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THE ELEGIES OF A GLASS ADONIS

BY

C. A. TRYPANIS

With a typographical note by

WILL CARTER

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NOTES

"I shall be going away next year," **LESLIE FIEDLER** says, "first to Amsterdam, then to Brighton—unless the cops (pursuing me for having acted as faculty advisor for LeMar) get in the way." . . . **FREDERICK SEIDEL** has written a book of poems, **Final Solutions,** and is at work on another. . . . **RICHARD HOWARD's** new book of poems, **The Damages,** will be put out this fall by Wesleyan. . . . Random House published **PHILIP ROTH's** new novel, **When She Was Good,** in June. . . . **JOHN GAGNON** is at the Kinsey Institute in Indiana. . . . **ROBERT COLES's** latest book is **Children of Crisis.** Dr. Coles is on the staff of the Harvard University Health Services and is working with families in the ghetto, he tells us, "trying to find out how they live and spend their time, and particularly how children grow up there, and what they find important." . . . **JOHN HENRY RALEIGH** is Chairman of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Berkeley. . . . **MARSHALL COHEN** recently joined the faculty of the Rockefeller University in New York. . . . **PAUL NEUBURG** spent last year at NYU working with Conor Cruise O'Brien's Schweitzer program. . . . **FRANK CONROY** lives in Brooklyn. His novel, **Stop-Time,** will be published by Viking. . . . **NAT HENTOFF** is working on a second novel. . . . **NORMAN MAILER's** new novel, **Why Are We In Vietnam?,** will be out at the end of the summer. . . . **TONY TANNER** will be returning to Kings College, Cambridge, where he is a Fellow, after a term at Northwestern and a trip to San Francisco. . . . **LEWIS COSER's** new book, **Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict,** will appear this fall. . . . **HENRY DAVID AIKEN** is at Brandeis. . . . **DANIEL AARON** is working on a book, **The Civil War and American Writers,** a volume in a series edited by Allen Nevins. . . . **MERLYN S. PITZELE's** field is American labor.

Kenneth Tynan also signed the statement on the CIA which appears on page 463, but we were informed too late to add his name to the list of signatories.

NEW DIRECTIONS BOOKS

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Dahlberg's autobiography, which Alfred Kazin called "one of the few important American books published in our day," is now available in a paperback edition. $2.35. (Also *clothbound*, $5.00)

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Leslie A. Fiedler

MASTER OF DREAMS

If there were dreams to sell,
Merry and sad to tell,
And the crier rung the bell,
What would you buy?
—T. L. Beddoes

"And Joseph dreamed a dream," the Book of the Jews tells us, "and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more." It is the beginning of a myth whose ending we all know, the opening of a larger dream which a whole community has dreamed waking and aloud for nearly three thousand years. But it is unique among communal dreams, this myth of Joseph and his descent into Egypt; for it is the dream of the dreamer, a myth of myth itself. More specifically (or maybe I only mean more Jewishly), it is the dreamer's own dream of how, dreaming, he makes it in the waking world; the myth of myth making it in the realm of the nonmythic; an archetypal account of the successful poet and the respected shrink, the Jewish artist and the Jewish doctor—hailed in the Gentile world, first by the Gentiles themselves, and as a consequence by their hostile brethren, their fellow-Jews.

I might have hit upon the meaning of the Joseph story in any number of ways, reflecting on the Biblical text itself, or reading Thomas Mann's true but tedious retelling of the tale in *Joseph and His Brethren*; but I did not. And only after I had begun my own ruminations did I come on Isaac Bashevis Singer's exegesis, in a little story called "The Strong Ones," in which he remembers the strange resentment of his childhood friends after he had first revealed

to them his secret desire to become a writer: "And even though I asked how I had offended them, they behaved like Joseph's brothers and could not answer amicably. . . . What was it they envied? My dreams. . . ." But the archetypal beginning implies the archetypal ending; and just as mysteriously as they had rejected him, Singer's comrades end by asking his forgiveness: "It reminded me of Joseph and his brothers. *They* had come to Joseph to buy grain, but why had my friends come to me? Since I had not become Egypt's ruler, they were not required to bow down to the earth. I had nothing to sell but new dreams."

Actually it was a chance phrase in a most *goyish* poet which provided me with a clue to the meanings I am pursuing here, a verse in the Sixth Satire of Juvenal, where—describing the endless varieties of goods on sale in Rome, wares especially tempting, he tells us, to women—he remarks that "for a few pennies" one can buy any dream his heart desires "from the Jews." *From the Jews*! It was those few words which fired my imagination with their offhand assumption that dream-peddlery is a Jewish business, that my own people have traditionally sold to the world that commodity so easy to scorn and so difficult to do without: the stuff of dreams. And I found myself reflecting in wonder on the strange wares that have been in the course of Western history Jewish monopolies, real or presumed: preserved mummy, love philtres, liquid capital, cut diamonds, old clothes—Hollywood movies; which brought me almost up to date.

Moving backward in time, however, in reversion from such uncomfortable contemporaneity, I found myself in *Mizraim,* face to face with the archetypal ancestor of all Jewish dreamers, with that Joseph whom his brothers hailed mockingly, saying, "Behold, here comes the Master of Dreams," and whom they cast into the pit, crying out, "And then we shall see what will become of his dreams." But we *know* what, in fact, did become of those self-flattering dreams of that papa's spoiled darling. And how hard it is to believe that there was ever a *first* time, when the envious brothers did not know in their deepest hearts what the event would be: how Joseph, after he had ceased to dream himself, would discover that his own dreams of glory had prepared him to interpret the dreams of others, and how, interpreting them, he would achieve the wish revealed in his own.

Not, however, until he had gone down into Egypt; becoming in

that absolutely alien world an absolute orphan, a Lost Son. When the Jew dreams himself in the Gentile world, it is as the preferred offspring of Jacob, which is to say, of Israel—betrayed by his brethren, but loving them still, forgiving all. When the Gentile dreams the Jew in his midst, on the other hand, he dreams him as the vengeful and villainous Father: Shylock or Fagin, the Bearded Terror threatening some poor full-grown *goy* with a knife, or inducting some guileless Gentile kid into a life of crime. But Shylock and Fagin are shadows cast upon the Christian world by that First Jewish Father, Abraham, who is to them circumciser and sacrificer rolled into one—castrator, in short.

In the deep Jewish imagination, however, Abraham is seen always not at the moment of intended sacrifice, but the moment after—releasing his (only ritually) threatened Son to become himself a Father, and the Father of a Father, to beget Jacob who will beget Joseph. Abraham *and* Isaac *and* Jacob: these constitute that paternal triad which possesses the mythic memory of the Jews. And beyond them there is for us no further Father, only Our Boy, Joseph, who never becomes (mythically speaking) a Father at all—only makes good, i.e., provides salvation for the Gentiles and *naches* for his own progenitor.

The Gentiles cannot afford the luxury of *our* Joseph, however, having an archetypal Son of their own, who denies his actual Jewish father ("Let the dead bury their dead"), called—appropriately enough—Joseph, too. How like and unlike the figure of the first Joseph is to that Gentiles' Son of the Father, the mythicized Jesus Christ, whose very Jewishness is finally sloughed off in the exportable archetype he becomes. Not for *our* Beloved Son a crucifixion and a translation to glory only after death. Our Dreamer, too, may begin by leaving his father's house on a mission to the Gentiles; but the temptations he must resist are the temptations of this world, not the next. Specifically, he must elude not the clutch of Satan but the grasping fingers of the Gentile woman who lusts for him; and survive the slander with which she punishes his rejection of her alien charms. And his reward for virtue is to become a success in this world, the unredeemed here and now (not some New Heaven and New Earth, where he will sit at the right hand of Power), ruled over only by the powers-that-be: those fickle Pharaohs whose favor

depends on his providing for them the good dreams they cannot dream for themselves, and therapeutically explaining away the bad dreams they cannot keep from dreaming.

And this means that the archetypal Jewish Son, in whatever *Mizraim* he finds himself, performs not only the function of the artist but also of the Doctor. My Son the Artist, my Son the Doctor—it is the latter which the tradition especially celebrates, the bad jokes recall in mockery; but in the tradition, the two—artist and doctor—are finally, essentially one. In life, however, they may be, for all their affinities, split into separate persons, distinct and even hostile: in our own era, for instance, Sigmund Freud, on the one hand, and Franz Kafka, on the other, which is to say, the Healer and the Patient he could not have healed, since he is another, an alternative version of himself. The voice which cries, "Physician, heal thyself!" speaks always in irony rather than hope. Yet both Healer and Patient are, in some sense, or at least aspire to become, Joseph.

How eminently appropriate, then, that Kafka (first notable Jewish Dreamer of a cultural period in which the Jews of the Western world were to thrive like Joseph in Egypt; but also to be subject to such terror as the descendants of Joseph later suffered at the hands of a Pharaoh who knew him not) should have called his fictional surrogate, his most memorable protagonist, by the mythological name of Joseph. This time around, however, Joseph is specified a little, becoming—with the addition of the author's own final initial—Joseph K., a new Joseph sufficient unto his day. This Joseph, at any rate, along with the fable through which he moves, embodied for two or three generations of writers to follow (real Jews and imaginary ones, Americans and Europeans, white men and black) not only a relevant dream-vision of terror, but also the techniques for rendering that dream in the form that Freud had meanwhile taught us was most truly dreamlike: with a nighttime illogic, at once pellucid and dark, and a brand of wit capable of revealing our most arcane desires.

Yet despite the borrowed name of his surrogate-hero, Kafka could no longer imagine a Happy Ending for either that character or himself; since he no longer dreamed himself the Beloved of his father, but an outcast, unworthy and rejected. In what has become perhaps the best-known, since it is, surely, the most available, of his stories,

Metamorphosis, his Joseph protagonist becomes a vermin in his father's eyes. And we are left with the question: how did the lovely boy in his coat of many colors turn into a loathsome insect, the adviser at the royal ear into a baffled quester, an outsider barred forever from the Courts of the Mighty? But the answer to this question Kafka's own works, whatever difficult pleasure or stimulating example they may provide, do not themselves render up—not even the private and agonized "Letter to My Father"; nor that final story, in which Joseph is altered in sex, demoted to Josephine, the Song-stress; and the relation of the mouse-artist to the Mice-Nation (i.e., the Jews) is treated with uncustomary explicitness: "But the people, quietly, without showing any disappointment . . . can absolutely only make gifts, never receive them, not even from Josephine. . . . She is a tiny episode in the eternal history of our people, and our people will get over the loss."

No, if we would really discover what went wrong with Kafka's relationship to his own father, which is to say, to Israel itself (he who never mentioned the word "Jew" in his published work) which that father represented, or more generally to his inherited past, to history and myth—we must turn back to another Master of Dreams: the Doctor who preceded and survived the Artist: a latter-day *Baal-ha-chalamoth* (in the sense this time of interpreter rather than dreamer), Sigmund Freud, or better, *Doctor* Freud. Only at this moment, as we pass into a regime of rulers who know not Joseph, have we begun to outgrow our own dependence on that Healer, to learn to see him stripped of his clinical pretenses and assimilated to the ancient myth.

And mythologically speaking, he is, of course, an *alter ego* of Franz Kafka—or more precisely, of Joseph K.—one who, like the Biblical Joseph and his namesake, descended into the abyss of ridicule and shame for the sake of his vision; then was lifted up and acclaimed a culture-hero: a Savior of the non-Jewish world which had begun by maligning and rejecting him. Certainly, it is as a solver of dreams that Freud first attracted public notice, with that book born just as the twentieth century was being born, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Like an artist, he himself tells us—though the comparison did not occur to him—he was granted in that book an unearned illumination, on which he was to draw for the rest of his days. "In-

sights such as this," he wrote much later, toward the end of his life, "fall to one's lot but once in a life-time."

And publishing the first fruits of that illumination, he prefaced it with a quotation reflecting his sense of how monumental and monstrous a task he was beginning to undertake: *"Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo."* If I cannot influence the Gods above, I will set the world below in motion—set Hell in motion, he means really, but he chooses to call it "Acheron," to draw on Classical rather than Hebrew mythology, perhaps because he realizes how Faustian, Satanic, blasphemous his boast finally is. And he further clarifies what he means by quoting, in the Foreword which immediately follows, Aristotle's dictum (once more the source is our other, non-Jewish antiquity) that "the dream is not Godsent but of demonic origin." But precisely in his turning from the supernal to the infernal interpretation of dreams, Freud declares himself a true modern, which is to say, quite another sort of Joseph; though the first Joseph, to be sure, began his journey toward success with a descent into the pit.

Unlike the original Joseph, however (for whom there could be no Happy Ending unless his father survived to relish his triumph), Freud could not begin his acherontic descent until after the death of his father—called Jacob, too, by one of those significant "accidents" which Freud himself would have been the first to point out in the case of another, but on which he never commented in his own. He could not even make the preliminary trip down, much less the eventual trip up, until his darkest wish-dream had been, in guilt and relief, achieved: not to do his rival siblings down in the eyes of his father, but to be delivered of that father—his last tie to the Jewish past—and thus be freed to become an Apostle to the Gentiles, a counselor at the Court of his own doomed Emperor. Yet, before releasing his published book to the Gentile world, or even lecturing on its substance at the Gentile University of Vienna, Freud rehearsed it in one lecture at the Jewish Academic Reading Hall, and two (however incredible it may seem) before that most bourgeois of Jewish Fraternal Organizations, the B'nai Brith; tried out his vision, that is to say, before the assembled representatives of the community to which his dead father had belonged.

Yet, despite the pieties with which he hedged his blasphemy

about, Freud's Acherontic "insight" failed at first to impress either the world out of which he was trying to escape, or the one to which he aspired. The handful of reviews his book got responded to it condescendingly, lumping it with old-fashioned "Dream Books" for the ignorant and the superstitious; and it sold during the first two years after publication some three hundred fifty copies, scarcely any in the next five. But this is hardly to be wondered at; since to Jew and Gentile alike, Freud was proposing a radically new myth of the relation of sons to fathers, of the present to the past: a myth whose inversion of the Joseph legend never occurred to him in those terms at all. What is involved is not merely the flight from Hebrew mythology in general, which we noticed in regard to the epigraph and Foreword to *The Interpretation of Dreams,* but something much more particular.

After all, one figure out of the Old Testament did come eventually to possess the imagination of Freud and to occupy him on the level of full consciousness: the figure of Moses, whose very name—as Freud carefully points out—means in Egyptian "Son," with the patronymic suppressed; and whose own fleshly father, Amram, plays no part in his myth, is not even named at the center of the tale. Surely Freud loved Moses because he would brook no father at all, Hebrew or Egyptian or Midianite, killing the surrogate for the Egyptian King who had fostered him, running off from Jethro, the father of the *shiksah* he had married—and, most reluctant of Jews, refusing to have his own son circumcized until the Angel of the Lord (so runs the apocryphal extension of the story) had swallowed him from his head down to his testicles. Joseph, however, Freud does not ever mention; though as an old, old man he wrote once, to his own son naturally: "I sometimes compare myself to the old Jacob whom in his old age his children brought to Egypt. . . ." (And not even this time did he pause to note that in becoming "Jacob," he was becoming his own father.)

In his great pioneering work, however, it is neither Jacob nor Joseph nor Moses himself whom Freud evokes, but a mythological *goy,* two mythological *goyim* out of the dreams of the Gentiles. How casually, how almost inadvertently he calls up King Oedipus and Prince Hamlet side by side in what purports to be a casual three-page digression; compelling the deep nightmare of fathers and sons dreamed

by the Western World from the fifth century before Christ to the seventeenth after his death, to give up its secret: "It may be that we were all destined to direct our first sexual impulses toward our mothers, and our first impulses of hatred and violence toward our fathers; our dreams convince us that we were. . . ." How calm and objective he keeps his tone, as if the "we" were more impersonal than confessional. Yet everyone knows these days that *The Interpretation of Dreams* was not the product of a sudden revelation alone, but also of a painful self-analysis, into which the death of his father had impelled Freud to plunge; and from which he liked to think of himself as having emerged healed.

Unlike Kafka's *Letter to My Father,* Freud's great antipaternal work is a solution not an exacerbation, or so at least he claimed. In him (it is his proudest boast, and we believe it), obsession is turned into vision, guilt into knowledge, *trauma* into *logos*; while in Kafka, the end is paralysis, a kind of lifelong castration, memorialized by the incomplete and bloody stumps of his most ambitious works. Freud's major works are finished—their completion as much a part of their final meaning as the incompletion of Kafka's were of his. Nonetheless, between them, Kafka and Freud, the crippled poet and the triumphant savant (for, finally, not even a measure of the worldly success of Joseph was denied to the father of psychoanalysis), have helped to determine the shape of Jewish-American writing in the first half of the twentieth century—the shape of the tradition from within which (at the moment of its imminent demise) I write of them both.

From the two, our writers have learned their proper function: to read in the dreams of the present the past which never dies and the future which is always to come; and they have, therefore, registered their vision in a form which wavers between the parable and the discursive essay, art and science. For though the means of the Jewish-American writers from Nathanael West to Norman Mailer are poetic and fictional, their ends are therapeutic and prophetic. Their outer ear may attend to the speech of their contemporaries in the realist's hope of catching out life as it passes; but their inner ear hears still the cry of Freud: "I am proposing to show that dreams are capable of interpretation." And their characteristic tone is born of the tension between the Kafka-esque wail of "*Oi gevalt*!" and the Freudian shout of "*Eureka*!"

That tone is established once and for all in the work of Nathanael West, in whom begins (however little the critics may have suspected it in his own time) the great take-over by Jewish-American writers of the American imagination: our inheritance from certain Gentile predecessors, urban Anglo-Saxons and midwestern provincials of North European origin, of the task of dreaming aloud the dreams of the whole American people. How fitting, then, that West's first book—published in 1931, at the point when the first truly Jewish decade in the history of our cultural life was beginning—be called *The Dream Life of Balso Snell*; and that it turn out to be, in fact, a fractured and dissolving parable of the very process by which the emancipated Jew enters into the world of Western culture.

Balso himself gets in by penetrating through the asshole of that symbol of tradition and treacherous conquest, "the famous wooden horse of the Greeks." West makes his point with some care, perhaps a little too insistently for subtlety's sake: not only is it the "Trojan" horse that alone gets us into the beleaguered city; but for us Jews, just to make it into the horse in the first place is a real problem —since, after all, it was built for Greeks. We do not need Balso to tell us that there are only three possible openings, three entry-ways into any horse, even the most fabulous of beasts; but which way is for us we do not know in advance; and this he is prepared to explain, reporting of his hero, our thirties representative: "The mouth was beyond his reach, the naval provided a cul-de-sac, and so, forgetting his dignity, he approached the last. O Anus Mirabilis!" O Anus Mirabilis! It is a lovely, an inevitable pun—and not only in 1931; since in any age, the Jewish Dream Peddler must, like Balso, "forget his dignity" to get inside. Not for him, the High Road to Culture *via* the "horse's mouth," nor the mystical way of "contemplating the navel"; only the acherontic Freudian back-entrance: the anal-sexual approach. "Tradesmen Enter by the Rear."

For West's Balso, at any rate, the strategy works; in a moment, he is transformed from outsider to insider, but he does not like it after all. God knows what he had imagined would be waiting for him in the belly of the horse; what he discovers in fact is that it is "inhabited solely by writers in search of an audience," all Josephs and no Pharaohs. And the approval of other approval-seekers is exactly what he neither needs nor wants; though for a while he pursues one of their number, "a slim young girl" called Mary McGeeney, who

has written a novel "in the manner of Richardson," the great WASP Father of the genre. It is not as an author, however, that Balso lusts for Mary, but as the archetypally desirable *shiksah,* who—at the very moment his tongue is in her mouth—disconcertingly becomes "a middle aged woman, dressed in a mannish suit and wearing horn-rimmed glasses," which is to say, Potiphar's wife turned schoolmarm. Once revealed, however, Miss McGeeney proves even less of a problem to Balso than her earliest prototype to Joseph: "He hit Miss McGeeney a terrific blow in the gut and hove her into the fountain." After which, she stays inside the limits of his fantasy, returning "warmly moist" to make possible the sexual climax with which the book ends, turning a dry dream wet.

More troublesome to Balso than his Gentile foster-mother (to whom he can play Joseph or Oedipus, turn and turn about, with no real strain) is a kind of archetypal Jewish father, who disconcertingly appears in the very bowels of the horse, a self-appointed kibbitzer in the uniform of an official guide, from whom Balso has finally to wrench himself "with a violent twist," as the paternal busybody howls in his ear: "Sirrah! . . . I am a Jew! and whenever anything Jewish is mentioned, I find it necessary to say that I am a Jew. I'm a Jew! A Jew!" It is the last such explicit declaration of Jewishness anywhere in West's work, on the lips of a character or in the words of the author himself; for after the exorcism of *Balso Snell,* his dreamers dream on, presumably free forever of their aggressively Jewish censor. But the dreams that they dream—of Sodom burning, of the destruction of ever purer Josephs by ever grosser Potiphar's wives—we must call Jewish dreams.

Even the madness which cues them, we must call (more in sorrow than chauvinistic pride) Jewish madness; for just such madness, cuing just such dreams, we discover in that other great novel of the thirties, this time frankly Jewish in language and theme, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep.* How aptly the ending of that book manages to catch, more in the rhythm maybe, the phrasing of the words than in their manifest content, that ambiguous moment at a day's end when it is uncertain whether the spirit is falling toward sleep and a dreaming from which it will wake with the morning, or toward a total nightmare from which there is no waking ever. The cadences of that close and their hushed terror stay in my head, more than

thirty years after Roth first conceived them, a valedictory both to his child protagonist in bed and to his own career as a writer: "He might as well call it sleep. It was only toward sleep that every wink of the eyelids could strike a spark into the cloudy tinder of the dark, kindle out of the shadowy corners of the bedroom such myriad and such vivid jets of images. . . ."

We know, having come so far in the novel, what those images "toward sleep" were, and are obviously doomed to be until death for Roth and his protagonist: the adoring mother, exposed in her nakedness before jeering kids; the terrible rage of an actual Jewish father, and the guilty dream of a *goyish* spiritual one; the Jewish girl betrayed in abject love to a mocking Gentile; the spark out of the bowels of the earth, up from the third electrified rail of the streetcar, bright enough to redeem all from darkness and pain; and, weaving in and out of the rest, the cry of the Prophet: "I am a man of unclean lips in the midst of a people of unclean lips. . . ."

Joseph—the solver of dreams—has become confused with Isaiah in the terrible thirties, learning to talk dirty instead of speaking fair; and he moves, therefore, not toward recognition and acclaim in his own lifetime and his father's, but like West or Roth, toward premature death or madness and silence. If, at long last, posthumous success has overtaken Nathanael West, and almost posthumous acclaim Henry Roth—this is because the forties and fifties learned once more to believe in the Happy Ending, which the writers of Genesis postulated for the Joseph myth, but which the thirties could imagine no more than Kafka himself. The lowering into the pit, the descent into Egypt or Hell was all of the legend which seemed to them viable; and trapped in the darkness, they looked not to Pharaoh for deliverance, but to the psychoanalysts, the heirs of that Jewish Doctor who had boasted that he could set very Hell in motion.

In our time, however, with benefit of analysis or without, Joseph has once more been hailed into Pharaoh's court, once more lifted up in the sight of his enemies and brothers; once more recognized as a true Master of Dreams, under his new names of J.D. Salinger and Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth and Saul Bellow. But this is the achievement of an era just now coming to a close, a decade or more of responsibility and accommodation, in which those erstwhile outsiders, Freud and Kafka, became assigned classroom reading, re-

spectable topics for the popular press: an age which, rediscovering West and Roth, celebrated its own sons who had grown up reading them, the age of the Jew as winner. But how hard it is to love a winner—to love Bellow, let's say, after the National Book Award and bestsellerdom—in this land of ours, where nothing succeeds like failure, and all the world loves a loser.

How much more comfortable we feel with those exceptional figures of the forties-fifties who did not quite make it, dying too soon and still relatively unknown, like Isaac Rosenfeld; or surviving dimly inside of their wrecked selves until they could disappear unnoticed, like Delmore Schwartz. I, at least, find myself thinking often these days of Rosenfeld, who might well (it once seemed) have become our own Franz Kafka; and who perhaps *was* (in a handful of stories like "The Pyramids" and "The Party," dreams of parables or parables of dreams) all the Kafka we shall ever have. And even more often my thoughts turn, ever since his pitiful death anyhow—in the same black year for the Jews which also saw Lenny Bruce go—to Delmore Schwartz, with whom the forties began two years before the official opening of the decade.

It was only 1938, even before the start of World War II, when there appeared a volume of his short fiction and verse called, appropriately enough, *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*—"responsibilities" for the age to come, "dreams" for the long tradition on which he drew. In the title story, at any rate, a young man on the eve of his twenty-first birthday, is portrayed dreaming a dream that becomes a movie (not in technicolor, or even in black and white, but in grey on grey, those authentic Schwartzian colors), the movie of a dream. Asleep, but already on the verge of waking, he watches his parents, sundered by rage and mutual incomprehension before his birth or conception. ". . . And I keep shouting," he tells us, " 'What are they doing? Don't they know what they're doing? Why doesn't my mother go after my father?'. . . But the Usher has seized my arm and is dragging me away. . . ."

