVER

That's a good joke!—Why Father's as tough as any piece of whipthong he ever tanned!

RUTH

Sure. He proved that by taking to bed twice last spring!

ANNE

That was only a touch of his old malaria.

OLIVER

The devil with her, Anne—She's set on balking, and no explanation will suit her.

RUTH

(GOING)

I say you're all acting like simpletons.

(SHARPLY)

The South is not Kansas. You're walking straight into a nest of rattlers—But you'll not take Henry!

ANNE

(ARRESTING HER)

I though you were going to wait for Father.

RUTH

(DISAPPEARING BEYOND PORCH)

Don't worry. I'll find him, or I'll be back!

(EXIT)

(OLIVER SITS to begin cracking his knuckles, and for a moment there is silence. SHORTLY, WATSON, a slender, delicate youth of 23 is seen outside)

WATSON

(ENTERING)

What's Ruth's hurry?

ANNE

She's loking for Father, so she can break her word.

WATSON

(JOINING BELL)

How's that?

(THEY ARE SILENT—TO BELL)

How're you feeling, Honey?

BELL

I'm quite all right.

OLIVER

(PROPPING HIS FEET ON BENCH)

You should've come in a minute sooner.

WATSON

Why?

OLIVER

So Ruth could've told you what Gumps she think we are.

BELL

(VOLUNTEERING)

Ruth is worried about Henry, and she wants Father to release him.

WATSON

(TO OLIVER)

What'd you say to her, anything?

OLIVER

What could I say?

ANNE

(GATHERING UP PATTERN)

Youleave it to Father. If she dares open her mouth to him, he'll scorch her eardrums for her.

MARTHA

(ENTERING)

Has anyone seen Ellen's doll, "Moses?"

ANNE

It was in Ellen's crib.

MARTHA

Oh—

(TO OLIVER)

I thought you were coming back so fast?

OLIVER

(REACHING FOR HER)

I was, until Mama took over.

MARTHA

(LAUGHING AS SHE EVADES HIM)

Some excuse!

BELL

Are you through cooking?

MARTHA

Almost!—Mama's making Father's favorite: Mint and radish sauce!

WATSON

Sounds like we're going to be festive.

ANNE

I'll say.

(GOING WITH PATTERN)

Martha's baked a ham, and all we need is the cake.

(EXIT)

MARTHA

MAYBE I should've baked one.

BELL

(SADLY)

I'm glad you didn't.

(GOING)

Come, Watson—I'll fix your bath.

(EXIT TOGETHER)

OLIVER

God, what gloom—Anybody's think this was going to be our last supper!

MARTHA

(CHEERFULLY)

You can't expect us to be happy, sending you into the arms of those Southern Belles!

OLIVER

(CATCHING HER)

Oh, yeah—Well, any Southern Belle who gets next to this buck is going to curse the day. Because I'm going down there to teach them all how to use a washboard.

MARTHA

(IN HIS ARMS)

You say that now!

OLIVER

(SWEEPING HER OFF FLOOR)

I'll teach you who to tease!

MARTHA

(CONCERNED ABOUT HER CONDITION)

Oliver, be careful!

OLIVER

Good Lord—I didn't hurt you — — ?

MARTHA

(LAUGHING)

No, you big Grizzly—But how often must I tell you not to do that?

OLIVER

I forgot—You don't suppose — — ?

MARTHA

No, you devil. I'm all right —

(MRS. BROWN Re-enters)

MRS. BROWN

(TURNS TO OLIVER)

Oliver, go and see what's happened to your father; there's a storm brewing.

OLIVER

Oh, Mama, a little rain won't hurt him—And, anyway, I want to talk to you—

(TO MARTHA)

Excuse us, will you, Bunny?

MARTHA

(GOING)

Of course. . . .

(EXIT)

Mrs. BROWN

What's on your mind?

OLIVER

This business about Ruth—

Mrs. BROWN

Yes?