It is a nightmare uncannily apt for the Age of the Cold War and Going-to-the-Movies—an era whose chief discovery was dis-illusion: this bad dream of the past as irrevocably given; and of the impotence of the young in the face of enormities which they inherit

(and even understand) but cannot control. Born in reaction, it is a counter-dream to the Marxian vision of apocalypse and social change which moved the thirties; and of the hysterical despair which underlay it, the paranoia which its myth of the class struggle at once nurtured and concealed. But for the antipolitical politics of the forties-fifties, too, there is an appropriate psychosis, as there is for all brands of politics: the conviction of impotence freezing into catatonia—the total paralysis of the will of those with no place to go except *up* into the Counselor's seat at the right hand of the leaders of utterly corrupt states. Both the thirties and the forties-fifties, however, merely *suffered* varying forms of madness bred by Freud's Oedipal dream and the failure of Marxian politics.

It was left to the sixties (which got off to an even earlier start than most decades somewhere around 1955) to *celebrate* psychosis; and to attempt, for the first time, not to pretend schizophrenia was politics, but to make a politics of schizophrenia recognized for what it is: a total and irrevocable protest against Things-as-They-are in a world called real. And behind this movement, too, there is a Jewish dreamer, yet one more Joseph sufficient unto his day. I mean, of course, Allen Ginsberg who has escaped the hangup of finding or not finding the ear of Pharaoh, by becoming a mock-Pharaoh, a Pharaoh of Misrule, as it were. Think of his actual presence at the head of parades, or his image looking down at us from subway hoardings—crowned with the striped hat of Uncle Sam.

Ginsberg, however, unlike the Josephs before him, is no father's darling at all, not even such a baffled aspirant for paternal favor as was Kafka. He is a terminal son, to be sure, like the others—but a mama's boy this time, unable to imagine himself assuming papa's role ever ("Beep, emit a burst of babe and begone/ perhaps that's the answer, wouldn't know till you had a kid/ I dunno, never had a kid never will at the rate I'm going"), or saying *kaddish,* that traditional Jewish mourner's prayer which becomes an endearing synonym for "son"; except for his mother—called Naomi, and identified in his mythological imagination with her Biblical namesake, and with Ruth and Rebecca as well, though not with Rachel, that favored second wife of Jacob. She was a lifelong Communist, that mother who haunts Ginsberg, who died—lobotomized and terror-stricken—in the nut-

house: "Back! You! Naomi! Skull on you! Gaunt immortality and revolution come—small broken woman—the ashen indoor eyes of hospitals, ward greyness on skin."

But her post-Marxism madness, the very paranoia which persuaded her that she had been shut away at the instigation of "Hitler, Grandma, Hearst, the Capitalists, Franco, Daily News, the twenties, Mussolini, the living dead," becomes in her son vision and a program fostered by that vision: "vow to illuminate mankind . . . (sanity a trick of agreement)." And when his own insanity fails to sustain him, he turns to drugs, singing—on marihuana and mescaline, lysergic acid and laughing gas and "Ayahusca, an Amazonian spiritual potion"—a New Song, appropriate to a new sort of Master of Dreams, the pusher's pusher, as it were. He does not sell the chemical stuff of dreams directly, of course (Was this, then, what the Jews *did* peddle in the marketplace of Juvenal's Rome?), but sells the notion of selling them; crying out in protest: "Marihuana is a benevolent narcotic but J. Edgar Hoover prefers his deathly scotch/ And the heroin of Lao-Tze and the Sixth Patriarch is punished by the electric chair/ but the poor sick junkies have nowhere to lay their heads. . ." or insisting in hope: "The message is: Widen the area of consciousness."

The psychedelic revolution, however, whatever its affinities with the traditional Jewish trade of dream-peddlery and its appeal to the sons of Jewish merchants engaged in handling much harder goods, belongs to a world essentially *goyish*: the world of William Burroughs and Timothy Leary and (however little he might relish the thought) J. R. R. Tolkien. For a contemporary Master of Dreams more explicitly Josephian, which is to say, Jewish, we must turn to a writer who in his own fantasies is never more than half-Jewish, to Norman Mailer. Those who have read the successive versions of his *The Deer Park* (or have seen it on the stage), and who know his most successful and impressive short stories, "The Man Who Studied Yoga" and "The Time of Her Time," as well as the notes on these in that mad compendium of self-pity and self-adulation, *Advertisements for Myself,* are aware that Mailer once planned a Great American Dream Novel in eight volumes.

Each volume, he tells us, was to have represented one of the "eight stages" in the dream of a defeated Jewish writer (Mailer

makes him only one quarter Jewish, which is to say, minimally though essentially so) called Sam Slavoda, who in his nighttime fantasy sees himself as a kind of Super-Goy called Sergius O'Shaughnessy. In the dream of Slavoda, O'Shaughnessy, his heroic *alter ego*, is portrayed as eternally struggling with a Jewish Father-Figure (in the recent dramatic version, we learn that he is "half-Jewish—on both sides"), named Eitel, for the possession of a Gentile girl, daughter or mistress or wife (essentially, I suppose, somebody else's wife, i.e., Potiphar's Wife), called Elena. It is all—thanks, alas, to Freud—distressingly explicit; and I for one was not, am not sorry that the project ended in shipwreck and a ten year's silence; since out of that silence Mailer emerged to write a book less like Kafka and more like Pop Art—more indebted, that is, to the immediate Jewish past (those post-World War II Masters of Dreams, Shuster and Siegal, who inventing Superman for the comics, invented a possible future for the dying novel) than to a remoter one no longer viable.

That book is, of course, *An American Dream,* in which dreamer and dream-actor have become one, Sam Slavoda plus Sergius O'Shaughnessy turning into Stephen Rojack—who is half-Jewish, since in the world of myth a quarter Jew plus a full Gentile equals a half-Jew. But he is precisely the half-Jew, the half of Joseph that neither Kafka nor the great writers of the thirties could envision: Joseph *after* his recognition, the very archetype of the Man Who Has Made It. No protagonist has entered our recent fiction with so impressive a list of distinctions, for he is a Congressman, a decorated War Hero, the friend of a future President of the United States, the M.C. of a successful TV Program; as well as a tireless cocksman, who can get away with murdering his own wife, then walk the parapet of a penthouse under the eye of his evil fascist father-in-law, turn down that Bad Father's homosexual advances and triumph finally over a Total Conspiracy—in which all of his Bad Brothers (transformed fashionably into members of the Mafia and the CIA) have joined with that Father to destroy him.

Mailer's latest novel is, indeed, in its very banality and vulgarity just such an American Dream as its title advertises it to be; but it is also a Jewish Dream: if not Joseph's own dream, at least our dream of Joseph, as well as a Jewish interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh's (read "John F. Kennedy's") servants. Try as he will,

therefore, Mailer cannot basically alter the shape of the myth he has inherited. How desperately he yearns to permit his Joseph (unlike the earlier Josephs from whom he descends) to have all that glory and Potiphar's Wife, too—in fact, all three of the Gentile women, into whom Mailer has split the single figure of the original legend. But, in the end, Rojack has to reject them like the Josephs before him, so that his soul may live. Deborah Coughlin Mangravede Kelly he marries and kills, though—or maybe because—she is Pharaoh's Wife rather than Potiphar's. Mailer nowhere says outright, of course, that she is intended to be a portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy; but she reminds us of the mythological Jackie at least. And Rojack, introducing her, explains, "Forgive me, I thought the road to the President might begin at the entrance to her Irish heart."

And the mistress once dead, he must destroy the maid who is her extension, too: pentrating all three of her entrances, one by one, but reaching his climax—and cheating her of her own—in the *Anus Mirabilis* (we are back to Balso Snell once more, and this time the identification is explicitly made between asshole and Acheron: "I had come to the Devil a fraction too late, and nothing had been there to receive me. . ."). Buggery is the essential aspect of a sexual connection whose aim is annihilation, not fulfillment; and buggery extorts from the redheaded German Ruta the confession that she had been a Nazi: " '*Ja.*' She shook her head. 'No, no,' she went on. '*Ja,* don't stop, *ja.*' " After which Rojack is able to declare, "There was a high private pleasure in plugging a Nazi, there was something clean despite all. . . ."

But another third of Potiphar's wife remains to be dealt with; after the Irish aristocrat and the kraut servant, the ultimately blonde, all-American Wasplet: the Happy Ending Girl, whose name, Cherry, declares, I suppose, that whatever befalls her flesh, mythologically she remains eternally virgin. Cherry Rojack truly loves, but her, too, he leads to her death—involuntarily, but inevitably all the same; not, however, until he has won her in an archetypal battle with a *really* Bad Brother—a Negro junkie who comes at him with a knife. It is as if Mailer were trying to declare, or his fable in his despite: "Things haven't changed all that much, my colored brothers; a Jewish boy in good condition can still beat out you spade hipsters in the struggle for that archetypal blonde *shiksah* who embodies the Ameri-

can psyche." Yet in the end, the spades who cannot keep her in life do her in; the friends of the hipster whom Rojack has earlier defeated, humiliated, in effect, *killed*, destroy our poor Cherry. And Rojack, guiltless of that murder, is released from the burden of actual love—releasing his author at the same moment from all obligations to realism: liberating him into the world if not of pure myth, at least of Pop Art fantasy.

As the book closes, Mailer asks us to believe Rojack has stopped at a disconnected phone booth in the middle of the Great American Desert; and when he dials (sleeping or waking, we are not sure) the voice of his dead beloved answers—and why not, after all. "Why, hello hon, I thought you'd never call. . . . Marilyn says to say hello." At this point, Mailer's personal fantasy becomes once more our common fantasy, his dream girl ours, as Cherry blends into our own late, perhaps too much lamented Marilyn Monroe; and somehow we are supposed to be, somehow we *are* at peace. It is a long way from the beginning of Mailer's book to the end: from his evocation of the dead Dream Boy of us all (the novel opens, "I met Jack Kennedy in November, 1946. We were both war heroes and had been elected to Congress"), whose death one crazy Jew, himself now dead, thought he was avenging—to the Dead Dream Girl of us all, of whose death another saner Jew has written a play to prove himself guiltless. But it is a way which leads from madness to sanity, from falling asleep to waking up; from the lunatic wish to be President and screw all the women in the world, to the modest hope of finding someone to love and the resolve to take time out for thinking things over.

"But in the morning," Stephen Rojack ends by saying, "I was something like sane again, and packed the car and started on the long trip to Guatemala and Yucatan." Maybe this, too, is only one more fantasy, the last madness of believing oneself sane; or maybe Joseph *is* sane again, at least as Mailer has reimagined, reembodied him; maybe, in exorcising himself of the American Dream, the American version of the flight from Potiphar's wife, Mailer has healed himself—demonstrating that artist and doctor can inhabit the same head. Didn't Freud himself assert (apropos of his own attempt along the same lines, the very book with which we began) that successful self-analysis is possible to one who is "a prolific enough dreamer"?

But even granting all this, we are left with the final question:

what does this mean to *us*? What do Joseph's personal healing and his consequent success (after all, *An American Dream* did prove a best seller, and more, a way back into writing again for its author) mean to those who have helped make that success, critics or readers or nonreading buyers of books? And the answer to that question I have been pursuing throughout—reflecting on how the Jewish Dreamer in Exile, thinking only of making his own dreams come true, ends by deciphering the alien dreams of that world as well; thus determining the future of all those who can only know what lies before them dimly and in their sleep. It is the essence of the myth I have been exploring that Joseph, the Master of Dreams, cannot lie; for dreams tell only the truth, and the Dreamer is also a Dream. But the final word on the subject has been said by Freud himself, in his peroration to *The Interpretation of Dreams*:

> The ancient belief that dreams reveal the future is not entirely devoid of truth. By representing a wish as fulfilled the dream certainly leads us into the future; but this future, which the dreamer accepts as his present, has been shaped in the likeness of the past by an indestructible wish.

FREEDOM BOMBS FOR VIETNAM

The bald still head is filled with that grayish milk—
It's a dentist's glass door. It turns heavily—
There may be a weight in it. It weighs one ton.

Very even light diffuses through the globe.
But this surprise: life-squiggles, fishhooks,
Minnowhooks, surround the mineral eyes.

Someone like Muzak is burbling slant-rhymes—
-om and *-am, -om* and *-am*—and holds up a telltale map
Of rice swimming in blood like white flies.

Ears almost as large as the President's
And more eloquent than lips,
That swallow toothlessly like polyps.

A spit glob and naked flashbulbs pop in Rusk's ear
And go down with whole heads, whole fields of heads
Of human hair, jagged necks attached.

Tangled unwashed bangs lengthening and cut, lengthening and cut,
The civilian population knows no more
Than a cellar of pocked Georgia potatoes.

This Press Talk is like a ham discussing pigs—
They need our help. He's a cracker showing the kids
The funny human shapes his potatoes have.

They must be scrubbed and eaten in their skins!
That's the nourishment! Rusk sets no other condition.
Rusk's private smile that looks like incest.

November 1965.

Frederick Seidel

Stephen Spender

WRITERS AND POLITICS

In England, the circumstances giving rise to poets interfering in politics are special. In their study of Julian Bell's and John Cornford's tragically broken off lives, Peter Stansky and William Abrahams[1] inevitably devote much space to explaining the family background and the personal psychological and intellectual problems which led these young men to anti-Fascism and their deaths in Spain.

If they had been French critics writing about the young Malraux, Aragon or Eluard, there would not have been need of so much explanation. For in France the nineteen thirties was only a recent episode in the long involvement of the French intellectuals with politics since before the French Revolution. As David Caute has pointed out, writers like Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, Georges Duhamel and André Gide publicly discussed their attitudes to the Russian Revolution, the League of Nations, war, disarmament, after 1918.

The rightist as well as the leftist French intellectual had centers, organizations, reviews, newspapers, platforms. They regarded imagination and critical intelligence as instruments which could be applied to social problems. In taking sides, the intellectual exploited the legend

1 JOURNEY TO THE FRONTIER. By Peter Stansky and William Abrahams. Constable. 50s.

that, *qua* intellectual, he represented detached intelligence. Stooping from his exalted height, the "clerk" made objective, disinterested judgments.

It is true of course that sometimes a Romain Rolland or a Henri Barbusse, infected with the virus of the International disguised as Internationalism, looked across the channel and appealed to a Shaw or a Wells to attend some international conference or sign some declaration of Human Rights. But if and when they responded, the English "great writers" did not descend as radiant messengers from the realms of pure imagination and impartial intellect. Wells, although priding himself on being a social prophet, cultivated the manner of a traveling salesman for the scientific culture, when he made his public "interventions." Like Shaw, Bennett and Galsworthy he thought of his public personality as antiesthetic, lowbrow. He was forever explaining that he was a journalist who breathed a different air from that in the novels of Henry James.

Eliot, Virginia Woolf, even D. H. Lawrence saw to it that Wells and Bennett should never forget their public streak. When during the thirties E. M. Forster appeared on "*front populaire*" platforms he did so because the time demanded that he should assume a role in which he had no confidence and for which he felt little enthusiasm. His presence at Congresses of the Intellectuals during the anti-Fascist period, and that of young English poets, was extraordinary—like lions walking the streets of Rome on the night preceding the Ides of March, a sign that the artist had become denatured from his function by apocalyptic events.

Until the thirties the younger generation of Oxford and Cambridge were infected by the antipolitics of their parents' generation. Stansky and Abrahams mention that the famous society of Cambridge intellectual undergraduates—the Apostles—which had such a close connection with literary Bloomsbury, agreed in the twenties that "practical politics were beneath discussion." Even more striking, in the early thirties, the Apostles ceased for some years to exist, as the result of the pressure of "too many conflicting political beliefs" among their members. Yet so different was the atmosphere by then that to Julian Bell, no longer then an undergraduate, and to John Cornford, who was one, this must have seemed like saying that having at last something to discuss, the Apostles had decided to discuss nothing.

To the Cambridge and Bloomsbury generation of their parents Bell and Cornford were ducklings hatched out from suppositious hen's eggs, swimming out on to those dirty choppy political waters. Not that

Clive and Vanessa Bell and the Cornford parents disagreed with the younger generation's anti-Fascist politics (they sympathized with them). But they regarded politicians as philistine and the artist in politics as betraying the pure cause of individualist art. Leftish political sympathies were almost a part of the ethos of literary Bloomsbury, but political action seemed vulgar. Art had no connection with political action, nor with the good life of personal relations and refined sensations which could only be enjoyed by the individual in isolation or among friends. J. M. Keynes and Leonard Woolf were, of course, in their different ways, politically involved and influential but they were so without lowering their intellectual values or sacrificing personal relationships.

These attitudes are reflected in Forster's novels, in which the good characters have liberal values but realize them only through the medium of personal relations. Business, power, government for Forster belong to the world of "telegrams and anger." That Margaret or Helen Schlegel should carry their socialism further than a few committees, and those personal relations with Henry Wilcox and Leonard Bast which test their principles, seems unthinkable. And although Fielding, Aziz and the other characters who fight on the side of the angels are opposed to the British Raj, it is difficult to think of them taking any effective political action: they attempt to resolve their problems through personal relations between British and Indians. One of their chief grievances against the British occupiers is that they have made relations perhaps impossible.

Forster's antipolitics, antipower, antibusiness attitude is implicit also in the novels of D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and Aldous Huxley, which have so little else in common. The fact is that the separation of the world of private values imagined in art from the world of the public values of business, science, politics was an essential part of the victory of the generation for whom "the world changed in 1910" against their elders Shaw, Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy. The accusation leveled against the "Georgian" novelists was that they depicted characters who were the social average of the material circumstances in which they lived. They interpreted human beings as walking functions of the society that conditioned them with body, soul, sensibility and sex, common denominators of the general gritty smog, stabbed through with steely rays of scientific materialist social progress. The aim of D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf was to create characters who were isolated creatures of unique awareness with sensibility transcending their material circumstances.

Of course I do not mean that Lawrence had no political sympathies: still less that he had views in common with the liberal ones of Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster. In his novels those characters like Birkin and Aaron who are representative of the politically searching Lawrence shop around in the contemporary world of action looking for lords of life who are passional, violent and antidemocratic. Bertrand Russell, after some dealings with him during a few months toward the end of the First World War—when Lawrence toyed with the idea of founding some kind of brain (Bertrand Russell) – and – blood (D. H. Lawrence) political movement—came to the conclusion (stated thirty years afterward) that Lawrence's blood-and-soil view of life was later realized in the horrors of Nazism. My point is though that, apart from this one disastrous attempt to get together with Russell and the Cambridge intelligentsia, and apart from his general sympathy with what might be termed bloody-bodiedness (in Germany, Italy or Mexico), Lawrence found the world of public affairs, business and any kind of social cooperation, utterly antipathetic. He even went so far as to write a letter to Forster (in September, 1922) charging him with "a nearly deadly mistake [in] glorifying those *business* people in *Howards End*," and adding that "business is no good"—a conclusion with which he might have found his correspondent concurred, had he bothered to read Forster's novel.

Different as E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence were, they all agreed that the novel should be concerned with awareness of life deeper than the conscious mind of the "old novelistic character" and the computable human social unit. Lawrence in his essay on Galsworthy, and Virginia Woolf in her lecture on Arnold Bennett ("Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown") attack Galsworthy and Bennett on similar grounds: that the characters in their books are "social units."

Thus, although the 1910 generation (I call them this to make them immediately distinguishable) sympathized with the anti-Fascism of Julian Bell and John Cornford, they were also horrified at the idea of literature being compromised by politics. Virginia Woolf's *Letter to a Young Poet* (1935) is a subdued but troubled protest at the spectacle of sensitive and talented young Oxford and Cambridge poets echoing public matters with a public voice and not writing out of a Wordsworthian isolation, solitary among the solitary reapers. And E. M. Forster, with politeness and forbearance, indicated the underlying grief of Cambridge friends, when he wrote that the future probably lay with Communism but that he did not want to belong to it.

John Cornford was seven years younger than Julian Bell, who was almost contemporaneous with Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice and myself. In our speeded-up century, perhaps even those few years marked still another "new generation." For our earlier Oxford and Cambridge one secretly sided with the personalist generation old enough to be our parents. We had, written on our hearts, the motto from *The Orators*:

> *Private faces in public places*
> *Are wiser and nicer*
> *Than public faces in private places.*

But John Cornford's generation of anti-Fascist undergraduate agitators at Cambridge, and of the Oxford October Club, did not cherish our sense of the supreme importance of maintaining the distinction between public and private worlds. This difference of generations comes between Julian Bell and John Cornford.

For Bell, to have to choose between personal loyalties and the public cause was always agonizing. By upbringing antipolitical, his choice would always have been for personal values, if he had not come to think of anti-Fascism as a burning loyalty beyond mere politics. But even so he remained conscious of having to make choices in which one set of loyalties had nearly always to be sacrificed to another. He came to think that the private ones of poetry and of love for his family had to submit to the public ones of anti-Fascism. Yet when he went to Spain, in joining an ambulance unit rather than the International Brigade, he sacrificed his interest in war and strategy to his parents' pacifism.

For Cornford, however, there was no question that personal values had to be sacrificed to the public cause. All that mattered was to defeat Fascism. For him, and for his already "new generation," all choices had to be decided by the Marxist interpretation of history. Subjective motives did not count.

In the jargon of the new activist generation (only five years younger than ours) all our generation's scruples about personal relations and subjective feelings could be consigned to the dustbin of liberal inhibitions. Cornford's conviction of the superiority of the Marxist objective reason over personal consideration is indeed the dominating theme of most of his poetry. Leaving the girl who is mother to his child, the objective reason becomes the image of the surgeon's knife cutting away the soft rot of compassion:

Though parting's as cruel as the surgeon's knife,
It's better than ingrown canker, the rotten leaf.
All that I know is I have got to leave.
There's new life fighting in me to get at the air,
And I can't stop its mouth with the rags of old love.
Clean wounds are easiest to bear.

The adroitness with which he establishes the superiority of the ideological "new life" struggling in him to the real new life—a child—struggling in her, tells a lot about young human nature dominated by an ideology.

To say that Julian Bell could not, except through a distortion of his nature, have discovered such impersonal grounds for apparent callousness is not to say that he might not have behaved just as egotistically to any of his mistresses (whom Stansky and Abrahams list as A, B, C, D, etc., far down the alphabet). The difference is that Bell would have found a personal reason for justifying conduct that Cornford justified by an "objective" one.

To most literary-minded readers, Bell will seem more interesting than Cornford because he is the more self-searching and Hamletian and literary character. Certainly his personality and his relations with his relations make fascinating reading. It is part of the excellence of their book that the authors, having put the reader in possession of some of the facts, often leave him wondering. For instance, when Bell wrote that dissertation *The Good and All That* which, it was hoped, would get him a fellowship at Kings, there were plenty of psychological reasons why he should make a hash of it. On the one hand he wished to please his Cambridge mentors by writing an essay on good and evil in the manner of the discussions of the Apostles, but on the other hand "more perhaps than he himself realized, Julian was in full revolt against his Bloomsbury philosophical background, and its static conception of 'states of mind' as values in themselves, or consequences that might ensue from them." The confusedness was perhaps in part the result of a naïve desire not to shock Roger Fry, to whom the dissertation was sent for a report. This was of course a model of tolerance and fair-mindedness. How *liberal*!

Anna Russell in her famous burlesque exposé of Wagner's operas points out (rightly or wrongly) that Siegfried had the misfortune never to have met a lady who was not his aunt. There was something of such a burlesque Siegfried about the young Julian Bell, who gives one the impression of always encountering very understanding Bloomsbury aunts. He certainly developed something of an anti-aunt complex. But, as

with the other Siegfried, we are also left with a further question on our hands—wasn't this Siegfried after all a bit stupid?

John Cornford was priggish but not at all stupid, and it is this which in the end makes him more interesting than Bell. He was a Greek hero rather than a confused Wagnerian one, his specialty being the cutting through of Gordian knots. He dealt with family, school, Cambridge, love affairs, the problems dividing the poet from the man of action, all in the same way—cut right through them with the steel blade of objective action. As between poetry and fighting in Spain, he decidedly chose the latter, after he left Cambridge:

> Poetry had become a marginal activity, and a private one. He never discussed his work with his friends in the party; most of them did not even know until after his death that he had been a poet. . . . In the rare moments when he was free to do so, he wrote both personal and political poems. The latter represents a conscious effort to "objectify" his ideas and attitudes as a revolutionary participator, and to transform them into revolutionary poetry.

Instead of being, like Julian Bell, a poet partly stifled in his work by his need to take action in circumstances which cried out for it, he put poetry aside and immersed himself in the war, but from this, and out of the ideology with which he tempered his will and determination, a hard clear new poetry of the objective will began to emerge. He writes sketchily, tentatively but effectively, as someone dominated by the Communist idea of transforming the dialectic into history—hammered out of his mind and body occupied at the given moment in doing just this:

> *The past, a glacier, gripped the mountain wall,*
> *And time was inches, dark was all.*
> *But here it scales the end of the range,*
> *The dialectic's point of change,*
> *Crashes in light and minutes to its fall.*
>
> *Time present is a cataract whose force*
> *Breaks down the banks even at its source*
> *And history forming in our hands*
> *Not plasticine but roaring sands,*
> *Yet we must swing it to its final course.*

The attempt here is to write a secular Communist poetry corresponding to religious metaphysical poetry. It is blurred perhaps because Marxism, in common with other analytic and scientific systems, cannot be taken outside its own method and terms, and interpreted

imagistically, or converted into a mystique, without appearing to lose its own kind of precision. Here the Marxist poet is only encountering the difficulty of other modern poets in a secular world. The precision of science resists being interpreted into the precision of poetry. But if one sees beyond the poem, as through a transparent screen, the structure of the dialectic, it is clear that this is an attempt to write Communist poetry. If one does not see this, then one might agree with Stansky and Abrahams that "the abstractions and metaphors proliferate, taking us still further from reality and deeper into the visionary world of the seer." Having lived through the thirties, I can only rub my eyes reading this. Still—from the Marxist standpoint—all that is wrong is thinking that "abstractions" (if they are "correct") lead away from reality instead of penetrating deeper into it. The point is that Cornford was trying here to be a Marxist visionary and seer. And, but for Stalin and the Marxists, the attempt would not be a contradiction in terms.

What does seem strange is that the idea of literary Bloomsbury that literature should be untainted by politics seems to have derived from France, or rather, from Roger Fry's and Clive Bell's idea of a France of complete esthetic purism. Probably this went back to de Nerval, Gautier, Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Flaubert—and to the eighteen-nineties, reviled and disowned, yet such an influence up till 1930. Art for art's sake looks sophisticated when metamorphosized into "significant form," and Oscar Wilde walks again, but unrecognized, through G. E. Moore's doctrine of the value above all other things of "certain states of consciousness, which may roughly be described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects."

But to hold up post-1918 France as the country of pure esthetic aims is rather as though the French were to point to the work of Edgar Allen Poe in Baudelaire's translations as the type of recent American literature.

A young English writer going with eyes unprejudiced by Bloomsbury's view of France to Paris in the late twenties or early thirties soon discovered that the newspapers and reviews had national parks freely ranged over by French novelists and poets offering their opinions on social topics. When Julian Bell was sent in 1927 to Paris, to learn French at the home of a teacher, he found that his host, as well as knowing much about French literature and art was a theoretical Communist though "there was nothing of the modern party line about him."

Just as English good taste is often modeled on an idea that France is the country of perfect elegance (one has only to travel a little in the provinces to see that the real strength of France lies in its bourgeois bad

taste) so Bloomsbury estheticism was modeled on the idea of French writers and artists devoted to nothing but their art. But France is pre-eminently the country of the *deuxième metier*, of the writer who is also a teacher or journalist, the writer who, though he may be "pure" in his poetry or fiction, yet lives by selling his opinions. Even Paul Valéry wrote about politics in the modern world.

It is, indeed, the English who are the real esthetes, failing perhaps to be as pure as they would like to be, but nevertheless upholding a standard of art for art's sake. One has only to mention the names of Kipling, Wells and Shaw to see that these writers, because they published undisguised opinions about politics, damaged their reputations as artists here more than they would have in any other country. And today the writers of the thirties suffer from the odium of their early work being tainted with politics.

All the English or American writer may do with his politics, if he is not to be labeled journalist, is cultivate convictions which show through his work, attitudes basically political, but implicit, not vulgarly declared. The anglicized Americans, Henry James and T. S. Eliot, adapting chameleon-like to England, acquired a traditionalist coloration that, on the rare occasions when it is developed to the point of crude statement, is conservative. But in fact they hardly ever do come into the open.

A point which Mr. John Harrison rather misses in his book *The Reactionaries*,[2] in adding up the sum of Eliot's anti-Semitic and politically reactionary observations, is that they are not in character with the Eliot who after all became an English poet. They come rather from another Eliot character, a somberly jaunty young American in Paris, a figure in a cape, almost eighteen-ninetyish. The famous pronouncement about being a royalist would do better as a bouquet thrown to the Comte de Paris, than to George V.

The characteristic of the special kind of crisis which persuades the young English or American poet (yesterday Spain, today Vietnam) to take the plunge into politics is one of conscience among sensitive and intelligent young members of the ruling class caused by what they regard as a betrayal of principle on the part of their fathers' generation. The failure is the failure to act according to principles when interests are threatened. Since the principles of democratic and "free" societies are basically liberal and since liberal values are always open to the challenge that those who profess them have refused to pay the

2 THE REACTIONARIES. By John Harrison. Golancz. 35s.

price which they demand, the crisis is one of the liberal conscience. At the time of the French Revolution and in the early nineteenth century the fury of the Romantic poets was against an English governing class which refused to support freedom when revolution threatened English interests. Byron and Shelley were never more the young English aristocrats than in supporting the overthrowers of kings and priests, and in reviling Castlereagh as though he were their delinquent lackey. Their attitude has something in common with that of Robert Lowell to President Johnson.

Likewise in the thirties anti-Fascism was predominantly a reaction of middle-class young men brought up in a liberal atmosphere against the old men in power, of the same class, who while talking about freedom and democracy, were not prepared to denounce Hitler or defend the Spanish Republic. They feared that as the price of doing so they would find themselves on the same side as the Communists. That the old who professed liberal principles should not see the threat of Fascism or, if they did see it, that they did not take action, seemed to the young a betrayal of basic liberal principles by liberals. Cornford and Bell were not just young Oedipuses subconsciously wishing to destroy their father's image. They had conscious reasons for attacking it: Laius was a liberal.

It is only in the circumstances of a moral power vacuum that the English or American writer can justify, to his conscience as an artist, his taking a political stand. But he does so not without qualms. The anti-Fascist writers of the thirties conducted debates, not only in reviews or at meetings, but in their own hearts, between public and isolated artistic conscience. Indeed, ever since the nineteenth century (Shelley, Arnold, Clough, Ruskin, Morris) it has been the case that the English poet mixed up in politics may spend a lifetime divided between two voices: that of social, and that of esthetic, conscience: Shelley calling on the world to dethrone kings, and Keats claiming that his poetry is unshadowed by any trace of public thought.

There is a good deal to be said in support of the English poets' mistrust of overtly taking sides. Only in exceptional historical circumstances do writers here attend the "boring meeting" or read or write the "flat ephemeral pamphlet." Very rarely do they find themselves involved in "the conscious acceptance of guilt in the fact of murder."

The "disgrace" attaching to the "low dishonest decade" of the thirties in England was not the same as that in France of some surrealist turned Communist and currying favor with Stalin by accusing André Gide of being a Fascist because he was critical of the Russia

of the Moscow trials. We had the humility to believe that for writers to be involved in politics was itself a fall from grace. To us part of the hideousness of Fascism was that it produced anti-Fascism, involving disinterested artists in interested politics. Reading Auden's poem on the death of Yeats, in 1939, "Intellectual disgrace/Stares from every human face," I think of the whole politically involved intellectual life of that decade, disgraced with ideologies.

However, our English and American idea that the intellectuals should only take political sides in situations providing moral contrasts of inky black and dazzling white has its disadvantages. For one thing there is something unserious about a seriousness which is made conditional on things being so serious.

After all, the shining emergent Causes—Spain, the Bomb, Vietnam—do have chains of further causality stretching before and after. That the intellectuals only have time for them when they have become moral scandals might seem to indicate that they do not have time anyway. The English and American political-unpolitical intellectuals sometime have the look of the gadarene swine hurling themselves down the steepest slope: the gadarene swine being of course in the latest apocalyptic fashion. The cause evaporates when the crisis in its immediate emanation has passed. The long term causes of the Cause find few among the English and American intellectuals to interest them.

In France the intellectuals are, as it were, more or less in continual session like the British House of Lords. They are sometimes irresponsible, nearly always narrowly legalistic in their interpretations of a political line (with that deceptive French "logic") but their concern with politics is sustained and (despite Clive Bell and Roger Fry) not thought to dishonor their art. They do not have to prove that in attending a conference about peace or freedom, they are being serious, whereas the English and Americans are under pressure to show that when they do take up a cause, they do more about it than travel to nice places. His biographers note that Julian Bell dismissed "in a few satirical phrases" the International Writers' Congress which was held in Madrid in the summer of 1937, while he was driving an ambulance on the Brunete front. I happened to attend the Congress of Intellectuals myself and also to have described it satirically (in *World within World*) though without Bell's justification that I was carrying a gun or driving an ambulance. But I don't think any but English and Americans would have thought that a meeting of writers in Madrid when shells were falling was a despicable exercise. The French would

have seen it as a useful part of a larger strategy of help for the Republican cause, as useful, in its way, as being at the front, though not so courageous and praiseworthy. They also serve who only sit and talk.

The authors of two books which I have been reading recently seem to me to take the difference between the situation of the French and the Anglo-American intellectuals insufficiently into account: *The Reactionaries* by John Harrison, to which I have already referred, and *Writers and Politics* by Conor Cruise O'Brien.[3]

O'Brien is at his brilliant best when he is discussing French writers: e.g., the shift in Camus' earlier revolutionary position to the resigned pessimism of *La Chute,* written when he refused to take sides over the Algerian War. O'Brien analyzes the relations of Camus with the general current of French-intellectual life with a precision which reads like a description of the modifications caused to some receiving instrument by the electrical impulses passing through it.

O'Brien quite rightly derides those critics who discovered Camus to be "objectively revolutionary," employing what he calls "the convenient principle: 'I know what he thinks: it doesn't matter what he thinks he thinks.' "

Since he has such insight into the fallaciousness of this principle, it seems strange that, on occasion, he employs it himself. In the essay on Dwight Macdonald (*A New Yorker Critic*) he argues that Mr. Macdonald in giving up his "socialist past" and writing about "masscult," "midcult" and the rest for *The New Yorker* in effect (and regardless of what Macdonald may think he thinks) subscribes to the policy of that magazine, which is a projection of the views of its advertisers. This is the "objective" argument squared. *The New Yorker* is as object to its backers, and Dwight Macdonald is as object to *The New Yorker.*

The insidious nonpolitical policy of *The New Yorker* as it operates subliminally on the mind of Dwight Macdonald works like this:

> you could say *almost* anything about Mark Twain, James Joyce, James Agee, Ernest Hemingway, James Cozzens, Colin Wilson, the English or revised Bibles, or Webster's *New International Dictionary*—to list most of Mr. Macdonald's subjects—without causing a *New Yorker* reader or advertiser to wince. If, however, your favourite author happened to be Mao Tse-tung and Fidel Castro and you tried to say so in *The New Yorker,* then you would be going "against the American grain" and you would not be likely to go very far.

3 WRITERS AND POLITICS. By Conor Cruise O'Brien. Alfred A. Knopf. $4.95.

This is really a variant of the "objective" argument: *The New Yorker* is not filled with articles in praise of Mao Tse-tung because of the invisible thought-control of the advertisers. But supposing, after all, that *New Yorker* writers don't admire the prose of the Chinese and Cuban dictators? Should *The New Yorker* nevertheless contain a quota of opinions praising it just to prove to Dr. O'Brien that *The New Yorker* is free from the pressures to which he thinks it is subject? Or supposing that Dr. O'Brien had suggested some different writers whom *New Yorker* writers would praise if they were free agents—say Hitler and Trujillo? One only has to suggest this to see the bias of the argument. Dr. O'Brien is playing on the reader's secret guilt about China and Cuba. There are I think false steps in O'Brien's attack on Dwight Macdonald. In the first place, Macdonald was never a party line socialist revolutionary, he was just a lone rebel all by himself. He was a highly individualist rebel against American capitalism who sought allies among Anarchists, Communists, Trotskyites. In discussing him as though he had reneged from revolutionary socialism (perhaps—because he is such a nice fellow—without realizing he was doing so), Dr. O'Brien fails to mention the important statements made by Macdonald when he gave up his magazine *Politics*, that in the complexity of the postwar situation he no longer found it possible to take up clear positions. He found, as did many other survivors from the simplicist world of the thirties, that politics had become extremely complicated and that it was no longer possible to see them in black and white.

O'Brien's case against Camus seems stronger than that against Macdonald, because the early Camus wrote within the context of the ideas of the left-wing French intellectuals. Camus' attitude toward Algeria certainly separated him from Sartre and his followers. It is plausible then to regard him as abandoning a path followed by leftist French writers. With Macdonald though, all one can say is that an independent thinker whose thoughts when he was young were anarchistic later had other thoughts about other things. The new thoughts were about culture and not about politics. One may or may not agree with them, one may or may not regret that Macdonald stopped having things to say about politics, but to say that he changed the content and the direction of his thinking to suit *The New Yorker* is misleading.

Mr. John Harrison's reactionaries are W. B. Yeats, Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound and D. H. Lawrence. Mr. Harrison knows that to prove that they are really reactionary, it is not enough to show that they occasionally labeled themselves so. However he does not altogether avoid the dangers implicit in compiling lists of their reactionary pro-

nouncements without asking how far these really correspond to ideas in their best creative work. His problem is to relate their expressed opinions to convictions of which they themselves may not have been wholly aware, but which do have political implications, in their best writing.

The extent to which we should take a writer's expressed opinions seriously is difficult to ascertain. What I have been suggesting here is that in France it is not so difficult to do this, because there is a tradition of intellectually respect-worthy opinion about politics to which the writer can relate his own views. But in England and America there is no such tradition of the writer in politics. Therefore his interventions tend to be sporadic and occasional and perhaps not consistent with his truest, that is his most imaginative, insights.

This is even more true of the Right than of the Left. For the Left, after all, even in England and America, can merge into the traditions of the French and American Revolutions, the internationalism of nineteenth-century liberals, Marxism, mingling, for the time being, with a world river of continuous thought and energy. During the decade of the Popular Front the English anti-Fascist writers became, as it were, honorary French intellectuals. And this was not altogether absurd because of the international character of the Left. But Fascism, and indeed the European right, so diverse in its manifestations in different countries, although potentially an international threat, was nationalist and local in ideas and performance. Therefore there was something much more esoteric and perverse about the intermittent support which Mr. Harrison's reactionaries gave to right-wing and Fascist movements than about the corresponding political involvements of the anti-Fascists.

The traditionalism which appealed so much to Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Wyndham Lewis and others doubtless had political implications, and given the crucial nature of the period, it was not dishonorable of traditionalists to want to realize these by supporting rightist parties. But a big leap into the near dark had to be made in order to convert the poetic traditionalism of Yeats, Pound or Eliot into support of General O'Duffy, Mussolini or the *Action Française*.

The political attitudes of Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Lewis, Lawrence, consist largely of gestures toward some movement, idea, leadership which *seems* to correspond to the writer's deeply held traditionalism. Such gestures and attitudes are largely rhetorical. For the politics of these writers are secondary effects of their thoughts about the tragedy of culture in modern industrial societies. They are sometimes con-

scientious, sometimes irresponsible attempts to translate their traditionalist standpoint into programs of action.

Whereas the leftist anti-Fascist writers—believing that the overthrow of Fascism was the most important task of their generation—tended to think that their writing should perhaps be the instrument of the overriding public cause, the reactionaries thought that politics should be the servant of their vision of the high tradition. Wyndham Lewis, for example, never supposed that he should become the mouthpiece of Hitler. What he thought was that as the living representative in the contemporary world of renaissance "genius" perhaps a few renaissance thugs would be helpful to the cause of his art: if this was the role that Hitler and Mussolini had unknowingly cast for themselves, maybe they should be encouraged. Yeats had a not very different attitude toward the soldiers of the Right who could perhaps be given orders by Art, and who also were useful in providing sound effects for the end of a civilization.

The most important thing common to the reactionaries was that they had a kind of shared vision of the greatness of the European past which implied hatred and contempt for the present. It might be said that all their most important work was an attempt to relate their experiences to this central vision. On the secondary level of their attempts to carry forward the vision into action and propaganda there is a good deal of peripheral mess, resulting from their search for political approximations to their love of past intellect, art, discipline and order. Often their politics only shows that they care less for politics than for literature.

Mr. John Harrison takes some remarks of Orwell as his text which he sets out to illustrate with examples drawn from his authors. This text is worth examining:

> The relationship between fascism and the literary intelligentsia badly needs investigating, and Yeats might well be the starting point. He is best studied by someone like Mr. Menon who knows that a writer's politics and religious beliefs are not excrescences to be laughed away, but something that will leave their mark even on the smallest detail of his work.

This sounds sensible enough though it is perhaps too offhand to bear the weight of Mr. Harrison's thesis. Certain objections occur to one. For example, if it were true that a writer's politics and religious beliefs extend from a center outward into every smallest detail of

his work, then the converse would also be true that one could deduce his party or creed from an analysis of any smallest detail, whether or not the writer thought that he supported such a party or a creed.

This leads back into the objectivist fallacy of the writer holding certain views whether he thinks he does or not.

What is wrong is Orwell's loose bracketing of religious and political beliefs, and his assumption that it is a comparatively simple matter to know what a writer believes. But it is not simple, since he is writing out of his imagination, his vision of life, and not according to labels which he or others may stick on to him. Orwell appears to think that Yeats's symbolism, mythology, imagery—his poetry in a word—are projections onto the plane of the imagination of his declared political and religious beliefs. It is really the other way round. Yeats's religion and politics are the results of numerous inconsistent attempts to rationalize his central poetic vision, as dogma, politics, action. Whether or not they should be "laughed off," Yeats's Fascism was an excrescence. It grew rather approximately and grossly from the center of his poetic imagination which was neither approximate nor gross. To anyone who reads *A Vision* or his journals and prose, it must be quite clear that his opinions are attempts to systematize the intuitions of his imagination.

Add to this that even when they are stated as prose, one cannot discuss Yeats's beliefs without making many qualifications. Outside of believing in art and in some universe of the spirit in which the visions of art are realistic truth, Yeats himself was extremely approximate about what he believed. He was candid in admitting that he cultivated beliefs and attitudes in himself for the purpose of propping up the symbolism of his poetry. He also had a sharp picture of a materialist world which undermined his world of the poetic imagination: this was Bernard Shaw's Fabian philosophy and belief in material progress. That which to Shaw was superstition and reaction recommended itself as dogma and practice to Yeats.

Dr. O'Brien has drawn up a formidable list of Yeats's pro-Fascist statements, including one or two sympathetic to Hitler. But to the reader who thinks that Yeats's poems and not his opinions matter, it will seem, I think, that he used the political stage properties of the thirties in the same way as he used the assertions of his esoteric system set out in *A Vision*—as a scenario stocked with symbols and metaphors which he could draw on for his poetry. To Yeats writing the tragic-gay poetry of his old age, Hitler had the seductive charm of an apocalyptic cat.

What is distressing about the reactionaries is not that they were occasionally betrayed by intoxication with their own ideas and fantasies into supporting dictators who would, given the opportunity, certainly have disposed very quickly of them, but that in the excess of their hatred of the present and their love of the past, they developed a certain cult of inhumanity. One has to ask though—was not their renaissance vision enormously valuable to us, and could it have been stated without dramatizing the statuesque figures of a visionary past against the twittering ghosts of the disintegrated present?

Eliot's political views, like those of Yeats, are a defense system hastily thrown out with the intention of defending a spiritual world deriving strength from the past, against modern materialism. One suspects that Eliot was convinced intellectually, as a critic, and not with his imagination, as a poet, of the necessity of rationalizing poetic values as politics. Without the example of T. E. Hulme and without some cheer-leading from Ezra Pound and some satiric pushing from Wyndham Lewis, Eliot would scarcely have made those remarks about liberalism and progress, which seem casual asides, and which yet set him up as an authority, defender of the monarchy and the faith. In his role of political commentator in *The Criterion* he must have baffled readers who did not realize that his mind was moving along lines laid down by Charles Maurras. There is also something cloak-and-dagger about the anti-Semitic passages in the Sweeney poems which Mr. Harrison inevitably relies on to demonstrate his thesis:

The smoky candle end of time
Declines. On the Rialto once.
The rats are underneath the piles.
The jew is underneath the lot.
Money in furs.

Of course this was distasteful caricature even when it was written. In the light of later developments it seems almost criminal. Nevertheless what seems wrong about the Sweeney poems is not that they are reactionary-political but that they use a tawdry view of a conspiratorial capitalism to construct a rather cardboard background to the poetry.

That Eliot, Yeats, Pound and Lawrence were all exiles (and Wyndham Lewis a self-declared outsider—"the Enemy") has a bearing on their politics. The exile is particularly apt to dramatize himself as a metaphor moving through a world of metaphors. Pound and Eliot left what they regarded as barbarous America to come to civilized Europe, where they found, in the First World War:

There died a myriad,
And of the best among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilisation.

Their poetry exalted the past which they had sought among the Georgian poets and found only embalmed in museums, and it derided the present, the decay of standards. They were, politically, Don Quixotes of the new world armed to rescue the Dulcinea of the old—an old hag. The aim of their polemical criticism was to reinvent the past, shining and modern, and use it as a modern weapon against the arsenals of the dead men stuffed with straw.

Their politics were secondary to the creative and critical attempt. In them, they were drawn to whatever points of view presented social and economic problems as metaphors for their idea of the state of civilization. The appeal of politics in the guise of metaphor is curiously shown in the great attraction—which can only be compared with that of Donne's ideas about time—of Social Credit theories for a number of writers, including not only Eliot and Pound but also Edwin Muir—during the late twenties and thirties. Social Credit is easy to visualize. One sees objects of value being produced on one side of a chart and on the other side money—credit—being printed equal to the value of the objects. Since Schacht and Mussolini actually made adjustments to the German and Italian economies along similar lines, Social Credit seemed to be an idea which could be abstracted from the rest of Fascism and applied to other systems. For reactionaries who could not swallow violence, it was a kind of Fascism without tears.

Students of Ezra Pound's *Cantos* will observe how metaphors of this kind drawn from a reading of economics imagized and then applied to describe the state of the civilization are used by Pound, sometimes to justify inhuman attitudes. A famous example is the passage about usury in which Pound explains that the introduction of usury into the economic system falsifies the line drawn by the painter, causes his hand to err. This justifies a massacre of Jews.

The Left also of course had their metaphors, which by making history appear a poetic act tended to regard human beings as words to be acted upon, deleted if necessary, so that the poem might come right.

In fact, on a level of false rhetoric, so far from there being a separation of politics from poetry, there is a dangerous convergence. Marxism, because it regards history as malleable material to be

manipulated by the creative will of the Marxist, is rich in this kind of raw material poetic thinking.

The temptation for the poet is to take over the rhetoric of political will and action and translate it into the rhetoric of poetry without confronting the public rhetoric of politics with the private values of poetry. If there is a sin common to poetry such as Auden's *Spain*, the anti-Semitic passages in Eliot's Sweeney poems, the political passages in Pound's cantos, Wyndham Lewis' adulation of what he calls "the party of genius" (meaning Michelangelo and Wyndham Lewis), Lawrence's worship of the dynamic will of nature's aristocrats (in *The Plumed Serpent*), certain of my own lines, it is that the poet has—if only for a few moments—allowed his scrupulous poet's rhetoric of the study of "minute particulars" to be overwhelmed by his secret yearning for a heroic public rhetoric. Sensibility has surrendered to will, the Keatsian concept of poetic personality to the dominating mode of character.

In a period when poets seemed imprisoned in their private worlds, their occasional acts of surrender to the excitement of a public world of action in the service of what they could pretend to themselves was a civilizing cause is understandable. But the reactionariness of the "reactionaries" is the weakness, not the strength, of their work. William Empson writes in his curious, sympathetic preface to Mr. Harrison's book that he doubts whether the political issues of "their weakness for Fascism" was "the central one." He adds:

> Now that everything is so dismal we should look back with reverence on the great age of poets and fundamental thinkers, who were so ready to consider heroic remedies. Perhaps their gloomy prophecies have simply come true.

We (and here by "we" I mean the thirties' writers) not only look back on them with reverence, but we also revered them at the time. It is important to understand that we thought of them as a greater generation of more devoted artists. That we did so made us reflect that we were a generation less single-minded in our art, but which had perhaps found a new subject—the social situation. We did not think this could lead to better work than theirs, but on the other hand we saw that young poets could not go on writing esoteric poetry about the end of civilization. Yet their endgames were our beginnings. Our generation reacted against the same conventions of Georgian poetry and the novel as did the generation of T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence and E. M. Forster. They were indeed our heroes.

Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Roy Campbell were the only reactionaries whose public attitudes we sometimes attacked: with the mental reservation that we thought them zanies anyway. As for Eliot, Yeats and Lawrence, if one minimized their statements about politics, there was much in their deepest political insights with which we agreed.