OLIVER

In a way, I think she's right.

Mrs. BROWN

(OBJECTING)

Oliver, I'm anxious to see your father leave here in peace—

OLIVER

I understand that. But he's taking me and Watson. That should be enough. If he takes Henry, too, you'll be left without a man's hand among you.

Mrs. BROWN

It's only for a short while, and I'm sure we'll get along.

OLIVER

Nevertheless, he could leave one of us.

Mrs. BROWN

It's impossible. He says he must have a certain number of thoroughly truthworthy men when he strikes. Everything depends upon it.

OLIVER

But what are you to do?

Mrs. BROWN

I've spoken to him about it. He thought I might hire Thomas Jefferson again. But he wants to be paid for his work. He wants cash for his family, as he says he can raise what foodstuffs he needs on his own place.

OLIVER

Well, you should insist on Father making some other arrangement.

Mrs. BROWN

He said he was hoping to be able to send one of you back before Fall.

OLIVER

But what if his plans miscarry? You know they have often enough.

MRS. BROWN

We must put our trust in God.

OLIVER

God helps those who help themselves—and if I'm to go South, I want Martha protected.

MRS. BROWN

I understand your concern, Oliver. It worries me when I think of this house, with Martha and Bell ready to be confined. The roof leaks and those clapboard've warped so they don't give us any protection whatsoever once the cold sets-in. Last winter it was impossible to keep the children warm. There were drifts as high as the bed in Anne and Sarah's room, and Ellen was down with the grippe so often I still can't see how I didn't lose her.

OLIVER

Then that's one thing I will insist upon. Father has money, and he must make the necessary repairs.

Mrs. BROWN

You'll do nothing of the sort. I've spoken to him, and he tells me he has only a pittance with which to begin.

OLIVER

I know better.

Mrs. BROWN

You do not. He has less than $300.

OLIVER

He must use part of it!

Mrs. BROWN

I had thought to press him. But there's the matter of defraying the expenses of the rest of the men to Virginia, and he reminded me, he must also be prepared to provide for your keep once you are all on the ground.

OLIVER

But, Mama, if that's so, then he must borrow some.

MRS. BROWN

It's not so simple as that.

OLIVER

(DESPERATELY)

Simple or not, something's got to be done. I'll not have Martha and the rest of you exposed like this.

MRS. BROWN

You don't understand, son. Your father has gone begging among the few

friends of the Cause so often, he's looked upon as a mendicant.

OLIVER

Oh, there must be something you can do, Mama. You've suffered enough. But you forget.

MRS. BROWN

No, Oliver. I do not forget. I have seen three of you children buried in one grave. But I see quite clearly, it would only serve to reduce his efforts to naught, if, as he has said, I should turn my back on him now.

OLIVER

But when will it be otherwise? When will it cease?

MRS. BROWN

Cheer up, Oliver. It will only serve to wound him, if he sees you in this spirit!

OLIVER

(DESPAIRINGLY)

Oh, Mama: If only there was some way of knowing all this sacrifice was not to be in vain!

MRS. BROWN

(GOING)

Nothing we have suffered, son, or may yet be called upon to endure in this cause can ever be lost.

(EXIT)

ANNE

(CALLING OVER HER SHOULDER AS HER MOTHER PASSES HER)

Bell, you bring the knives and forks—

(SEEING OLIVER IN GLOOM)

What's the matter with you?

OLIVER

What's Martha doing?

ANNE

(AS BELL ENTERS)

Stirring up a pudding—Why?

OLIVER

(CROSSING TO PORCH)

Tell her to join me outside—But don't let Mama hear you—

(WATSON ENTERS)

BROWN

(APPEARING OUTSIDE—ARRESTING OLIVER, AS HE CALLS)

Mary are you there!

(HE STRIDES UPON PORCH—HALTS AND TURNS TO SURVEY THE DISTANT RANGES OF THE ADIRONDACS —HIS TALL FRAME SEEMS AS TAUGHT AND VIBRANT AS THE STRINGS OF A HIGH-TONED VIOLIN, AS HE STANDS THERE, HIS BEAKED-NOSE TILTED AS THOUGH SCENTING HIS LONG SOUGHT OBJECTIVE IN THE DISTANT MOUNTAINS WHICH, IRONICALLY, ARE A PART OF THE CHAIN, RUNNING DOWN INTO THE ALLEGANIES, WHERE HE WAS DESTINED TO ACCOMPLISH HIS STRANGE BUT MIGHTY VICTORY OVER THE MONSTROUS FOES OF FREEDOM)

ANNE

(MEANWHILE, CALLING EXCITEDLY)

Mama! Mama! Father's here!

BELL

(JOINING BROWN)

What is it, Father?

OLIVER

What's up?

BROWN

Where's your mother?

MRS. BROWN

(ENTERING SWIFTLY)

What is it John?

(MARTHA ENTERS BEHIND HER)

BROWN

(IN A MOOD OF EXALTATION AS THEY GATHER AROUND HIM)

Look for yourself, Mary! I have never seen the Adirondacs so sublime. Nor have I ever recognized so fully before how prized we are to have our home in their midsts. Look how limpid the sky is. Note how keenly the stars blaze, each in its separate place, and how the fog, over there in Vermont, is ringed like a mantle of ermine about the shoulders of Pico Peak. It is as though nature had hung it there in order to instruct us as to the beauty and greatness of this land, which slavery like those gathering clouds, has so besotted!

(FOR A MOMENT THEY GAZE IN SILENCE, THEN HE TURNS TO ENTER, ESCORTING MRS. BROWN)

MARY

It was a wise step that took you to Mr. Gerrit Smith, and led you to choose this land. I have never regretted it—Only I do hope to see the day when you'll be free of duty and can settle down.

BROWN

(STRIDING UP TO PLACE HIS HAT ON HOOK IN CORNER, MEANWHILE REVEALING A SHOCK OF SNOW-WHITE HAIR)

It will not be long, dear ones. I expect to bring the issue to a head before the first snow falls!

(LIGHTNING AND THUNDER FAR OFF)

ANNE

Oh Father, then you'll be able to stay home forever!

BROWN

(TAKING HIS FAVORITE CHAIR AS HE PULLS HER UPON HIS LAP)

Yes, Anne—to give you into the hands of some undeserving scoundrel, and spend the rest of my days dangling my grandchildren on these bony old shanks—

(SUDDENLY SERIOUS)

But the harvest is not yet.

(TURNING)

Oliver!

OLIVER

Yes, Father?

BROWN

Would you mind very much if I should ask you to leave tonight?

MARTHA

(SHOCKED)

Oh, Father, not tonight!

OLIVER

Is it that important?

BROWN

(RISING)

Yes, I'm sorry to say it is.

MRS. BROWN

(PROTESTING)

But, John, surely tomorrow—Tonight it may storm.

BROWN

I would not ask it, Mary, if there were not much to be gained.

(TO MARTHA)

The letter I received this morning informed me: Matters have taken a bad turn at camp, and I must contact John at once. I am sorry. But I hope you will not mind too much.

MARTHA

(REGRETFULLY)
It's all right, Father.

BROWN
Thank you, my dear. If he waits until morning, he'll not be able to catch an early train out of Albany—
(TO OLIVER)
And you must reach Connaught tomorrow—
TURNING TO MRS. BROWN AS HE GOES ON)
But I will give you my instructions later.

OLIVER
(TO MARTHA)
I'd better pack.

MRS. BROWN
(GOING)
Later, Oliver. Supper is ready—You and your Father had better wash up.
(EXIT)

BROWN
(FOLLOWING HER)
Good! I'm sure my delay has made you all as hungry as hibernating bears!
(EXIT)

OLIVER
(ARRESTING MARTHA)
(LIGHTNING AND DISTANT THUNDER)
Wait, Martha—
(TO OTHERS)
Excuse us, will you, for a moment—?