> *Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold;*
> *Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.*

This described our situation. By comparison the fact that Yeats went out and supported General O'Duffy seemed singularly irrelevant. No poem could show better than *The Second Coming* how wrong Orwell was to approach Yeats's poetry as a function of his Fascism. To us, his Fascism seemed a misconception arising from his deep political (and here the word seems quite inadequate) insight.

It is a pity that Mr. Harrison, instead of accepting at their face value labels like "left" and "reactionary," did not compare at a deeper level than that of political parties the social vision of the poets of the thirties and the older generation. He might have found then that the two generations often agreed in their diagnoses: they came to opposite conclusions with regard to remedies. He might also have found that the younger generation, in coming to their revolutionary conclusions, owed their view that we were living in a revolutionary situation to the insights of the reactionaries.

His biographers point out that John Cornford, while he was still a schoolboy, was led to Communism by reading *The Waste Land*. "He believed it to be a great poem, read it not as a religious allegory . . . but as an anatomy of capitalist society in decay; it shaped his style, but more important, it was a preface to his politics."

To the imagination the poetry does not preach party matters. It penetrates into the depths of an external situation and shows what is strange and terrible. Eliot drew conclusions from his own poetic insight with his intellect, with which Cornford disagreed when he wrote:

> *The Waste Land* . . . is of great importance not for the pleasure it gives, but for its perfect picture of the disintegration of a civilisation. . . . But something more than description, some analysis of the situation is needed. And it is here that Eliot breaks down. He refuses to answer the question that he has so perfectly formulated. He retreats into the familiar triangle—Classicism, Royalism, Ango-Catholicism. He has not found an answer to the question of resignation. Rather he has resigned himself to finding no answer.

Here the imagination which can give the "perfect picture of disintegration" is dramatized as posing the question to which the intellect gives the answer—the wrong answer, according to Cornford, but even he, the convinced Communist undergraduate about to go to Spain, cares more that the question should have been posed than that the answer should be "correct," for the question suggests what was to him the "correct" answer.

What was common to modern poets between 1910 and 1930 was their condemnation of a society which they saw as the disintegration of civilization. Given this agreed on line, it was possible to be on the reactionary or the socialist side of it. The reactionaries, on their side asked: "What of the past can be saved?" The socialists, on their side, asked: "How can there be new life?" The awesome achievement of the earlier generation was to have created for their contemporaries a vision of the whole past tradition which had a poignant immediacy: giving shattered contemporary civilization consciousness of its own past greatness, like the legendary glimpse of every act of his life in the eyes of a man drowning. Without the awareness of drowning, of the end of the long game, the apprehended moment could not have been so vivid. Thus the gloomy prophecies of the future, and the consequent weakness for reactionary politics, were the dark side of an intensely burning vision.

The liberals, the progressives, the anti-Fascists could not invest their future with a vision of the values of present civilization as great as the reactionaries' vision of past values. Perhaps though they agreed with the reactionaries that the genius of our civilization which had flickered on since the Renaissance was soon to be extinguished. E. M. Forster, whose work stands midway between the idea of past and present, sees the greatness of England and Europe as over. The past commands his love, though the causes which should ultimately make people better off—freedom of the peoples of the world from the old imperialisms, greater social justice, etc.—command his loyalty. But his loyalty inspires him with little love, and he has no enthusiasm for the liberated materially better world which he felt bound to support.

The anti-Fascists in the end accepted or were influenced by the idea that the struggle for the future meant abandoning nostalgia for a past civilization. They had now to emphasize "new life," a new culture not obsessed with the past. Julian Bell and John Cornford came to feel that in putting the cause before everything they must be prepared even to jettison their own poetry. And they found themselves quite glad to do so. In 1932, when he started becoming interested in

politics, John Cornford wrote to his mother: "I have found it a great relief to stop pretending to be an artist" and in the same letter he told her that he had bought "*Kapital* and a good deal of commentary, which I hope to find time to tackle this term. Also *The Communist Manifesto*." In renouncing being an artist he is also turning back on the world of his mother, Frances Cornford, the poet. Julian Bell experienced an immense sense of relief when he decided to turn away from literature and go to Spain. If Auden and Isherwood had written a play on the theme of Bell and Cornford one can well imagine that their deaths on the battlefield would have been seen as the finale of a dialogue with their art-loving mothers.

Feelings and motives involved here are extremely complex. Uncertainty about their vocations, rebellion against their mothers and against the values of the literary world of Cambridge, Oxford and London, a suppressed anti-intellectualism and an expression of the tendency of the young in that decade to interpret all current issues as a conflict between principles of "life" and "death," the "real" and the "unreal," all enter in. The reader of Stansky and Abrahams cannot help noting that in a decade when people were always being reproached for "escapism" the immersion into the life of action and political choice filled Bell and Cornford with an elation remarkably like that of escape —escape from having to be poets. Escape is wrong only if it means an escape from high standards to lower or more relaxed ones. In their renunciation of those standards of their parents which were, perhaps, too esthetic, Cornford and Bell shared a tendency to escape into accepting means which were perilously close to Fascist ones. Thus Cornford writes:

> The disgraceful part of the German business is not that the Nazis kill and torture their enemies; it is that Socialists and Communists let themselves be made prisoners instead of first killing as many Nazis as they can.

Julian Bell states still more strongly the objection to the liberals. His reaction is all the more striking because it is so much a renunciation of that pacifism which was one of his deepest ties with his parents:

> Most of my friends are utterly squeamish about means; they feel that it would be terrible to use force or fraud against anyone. . . . Even most Communists seem to me to have only a hysterical and quite unrealistic notion about violent methods . . . I can't imagine anyone of the *New Statesman*

> doing anything "unfair" to an opponent. . . . Whereas for my own part . . . I can't feel the slightest qualms about the notion of doing anything effective, however ungentlemanly and unchristian, nor about admitting to myself that certain actions would be very unfair indeed. . . .

and he ends the same letter with a sentence that is surely very revealing:

> I don't feel, myself, as if I could ever be satisfied to do anything but produce works of art, or even nothing but leading a private life and producing works in the intervals.

I do not quote these passages because I think them characteristic of Cornford and Bell (in fact they are hysterical outbursts out of character) but because of the light which—paradoxically—they throw on the relationship of the thirties generation with an older one. This balances the violence of the reactionaries supporting Fascism in the name of art, against the violence of the leftists prepared to sacrifice art to the cause of anti-Fascism.

The reactionaries cared passionately for past values. Their nostalgia misled them into sympathizing with whatever jack-booted corporal or demagogue set himself up in defense of order. As the history of Ezra Pound shows, the results of this could be tragic. But they did put literature before politics, and their first concern was to preserve the civilization without which, as they thought, neither past nor future literature could survive. They did not, as the anti-Fascist writers did, abandon or postpone their literary tasks. For the anti-Fascists allowed themselves, rightly or wrongly, to be persuaded that civilization could only be saved by action: the logical consequence of this attitude was to put writing at the service of necessity as dictated by political leaders.

There was, then, the paradox that the reactionaries who were on the side of the past, the dead, had to live for the sake of literature, whereas circumstances drove the most sincere anti-Fascists—men like Cornford, Bell, Fox and Caudwell—to death as absolution in a cause which they had made absolute. The reactionaries wrote out of their tragic sense of modern life. The Cornfords and Bells lived and died the tragedy.

THE OTHER AUTHOR: DIVISIONS ON A VICTORIAN THEME

A Sepoy servant, Nate, the natural son
Of my Calcutta stepfather, probably
Tended my seasickness, for I was but eight
On the long passage to England—Starboard Home.

When we called at St. Helena, he took me
A crooked way over brown hills and boulders
Till we reached a garden where we saw a man
Walking. "There he is," my black Nate said, "see him?

Buonaparte, that is he! Three pigs in a day he eats
And all the children he can lay hands on too."
Thirty years hence, to the day, I wrote the first
"Novel without a Hero." Then I was nine:

Dear Mother, I am at Margate. This has been
Neptune Day with me. I call it so because
I go into the water and am like Neptune.
The sea was ever my friend, and shall be so.

Everyone here is very kind and *will* give
A great many cakes, a great many kisses,
But I do not let Charles kiss me. Those I take
Only from the ladies. And I learn such poems

As you once affected, the *Ode on Music,*
Etc. I intend to be one of those heroes
In time . . . In time I have come to know Babylon,
My books made my fortune there, a kind of *Ode*

On Money. "Dress me for ten," cried the Duchess,
"Dress me for twenty!" Madam, I never make love,
I told the pretty glove-seller, I buy it
Ready-made. "Do you like London, Miss Brontë?"

And after a long pause, very gravely, "Yes
And no." Dress me for ten, dress me for twenty:
Those years upon years of world without event
Save going out to dinner, I and my wife. . . .

On Sunday, sailing through the calm, shining sea
(Neptune was ever my friend, and shall be so),
Isabella, off the Isle of Wight, flung
Herself into the water (from the water-closet)

And was there twenty minutes floating before
The ship's boat even sighted her. O my God
What a dream it is! She was found then, floating
On her back, paddling with her hands, and never

Sank at all. In the night, she made fresh attempts
At destruction, and all the first week I wore
A riband about my waist and fixed to hers,
The which always woke me if she moved. Marriage

Is like dipping into a pitcher of snakes
For the chance of an eel. Tennyson perhaps
Found an eel, no one else. After my seventh
Novel, it ceased to matter. I sent the boy

To Oxford with every hope he might become
A gentleman. Alas, he became only
A Roman Catholic. The girls never grew
Away from Isabella as I supposed—

She had a new kind of power, from her bed,
And seldom needed speak above a whisper.
But how they listened to her when she sighed:
"Servants talk about people, gentlefolk discuss

Things." A novelist was, she knew, beneath her.
I had not found what I wanted, nor wanted
What I found: the Grand Style for the few that meant
A Small Style for the many. *Punch* will show you

The rest: I was taller than Carlyle, white-haired
At forty, fond of cheroots and good claret.
I died on a visit to the Duke of Devonshire:
"Show me the Bluebeard Closet where the dead wives

Hang, and the murdered secrets. O you must have
A Bluebeard Closet! Everybody does.
Just let me sit there—I'd like that best." Today
My Jubilee Edition is "very scarce."

Richard Howard

Philip Roth

WHACKING OFF

Then came the years when half my waking life was spent locked behind the bathroom door, firing my wad down the toilet, or into the soiled clothes of the laundry hamper, or with a thick splat, up against the medicine chest mirror, before which I stood in my dropped drawers to see how it looked coming out. Or else I was doubled up over my flying fist, eyes closed but mouth wide open, to take that sticky sauce of buttermilk and Clorox on my own tongue and teeth—though not infrequently, in my blindness and ecstasy, I got it all in the pompadour, like a blast of Wildroot Cream Oil. Through a world of matted handkerchiefs and crumpled Kleenex and stained pajamas, I moved my raw and swollen penis, perpetually in dread of my loathsomeness being discovered by someone coming upon me just as I was dropping my load. Nonetheless, I was wholly incapable of keeping my paws from my dong once it started the climb up my belly. In the middle of a class I would raise my hand to be excused, rush to the lavatory, and with ten or fifteen savage strokes, beat off standing up into a urinal. At the Saturday afternoon movie I would leave my friends to go off to the candy machine—and wind up hiding in a distant balcony seat, where with muffled groans I would squirt my seed into the empty wrapper from a Mounds bar. On an outing of our family association, I once cored an apple, saw what it looked like, and ran into the woods to fall upon the orifice of the fruit, pretending that the cool and mealy hole was actually between the legs of that mythical girl who always called me Big Boy when she begged and wept and pleaded for a bit of what I had. "Oh, shove it in me, Big Boy," cried the cored apple that I banged

silly on that picnic. "Big Boy, Big Boy, oh give me all you've got," cried the empty milk bottle that I kept hidden in our storage bin in the basement, to drive wild after school with my vaselined upright. "Come, Big Boy, come," screamed the maddened piece of liver that, in my insanity, I bought one afternoon at a butcher shop and, believe it or not, violated behind a billboard on the way to a *bar mitzvah* lesson.

It was at the end of the first year of high school—my first full year of masturbating—that I discovered on the underside of my penis, just where the shaft meets the head, a little discolored dot that has since been diagnosed as a freckle. Cancer. I had given myself *cancer*. All that pulling and pawing and tugging at my own flesh, all that friction, had given me an incurable disease! At fourteen! In bed at night the tears rolled down my cheeks: "No!" I sobbed, "I don't want to die! Please—no!" But then, because I would very shortly be a corpse anyway, I went ahead as usual and jerked off into my sock. I had taken to carrying my dirty socks into bed with me at night, so as to be able to use one as a receptable upon retiring and the other upon awakening.

Oh, if only I could cut down to one hand-job a day, or hold the line at two, or even three! But with the horror of oblivion before me, I actually began to set new records for myself. Before meals. After meals. *During* meals. Jumping up from the dinner table, I tragically clutch my belly—diarrhea! I cry, I have been stricken with diarrhea!—and once behind the locked bathroom door, slip over my head a pair of my sister's underwear that I have stolen from her dresser and carry rolled in a handkerchief in my pocket. So galvanic is the effect of those cotton panties against my tongue—so galvanic is the very *word* "panties"—not to mention all that pink against my undie-crazy eyeballs, that the trajectory of my ejaculation reaches startling new heights: leaving my joint like a rocket it makes right for the light bulb overhead, where to my wonderment and horror, it hits and it hangs. Wildly in the first moment I cover my eyes, expecting an explosion of glass, a burst of flames. Disaster, you see, disintegration, are continually on my mind. Then quietly as I can I climb the radiator and remove the sizzling gob with a wad of toilet paper. I begin a scrupulous search of the shower curtain, the

tub, the tile floor, the four toothbrushes—God forbid!—and just as I am about to unlock the door, imagining I have covered my tracks, my heart lurches at the sight of what is clinging like snot to the toe of my shoe. I am the Raskolnikov of jerking off—the sticky evidence is everywhere! Is it on my cuffs too, my hands, *is it in my hair*? All this I wonder, even as I come back to the dinner table, scowling and cranky, to snap incoherently at my father when he opens his mouth full of red jello and says, "I don't understand what you have to lock the door for. That to me is beyond my comprehension. What is this, a home or a Grand Central Station?" ". . . privacy . . . human being . . . around here *never*," I grumble at him, then push aside my dessert to scream "I don't feel well—*will everybody leave me alone*?"

After dessert—which I eat finally because I happen to like jello, even if I detest them—after dessert I am back in the bathroom once again. I burrow through the week's laundry until I uncover one of my flat-chested sister's soiled brassieres. I string it up, a scarecrow to bring on the dreams—one shoulder strap over the knob to the bathroom door, the other on the knob to the linen closet. "Oh beat it, Big Boy, beat it to a red hot pulp"—so I am being urged by the little cups of Hannah's bra, when a rolled-up newspaper whacks angrily up against the door. "—Come on, give somebody else a crack at the bowl, will you?" my father says. "I haven't moved my bowels in a week."

I recover myself, as is my talent, with a marvelous burst of hurt feelings. "I have a terrible case of diarrhea! Doesn't that mean anything to anyone in this house?"—in the meantime not missing a single stroke—indeed quickening the tempo as my smarting, cancerous organ miraculously begins again to quiver from the inside out.

Then Hannah's brassiere *begins to move*. To swing back and forth! I close my eyes and see Lenore Blatt, who has the biggest pair in my class, running for the bus after school, her great untouchable load shifting in her blouse, oh I urge them up from their cups, and over, *Lenore Blatt's actual tits*—and realize in the same split second that my mother is vigorously shaking the knob, trying the door. Which I forgot to lock? I am caught! I am as good as dead!

"Open this door, Alex. I want you to open this door this instant."

I am not caught. And I see from what's alive in my hand that

I'm not dead yet either. Beat on! "Lick me, Big Boy—lick me a good hot lick! I'm Lenore Blatt's big fat red hot brassiere!"

"Alex, I want an answer from you. Did you eat french fries after school? Is that why you're sick like this?"

"Nuhhh."

"Alex, are you in pain? Do you want me to call the doctor? Are you in pain, or aren't you? I want to know exactly where it hurts. Alex, answer me."

"Yuhhh."

"Alex, I don't want you to flush the toilet," says my mother sternly. "I want to see what you've done in there. I don't like the sound of this at all."

"And me," says my father, touched as he always was by my accomplishments—as much awe as envy, "I haven't moved my bowels in a week," just as I lurch from my perch on the toilet seat, and with the whimper of a whipped animal, deliver three drops of something barely viscous into the tiny piece of cloth where my sister, whom I hate, has laid her nipples, such as they were. It is my sixth orgasm of the day. When will I begin to come blood?

"Get in here, please, you," says my mother. "Why did you flush the toilet when I told you not to?"

"I forgot."

"What was in there that you were so fast to flush it?"

"Diarrhea."

"Was it mostly liquid or was it mostly poopie?"

"I don't look! I didn't look! Stop saying poopie to me—I'm in high school!"

"Oh, don't shout at *me,* Alex. I'm not the one who gave you diarrhea, I assure you. If all you ate was what you were fed at home you wouldn't have to be running to the bathroom fifty times a day. Hannah tells me what you're doing, Alex, don't think I don't know."

She's missed her underwear! Dead! Dead! I wish I were dead!

"Yeah, what do I do . . . ?"

"You go to Harold's Hot Dog and *Chazerai* Palace after school and you eat french fries with Sheldon Weiner. Don't you? Don't lie to me either. Do you or do you not stuff yourself with french fries

and ketchup after school? Jack, come in here, I want you to hear this," she calls to my father.

"I'm trying to move my bowels," he shouts. "Don't I have enough trouble as it is without people screaming at me when I'm trying to move my bowels?"

"You know what your son does after school, the 'A' student here, who his own mother can't say poopie to anymore, he's such a *grown-up*? What do you think the grown-up does when nobody is watching him?"

"Can I please be left alone, please?" my father cries. "Can I have a little peace, please, so I can get something accomplished in here?"

"Just wait till your father hears what you do, Alex, in defiance of every health habit there could possibly be. Alex, answer me something. You're so smart, you know all the answers now, answer me this. How do you think Sheldon Weiner gave himself colitis? Why has that child spent half his life in hospitals?"

"Because he eats *chazerai*."

"Don't you dare make fun of me!"

"All right, how *did* he get colitis?" I scream.

"Because he eats *chazerai*! But it's not a joke! Because to him a meal is an Oh Henry bar washed down by a bottle of Pepsi. Because his breakfast consists of, do you know what? The most important meal of the day—not according just to your mother, Alex, but according to the highest nutritionists—and do you know what that child eats?"

"A doughnut."

"A doughnut is right, Mr. Smart Guy, Mr. Adult. And *coffee,* Alex. Coffee and a doughnut and on this a thirteen-year-old *pisherkeh* with half a stomach is supposed to start a day. But you, thank God, have been brought up differently. You don't have a mother who gallavants all over town like some names I could name, shopping from morning till night. Alex, Alex, tell me, so it's not a mystery, or maybe I'm just stupid—tell me, what are you trying to do, what are you trying to prove, that you should stuff yourself with such *chazerai,* when you could come home to a poppyseed cookie and a nice glass of milk? I want the truth from you. I wouldn't tell your

father, but I must have the truth from you. Is it just french fries, or is it more? Tell me, please, what other kind of garbage you're putting into your stomach so we can get to the bottom of this diarrhea. Alex, I want a straight answer. Are you eating hamburgers out? Answer me, please, is that why you flushed the toilet? Did it have hamburger in it, is that why?"

"I told you—I don't look in the bowl when I flush it! I'm not interested like you are in other people's poopie!"

"Oh, oh, oh—fourteen years old and the mouth on you! To someone who is asking a question about *your* health, *your* welfare!" Her hurt, plus the utter incomprehensibility of the situation, causes her eyes to become heavy with tears. "Alex, why are you getting like this? Tell me please, what horrible things have we done to you all our lives that this should be our reward?" I believe the question strikes her as original. I believe she considers the question unanswerable. And worst of all, so do I. What *have* they done for me all their lives, but sacrifice? Yet that this is precisely the horrible thing is beyond my understanding—and still, Doctor, still! To this day!

I brace myself now for the whispering. I can spot the whispering coming a mile away. We are about to discuss my father's headaches.

"Alex, he didn't have a headache on him today that he could hardly see straight from it?" She looks up quickly to be sure he is still out of earshot; God forbid he should hear how critical his condition is. He might claim exaggeration. "He's not going next week for a test for a tumor?"

"He is?"

" 'Bring him in,' said the doctor, 'I'm going to give him a test for a tumor.' "

Success. I am crying. There is no good reason for me to be crying, but in this household everybody tries to get a good cry in at least once a day. My father, you must understand—as probably you do—has been going for this tumor test every month now for as long as I can remember. Why his head aches him all the time is because he is constipated all the time—why he is constipated is because ownership of his intestinal tract is in the hands of the firm of Worry, Fear & Frustration. It is true that the doctor once said to my mother that he would give him a test for a tumor—if that would make her

happy, is I believe the way that he worded it; he suggested that it would be cheaper if my father invested the money for the test in a case of milk of magnesia. That I know all this to be so does not make it any less heartbreaking to imagine my burly, overburdened father dead.

Yes, she has me where she wants me, and she knows it. I clean forget my own cancer in the grief that comes—comes now as it came then—when I think how much of life has always been beyond his comprehension, and beyond his grasp. No money, no schooling, no language, no learning. All he had to pride himself on was his dutifulness. He did not commit adultery. He did not steal. He did not beat his wife. He did not drink. He visited his mother every Sunday of her life. And he worked. For Boston and Northeastern Mutual ("The Most Benevolent Financial Institution in America") he sold insurance (or tried to) to the poorest people in all of Jersey City. He worked the lousiest district the company had, worked it like a dog. . . . So isn't this plenty to be grateful for? Isn't this a description of an admirable man? A man deserving only of sympathy and love? Am I not expecting too much, now as then? I had an uncle who played the horses and wound up in jail. To pay his debts, he fiddled with the books where he was employed as an accountant, and went to jail for a year. That kind of humiliation is something I know nothing about, I realize that. That my father was virtuous is not something that I have a right to minimize. Nevertheless, I am trying to tell the truth about what it was to be a son in that family. My emotional life is a shattered miserable thing that I must get to the bottom of, Doctor—and I am going to whine and bitch and complain all I want! Why else am I so indecisive if not because of them? Why else do I feel so boyish at the age of thirty, so temporary about myself? Why am I never a day without worries? Why do I panic so easily, weep so easily, drop into melancholy or rise into a rage at the drop of a meaningless hat? Where else but in my home did I learn such a way to respond to the simple vicissitudes of human life? What else but my past causes these insides to feel like crumbling clay twenty-four hours a day? Doctor, how deep is the damage, that's really the question? How much is lost? Why can't I be man enough to overcome this stupid, ridiculous, joke of a past!

Where were we? My father.

A person my father often held up to me as someone to emulate in life was the theatrical producer, Billy Rose. He had read in Walter Winchell that it was Billy Rose's knowledge of shorthand that had led Bernard Baruch to hire him as a secretary—consequently he plagued and pestered me throughout high school to enroll in the shorthand course. "A person who has shorthand will never have to worry. A person who has shorthand is always in demand. Why do you fight with me when this is a proven fact? Where would Billy Rose be today without his shorthand? Answer me that."

Earlier it was the piano we battled over. For a man whose house was without a phonograph or a record, he was passionate on the subject of a musical instrument. "I don't understand why you won't take a musical instrument, this is beyond my comprehension. Your little cousin Toby can sit down at the piano and play whatever popular song you can name. All she has to do is sit down at the piano and everybody in the room is her friend. She'll never lack for friends, she'll never lack for a good time, even when she's alone. Say you'll take up piano, Alex, and I'll have one in here tomorrow morning. Alex, are you even listening to me? I am offering you a piano that could change your social life for the rest of your life!"