ANNE
(TO BELL AND WATSON)
I forgot he wants to see her—
(EXIT)

WATSON
(GOING WITH BELL)
Surely.
(EXIT)

MARTHA
If you're worried about Father's wish, please don't be. I meant what I said to him.

OLIVER
It's not just that, Martha.

MARTHA
No—?

OLIVER
I don't want to frighten you. But you must be prepared—

MARTHA
How do you mean?

OLIVER
I'd give an arm to spare you—I guess you know that.

MARTHA
You are serious!
(SHE SEEMS TO BE HIDING HER ALARM)

OLIVER
(DESPAIRINGLY)
Serious or cruel—I'm uncertain which—But I must tell you.

MARTHA
I think I can be brave, Oliver.

OLIVER
That's one of the things I want you to know I understand about you, Martha. You're only 17. But when it comes to grit—well, you're like Mama. In a way I've been taking it for granted. And I guess, Martha, if it wasn't for what I've just learned from Mama, I wouldn't be bringing it up. Anyway, Martha, I don't want to leave you without knowing I see very well how you've been backing me up when you must've known it would only mean more hardship for you and the baby.

MARTHA
I see your courage, and I try to live the way I think you would want me to.

OLIVER
You could've rebelled just as easy as Ruth, and with better cause!

MARTHA
(SYMPATHETICALLY)
Ruth suffered a lot in Kansas. It wasn't easy for her to bring Henry home all shot to pieces.

OLIVER
(SHARPLY)
We all had it hard in Kansas!

MARTHA
(APOLOGETICALLY)
I was only trying to see her side.

OLIVER
We all swore out there we were through. But a misguided oath is no excuse for quitting—But I'm rambling, and I have so little time. What I want to say, Martha. You talk about my being a man of gumption. But I'm leaving you, and you can't even look forward to the shelter of your own home! (*Completed in March issue.*)

THREE PLAYS ON THE NEGRO

Fly Blackbird

Fly Blackbird, an outstandingly good musical, is now appearing at The Mayfair Theatre, on 46th street, just a few yards away from another musical, *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying.* The latter is a lavish production. It is reported tickets are going for as much as a hundred dollars a piece. The President of the United States saw the show recently. *Fly Black bird* is in a relatively small theatre. The President has not seen it. But he, and everybody else who can should. But as yet it has not got the publicity it deserves and to Broadway's shame it may fold without getting a real chance while *"How To Succeed"* goes on to make millions. It is a high-kicking, song-filled musical on integration. A group of New York Negro and white students are arrested for singing in a park. By mistake, the daughter of a wealthy Negro, Willie Piper, is put in jail with this group. Her father, who believes in playing ball with all whites, is an advocate of the policy, "Everything comes to those who wait." Appalled to find his daughter in jail, he is even more astounded to find her agreeing with the other young people that integration is long over due. "You can't do that," he says. "You're a Sarah Lawrence Girl!" One of Mr. Piper's best friends is Mr. Crocker, "some of whose best friends are Negroes; Negroes who know their place and don't try to step out of it."

These two, the Negro who owns a white cadillac and the white man who owns a black cadillac, but who otherwise believe black is black and white is white and never the two should mix, are buried in a hilarious dream sequence.

The two young men who wrote this play are teaching at U.C.L.A. in California. Mr. C. Jackson a Negro, wrote the music. James Hatch, who wrote the book is white. They have described their play as "a musical affirmation of integration." It is that. And much more.

The cast is excellent. The music is modern, rock and roll and twisting, as well as traditional, and the cast *in toto* dances to it all most energetically. The sets are beautifully done. What more could be asked for. If it is still running when this review appears, go see it. If you don't you'll really miss something.

ROBERT OLSON

The Blacks

IN *The Blacks* playing at the off-Broadway St. Marks Playhouse in New York, Jean Genet tells us that the only attitude possible to Negroes in their relationship to the white world is hatred and contempt. He gathers us together, therefore, on the pretext of entertaining us with a play, to watch a group of Negroes, who only pretend to be actors, but really remain Negro men and women as they are in reality, perform an intricate, fragmented charade, full of hints and ironies and off-stage remarks, full of broken shards of light and darkness, of illumination and confusion, like a thousand broken mirrors, to tell us —angrily and sometimes insultingly —that there is no possible way of communicating with us, and so we part as we came—enemies. So much so that the actors—with play's end —refuse, as Negroes, to come out and take their bows—they have no more to say to us; we can creep home, insulted, humiliated, aware of hurt and wounding. They speak a special language to which we listen but cannot understand; they mock us, resent us, throw obscene jokes at us—would kill us if they could—(as they "kill" the white woman in the play) and if, worst injury of all, worst punishment of all, they themselves were not divided into a hate-love dichotomy, hating themselves and each other as much as they hate us.

Characteristic of modernism, in this play as in so much of modernistic art, is this note of frenzy, irony, hatred, each time that it forms firmly, dissolving just as suddenly into a kind of futility—a kind of what's-the-use-anyway, evil is inherent in us all and good betrays us worse than evil, *is* evil in masquerade. Modernism cannot tolerate form, a positive statement about men or their affairs; but it must always mock, it is constantly self-conscious, constantly turning on itself and observing itself with nervous intensity, finally substituting the means, the method, for the end, which is consumed in the process. The play must be anti-theatrical; it must expose itself and its tricks as it unfolds. It must comment on its processes, ask out loud how to proceed, mock itself, question itself, and

question the questioning—and end, finally, in paralysis, in a hanging question. Only the unpremeditated, the spontaneous—the mad is true, is real, is worthy of respect. And so the play destroys its past as it spurns its future. It hangs in mid-air—it tries to be an experience, an event, sufficient to itself and the moment, which comes as a surprise each time, *ab novo;* to improvise from sources deep within that are beyond regulation, control, and are therefore *true,* sincere—that is the aim. It means a twisting upon one's self in an attempt to catch one's self, and one's thought processes, and one's feelings, unaware, as they are in some innocence which has fled from the world into one's unconscious hiding there to be surprised again.

Only the range of emotion between hatred and futility finds expression in such an art—there is no room for the noble, for the grand, for the majestic, for the believing: all these are subject only for mockery, for satire, for jest. And in the end the play stops where it begins —there is no resolution, only a return to the sterile security of a circle.

What does all this mean? It means, I think, that the play is where the conscience of the class will be caught—for Genet takes up a real social question, and it must be solved, as it is being solved, in the real world. To express this a realistic theatre is natural and logical. Why then the ambiguity? Because, at bottom, it is a social frustration that has caught the playwrite in its grip: anarchism is both the beginning and end, the form and its lack of form. Hatred shapes it; futility dissolves it. It does not recognize history; therefore it hangs motionless in the still air.

The performance, which sometime reaches frenzy, is dynamic and compelling at the moment of witnessing, with almost hynotic power. It could not be so without Negro actors—this is both the key to its strength and power, and to its weakness.

—PHILLIP BONOSKY

Purlie Victorius

"I'M from Georgia and its true." With this comment a man from the state of Georgia recently went backstage to congratulate Ossie Davis and his wife Ruby Dee following a performance of their brilliant new stage show "Purlie Victorious." Of all the plays to be performed on Broadway in the past year this is one of the few to receive unanimous raves from all reviewing quarters. This play pokes satirical fun at the absurdity of the segregationist policies of the southern land-owning families and the mentality of the average racist. Set in Georgia the plot deals with a southern Negro drawn to the ministery and his scheme for the reclamation of his lawful church, now owned by the local white "bossman." The brilliance of Mr. Davis, who not only wrote but stars in the play, is unfortunately at times detracted from by the seeming overacting of Miss Davis in her role as Lutiebelle Gussie Mae Jenkins. Undoubtedly Miss Davis is one of the best actresses to hit the Broadway stage in years, as is easily noted from her award winning performance in "A Raisin in the Sun," but for some reason, perhaps so staged, she seems to force herself too hard in the portrayal of the typical stereotype of a cotton-patch Georgia Negro. Mr. Davis, in the part of Purlie Victorious Judson, is magnificent. His attempts to outsmart the law and the typicality of Ol' Cap'n Cotchipee are so hilarious that the audience often finds itself laughing too hard to catch many of the lines.