What he had to offer I didn't want, what I wanted he didn't have to offer. But how unusual is that? Why has it caused such grief? Doctor, what must I rid myself of, the hatred of them—or the love? I haven't begun to tell you, you see, of all I remember with pleasure—all those memories that seem somehow to be bound up with weather and the time of day, and that flash so suddenly into my mind, with such vividness, that momentarily I am not in the subway, or my apartment, or at dinner with a girl, but back then, back there. And for all that they are so gripping, they are really very simple. They are memories of practically nothing—and I have them all the time. I am standing at the kitchen window, my mother says to me, "Look outside, a real Fall sky." It is an iron-cold January day, dusk —oh these memories of dusk, of chicken fat on rye bread to tide me over to dinner, and the moon already outside the kitchen window— I have just come in with a dollar I have earned shovelling snow. "You know what you're going to have for dinner," my mother says

to me, "for being such a hard-working boy? Your favorite winter meal. Lamb stew." It is night; after a Sunday in New York City, at Radio City and Chinatown, we are driving home across the George Washington Bridge—the Holland Tunnel is, of course, the shortest route between Mott Street and Jersey City, but I beg for the bridge, and I get it. Up front my sister counts aloud the number of supports upon which the marvelous cables rest, while in the back I fall asleep with my face against my mother's black sealskin coat. At Lakewood where we go for a weekend vacation one winter, with my parents' Sunday night Gin Rummy Club, I sleep in one twin bed with my father, while my mother and Hannah curl up together in the other. At dawn my father is already dressed and in his hat and earmuffs. He awakens me. "Come," he whispers, "I want to show you something. Did you know I was a waiter in Lakewood when I was sixteen years old?" Outside he points across to the beautiful silent woods. "How's that?" he says. We walk together around a silver lake. "Take good deep breaths. Take in the piney air all the way. That is the best air in the world, good winter piney air." In summer he remains in the stifling city while the three of us go off to live in a furnished room at the seashore for a month. He will join us for the last two weeks, when he has his vacation . . . however, there are nights when Jersey City is so thick with humidity, so alive with the mosquitoes that come dive-bombing in from the marshes, that at the end of his day's work he drives the sixty-five miles down the old Cheesequake—my God, the Cheesequake!—to spend the night with us in our room at Bradley Beach, where there is always a breeze through the window. Usually he arrives at seven-thirty, and dinner waits, while he unpeels the soggy city clothes in which he has been making the rounds of his debit all day, and changes into his swimsuit. I carry his towel for him as he clops down the street to the beach in his unlaced shoes. I am dressed in clean short pants and a spotless polo shirt, the salt showered off me, my hair beautifully parted and slicked down. There is a roughened iron rail that runs the length of the boardwalk, and I sit on the edge of it and watch while, still in his shoes, he crosses the beach below and neatly sets down his towel. He places his watch in one shoe, his eyeglasses in the other and then slowly he enters the ocean. I still to this day go into the water the

way he advised. Plunge the wrists in first, then splash under the arms, then a handful on the face and back of the neck; ah, but slowly, slowly. This way you get to refresh yourself, meanwhile avoiding a shock to the system. Refreshed, unshocked, he turns to face me, comically waves farewell up toward where he thinks I'm standing, and drops backwards to float with his arms outstretched in a little circle of dark velvety sea. Oh he floats so still—he works, he works so hard, and for whom if not for me?—and then at last, after turning on his belly and making with a few choppy strokes that carry him nowhere, he comes wading back into the shore, his streaming compact torso glowing from the last pure spokes of light driving in, over my shoulder, out of stifling inland New Jersey, from which I am being spared.

And there are a lot more memories like this one, Doctor. A lot more. This is my mother and father I'm talking about.

But—but—but—let me pull myself together—there is also this vision of him coming from the bathroom, savagely kneading the back of his neck and sourly swallowing a belch. "All right, what is it that was so urgent you couldn't wait till I came out to tell me?"

"Nothing," says my mother. "It's settled."

He looks at me with disappointment. I'm what he lives for, and I know it. "What did he do?"

"What he did is over and done with, God willing. You, did you move your bowels?" she asks him.

"Of course I didn't move my bowels."

"Jack, what is it going to be with you, with those bowels?"

"They're turning into concrete, that's what it's going to be."

"Because you eat too fast."

"I don't eat too fast."

"How then, slow?"

"I eat regular."

"You eat like a pig, and somebody should tell you."

"Oh, you got a wonderful way of expressing yourself sometimes, do you know that?"

"I'm only speaking the truth," she says. "I *patchkeh* and *patchkeh* in this kitchen, and you eat like there's a fire somewhere, bolting everything down before I even have a chance to sit, and this one—

this one has decided that the food I cook isn't good enough for him. He'd rather be sick and scare the living daylights out of me."

"What did he do?"

"I don't want to upset you," she says. "Let's just forget the whole thing." But she can't, so she begins to cry. Look, she is probably not the happiest person in the world, either, you know. She was once a tall stringbean of a girl whom the boys called "Red," in high school. When I was nine and ten years old I was an addict of her high school yearbook.

Sophie Ginsky the boys call "Red,"
She'll go far with her big brown eyes and her clever head.

And that was my mother!

Also, she had been secretary to the track team, an office pretty much without laurels in our time, but apparently quite a post to hold in Bayonne during the First World War. So I thought, at any rate, while I turned the pages of her yearbook, and she pointed out to me her dark-haired beautiful beau, who had been the outstanding broad jumper of Hudson County, captain of the team and today, to quote Sophie, "the biggest manufacturer of mustard in New York." "And I could have married him instead of your father," she told me, and more than once. I used to wonder sometimes what that would have been like for my Mamma and me, invariably when my father sometimes took us to dine out at the corner delicatessen. I look around the place and think, "We would have manufactured all this mustard." She must have had thoughts like that herself.

"He eats french fries," she says, as she sinks into a kitchen chair to weep her heart out once and for all. "He goes after school with Sheldon Weiner and stuffs himself with french fried potatoes. Jack, you tell him, I'm only his mother. Tell him what the end is going to be. Alex," she says passionately, looking to where I am edging out of the room, *"tateleh*, it begins with diarrhea, but do you know how it ends? With a sensitive stomach like yours, do you know how it finally ends? *Wearing a plastic bag to do your business in*!"

Who in the history of the world has been least able to deal with a woman's tears? My father. I am second. He says to me, "You

heard your mother. Don't eat french fries with Sheldon Weiner after school."

"Or ever," she pleads.

"Or ever," my father says.

"Or hamburgers out," she pleads.

"Or hamburgers out," he says.

"*Hamburgers*," she says bitterly, just as she might say *Hitler*, "where they can put anything in the world in that they like—and he eats them. Jack, make him promise, before he gives himself a terrible *tsureh* and it's too late."

"*I promise*!" I scream. "*I promise*!" and race from the kitchen —to where? Where else?

I tear off my pants, furiously I grab that battered battering ram to freedom, my adolescent cock, even as my suffering mother begins to call to me from the other side of the bathroom door. "Now this time don't flush. Do you hear me, Alex? I have to see what's in that bowl!"

Doctor, do you understand what I was up against? My wang was all I really had that I could call my own! Oh, you should have watched her at work during polio season. She should have gotten medals from the March of Dimes. Open your mouth. Why is your throat red? Do you have a headache you're not telling me about? You're not going to any baseball game, Alex, until I see you move your neck. Is your neck stiff? Then why are you moving it that way? You ate like you were nauseous, are you nauseous? Well, you ate like you were nauseous. I don't want you drinking from that drinking fountain in that playground. If you're thirsty wait until you're home. Your throat is sore, isn't it? I can tell how you're swallowing. I think maybe what you are going to do, Mr. Joe DiMaggio The Second, is put that glove away and lie down. I am not going to allow you to go outside in this heat and run around, not with that sore throat, I'm not. I want to take your temperature. I don't like the sound of this throat business one bit. To be very frank, I am actually beside myself that you have been walking around all day with a sore throat and not telling your mother. Why did you keep this a secret? Alex, polio doesn't know from baseball games. It only knows from iron lungs and death and crippled forever! I don't want

you running around, and that's it. Or eating hamburgers out. Or mayonnaise. Or chopped liver. Or tuna. Not everybody is careful the way your mother is about spoilage, Alex. You're used to a spotless house where nothing is in the refrigerator for more than two days, where whether it is used or not it gets thrown out rather than take the risk. You don't begin to know what goes on in restaurants. Do you know why your mother when we go to the chinks will never sit facing the kitchen? Because I don't want to see what goes on back there. Alex, you must wash everything, is that clear? Everything. God only knows who touched it before you did.

Look, am I exaggerating to think it's practically miraculous that I'm ambulatory? The hysteria, Doctor, and the superstition! The watch-its, and the be-carefuls! You mustn't do this, you can't do that, don't don't, you're breaking an important law! *What* law? *Whose* law? They might as well have had plates in their lips and rings through their noses and painted themselves blue for all the human sense they made! Oh, and the *milchiks* and the *fleishiks* besides—all those *mishuggeneh* rules and regulations on top of their own personal craziness! Doctor, it's a family joke that when I was a tiny boy I turned from a snowstorm I was watching out the window and hopefully asked my mother, "Mamma, do we believe in winter?" Doctor, do you get what I'm saying? I was raised by Hottentots and Zulus! I could not even contemplate drinking a glass of milk with my salami sandwich without giving serious offense to God Almighty. Imagine then, oh just imagine what my conscience gave me for all that jerking off! Oh, the guilt and the fears—the endlessness of our crises! Oh, the terror of life bred into my bones! What in their world was not charged with danger, dripping with germs, fraught with peril? Doctor, where was the gusto, where was the confidence and the courage? Who filled these parents of mine with such a fearful sense of life? My father, in his retirement now, has really only one subject into which he can sink his teeth, the New Jersey Turnpike. "I wouldn't go near that thing if they paid me. You have to be out of your mind to travel on that thing. It's Murder, Incorporated. It is a legalized way for people to go out and get themselves killed." And on—and on—and on! You know what he says to me three times a week on the telephone—and I'm only counting when I pick it up,

not the total number of rings I get between six and ten o'clock every night. "Sell that car, will you? Will you do me a favor and sell that car so I can get a good night's sleep? Why you have to have a car in that city is beyond my comprehension. Why you want to pay for insurance and garage and upkeep, I don't even begin to understand. But then I don't understand yet why you even have to live by yourself over in that jungle. What do you pay those robbers for that two-by-four apartment anyway? A penny over fifty dollars a month and you're out of your mind. Why you don't move back to North Jersey is a mystery to me—why you prefer the noise and the violence and the fumes—"

And my mother, Doctor, she whispers on. *Sophie whispers on*! I go for dinner there once a month; it is a struggle requiring all my guile and cunning and strength, but I have been able over all these years still to hold it down to once a month. I get out of the elevator, see those milk bottles outside the door—and my whole gorge rises; then the door is opened and I am home: "Don't ask what kind of day I had with him yesterday." So I don't. "Alex," she says, *sotto voce,* "when he has a day like that you don't know what a difference a call from you would make. And, Alex,"—even as I nod yes, yes, yes—"next week is his birthday. That mine went by last month without a card—those things don't bother me. He'll be sixty-six, Alex. That's not a baby, Alex, if you know what I mean. Send him a card. Pick up the phone. It wouldn't kill you."

Doctor, these people are incredible! These people are unbelievable! These two are the outstanding producers and packagers of guilt in our time! They render it from me like fat from a chicken! "Call, Alex. Visit, Alex. Alex, keep us informed. Don't go away again without telling us. Last time you went away you didn't tell us, your father was ready to phone the police. You know how many times a day he called and got no answer, Alex?" "Mother," I cry, "if I'm dead they'll smell the body in three days!"—"Don't talk like that!" she cries right back. "God forbid!" Oh, and now she's got the real beauty, the one that comes with age: "Alex, to pick up the phone is such a simple thing. How much longer will we be around to bother you anyway?"

Doctor Spielvogel, this is my life, my only life, and I'm living

it in the middle of a Jewish joke! I am the son in the Jewish joke—*only it ain't no joke*! Oh Doctor, who crippled us like this? Who made us so morbid and weak? Why, why are they screaming still, "Watch out! Don't do it! Alex—*no*!" and why, alone on my bed in New York, why am I still hopelessly beating my meat? Doctor, what is this sickness I have? Is this the Jewish suffering I used to hear so much about? Is this what has come down to me of all that filthy persecution? Oh, my timidity! my fear! my palpitations! my sweats! Doctor, I can't stand anymore being frightened! Bless me with manhood! Make me brave, make me strong! Enough being a nice Jewish boy, publicly pleasing my parents while privately pulling my putz! Enough!

John H. Gagnon

INSIGHT AND OUTLOOK

For some time after leaving graduate school I was engaged in social engineering. My time was spent in trying to change people from one condition to another: what is now called from sick to well and was formerly called from bad to good. There was some variety in terms of the sick (or bad) conditions that they represented: alcoholics, opiate addicts, schizophrenics, juvenile delinquents and adult criminals; and the attempt to change them was made in various contexts: the free community, a prison and a university clinic. While I rarely worked as a therapist, I was commonly involved in the design of the therapeutic program and in the evaluation of its effectiveness. If there is any activity that will lead one back into the ivory tower, it is day-to-day work with the problems of men and women in serious difficulty, and the sudden realization of how little can be done to change people who are resistant to change—that is, how little can be done within the limits on the use of coercion and control of environment in a democratic society. Indeed, there is even a question of how much can be done in totalitarian systems; the conformity that they produce is often at the cost of other socially necessary functions: imagination, inventiveness and complex responses to new stimuli.

The problem of how people are helped or changed and the margin between mental treatment and coercion is partially at issue here. Verbal therapies are not new or unique. As Jerome Frank has pointed out, they involve a trained, socially-sanctioned healer, a sufferer who seeks relief and a series of meetings between healer and sufferer which are attempts to change the beliefs or behavior of the sufferer. Such a wide definition is quite proper and encompasses the

activities of witch doctors in primitive societies and faith healers in America today and the efforts of psychoanalyst and patient. The contents of each of these healing sessions are very similar. Through the manipulation of physical symbols (such as fetish objects) and words the patient and the healer interact, both hoping that the patient will get better. This is a situation of persuasion, in which the healer seeks to persuade the patient primarily through the use of language or traditional belief that changes in his behavior or belief are both possible and profitable.

In primitive societies the illness of the patient is attributed to possession by evil spirits, to curses or to violations of taboo. The function of the healer is to propitiate the evil spirits, lift the curse or make reparations to the aggrieved gods. Since the healer in this situation must in all instances be operating on a false theory of disorder, none of his activities (unless he uses folk medicines) can affect the patient except through the intensity of the belief of the patient and the credibility of the performance of the healer. I do not mean by performance that the healer does not believe in what he is doing, but rather that what he is doing has a dramaturgical function for the sufferer and increases his belief in the capacities of the healer. Unlike the jazz musician who says, "When you can't make it, fake it," the healer must attempt to "make it" every time. Given the necessarily high frequency of failure in primitive medicine, the healer must select his patients carefully so that the ratio of failures to successes does not undermine the credibility of his performance either for the patients or for himself. And patient selection is a requisite for the same reason in modern therapies. The same kind of mutual belief took place in the exorcism of devils in the Middle Ages, where what must have been some form of mental illness was viewed as possession, and the priest played the healer's role. A fascinating chronicle of one such process is given in Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun,* in the Polish film, *Joan of the Angels* and in John Whiting's *The Devils.*

Most of the history of medicine in Western countries must be viewed in this context, for, except for opium and its derivatives (which are known to physicians as "God's Own Medicine"), very few drugs with specific effects on bodily processes were known. In fact, the history of Western medicine has been described as the history of the placebo effect. A placebo was given to the patient in the

full belief by the physician that it was efficacious and in the belief by the patient that the physician knew what he was doing. Nor is surgery excluded from the power of faith, for, as Henry Beecher of Harvard reports, a surgical technique is more effective when used by surgeons who believe in its efficacy than when used by surgeons who regard it as debatable or experimental.

It was Freud who made a primary break in the course of treatment of mental disorder by directing his attention to matters that had not been of interest for more than one hundred fifty years. There was, as a result of his work, a shift from what has been called the directive-organic technique, the accepted method in the early part of the nineteenth century, to the analytic-psychological. Today this split between the two approaches still exists, and there is a constant straining in traditional medical circles to return, if not to organic theories of mental illness, at least to organic techniques of treatment. In most directive-organic treatment the physician remains close to the practice of physical medicine, and the problems of the patient are felt to be treatable through the ingestion of chemicals, the application of certain bodily shocks (electric or otherwise), the treatment of specific lesions in the nervous system or, at its most psychological, the giving of good advice. This ever-present division has led to serious difficulties for patients in cases in which psychological treatment has been given for specific organic problems, and, on the other hand, for patients whose lesions have been treated and were assumed to be cured even though the lesions have produced psychological difficulties. Thus many physicians, to take a simple example, tend to treat only the damaged liver of the alcoholic and ignore the problems that led him to drink, while many therapists often pay no attention to the debilitated state of the physical organism that is not responding to psychological treatment.

Freud disposed of irrationality and possession by pointing to the psychic causes of mental suffering. In the atmosphere of nineteenth-century empiricism, though it was possible to conceive of men lying to one another, it was not possible to believe that they themselves did not know what their own motives were or what the truth was. It is out of this econometric view of man that an attempt, like Bentham's, at a rational calculus of choices was possible. The devils of the Middle Ages had been routed by positivistic philosophy.

Freud's major contribution was an attempt to examine those devils scientifically. Three processes went hand in hand throughout the development of Freud's ideas. One was the treatment of the sufferers who came for help, the second was the training through the analytic experience of new healers and, finally, the formulation of a psychological theory of character and personality development based primarily on the interaction of child and parent through necessary stages in the development of character structure.

At this point I would like to distinguish between the first and third of these processes, that is, between the treatment of specific sufferers and the development of an explanatory theory of how they came to be suffering. It is important to note that the relationship between these two processes has changed from the day of the first patients and a nascent theory to today's fully articulated theory and rather more knowledgeable patients. In the early days of analysis patients came to an obscure and radical physician who was beginning to explore and find in their unhappy behavior the basis of a general theory not only of mental illness but also of character development. Today the patient has some knowledge of the theory; the analyst is fully armed with explanations for the patient's behavior and has a relatively high status in the community. Far from being revolutionary, psychoanalysis is now one of the mainstays of conventional wisdom.

The development of psychoanalytic theory was dependent on the productions of the patients, but these productions were a function not only of the experience of the patients, but also of their interactions with Freud. Patients do not talk about all things, but about those which at the moment seem to be troubling them—those relationships that do not resolve themselves. But regardless of how much the healer wishes to conceal his own feelings about what is significant —and Freud was acutely aware of this—the patient will usually divine them. And in the analytic situation of both Freud's early patients and for those persons who are in treatment today, the patient digs for his own motives under conditions of considerable anxiety. The ambiguity of the situation which is deliberately fostered by the analyst makes the patient dredge up more and more material, most of it self–denigrating and guilt-producing. It is possible to look at a good part of analytic therapy as patient training, during which the disapproval

of the analyst is more important than bringing up disagreeable truths. Some of these may be false, unhappy or ugly desires produced to reduce the anxiety of the analyst who also has a need for a few "good sessions."

In the process of treatment, in addition to unconscious cues to the patient, the analyst may offer constructions (or interpretations) that reveal the meaning of the patient's verbalizations. It is commonly felt by analysts that incorrect constructions do not result in false insights on the part of the patient, because they fall on barren ground. An accurate construction taps more repressed material, and it is the production of this additional material that is the measure of the adequacy of the analytic interpretation. This is a murky point since the source of its validity is the patient's response rather than some independently verifiable event that serves as a basis for this judgment. What appears to have happened in the early days of analysis, and still happens today, is that the analyst was in subtle ways influencing the direction not only of the treatment, but of the verbal productions of the patients. In the beginning, however, there was the complicating factor that the patients had no access to analytic literature, and the direction of the treatment was even more bound to the interaction of patient and analyst and to the strength of the transference.

Freud's early error in his view of hysteria is quite instructive here. Originally, Freud felt that the cause of adult hysteria lay in actual sexual relations. Later however—and this is chronicled in the letters to Fleiss—he came to believe that the sexual productions of his patients were fantasies, covering up their own sexual vices (usually forms of masturbation). It is out of this insight that the universal significance of the Oedipus complex was constructed. Freud was quick to recognize the problem which the patients' distorted use of childhood memories raised for the whole theoretical body of analysis and especially for the validity of the theory in so far as it was based on the patients' reports. Examined from this point of view it is perfectly possible to suggest that the fantasies of the patients are nothing but material called up through the influence of the analyst. Freud solves this problem brilliantly by contending that it is the psychological reality of the fantasy rather than any physical occurrence that

is decisive. An important consequence of this decision is that psychoanalytic theory cannot be refuted by the patients' productions since they need not be based on actual occurrences and *must* be interpreted back into the general schema by the analyst. If the fact or fantasy of childhood sexual experience is universal, then the failure of the patient to remember can be attributed to repression which is a factor in the treatment; if he does remember it and it did not happen, then it is a fantasy; if it happened and the patient reports it, it is simply another overdetermined event.

The problem here, however, is not the truth of the theory; and in spite of Freud's general contention that the theory and the therapy are dependent and that they stand and fall together, it can be argued that the fate of the Freudian theory of human behavior is irrelevant to the problem of whether or not the large majority of patients get well as a result of analytic treatment. As Grinker has said: "The (Freudian) theoretical system, in general, I consider to be the essence of the best of modern psychodynamic theory. However, I contend that the theory has a minor place in the operational procedures of psychotherapy. I am convinced, if we were to have truthful information about what goes on in the inviolate relationship of the psychiatrist and patient, we would find here that the operations are not direct expressions of psychoanalytic theory."

If the psychoanalytic theory of personality does not control the operations of the therapist, what then is its role in the process of treatment? I think that today it is what Kenneth Burke called it over thirty years ago—a vocabulary of motives. In Burke's sense the focus is not on the motives or their truth, nor is the vocabulary of motives another way of describing and ordering motives; what is of interest is the structure of the vocabulary itself and the ways in which the vocabulary is used to make sense of the behavior or fantasy. It is the function of the analyst to make sense or to give order to such reports not only within the life of the patient, but in terms of psychodynamic theory as a method of behavioral explanation.

For the patients this method of explanation is of varying significance. It is possible to argue, perhaps too simply, that patients may be divided into two classes: the ideological, representing at best a small minority, and the nonideological. The nonideological are theoret-

ically less interesting, for their central purpose is getting well, not understanding. The ideological patient on the other hand makes a much larger demand—he must understand how he will get well.

In nonideological cases there is no apparent relationship between the source of the problem as it is described to the patients by the healer and the question of whether they will get well. What is important is the relationship with the healer. Since all healing explanations do not apply to all patients, there must be an overlap between the vocabulary of motives of the sufferer and the vocabulary of motives of the healer. A member of an evangelical primitive Christian cult will certainly not be prepared to ascribe his problems to the Oedipus complex and neither will his suffering counterpart at a university clinic be prepared to have the devil exorcised. What is important is that the vocabularies overlap sufficiently so that the patient is not entirely put off by the healer's interpretations. Historically there has been an important change which has made the psychoanalytic vocabulary of motives more believable and credible. In the early days of Freudian theory and therapy its proponents and patients were viewed as dangerous subversives. To ascribe all of one's problems to disturbances in the sexual sphere arising out of early familial malfunction was an extreme and socially disruptive position. The vocabulary of motives that the healer used was strange to the sufferer, and it is difficult to assess its role in the increased well-being of those early patients. Even at that time probably only a minority were converted to the Freudian vocabulary of motives; the majority probably responded not to the manifest statements, but to the very process of treatment.

However, a number of people—and these cases are of great cultural interest—did become enmeshed in the forms of explanation that were made available through analysis, and some of these were the next generation of analysts begat by Freud. Freudian ideas were disseminated in our society partially through the treatment of certain patients who were the new analysts and the analyzed avant-garde of the American intellectual community. It should be clear that patients in analysis have not been drawn equally from all sections of American life but mainly from elite groups—from writers and other intellectuals, and people in the mass media and publishing—from the urban centers of the country. Since World War II the mass media have popular-

ized the Freudian vocabulary of motives. The vulgar use of analytic terminology is heard everywhere, and this ideological penetration of the potential patients has both positive and negative aspects.

For the future analyst and for the intellectual, unlike the general run of patients, the vocabulary of motives assumes a primary role in the treatment process. For the intellectuals with their concern with communication and words, the healing situation alone is not enough; the persuasive part is the language and the descriptions flowing out of the theory. Through access to analytic literature the need to confirm the value of the therapeutic experience is satisfied, since the Freudian metapsychology provides a system of ordered relationships for the interpretation of literature, history, politics and interpersonal relations. Much that was not explained in the thirties by vulgarized Marx was explained by vulgarized Freud. Seldom have the contributions of great men been so rapidly devalued. With the depoliticalization of American intellectuals, Freud replaced Marx.

The question of the truth of the vocabulary of motives is most relevant to the healer's role. Just as the intensity of the witch doctor's belief in his treatment played a role in the healing process, so today the splintering of the psychoanalytic movement into schools and subschools—Freudian, Jungian, Adlerian, Kleinian—is functional. What appear to outsiders as doctrinal quibbles are really measures of the intensity of the therapists' belief. The analyst is trained at the analytic institute, and his primary experience is his "didactic" analysis. The training for analysis is like a religious conversion. Kenneth Burke has pointed out that patients' descriptions of the moment when they come to believe in the reality of the unconscious have exactly this religious tonality; there is a falling together, a way has been found, there is a moment of insight—all of which adds up to a revelation. The neophyte analyst, armed with commonsensical explanations of behavior, is supplied in a highly charged emotional situation with new explanations of the behavior (often better than the ones he had before) of both others and himself. Given the ambiguities of the analytic situation, the analyst must be sure of himself, for if he is not the patient quickly senses it and will be more resistant. If in the process of his practice the analyst becomes less sure of himself, it is necessary either that he be reanalyzed or that he retreat into dogmatism. Failures can then be described as unanalyzable.

While this dedication to the vocabulary of motives is fundamental to treatment, it is probably not very conducive to an assessment of the value of the vocabulary either to the therapy or to theoretical explanations of the disorder. As Dr. Rieux says near the end of Camus' novel *The Plague,* one "can't cure and know at the same time." If a belief in one's method is central to the healing role, it is the polar opposite, doubt, that is central to the knower's role. A therapist, almost by definition, cannot house such doubts in his desire to treat the patient. I feel that this is the main reason why so little fundamental research in human behavior has come from the practicing healer, and why the case reports of analysts often reflect only specific applications of the theoretical categories. The character of most analytic writing is very much like the Talmudic or medieval Christian commentaries in which the case is fitted into the sacred texts, usually the collected papers of Freud.

My point is not to discredit either Freud or the psychoanalytic movement, nor to deny the effect of certain experiences on adult character structure. My concern has been to separate the two elements in the healing situation: the very process that is composed of healer, sufferer and the expectation both have of a cure; and the system that purports to explain the disorder and to direct the course of therapy. As can be seen, the latter often serves only as support to the healer or as a useful accompaniment to the treatment.

I referred earlier to disorders that seemed to be intractable to treatment, yet there is some evidence that there is an improvement in almost two-thirds of the patients who submit voluntarily to psychoanalysis or other forms of therapy. This might appear to be a contradiction. However, most people difficult to treat are not voluntary patients but people who have demonstrated a resistance to change. The demand for change commonly comes from the outside and involves a fundamental shift in character structure, in some cases requiring something close to a conversion. These are changes from one social category to another, quite unlike what happens to a voluntary patient who comes not for a transformation of his personality (though it may be transformed), but rather for help in a troubled, but often transitory, situation. Those persons who are not helped are in life-changing situations beyond the reach of verbal therapy. Thus the shift from law-abiding citizen to felon, from an in-contact person to

the autistic schizophrenic, from an unaddicted person to one who has made a chemical adjustment to heroin: all of these represent shifts that so far as I know have not been dealt with successfully in therapy. This does not mean that the explanations derived from Freudian theory may not apply to any of these conditions, only that the therapy does not work.

In addition to those who are recalcitrant to the dominant mode of treatment in our society, there is an apparent increase in the analytically untreatable among ordinary patients. It is a commonplace that for years no one has seen the kind of patients treated by Freud. The phobics and the hysterics, who made up the bulk of Freud's patients, appear very rarely in a modern analyst's office. What appear now are what are called character disorders or ego defects. Unlike the traditional cases of superego defect or overcontrol, these cases are those of undercontrol. In contrast to the release of inhibition, which was required of the traditional analytic patient, the problem in therapy today seems to be the problem of impulse control and of undersocialization. There seems to be a group of patients, even among those who are voluntary, who do not fall into the original theoretical system. Another complication has been the widespread dissemination of the terminology of analysis. The very possession of this vocabulary may make the patient unreachable by the traditional process. The patient has in this case already integrated the vocabulary of treatment into the neurotic problem.

The healers in our society have not responded well to those who have been intractable to treatment. In the case of observable deviants —the criminal, the drug addict, the homosexual, the alcoholic—the tendency has been to use pejorative terms as classifications. The drug addict is described as infantile, oral regressive, with a fixated ego impervious to treatment; the criminal is psychopathic; the homosexual is compulsive and masochistic; each of the unreachables, for whatever reason, is defined as a peculiar case. The defect is in the individual rather than in the theory or the therapeutic method.

The schizophrenic whose disorder is in the area where the stock-in-trade of verbal therapy exists is an even more difficult problem. For language and social facility are precisely what the schizophrenic lacks; hence he is linguistically unreachable.

In the face of these new difficulties and the extension of therapy

to larger numbers of people, I suspect that we are about to regress to an earlier stage in our treatment of this kind of case.

Dr. Spock, though not a therapist, was for many years a proponent of permissiveness, whatever that may be, in the rearing of children. He has lately begun to suggest that children are really searching for discipline and really want control. Those psychiatrists who think that what patients really need is more reality contact and less permissiveness are expressing the same anxieties over the modern condition of man. The treatment of schizophrenics is also tending in this direction, on the theory that the patient needs more punitive relations with the world to get him back into contact. All of these changes are indicative of a basic shift in orientation, but it has nothing to do with actual therapy. I do not think that we can attribute the condition of youth today to permissive child rearing, since most people have never even heard of it. In any case, to suggest that people who have lost the capacity to cope because of the cruel circumstances of their lives need more punishment flies in the face of reason. Such theoretical maneuvers are symptoms of the failure of an ideology to connect with the conditions of modern life, and not a new recipe for treatment or an attempt at new thinking.

Part of this retreat to outworn formulas is a loss of faith in the word. Since Marx, there has been a systematic erosion of belief in the face value of any statement. Kenneth Burke points out the impossibility of a dialogue between a Freudian and a Marxist. In such a pseudodialogue the reductive Freudian attributes the ideas of the Marxist to his frustrated relation with a father-figure resulting in an attachment to the party as a substitute. The Marxist dismisses the explanations of the reductive Freudian as a defense of bourgeois capitalism. This kind of simplistic exchange is the culmination of the tendency to interpret ideas and behavior as forms of ideology: that is, to find statements interesting not as ideas, but, as Daniel Bell puts it, as ideas held and used. Burke himself has been part of this movement by proposing such concepts as the vocabulary, rhetoric and grammar of motives. As Daniel Boorstin suggests in a general critique of the made-up quality of American life, "When truth has been displaced by believability as the test of statements which dominate our lives, advertisers' ingenuity is devoted less to discovering facts than to inventing statements which can be made to seem true."

My reading of the signs is that our tendency will not be to look for verbal therapies that will not violate the personality of the person we want to help. As our desire to change people becomes more intense and our disillusion with current techniques increases, it seems to me that we will be tempted to go beyond words and resort to forms of treatment that use words only as adjuncts of other processes. Words themselves are not only the healer's instruments of change, they also play a role in the patient's successful defense of the self. Indeed, that self is composed of his ways of explaining his own behavior to the world and to himself. And if we ignore it we face even more difficult problems.

One need only look at the most awful creation of our time, the concentration camp, where the imitation by inmates of their guards supplies a terrifying example of the possibilities of transforming men. The Nazis were not running a program of thought reform, but one of murder; however, by accident they produced a system of total terror in which the fabric of social life and personality disintegrated, victim and violator became homologues and, unless by chance, only the criminal and those who were organized could survive. The Chinese brainwashing techniques are in some ways like those of the concentration camp. But the effectiveness of Chinese Communists in shattering the American dream of American P.O.W.'s was matched by their ineffectiveness in creating new ideological commitments. They failed because Chinese behavior models are socially implausible for the American; however, when these same processes are used against their own people, they are most effective. In a situation full of terror, anxiety and physical threats, the reformee is questioned over and over again with no reference to the actual substance of the complaint. He is forced to repeat again and again the same confessions, dredging up new feelings of guilt. This process is intensified by the presence of other guilty people and a healer who is attempting to bring the sufferer back into the social life of the community. This situation is similar in many ways to the psychoanalytic process, but it adds bodily deprivation and disorganization. It should be noted that the degradation of prisoners also occurs routinely in many American penal institutions and is a part of the life of the mental patient in our mental hospitals. People are stripped of their legal identities, have their hair cut a prescribed length, live as statistical entities in a total institution, rise

and sleep together, eat the same food at the same time and bathe in groups. What distinguishes these processes from those of thought reform is that the prisoner and the mental patient are not subjected to systematic institutional coercion to change. The purpose of the degradation seems to be adequate control of the inmates and not their mental conversion. The same practices, when geared to thought reform, are designed to break down existing identities so that a new one may be assumed more easily. It might be suggested that the ideological father of the Chinese Communists may not be Marx, Lenin or Stalin, but B. F. Skinner.

Indeed, recent research in psychology suggests that operant conditioning will soon be recommended for the treatment of neuroses as well as the more intractable states commonly described as psychoses. The new approach is known as behavior therapy and its roots are in a thoroughgoing Skinnerian orientation. Though the behaviorists of Skinner's generation were prepared to assert that the conditioning model, derived from their experiments with animals, was applicable to human disorders, it was not until after World War II that such techniques were directly and systematically applied to humans. Using the standard techniques of aversion therapy, electric shock, emetics or other punishments (how much easier it is for the psychologist to devise inhibitory or punishing experiences than disinhibitory or joyful experiences) the patient's symptom is subjected to negative stimulation. The position of the behavior therapists is that the symptom is the disease and that is what they seek to eradicate. The disorder of the obese person is his attraction for food, the disorder of the homosexual the arousal by people of his or her own sex, the disorder of the exhibitionist the taking of the penis out of the pants in an inappropriate situation, the disorder of the schizophrenic child the inability to behave in ways that others read as affection or communication. Once the symptom is removed the patient is well. The whole process is called behavior shaping: when the fat person's desire for food is strongest he is given an electric shock; the homosexual is sexually stimulated, and then made to vomit; and so on. When the patient responds improperly, he is positively or negatively reinforced (usually the latter). When the patient ceases to make these improper responses he is well.

Even without the use of punishment for improper behavior, total systems of living are now being experimented with.

In one state hospital severely disturbed female patients are allowed only bare necessities of living. They are given a bed and three meals a day. In order to have night stands, ground passes, access to the commissary, privacy through the use of screens around a bed, psychotherapy or permission to attend church, the patient is required to use tokens earned through cooperative behavior. The tokens are earned by making one's own bed, keeping clean, cleaning others, being obedient and so on. This ward has rapidly become the cheapest in the hospital to run, though no patients have been released. In a critique of this and similar experiments William Simon has pointed out that this technique merely creates a very special Adam Smithian world where all relationships are based on economic exchange, though the evidence indicates that the schizophrenic disorder is not related to a lack of economic rationality, but rather to a failure in social relations. The exchange of tokens is not a human exchange.

In the face of insoluble problems one is tempted to retreat once again either to organic methods of treatment disguised as behavior therapy or to other organic panaceas through which the body is attacked in order to change the mind. The widespread popularity of tranquilizing and energizing drugs in our mental hospitals was and is an expression of the continuing distrust of verbal forms of treatment and part of a general hope that we can reduce the changing of human behavior to the taking of a few pills. The mental institutions where the drugs have had their greatest successes are those where the least was being done in verbal terms for the patients. Little or no change has been observed in institutions where a high level of patient care already existed. Indeed, there is disturbing evidence that the function of these drugs has, in most cases, been reduced to simple patient management: tranquilize the overactive, energize the depressed. Assaults on the body in the form of shock therapy (drug or electric) and brain surgery (prefrontal lobotomies) have also had their vogue.

Perhaps it would be useful to look outside psychology to see the result of our mistrust of symbols, language and consequently, the mind itself. Our literature might be the best indication of where our

current psychophobia is taking us. In the sense that the novels of Kafka might be seen as prophetic symptoms of the concentration camp and totalitarianism, I would suggest, perhaps in an excess of pessimism, that the essence of the post-Freud, post-Belsen world might be found in the novels of William Burroughs.

Burroughs seems to capture the failure of verbal connection as well as the general corruption of language when he says, "To speak is to lie. . . . Rub out the word forever." In the texture of his prose, where psychological states are translated into physical metaphors or relationships, there is a flight from mental function to biological function. The psychological dependence of the policeman on the criminal is transformed into a series of physical relations—the policeman has a "contact habit," consisting of the contact of his own mucous tissues with those of the addict. Dr. Benway, the medical man, is "an expert on all phases of interrogation, brainwashing, and control." Benway's philosophy of "mind rape," as Burroughs calls it, means that the subject of control "must be made to feel that he deserves any treatment he receives because there is something (never specified) horribly wrong with him." Burroughs' vision is that of ultimate excremental society where conformity, fear and death are the ends of life, not because of some system of control but because that is the nature of man.

There is an alternative tradition in modern literature that does not represent intellectual experience as a denial of physical experience but which positively affirms both. Unfortunately, this is a minor strain and one that is dying. The dominant ideology is that of the past, with the mind and the body engaged in a zero-sum game; that is, what one gets the other must lose. The current tendency is to mistrust the mind and to use the body to manipulate it. In this I see a special kind of mindlessness which, in an effort to save the mind, is prepared to destroy the mind and the body.

ARGUMENTS

BEYOND THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

Although these two books on marihuana and LSD[1] appear to be scholarly, imposing and beyond the reach of anyone who is merely literate and interested in the subject of drugs, I hope many people will look into them and find out how much they have to reveal about our society. For me, in a way, the books were a source of reassurance. Sometimes I have felt that psychiatrists or social scientists are America's unassailable priests, pursued by a nervous, gullible middle class for advice and consolation—which are offered for a sound, stable fee and in language cloudy enough to threaten no one and nothing very important. Now I know that there are indeed limits, very definite limits to what even psychiatrists can get away with. They complain in both books that their legitimate desire to study, use—even to recommend—drugs is decisively thwarted by a public that is not about to sanction pot or acid as "therapeutic agents," or even "harmless" sources of pleasure, no matter how "rationally" their value is urged. It seems that doctors can also push their luck too far—if they take themselves so seriously that they actually believe they are strictly interested in learning how the brain works and the mind gets along.

In both *The Marihuana Papers* and *The Use of LSD in Psychotherapy and Alcoholism* voices of "reason" and of "science" (medical and social science alike) are bravely raised in an effort to give the reader historical, neurophysiological and psychiatric information about

1 THE USE OF LSD IN PSYCHOTHERAPY AND ALCOHOLISM. Ed. Harold Abramson. Bobbs Merrill. $17.50.
THE MARIHUANA PAPERS. Ed. David Solomon. Bobbs Merrill. $10.00.

two drugs that seem to inspire waves of panic and outrage in people usually better able to control themselves and fall in line when it comes to other matters, like war or poverty. The books are similar: each is a compilation of essays by experts of one sort or another as well as interested observers; and each conveys an overall attitude of open-minded interest and curiosity. Both offer space to writers who might be called committed advocates of LSD or marihuana—and the latter drug has had what might be called propagandists rather than advocates for a long time. Yet neither of these books is without the serious, critical analysis that in fact distinguishes them from a number of sensational or hysterical books I have recently come across. (The "market" for books and articles on drugs gets better with each police raid, each outburst from a worried dean, doctor, politician or minister.)

The papers on LSD are primarily directed at interested psychiatrists. The book has its origins in a conference held two years ago in Amityville, New York. A number of physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists and psychoanalysts assembled from both sides of the Atlantic to read and hear papers, then to discuss LSD as a hallucinogenic drug, a pharmacological agent, a substance of interest to psychiatrists and one used by them under a number of circumstances, from "ordinary" therapy or analysis to the special kind of treatment usually required in the case of alcoholics. The papers were edited by the well-known psychiatrist Harold Abramson, and introduced by an eminently respectable and thoughtful physician, Frank Fremont-Smith. (For years he headed the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, one of the leading sources of support for medical research in this country.)

In contrast, *The Marihuana Papers* are of much more diverse origin. There are historical and anthropological essays that convey the worldwide interest various forms of marihuana have been able to generate for centuries. There are "literary and imaginative papers" by Rabelais, Gautier, Baudelaire, Paul Bowles, Terry Southern and Allen Ginsberg, all enthusiastic spokesmen for the drug, though Baudelaire had second thoughts toward the end of his life. Finally, a number of doctors, pharmacologists and social scientists come forth to describe exactly what marihuana does and does not do—and in the process show how illogically and fearfully we in America have responded to the drug.

Both these books were published by the Bobbs Merrill Company, and the mere fact that I must thank them for having the good sense and willingness to make two books out of so many good and provocative articles indicates the extent that intimidating and punitive scrutiny have plagued the "drug scene"—and frustrated the honest efforts of those who

want the freedom to do research, to ask questions and to find answers. What, for example, does pot do to the mind or body—in contrast, say, to alcohol and tobacco? Is marihuana the drug addict's first love, to be inevitably or commonly followed by a marriage to heroin? Who uses pot or acid anyway—mad, immoral and "deviant" students on the way to oblivion, or Negroes, or delinquents and criminals, or ineffective political radicals? Ought those who take drugs like marihuana and LSD be considered primarily medical and psychiatric "problems," or social outcasts or—as they now are—lawbreakers pure and simple? Is there, for that matter, any reason why pot should be outlawed, why you and I should be denied rightful access to the experiences and sensations hemp and its derivatives have offered millions of people for centuries? Why do even psychiatrists (in America, that is) find supplies of LSD almost impossible to obtain, at least legally?

These are the questions we all have, and no amount of rhetoric from self-righteous politicians, ministers, college deans or doctors ought to make them illegitimate or "evil" questions—that deserve in alarmed reply a smoke screen of pieties. In these two books at least the tone is one of rational curiosity. No doubt many of the authors favor the use of both drugs—as aids in psychotherapy or for the personal use of any citizen—but at least they marshal evidence for their cause rather than proclaim it as part of some unarguable morality. It is a relief to find an uncommon viewpoint stated honestly, quietly and seriously.

What is there to say, after going through these 1,100 pages—not to mention the articles and editorials that appear with rising frequency in the medical and psychiatric journals? Perhaps the most important conclusion is the one that is least medical: pot and acid challenge our culture. They are social drugs. They influence our values and attitudes. Consequently, what they do to our "nerves" or our moods cannot be described in a purely psychological or psychiatric way. They are not like sedatives or tranquilizers, including alcohol—let alone the thousands of other drugs that pharmacists dispense—because they arouse, rather than dampen or ignore, the mind's consciousness, the mind's awareness of itself, its host the body and its surroundings, that is, the neighbors, the ministers, the police, the mayor and everyone else who has a say in what is "right" or "wrong." Minds so aroused may not storm barricades but walk away from them with pointed indifference or scorn—and perhaps it is more galling to be snubbed than fought.

Consequently it has to be admitted that the least thoughtful and most outraged critics are right when they refuse to lump pot with alcohol, or the side effects of LSD with the by-products of racism, poverty,

bureaucracy or suburbia. There may be six million alcoholics in America—their bodies are ravaged to a degree that pot can never equal, and they kill thousands while driving to the office or the split-level ranch home, not the pads of Haight-Ashbury or the East Village—but the martinis those alcoholics take blot things out rather than highlight them. The drunk is fed up and tired rather than glowing with vivid, intense and unusual visions. He wants oblivion. He leaves IBM and the Pentagon reeling. Inevitably he will blame himself, become his own critic rather than the college president's, the company president's or Lyndon B. Johnson's. In contrast, the pot-head or acid-head does what the saying urges—he turns on, tunes in and drops out—but he is drawn *to* something, in fact to himself, for which he is called a criminal or "sick."

So much of our psychiatric thinking accounts for flights—from "reality," from fears, from anxieties, from desires that the person feels to be forbidden, immoral or knows to be illegal or unconventional—that we think of "sick" people as evasive and escapist rather than determined and ambitious. We fail to see what our patients want and do; we only know what is *wrong* with them. Yet some people say that we the doctors are crazy—in so far as we are part of this society. They are fleeing *us,* not their memories or dreams. They openly proclaim their sincere and convinced despair with what is going on in this country—and work very hard not only to leave it (through drugs) but to find a replacement for it among themselves. They are seeking as well as running, and I do not believe that as a psychiatrist I am required to call them "abnormal" or such thinly disguised equivalents as "troubled" or "disturbed."

In the conversations I have had with many such youths—they use pot rather casually, and LSD much more guardedly—I find them no more in need of psychiatric "help" than many others who also worry about where in hell we are going, as a nation and as individual citizens. If anything, drugs make many of these young men and women more alert, more sensitive to the feelings they have and to the grim facts of this century. I have seen some youths overwhelmed by their awakened (drug-induced, if you will) sensibilities, but at least they are not full of rationalizations and self-deceptions; at least they do not whistle in the dark and become obsessed with the intricacies of the tax-form. Anyone who has used pot or acid knows how brutally frank the mind can become with itself when prodded. In that sense hallucinogens do what psychoanalysis does: in each instance the mind's "ordinary" way of dealing with the world is altered, and a greater degree of "awareness"

is achieved. Nor is psychoanalysis without dangers somewhat comparable to those experienced by a youth who takes pot, and especially acid. Analysts know that a "transference psychosis" can sometimes occur among even the most normal (apparently) of patients, in treatment with the most skilled of doctors. The patient's defenses are down; he is as it were exposed to his naked self as never before; for a while he feels overwhelmed, indifferent to the "real" world, prey to fantasies, wishes and fears once held firmly under control, and indeed out of sight, out of mind. I am not saying that the various turmoils of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy are the "same" as those brought on by drugs, but I am trying to put the "problem" of drugs in a larger perspective—so that when someone on marihuana or LSD gets in an automobile accident or even tries suicide I am not driven into a state of near hysteria by the eagerly reported and prominently billed news that drugs were "involved."

Every day good law-abiding people, who have scarcely heard of iniquitous drugs, go wild; they kill themselves or others; sometimes they are even "driven mad" (or so they see it) by their "loved ones," their neighbors, even their doctors. We may "know" that fact, but we seem to forget it, too. We forget that what is "normal" varies; that even madness or cruelty have their styles. One culture does not permit but asks a man to take cocaine; another is shocked at how drugs lead to beards. Some men run amok in the jungles of Asia, with little or nothing but their own inexplicable misery to account for their deeds; and others take a few martinis, complain bitterly about the boss or the way things are going at home, step on the gas of a car whose speedometer goes up to 140 miles per hour—and wrap themselves and any number of other people around a tree, a post, whatever.

I do not see how we can refuse to see the challenge that marihuana and LSD make to our society. They may be called "drugs," and we doctors may want to handle them as a "medical" problem, but much more is at stake. The psychologist William McGlothlin is right when—in articles contributed to both books—he brings up the social, cultural, religious and economic aspects of drug usage, here and abroad. After all, what Max Weber called the "protestant ethic" was not fashioned to achieve nirvana, or even a resolution of the Oedipus complex. Men were asked to heed their elders, work hard, pray a lot, but think not very much—so that "things would get done." God is transcendent and not (as for so many Asians) immanent, and He is to be reached (by hard work, loyalty, subservience and spurts of initiative) rather than felt. Respites and crutches are allowed (such as alcohol and tobacco) but not the kind of self-regard that challenges the "ethic" of the "system"

head-on—and makes the mind's life seem more interesting than the factory's goods.

These two books at least try to discuss some of all this; in a sense we are asked to acknowledge that we are men of the West, and working men. We are also asked to think of drugs as more than a legal problem, or one that deserves the awesome, frightening, authoritative language doctors can easily summon. As I see it, we are asked to question one another and decide for ourselves openly and without coercion whether or not we'll use or advocate pot, even as we do with other habits or ideas. I have no personal interest in any of the drugs; I do my work and put in my forty-five minutes on the expressway every morning, every night. Yet, it is quite apparent that there are some—call them a few or a growing number, depending upon your viewpoint—who not only turn me and my habits down, but do so by "turning off." I fail to see why I should hound them and punish them for the choice they have made, particularly since they may persuade me to have some second thoughts about my own values and actions, about what in my "way of life" I want to defend, or keep at arm's length—or abandon for something better.

Robert Coles

A MODEST PROPOSAL

Daniel Bell's *The Reforming of General Education*[1] is a proposal to hold the line on what is known as general education, i.e., a broad, amateur knowledge of the culture of the West. Admittedly, Bell's book is a rear-guard action, a shoring-up, and is limited by the fact that it is specifically addressed to the problems of Columbia College although it takes constant side-glances at Harvard and Chicago, other traditional bastions of general education.

At the risk of distortion, and certainly at the sacrifice of nuance (of which there is much), I shall first set forth my sense of the main drift of the argument or pedagogical scheme. According to Bell, the secondary schools should pack the student with information, especially in history and anthropology, so as to leave the college free to concentrate on conceptualization. General education in the college should begin at the beginning, i.e., with Greek and Roman history. It should provide a "common learning"; a knowledge of and feeling for the Western tradition; and provide an antidote to intellectual fragmentation. If there is no longer any single tradition or "past" in the sense that there was for John Stuart Mill or Jonathan Swift or John Milton, then at least the modern student can be introduced to the "idea" of tradition or the past. The humanities and history should nourish or make flourish the undergraduate imagination, while the physical and social sciences should introduce him to the conceptual grounds of knowledge. There should

1 THE REFORMING OF GENERAL EDUCATION. By Daniel Bell. Columbia University Press. $6.95.

be a constant interplay or dialectic between the major or the special subject of the individual students and the general spectrum of human learning. But the heart of the matter, in Bell's schema, is cognitive: the manner in which the mind works in different fields of knowledge. Thus: "the pattern of knowledge is fundamentally triadic; . . ." From this it follows that the learning process or function is different in each of the three fields. In mathematics and the sciences learning is *sequential,* building up learning in a linear manner. In the humanities it is *concentric,* whereby certain major themes (love, death, rebirth and so on) are returned to again and again. In the social sciences learning procedes by *linkages,* constant movement outward into different but related fields of knowledge.