Although this play has been reviewed generally as a comedy the seriousness which is inherent in "Purlie Victorious" should certainly not be overlooked. Ossie Davis, who was born in Waycross, Georgia—deep down in Dixie—lived his early life in the bitter, hate ridden area of which he now writes. His background has given him the material to use and his dramatization is remarkable in the insight and candor with which he portrays both the Southern white and the Negro. From the stubborn insensitivity of Ol' Cap'n Cotchipee who is played to perfection by Sorrell Booke, to Gitlow Judson the "Uncle Tom for the white folk," as played by Godfrey M. Cambridge, the play rings with an inner sense of truthfulness. Anyone who has ever lived in the South will have no trouble identifying these stereotyped characters with people they are certain to have known in the South.

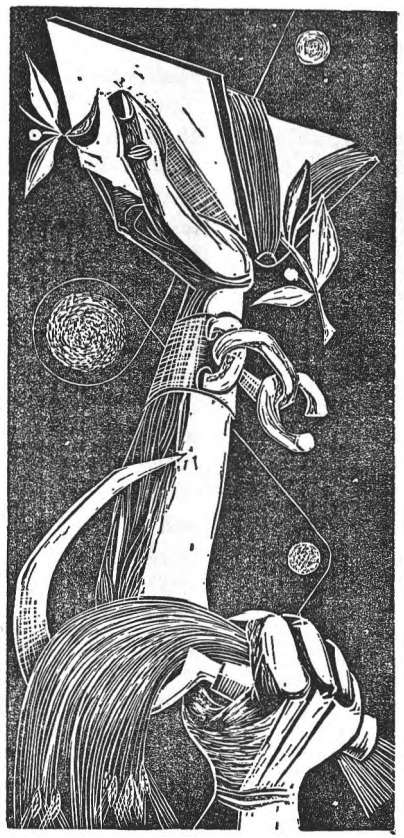
It has been noted by some people that the play does an injustice to the "white liberal" and certain spectators have failed to find the play "funny" but, rather, very disturbing. They are suddenly confronted with jokes and satire that challenge their easy little world of "love"—a "love" substantiated by their small and, at best, superficial contact with the Negro world. Ossie Davis, who is one of the writers and poets who, in today's parlance might be called one of the "New Negro" group, is not content to allow all the fun to be poked at the white segregationist; he also finds room for the white liberal and those Negroes who are and are not, as he puts it, "a disgrace to the Negro profession."

When I talked with Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee last week they related how the play "Purlie Victorious" was designed to help break down the racial barriers here in the United States. Taking as his model the brilliant satire of Cervantes and Sholom Aleichem, Mr. Davis decided that through laughter and the portrayal of the ridiculous aspects of segregation the wall might begin to buckle.

The dressing room of Ossie Davis showed the character of the

man—I noticed recordings and books of Langston Hughes as Mr. Davis spoke earnestly of those Negro leaders who have fought for equal rights. Ossie Davis, who grew up with segregation, is the first to say that this system "was instituted only for the purpose of keeping the Negro economically inferior." If the white southerner can keep his white and black neighbors separate then he will have created his "artificial state of segregation." Throughout the play both Mr. Davis and Ruby Dee do their utmost to force the audience to "laugh at the antiquated, outmoded system in stereotype."

PHILLIP ABBOTT LUCE



PEACE

Anton Refregier