Protesting against many of these proposals would seem, especially for a humanist professor, like espousing sin, but since I am in fact very partial to sin, I do have many reservations about Bell's proposals. I must preface my remarks by saying that I applaud emotionally and subjectively what he is attempting, that is, to shore up the idea and practice of the traditional conception of general education, a noble idea and ideal. But the reality principle tells me that this is tinkering with a phantom, for what Bell is talking about is something that has at least partially disappeared. The real question is not how it can be preserved —it can't—but what is to take its place. All of modern history, by which is meant history since the French Revolution, has been a kind of clumsy brokerage whereby society somehow continues to replace the obsolete by the obsolescent (usually over the dead bodies of the conservatives and with, very often, the massacre of the revolutionaries). This movement has now finally caught up with higher education. This is not meant to imply that the study of the past will or should disappear or that traditional subjects will disappear. Quite the contrary; but their organization and instruction will have to be radically revised. I do not pretend to know the answers to these problems and am only asking questions. But I am convinced, as are others, that part of our difficulty arises from the fact that we are giving old answers to new questions. And the whole problem of education is beset by more than its share of the ordinary difficulties attendant upon all collective human enterprises, not the least of these difficulties being the very fragility of the educational process itself.

Accordingly, there is no subject on which a dogmatic approach is less relevant than in theories, or practices, of education, which now in the United States bids fair to replace sexual relations as Topic A. The fact that both activities are undergoing tremendous transitions or revolu-

tions, the end of which, or even the beginning of the end of which, is not yet in sight, only increases the hysteria and bewilderment about both. It may well be that some day the sexual code will be resettled in a more satisfactory fashion for more people than has been the case in the past, but it is doubtful if educational systems and theories will ever be anything but provisional, that is, elaborate and constantly shifting compromises. According to Samuel Kramer's *History Begins at Sumer*, one of the phenomena of Sumer was the delinquent schoolboy, and from the pre-Socratics, Socrates and Plato on down, education, and its mysteries, has been one of the basic concerns of mankind.

Thus, the humble motto for all theorists should be that uttered by John Dewey when he spoke at the dedication of UCLA in 1930 on the subject of "Philosophy and Education." Dewey quoted Professor John M. Coulter, "himself a highly successful teacher," on the difficulties of propounding theories of education:

> There is no problem concerning which we can so ill afford to be dogmatic; and no one concerning which we are so dogmatically inclined. There is no question concerning which past experience may be so unsafe a guide, since what we attained cannot be compared with what we hope for and have a right to expect. There is no problem concerning which theorizing may lead so far astray, and none which has been so covered with crude theorizing. We do not understand the structure we are seeking to modify and develop; we do not know what we want to do for it when we shall understand it, and we do not know how to accomplish when we shall know what we want. Out of this mass of negations we are constructing our hypotheses.

To get directly to *The Reforming of General Education*, I find Bell's stress on methodology and the understanding of concepts in the learning process, which smacks of the murkier regions of sociology and of the intellectual atmosphere of the University of Chicago—the logic-choppers of the academic world—to be, or to be liable to be, both barren and sterile. Further, I doubt very much that "learning," whatever that is, is fundamentally different in the three fields—physical sciences, social sciences and humanities—that Bell posits, or that each pursuit embodies a special way of learning. There is some plausibility to the idea of science as sequential, and certainly progress in a science tends much more than in the humanities to be a kind of linear progression. But I suspect that learning at its most profound and creative in all three fields would have more similarities than differences and that in describing the learning function at its best something like the distinction Coleridge

made between the primary and secondary imagination, or intuition or power of synthesis, or intellectual grace (in the theological sense), would be more relevant. At their higher reaches all fields of knowledge have in common a high esthetic component; thus a mathematical demonstration or a physical hypothesis or an elegant scientific experiment is "beautiful" in the same way as Vermeer or Mozart or Tolstoy or, for that matter, Max Weber. They are all *austere*, like *Oedipus Rex*. In Yeats's phrase:

> *Like a long-legged fly upon the stream*
> *His mind moves upon silence.*

At this level too they are all provisional, brilliant and beautiful contour maps, illuminating for the moment the chosen area which on its part is only one small slice of the great cake of Reality, which itself is so wondrous and complex that no human mind could ever have "thought it." In short, what should be imparted to the student is not the presumed logic of knowledge, which is a debatable affair, but its beauty and its fluidity, which are its greatest attractions.

Moreover, to take the learning process in the study of literature, which is the only one I am at least partially competent to discuss, there are in it, when it is done properly, all kinds of different things going on, of which the concentric recurrence of basic themes is only one, and that not the most important. And some of these other things are remarkably like what goes on, according to Bell's description, in the social and natural sciences. For one thing, literature is taught most effectively and absorbed with most consequence when great emphasis is given to its historical context, in other words to the *linkages* of literature to history in the widest sense, not only the history of events and ideas but that of society, philosophy, psychology, theology and so on. No teacher, naturally, is capable of handling all approaches, but a good student in a good, and large, department of literature will encounter the historical context of literature in many forms. Secondly, the study of literature is very much the careful reading of specific documents—this is really the heart of the matter—and reading a complex and intricate work of literature involves a mental process which has much in common with conducting a fairly sophisticated scientific experiment. Here, for example, is Edward Wasiolek's description of what is involved in reading properly a Dostoevsky novel:

> . . . *Crime and Punishment* is a great novel, and part of its greatness comes from a technique that assaults the reader's intellectual

> complacency and challenges him to continual refinement of understanding. Whenever the reader begins to relax into what he thinks he understands and can accept, Dostoevsky introduces some fact, some scene that contradicts what the reader expects, and *forces him to rethink* [italics mine] the novel.

Or the movement of a mind, even the mind of a learner, over a problem, any problem, is at its best something akin to the process described by Lucien Goldmann in *The Hidden God*:

> . . . Dialectical thought . . . affirms that there are never any absolutely valid starting-points, no problems which are finally and definitely solved, and that consequently thought never moves forward in a straight line, since each individual fact or idea assumes its significance only when it takes up its place in the whole, in the same way as the whole can be understood only by our increased knowledge of the partial and incomplete facts which constitute it. The advance of knowledge is thus to be considered as a perpetual movement to and fro, from the whole to the parts and from the parts back to the whole again, a movement in the course of which the whole and the parts throw light upon one another.

This is how *King Lear* or *The Brothers Karamazov* is to be best apprehended (and, I suspect, the nature of urban man or that of subatomic particles or quasars as well).

Bell is not constructing an epistemology; so it is perhaps an injustice to belabor this point, but I do so belabor because I think it decidedly in error to put at the heart of a pedagogical treatise a simplified, and, I believe, erroneous, conceptual map of how the student learns or how the mind operates in different fields. Furthermore, the assumption that human knowledge divides itself neatly into a triad has always been questionable and is now becoming more so. For the sacred triad is not in the nature of things, as Bell knows. Rather like most "happenings" in the academic world, it just happened, willy-nilly, got built into the organization of universities and is now an administrative holy cow. Thus at the University of California at Berkeley, for example, there is not a trivium but a quadrivium: biological sciences, physical sciences, social sciences and humanities. Does this mean that knowledge is really four-fold? Not at all. It means that at Berkeley it happened to get organized that way. The Doty Committee at Harvard, as Bell remarks, paid scant attention to the trivium and suggested a two-fold division of humanities (including history) and sciences (including behavioral). But all kinds of other arrangements could be made. It would be, for example, more logical to divide the whole thing into the study of

man (humanities, history and social sciences) and the study of nature (biological and physical sciences). Biology itself, of course, would have a foot in both camps. Or to have a flexible and constantly shifting arrangement with no absolute divisions. (Why divisions anyway, which are only an administrative convenience?) The two emergent powers in the field of human thought are biology and mathematics (math departments are now across the country surpassing English departments in size), and perhaps they should be at the center of things, with other subjects ranged around them, until a new dispensation emerges and a new rearrangement takes place.

Now all this is a far cry from general education, but that is the point and one of the problems: can general education survive not only specialization and fragmentation, the age-old complaint of the humanist, *but,* and this is important, the appeal to the young of the dynamic brilliance and the constantly shifting character of modern thought itself, which doesn't want an anchor in the past, one of the historical justifications for general education, but is racing ahead of the future, into a world where subject matter *per se* in the old sense of the word has begun to disappear and where what used to be nonconnected parallels, e.g., mathematics and biology, or mathematics and political science, or biology and chemistry, or, in the field of literature, the art of criticism and the art of creation, have begun to curve and cross. The answer is that it can survive if its proponents cease to make it, in Henry James's phrase, a "seated lump of information." Today if a thing is not dynamic, it is dead. Timeless abstractions, general schema, nontemporal genera are "out"; the concrete and the historically "real" (i.e., the historically conditioned) are "in." A popular sage recently remarked that there was no longer a Left Wing and a Right Wing, only an up wing and a down wing. Education, in some respects, tends to be down wing. But to make it up wing does not mean jettisoning the past; rather it means making that past come alive again. I shall try to illustrate this by reference to the teaching of history.

I have chosen history because *Reforming General Education* asserts that the modern student is not really interested in, or is uneasy about, the study of the past and that he or she is inclined toward the abstract rather than the concrete in the study of anything:

> The passion for the abstract is a great danger, especially for students, because they lose a sense of the concrete and of the actuality of events, which give not only dramatic meaning but a kind of sensibleness to the nature of human dilemmas.

My own experience with students, however, has been quite the opposite, and I have come to feel that the one sure way to put a modern student to sleep, and the brighter he is the sooner he will begin to snore, is to begin talking about "the Western tradition" or the "Idea of Freedom." Students hate large abstractions with the passion of characters in a Hemingway novel, and, correspondingly, they hunger, whether they know it or not, for the real, the tangible, the concrete complexity or the complex concretion. Nor are they alone in this, for it is in the air of the times, among historians themselves, for example. The two most interesting and influential, from my point of view, of modern historians have not been Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee but Sir Lewis Namier and Marc Bloch and his associates. What Namier and Bloch had in common was a passion for the detailed complexities, the tangible, the real, the "touchable" of historical man. If Namier "freudianized" history and showed that labels, political or otherwise, do not explain or cover individuals, Bloch brought it back to earth with his insistence on the evidence of archaeology, folklore, language and other concretions: "What is most profound in history may also be the most certain." In our time there is no such thing as "the idea of man"; there are only concrete men, body and soul (psyche), in concrete situations. "Is not man himself the greatest variable in nature?" A whole new generation of "hard" historians has come into being, and the standard historical clichés are being either modified or shattered right and left. That old fable, "the rise of the middle class," which has been "rising" it seems from the beginning of time, turns out to be as much an abstraction as the Marxist view of history. Did industrialism lead to "broken" homes? Perhaps, but in Stuart times one quarter of the families in parishes for which there is evidence were "broken," usually by death. This sort of thing is all very exciting, and if it is brought into the classroom, as it now is, there will be no difficulty in interesting the student in the past.

In fact the passion for concretion pervades the whole life of the mind in the present day. The most powerful, and beneficial, movement in literary criticism in the twentieth century has been the New Criticism —it is now over and like all revolutions it got tired—with its insistence on minutely studying the text in order to ascertain exactly what it meant, every word of it. One of the most interesting new developments in literary criticism, as exemplified by Frederick Crews's book on Hawthorne and Normand Holland's on Shakespeare, is the scrupulous, subtle, hard-headed and knowledgeable investigation of the latent psychic patterns underlying the manifest content of works of literature. Nor is it only a

coincidence that the "hard" approach—facts, statistics, mathematical exactitude—is pervading all the social sciences, even, so help me God, psychology and social welfare. Nor that the physical and biological sciences have all converged on the most minute evidence (the microcosm) of their respective areas. All this is exciting too; in Oppenheimer's words:

> . . . I do have the impression that all the way from history to biology a great arc of science is about to catch fire.

Oppenheimer continues:

> I believe that there is a good chance that what have been the protosciences of man are now rather close to becoming the many, many different sciences of man. I do not think that in the world fifty years from now there will be a subject called *psychology*, any more than there is now a subject called *natural philosophy*. I think that different ways of studying man will lead to disciplines which for convenience will have different names, be in different buildings, and will have different professors.

What I am suggesting by this is that the dynamism, fluidity and exactitude of modern knowledge, which is the heart of the matter, be built into the organization of the university by increasing its flexibility and by purging it of its heavy overlay of nineteenth-century ponderosity and monolithicality. And that some of the intellectual excitement that is occurring on the frontiers of knowledge be introduced more explicitly into the undergraduate curriculum, if at the sacrifice of some of the traditional coverage of traditional areas of general education. To use Toynbee's terminology, the whole institution must be "etherealized."

This proposal has the defects of its virtues: it does involve some losses. In Santayana's words: "The necessity of rejecting and destroying some things that are beautiful is the deepest curse of existence." Bell says in partial approval of the educational pattern of the fast-moving students, who do not really partake of the blessed four-year interlude which the college used to provide, "Clearly not all acceleration is bad." I agree with this, but would also add, as I'm sure all would agree, "Something precious is always being lost."

One thing that has been lost, as Bell admits, is the idea that there is a common core of knowledge which everyone should know. Today, however, in some senses, the university has been turned upside down and exists to show how ignorant everyone is. To quote Oppenheimer again:

> No man should escape our universities knowing how little he knows. He must have some sense of the fact that not through his fault, not through his sloth (though he may be lazy and not very bright) but inherently in the nature of things, he is going to be an ignorant man and so is everybody else.

But surely too all the traditional fields are imparting or try to impart more information than is necessary and they could all stand some pruning, some de-essentializing, for the *whole* past cannot be carried, still vital, into the future, although all we know of it can be recorded and stored in books. In short we must pick and choose as to what matters are to be preserved in education as the living links in the total history of mankind. Further, rote learning, storing information in human memories, will be less and less relevant as time goes on. The most profound and important changes in the human organism usually happen right before our eyes, but they are accomplished, usually, before they are noticed. One such change certainly in modern history is the decay, through atrophy or desuetude, of the human memory. In 1846 in a review of Grote's *History of Greece* John Stuart Mill mentioned the poor memory of "our degenerate days" and speculated on how mighty an instrument it once must have been:

> In our time, when the habit is formed of recording all things in permanent characters, and when everyone relies, not on memory, but on substitutes for it, we can scarcely form an idea of what its intrinsic powers must have been. . . .

Since Mill's day memory has only become less and less relevant, and more and more what will be sought in students will not be *total recall,* although genuine erudition will always be prized, but a certain mental *style*: swiftness, grace, subtlety, the ability to synthesize, the faculty of being able to steer successfully between an endless series of *Scyllas* and *Charybdes.* More and more the whole educational enterprise will have as its motto: what is concluded that we should reach conclusions about it?

Bell says that he is concerned only with the program of instruction at Columbia College (this was his mandate) and, quite understandably, would not be concerned with the student and the administration. Thus it is no criticism of his book to say that in the larger perspective, and in the nation as a whole, it will become increasingly difficult to deal with any one component of the college or the university in isolation from the others. All large modern problems, urban renewal, air pollution control, population control, eradication of poverty, racial relations, can-

not be dealt with, it becomes increasingly clear, in a piecemeal fashion. The whole ecology, including the total physical environment, has to be taken into account, and in education, at this point anyway, the nature of the administration and the nature of the student is of equal importance, in academic planning, to the nature of the subject matter. But I shall confine myself here to a few remarks about the modern student.

It is clear that modern students want something that they are not getting, although they do not know what it is they want. Ostensibly, it is some kind of participation in their own governance, which they should certainly have. Service on college and university committees, for example, by students would do no harm and might do some good. Fresh ideas and energies are always welcome. The higher wisdom says that before they expired from boredom, they might begin to see that the general administration of an institution of higher learning is not a plot—though it does not lack plotters—but a muddle and that it functions by and large not by fascistic fiat (although on occasion this can happen) nor even by conscious purpose but through a peculiar combination of inertia and what can only be regarded as divine intervention, or, in other words, by miracle. For the signal fact is not that these institutions function badly but that they function at all.

But this is not the heart of the matter, even though some students and faculty think it is. Perhaps it is all the fault of civilization and its discontents—"It seems then that history is to blame"—and there is nothing anyone can do about it. Be that as it may, traditional undergraduate education, while not moribund, is suffering from hardening of the arteries, while at the same time human knowledge itself is proliferating in an awesomely brilliant manner, both in quantity and quality. The task then is once more to bring the fire down from Heaven and rekindle the spark, for it is there, in the undergraduate soul. If this could be done, it is even conceivable that something like General Education (the history and "nature" of man and the history and the "nature" of nature) could emerge once more at a higher level and with a fresh organization. Perhaps some day abstractions will be once more not only bearable but fruitful, and, even, "true."

Having said all this in criticism of Bell's pedagogical scheme, I cannot help but feel guilty of having indulged in a certain degree of irresponsibility since I am talking freely in a vacuum while Bell was working in the context of the conditions of Columbia College and, further, had to bring concrete proposals to a living, breathing faculty, for which arduous, often bloody, and usually thankless task, he has my

completest sympathy. Purple Hearts are in order, no doubt. But having uttered this *mea culpa,* I should like to go the whole hog and in conclusion propose my own educational utopia, wild as it is. As has so often been said, talk is cheap (and harmless).

My strongest negative feeling about grade-school education in America is that, once outside English or languages or math, it fills the students' heads, from first to last, with a lot of irrelevant, useless and inert information, and that it has no real shape or form. This is true even at the good schools. Anyone who has surveyed those dreary "science" text books used in the grade schools, with their explanations of the workings of modern plumbing, or those "social science" texts with their liberal pieties and their "cutenesses" and their masses of irrelevant information, or, even at their best, those reading lists for the study of literature, with their Pearl Bucks and John Steinbecks, can only agree. Similarly, colleges and universities often deal in high-level junk. Thus the esthetic component of knowledge, so important, disappears, down the drain, literally, while the students are asked to absorb a shapeless mass of irrelevancies.

It is visionary and perhaps useless to hope—since so far modern civilization never does get back to what really counts—that there will some day be a genuine educational system, something we have never really had, that at its highest level takes the best students and gives them a genuinely elite education, somewhat like that James Mill provided for John Stuart Mill: from three years to eight years nothing but Greek and arithmetic with Latin beginning at eight. After that history, other languages, science and so on. About this education Mill made two significant remarks: first he maintained, perhaps with excessive modesty, that he was not an especially brilliant or precocious child (in other words many other children could have done it) and that it put him twenty years ahead of his contemporaries. As to the point that the education later helped to give him a nervous breakdown, the answer is that plenty of people have the breakdown without the education.

About Greece itself Mill was to say many years later in his review of Grote:

> The interest of Grecian history is unexhausted and inexhaustible. As a mere story, hardly any other portion of authentic history can compete with it.
> It is also, of all histories of which we know so much, the most abounding in consequences to us who live now.

Even in English history, according to Mill, the battle of Marathon was more important than the battle of Hastings, for without Marathon the

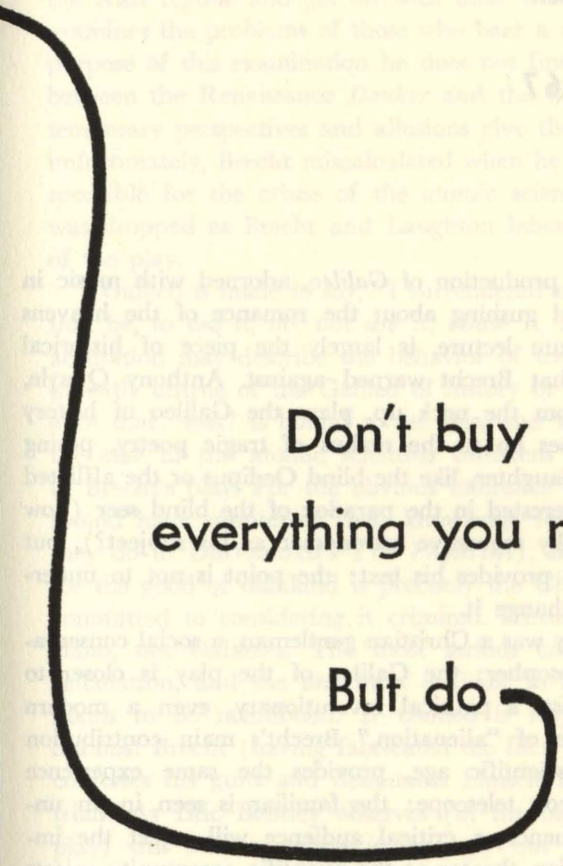
Saxons might have kept wandering in the woods forever. For the Greeks began everything of which the modern world can boast.

Above all the Greeks began education, and, from my point of view, the greatest pedagogical treatise written in the twentieth century is a history, the massive, profound and probably idealized version of Greek pedagogy given by Werner Jaeger in *Paidea.* The cornerstones of this pedagogical scheme, as set forth by Jaeger, were language or literature, mathematics and music: words, theory and rhythm and harmony. In Jaeger's words:

> They considered that the only genuine forces which could form the soul were words and sounds, and—so far as they work through words or sounds or both—rhythm and harmony.

Thus it was that the Greek created, self-created, the first full human beings in history; in Jaeger's words: "Other nations made gods, kings, spirits; the Greeks alone made men." If these assertions are merely expressions of the old Germanic obsession with the perfections of Greece and if in truth such a harmony never existed (Socrates and the hemlock, and so on), then one can still say that it constitutes the greatest educational ideal ever propounded and that it is the destiny of education in the future to approximate its realization. Greek and Latin unlock language, literature and history; mathematics unlocks the sciences; music unlocks the world of the arts. Each component is a beautiful thing in itself (even Latin declensions and semideponent verbs) and, taken together, they are at the origin of almost everything worthwhile that the human reason and imagination have discovered or created. Upon such a foundation a genuine higher educational system could properly be built.

John Henry Raleigh


Don't buy
everything you read.
But do

Marshall Cohen

THEATER 67

John Hirsch's production of *Galileo,* adorned with music in the style of Gabrieli, and gushing about the romance of the heavens like a Hayden Planeterium lecture, is largely the piece of historical ham with a star part that Brecht warned against. Anthony Quayle, wonderfully articulate from the neck up, plays the Galileo of history and legend. Hirsch presses on to the realms of tragic poetry, posing Galileo with his faithful daughter, like the blind Oedipus or the afflicted Lear. Brecht is not uninterested in the paradox of the blind seer (how could he be with a socially regressive astronomer as his subject?), but the *Theses on Feuerbach* provides his text: the point is not to understand the world, but to change it.

The Galileo of history was a Christian gentleman, a social conservative and a natural philosopher; the Galileo of the play is closer to Brecht himself—an atheist, a political revolutionary, even a modern "scientist." The technique of "alienation," Brecht's main contribution to an esthetic for the scientific age, provides the same experience as looking through Galileo's telescope: the familiar is seen in an unfamiliar light. In consequence, a critical audience will reject the implications of the Aristotelian theater as the scientific community rejects the assumptions of the Aristotelian world. Galileo makes this point to his disciple Andrea—and well within earshot of the audience: gawking is not seeing.

Brecht's relation to Galileo is personal, as well as theoretical; he reads his own dilemmas, and the dilemmas of his generation, into and back out of at least three different versions of the play. If Galileo cooperated with the Inquisition and lived to finish his *Discorsi,* Brecht was praised by the House Un-American Activities Committee and went on to found the Berliner Ensemble. If Galileo abandoned the impecunious freedom of Venice for ease at the Medici court, Brecht rejected obscurity in Hollywood for the subsidies of East Berlin. In the first version

of the play a "cunning" Galileo tries to outwit the Inquisition and pursue his studies just as Brecht's anti-Fascist friends tried to outwit the Nazi regime and get on with their work. In every version, Brecht examines the problems of those who bear a revolutionary truth. For the purpose of this examination he does not find it necessary to distinguish between the Renaissance *Denker* and the Marxist *Dichter.* These contemporary perspectives and allusions give the play much of its interest; unfortunately, Brecht miscalculated when he decided to hold Galileo responsible for the crime of the atomic scientists: the Hiroshima bomb was dropped as Brecht and Laughton labored over the second version of the play.

Galileo is made to say, "I surrendered my knowledge to the powers that be, to use it, no, not *use* it, abuse it, as it suits their ends." This accusation may describe the behavior of the atomic scientists, but it is patently untrue of the Galileo of history or of Brecht's play. Any audience that "sees" is bound to see this, and to be put off by it. Besides, the case of the atomic scientists threatens to undermine the dialectic of Brecht's play. For the obvious inference is that the atomic scientists should have suppressed their knowledge for the good of mankind (as they do in Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists*). But suppression of the truth for the good of mankind is precisely the Church's aim, and the play is committed to considering it criminal. Hiroshima supports the Church's claim, not Galileo's. The most serious consequence of Brecht's miscalculation, and the one most difficult to remedy in performance, remains to be mentioned. If Galileo is responsible for Hiroshima the Stalinist Brecht (having fabricated the facts) must see to it that Galileo confesses his guilt and denounces himself in the style of the Moscow trials. As Eric Bentley observes (in his indispensable remarks on the play) this self-accusation is jarringly out of character, and he sympathizes with Laughton for muting it in performance.

Quayle, unfortunately, mutes the entire character, and Brecht's main idea about it is lost. Brecht's Galileo is a man of appetites who cannot say no to a new thought or an old bottle of wine. Thinking is simply another physical pleasure and this makes it entirely plausible that Galileo should recoil from the instruments of torture or fail to consider the responsibilities of scientists. Quayle's Galileo is, by contrast, an *homme moyen sensuel.* His scientific impulses seek a cool, didactic expression; his sensual fulfillments display a gentlemanly *joie de vivre.* (And Aline MacMahon is too old by a generation for there to be any suggestion of sexual hanky-panky with the housekeeper.) At the last, he is a broken man, picking at his dinner. Laughton's Galileo fell

greedily upon Andrea's goose: the image of his humiliation, and its cause.

The Lincoln Center group claims to be performing the Laughton version. In fact, there are many additions from the far more explicit Berlin version (prepared for a plebian audience), and a number of serious omissions, including the "plague" scene, which shows that Galileo is no coward when he wants to get on with his physics. More importantly, the "carnival" scene is badly cut, obscurely set forth and foolishly employed as a curtain-raiser to the arbitrarily selected second act. This scene is critically important in establishing the revolutionary potentialities of Galileo's new science, and it suggests the disastrous consequences of his abjuration. The final scene is omitted as well. The burden of ushering in the new age, of building a land that needs no heroes, has passed to Galileo's disciples and by implication to Brecht's audience. Galileo's betrayal has made the task more difficult, and the little boys still believe in witches. There are no disciples, or little boys, in Hirsch's VistaVision finale; only a pitiable old man, alone with the stars.

Galileo's collapse before the Inquisition merely delays the dawn of the new scientific age, and the task of his disciples, Andrea and Federzoni, is simply to bring that age to birth. Eitel's capitulation to the Senate Investigating Committee in Mailer's *The Deer Park* marks the death of liberalism, and Eitel's disillusioned admirers, the ex-Army flier, Sergius O'Shaughnessy, and the post-Nietzschean pimp, Marion Faye, must discover the new dispensation for themselves. Hiroshima is a critical event for Mailer, as it is for Brecht. For Mailer, however, it signifies not the corruption of reason, but the sickness of feeling and the longing for nihilistic destruction. (Sergius falls impotent after showering the Japanese with atomic "radiations of hate" and Marion, dressed in a shiny S/M leather suit, calls upon the atomic "Sun God" to cleanse the corrupt City.) Sergius and Marion can now be seen as anticipations of later developments in Mailer's thought. Mailer supposes that inside every liberal a hipster is trying to get out, but Sergius emerges convincingly only in Mailer's subsequent short story, "The Time of Her Time." Marion Faye is plainly struggling toward the Nietzschean view that whatever is done out of love is done beyond good and evil—or toward Mailer's Reichian restatement of it. Faye has embraced the vulgar paradox that vice is identical with virtue, having sensed Nietzsche's finer point, that both are conceived in hate. But he has yet to make Rojack's discovery that hatred must be purged, if necessary by murder, before orgasm is possible. In their inchoate state Sergius and Marion fail to carry the philosophical burden placed on

them in *The Deer Park,* and this defect is not repaired, as it might have been, in Mailer's play.

The play is, in fact, inferior to the novel in almost every respect. Pressing esthetic and historical considerations once led Meyerhold to call for a cinematization of the theater. Mailer, apparently straightfacedly, suggests that he employed film techniques in *The Deer Park* because Hollywood is its subject. I can easily believe that his director's imitation of "zoom" shots, and sharp-focus photography is inspired by some such misguided intention. But Mailer's "montage" of eighty-eight scenes, and the very considerable tedium of the evening, are surely the result of attempting to reproduce his novel, relatively intact, on the stage. He seems never to have considered the potentialities, or the hazards, of the new medium. Plays do not require narrators, and there was no reason to continue Sergius in this capacity on the stage. Especially so, as Sergius' narration is a conspicuous failure even in the novel. Norman Podhoretz found it impossible to believe that Sergius, callow and a bit priggish, could have written Mailer's remarkable and subtle book. On the stage, Sergius, whose role in the action is minor, inevitably gets lost for long periods of time, and we certainly have no sense of witnessing events through his eyes; when he does unaccountably turn up it is usually to split a few philosophical hairs ("Rather think of Sex as Time, and Time as the connection of new circuits"), or to tell us how he's making out (since Lulu, no new circuits). He has been made a little more portentous in the play to help him create an impression, but he seems dramatically otiose and esthetically vestigial. The great triumph of Mailer's novel was his account of Eitel's affair with Elena. It was, however, a distinctively novelistic accomplishment, a psychological analysis in the tradition of Laclos, Stendhal and Proust, and it proves impervious to dramatic presentation. What, after all, is one to do with a hundred passages like ". . . Eitel noticed that Elena's thighs were beginning to show dimpled hollows. It was the only blemish on her skin, and yet it depressed him deeply"? Without them one has a skeleton key to *The Deer Park* and this is very importantly the impression the stage play makes. Mailer has by far his greatest theatrical success with the Hollywood moguls Teppis and Munshin (a father-in-law–son-in-law team reminiscent of Louis B. Mayer and David O. Selznick) who seemed, in the novel, to verge on being stage villians and stage Jews. The scene in which Teppis, a sanctimonious hypocrite, tries to force Lulu Meyers into marriage with a "faggola" for her own good, and to please the vast American public, has more political bite than *Viet Rock* and *MacBird* taken together.

The company is attractive, but it does not compensate for the losses suffered in translation. Gene Lindsey's performance not only captures, it shares Sergius' callowness, and he is understandably shy about buttonholing the audience for no very good reason. As the movie queen Lulu Meyers, Beverly Bentley offers a creditable imitation of Marilyn Monroe as Lorelei Lee, but nothing more to the point. Hugh Marlowe misses the streak of vulgarity and the impulsive vanity of Eitel, but he is suave and possesses literary intelligence. It's not his fault that he can't lend a conversational air to reflections like, "Where, in which cemetery of the heavens, do the tender words of lovers rest when they love no more?" Rosemary Tory's Elena is wonderfully vulnerable but Rip Torn's Marion is only saturnine and troubled, where he ought to be demonic and despairing. Will Lee, of course, has a minor triumph punching out Teppis' wonderful one-liners. Perhaps he and Mailer should think of reviving Minsky's.

Pinter possesses in a supreme degree that sense of the theatrical medium Mailer so conspicuously lacks. *The Homecoming* is, in fact, an austere esthetic exercise, an approach to "pure" theater. Pinter rejects the grosser materials of his earlier plays, the poignant betrayals of *The Caretaker*, or the Hitchcockian bravura of *The Birthday Party*, and works toward cooler, more formal effects. *The Homecoming* is a work of great virtuosity and rhetorical brilliance, but it is also fragmentary, evasive and often pointlessly paradoxical.

Teddy, an unphilosophical professor of philosophy at an American university, brings his inscrutable wife Ruth—for no apparent reason—to meet the exclusively male remnant of his North London family. His father Max, who plays the role of mother, and his brothers Lenny, an impotent pimp, and Joey, a sexually reluctant rapist, propose that Ruth abandon her family and stay on as their whore. Ruth immediately agrees and Teddy, urging her to keep in touch, withdraws without protest. The North London atmosphere, and the Cockney speech of Pinter's characters, invite us to put a realistic interpretation on these events, and when this proves troublesome, to seek an "hypothesis" explaining their strangeness. Of course, no such account of the events is forthcoming nor is there—as Ruth and Lenny warn us— any symbolic "point." In his earlier plays Pinter raised and sustained the expectation that there were such hypotheses and points. Who was the blind Negro? What did Goldberg and McCann represent? Pinter made horrifying suggestions and hinted at awful possibilities. The most straightforward remarks were invested with frightful implications or made to look like

menacing evasions. All too often, these procedures degenerated into cheap mystification and portentousness.

Pinter has not entirely renounced these methods in *The Homecoming*, but he does distinguish much more sharply between the subject matter from which he starts and the esthetic materials he is interested in manipulating. The hectoring speech of Teddy's father Max is precisely rendered, but his persistence in violent self-contradiction makes it clear that Pinter is not engaged in realistic characterization. Ruth may ignore her children back in the States, but the important point is that Max's wife, Julie, also abandoned three children. Pinter's tale establishes its own logic and its own standards of relevance, and he permits us the refined satisfaction of watching it unfold. It should be no surprise that the absent Julie is at the play's center. She was, as Max tells us, a good woman, but also a slutbitch of a wife; the mother of three fine lads, whom he suspects are bastards. Julie's withdrawal upsets the natural order and Pinter records the attendant dislocations; domestic, sexual, generational. The decisive action of the play is the "homecoming" of the Julie figure, the contradictory female, at once mother, mistress and whore, in the person of Ruth. As in a Shakespearean comedy a "marriage" is arranged, and the natural order restored.

Unfortunately, it is of purely formal interest that Max suffers the pangs of childbirth, calls his brother Sam a "tit," and wishes to "cuddle" his fully grown son. We do not understand the psychological basis of these disorders, or feel their moral pathos. We simply recognize their esthetic function. Nor does the resolution have any real resonance. The TDR critics are surely wrong in claiming that the play constitutes a deep "probe" of the male psyche. Ruth does not strike us as the inevitable, or even as a plausible, manifestation of the *ewig weibliche*. She is an esthetic contrivance, a mere *dea ex machina*. If Pinter's large design is abstract and austere, he does not hesitate to exploit the realistic thrust of his materials along the way. Often this is only to open murky perspectives on the largest possible topics: body and intellect, morality and nature, being and nonbeing. But he often demonstrates some special fact with remarkable skill: language is an instrument of evasion; morality is the vehicle, not the arbiter, of power. And his most remarkable achievement is in recording subtle fluctuations of feeling, decisive alterations of power. He can find the "objective correlative" of a feeling in a trivial situation, or invest an utterly commonplace object with an overwhelming significance. These objects are the arbitrarily chosen props of studio improvisations and Pinter, an actor turned playwright, can make them tick in the night, like Lenny's clock. Teddy steals Lenny's

cheese-roll and is revenged for the loss of a wife. Lenny demands Ruth's glass of water and is served with the superb sexual threat, "If you take it, I'll take you." This is the play's peripety and we are never again in doubt that Ruth, who looked to be another Pinter victim, will emerge ultimately as the victor.

The play is given an astonishingly skillful performance by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Peter Hall's direction is as subtle as it is self-effacing. This last is a rare quality, indeed, in a theater dominated by such flamboyantly self-indulgent directors as Guthrie, Zeffirelli and Peter Brook. A slightly greater shift toward the nonrepresentational, particularly in the performances of Paul Rogers and Ian Holm, might have prevented the Broadway critics from demanding to know why a midwestern faculty wife would abandon her family for a life of prostitution in North London. Better yet, why don't they ask one?

Pinter has assimilated the influence of Beckett and Ionesco so completely that his plays seem as English as Shakespeare's. They may, in fact, be regarded as elaborate fantasias on English working-class themes and, in particular, on English working-class diction. (As Jonathan Miller suggests, the entire post-Suez renaissance of English drama, from the Brechtian revivals of Shakespeare's history plays to the "absurdist" dramas of Pinter, may be understood as a proud celebration of English national consciousness.) Albee, by contrast, has never quite succeeded in domesticating his European sources and, if he frees himself from one influence, it is only to subject himself to another. The Ionesco family of *The American Dream* gives way to the Strindberg family of *Virginia Woolf* and it, in turn, is succeeded by the Eliot family of *A Delicate Balance*. Still, Albee has often managed to endow his European originals with an American significance and even with a local accent. Mommy and Daddy's baby-talk, and their euphemisms, may derive from the French copybook clichés of *The Bald Soprano*, but their brutalities betray a peculiarly American dream. George and Martha may be involved in a Strindbergian Dance of Death, but their very names, those of the First President and his Lady, suggest the collapse of distinctively American ideals. On occasion Albee has also managed to invest his models with an immediate personal significance. "The American Dream" is a self-pitying orphan, and George and Martha may be regarded as a barren homosexual couple. Albee writes, then, and with power, of the man without origins, or hope of issue. The Eliot family of *A Delicate Balance* does not, however, adapt at all well to the new environment and constantly betrays its past. The well-appointed home in an American suburb remains an English country house; half the characters

still bear names from the dramatis personae of *The Cocktail Party* or *The Family Reunion*; and they speak—when they are not speaking of "fags" and "copping out"—a preposterous and occasionally illiterate imitation of Eliot. Even their thoughts are not their own, and Albee's grudging admiration for the delicate balance Agnes manages to arrange is sheer literary affectation. Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly's dispiriting conception of marriage and the good life cannot possibly bear such weight in Albee's own view.

Albee's exposition of the threats to Agnes' sense of order is overly explicit and dramatically redundant. Agnes entertains the possibility (although Jessica Tandy and Albee do not convince us of the possibility) that she may one day go mad. Meanwhile a steely equilibrium is enforced in her present life. She overlooks her husband's occasional infidelities, contains her sister's inebriated aggressions and endures her daughter's disastrous marriages. This delicate balance is almost upset by Harry and Edna, Agnes and Tobias' best friends, who experience a nameless "fear" and seek refuge in the bedroom Agnes maintains for Julia's homecomings. It is all the same to Albee whether Harry and Edna have experienced fear, anxiety, terror or The Plague, if, indeed, he distinguishes among them. He is plainly more interested in staging yet another, and still cruder, version of Get The Guests: Julia threatens Harry and Edna with a gun. Order is restored when Harry and Edna, accepting a Kantian argument in a Kierkegaardian situation, find that they must withdraw, and the curtain falls as Agnes, framed by the classical arches of her sitting room, delivers a speech that delicately balances the one on which the curtain rose. Its exhausted imagery and grammatical perversities will give some sense of Albee's widely-praised literary achievement. "What I find most astonishing—aside from my belief that I will, one day . . . lose my mind . . .—but when? Never, I begin to think, as the years go by, or that I'll *know* if it happens, or maybe even has—what I find most astonishing I think, is the wonder of daylight, of the sun. . . . When the daylight comes again . . . comes order with it."

Edna and Harry are not friends from across the way but refugees from some absurdist drama, and dramatic logic ordains that they will not make sense in Agnes and Harry's suburban home. The audience may feel that new metaphysical realms have been penetrated when Harry makes the Heideggerian suggestion that the terror struck after "nothing happened." But the ethical and psychological consequences of this metaphysical calamity cannot be explored in the impenetrably empirical atmosphere of Agnes' living room. Moving in with a friend in

Winnetka will not dissipate anyone's *Angst,* and putting up with the Plague is not the test of friendships consummated over canasta. Edna and Harry are made to withdraw because they cannot be weighed in the play's balance and their retreat does not signify Agnes' victory, but Albee's defeat.

Although Albee has introduced enough material to keep Shakespeare busy for five hours (it did, in fact, in *King Lear*) one gets the impression that he is padding a rather thin one-act play. The dialogue is largely concerned (and the blocking is almost exclusively concerned) with the offering and accepting of drinks: absinthe (sticky), scotch (on the rocks), coffee (instant) and orange juice (spilled). The rest of the evening is filled out with the familiar Albee vaudeville (unthematic jokes about sexual inversion, unsuccessful ones about topless swimsuits) and the familiar Albee obsessions (Agnes and Tobias lose a male son, Tobias has the same sort of difficulty sustaining a love relationship with his cat that Jerry, in *The Zoo Story,* experienced with a dog). Almost all the good jokes are assigned to Agnes' wisecracking, alcoholic sister Claire, and Rosemary Murphy makes them seem even better than they are. Claire is symbolically named, as the author of *Tiny Alice* rather laboriously points out, and if Albee had anything to say about the questions he raises she would obviously have been his *raissoneuse.* As it is, she is simply Albee himself, looking everyone over and bitching everyone up. But in a loveable, Pulitzer Prize-winning sort of a way, this time.

CONTEMPORARY NONSENSE

"ORGANIZED HIPPIES EMERGE ON COAST"
"CIVIC GROUP AND TWO PAPERS MAKE ADMIRERS FEAR LOSS OF DESIRE FOR NOTHING"
(*New York Times,* May 5, 1967). Contributed by Miss Candace Watt, New York, New York.

"As for affairs south of the border, Mr. Nixon said after visits to Peru, Chile, Argentina and Brazil that he thought it were time for the United States to change its Latin American policies.

" 'United States-style democracy won't work here,' he said. 'I wish it would. If I were to pick a system, it would be a De Gaulle-style democracy with strong leadership at the top and democracy at the bottom.' "
(*New York Times,* May 16, 1967).

"GARBAGE CARTING IN GRIP OF MAFIA"
(*New York Times,* June 28, 1967).

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.—"A mob of angry high school youths, shouting 'dirty draft dodgers,' beat up antiwar college students passing out literature on the draft today.

". . . Dr. William F. Wright, the principal of the school, said:

" 'Like any group of people, high school students become quizzical when they see a bunch of people standing around. What they did was perfectly natural.' "
(*New York Times,* May 24, 1967). Contributed by Stephen Levy, Bayside, New York.

"KY WARNS OF FIGHT IF 'RED' WINS VOTE"
" 'If he is a Communist or if he is a neutralist, I am going to fight him militarily,' Marshal Ky said.

" '. . . In any democratic country you have the right to disagree with the views of others,' he added."
(*New York Times,* May 14, 1967). Contributed by Nicholas Macdonald, New York, New York.

"REAGAN IS HAILED IN OMAHA AGAIN"

"The Governor said in response to a question that Israel and the Arab states were not responsible for the conflict in the Middle East.

" 'That whole pot was stirred by the Soviets,' he declared. 'These people have gotten along together in that area since the beginning of time.' " (*New York Times,* June 25, 1967). Contributed by Peter Minichiello, Lynnfield, Massachusetts.

" '. . . The people from the Soviet Mission have been buying their groceries from us for more than 15 years. . . .

" '. . . You ask what they buy? Practically everything. They're heavy on cornflakes. . . . They're big on long loaves of our white bread, too. Mostly they buy Tip-Top, 30 cents a loaf.

" '. . . They watch TV avidly, and almost every time something new is advertised, they come in and ask for it. . . . They call me Gil and I call them by their first names—Ivan, Tamara, Sasha, Valentin, names like that. . . .' "
(*New York Times,* Sunday, May 25, 1967).

"The military junta announced tonight that, effective tomorrow, it would tolerate some criticism in the strictly censored Greek press. . . .

"The relaxation of the restrictions was announced by General Papadopoulos at a reception in his honor at the Athens Union of Journalists. . . .

" 'I do not want to see two newspapers alike after tomorrow,' the colonel said.

". . . Greek journalists said that the announcements . . . meant the censors would no longer issue instructions about the papers' layout."
(*New York Times,* June 27, 1967).

Editor's Note: *We'd like to remind our readers that they are invited to send in examples of Nonsense. A free subscription to* PR *will be awarded for each contribution used. In case of a tie, single copies will be sent to the latecomers.*

BUDAPEST LETTER

ALL QUIET ON THE EASTERN FRONT

When I set out on my return visit to Hungary, the first in ten years, I decided I'd behave like the Good Soldier Schweik. I would not get obstreperous whatever happened, and if asked for my opinion I'd tell them everything was just beautiful and anyway I was there by mistake. Let them talk. Though traveling on a British passport, I had been warned by the Home Office that under Hungarian law I was still a Hungarian citizen and once inside the country I could expect no consular protection. If I got into trouble, that was my worry. There'd be no diplomatic noise, no reprisals, no H.M. destroyers steaming down the Danube on my behalf. Then I'd heard blood-curdling stories about provocation by secret policemen, and even worse, about a gulf of unease that had grown between those who had left and those who had stayed after 1956. Apparently, even in the circle of closest friends, if the visitor was enthusiastic, he was taken for a fool; if he found fault, he was made to feel that having left the country he'd lost his share and thus his right to criticize. As a dilemma, this was enough to strike anyone dumb. Especially in a country where, I was convinced, law had lost its sanctity and had become a matter of dialectical synthesis between the situation and its interpretation, without the possibility of appeal to an absolute beyond.

As it turned out, during my six weeks there I talked and listened to enough politics to merit a lifetime in the saltmines under Stalin. Inevitably. Politics, always a national pastime, prime occasion for humor, lament and conversation in general, had become pervasive in the life of the people in the last twenty years. When an elite in government sets about turning the country (and the whole world, for that matter) upside down, the root cause of every effect will stick in the air, to be highlit or shrouded in verbal mist by those in power, but never to be ignored. People will be pressured to attend evening seminars where the new view of history, economics, morals and of themselves

as human beings is expounded, and in the morning, thirty minutes before work starts, they'll be drawn into a circle to read the party paper together and clarify the issues of the day. Ideology will be in the air, and everything in people's lives, from the loss of a job to free sports facilities or the boredom of didactic art to the doorbell buzzing at dawn, will have to do with daily or transcendent politics, and will be understood that way. And though outwardly much of this has changed, the basic pattern, and the pattern of thought, persists. A woman queuing for block-ice or milk still blames the government if the stuff runs out before she's got any. Quite rightly, too. Having put itself at the center of life, having replaced Chance and God (not to mention such smaller dignitaries as the owner of the block-ice plant), the government must shoulder all responsibility. And with a visitor like myself, whose very existence as a visitor, an outsider, is the result of the last political upheaval in the country that has mattered, the subject will be in everybody's mind and soon rise into the conversation. The Good Soldier Schweik hasn't a chance.

Politics is there even before the border. The road from Vienna is busy as it leaves the city, traffic is normal, as if the world too were normal and no division ran through it a bare forty miles away. Then at junction after junction cars turn off. In the end, approaching Nicklesdorf, the last Austrian village, the road is empty. I am the only thing going.

An unease takes my throat. This is it, the real thing, for the first time in ten years. Not the distant country about which I've been asked and been talking till it became no more than a myth, but the one in which I grew up and which has lived on without me. The one there, the fact, containing friends, parents, the city, the language and the party and the police too. The landscape is flat and familiar, some of the clouds must already be hanging in Hungary. I try to figure out which, then I give up. I'll soon be there. As if by fateful courtesy, the Viennese radio is playing Bartók.

In Nicklesdorf I fill the tank. Hungarian petrol has a ghastly reputation. I have a coffee, and muse over the thought of starting a diary. So much is going to happen. But a diary in what language? And how do I know they won't want to read it on the way out at the border? Would be useless if I had to self-censor it for that. Facing me on the wall there's a large poster advertising a village dance. Another next to it, with pictures, warns about the types of Hungarian mines floating in the stream that divides the two countries. Let's go.

Near the Austrian checkpoint I meet a whole row of tiny cars,

BMW's I think, coming the other way. Some club from Budapest, on a trip, runners across the front of each car. The road through no man's land is joined by a line of barbed wire, watchtowers looming. Ridiculous when people can come and go with passports. Still they're there, just to make sure. Make sure what?

At the Hungarian border they're polite. They talk in English, leaving it to me to change into Hungarian, which I do, watching my accent. They continue to call me Sir, and give me a map, explaining about the best road to take. Walkie-talkies hang from their shoulders. The car is examined, they look at my camera, my radio and the presents I'm taking, then I'm off.

Road. Grass. Trees. Stones. Telegraph poles. Haystacks. Horses. A lorry coming the other way. Driving it, people. It's all so unbelievable, for such a long time it has been just talk, and memory. A mile inside the country two guards with machine guns signal me to stop, then as I slow down they scrutinize the car and wave it on. They too are real, gun and uniforms.

The first village, houses all yellow, or seem yellow, the paint sunbaked and flaking. People's clothes too sunbaked somehow, threadbare. Faces set. Yet healthy, and the children are playing. And there are geese in the roadway, cropping weeds from the bank or flatfooting across in a hurry. I haven't seen geese in the roadway for ten years.

Past the village, a hitchhiker hails me. I'm more pleased to pick him up than he can know. He mutters something, I answer in Hungarian and soon we're talking. He's twenty, a mason, takes classes in the evening, wants to be a building technician, eventually an architect. Seems quite happy. Planning a cycling trip through Poland and Czechoslovakia. Says nothing about wanting to move to the West, though he has relatives across the border and knows that they're better off. Asks me about the British. Is Wilson a real socialist, a radical? I try to explain that a British radical is a contradiction in terms, but all I manage is to give the impression that I'm evading the point. "I think socialism is like marriage," he sums up, apropos of Wilson, and Cuba too. "You keep dreaming about it, you want it, then when you've got it, you want to get out of it." Sound practical wisdom. On a factory wall we're passing, a slogan in letters eight feet tall faces the world. "VÁDOLJUK AZ IMPERIALIZMUST!" (We blame imperialism!) I suppose they mean Vietnam, but there's no indication and the words are left to assume a blanket permanence.

We have a drink before saying goodbye. The hotel, the best in town, is called Red Star. I hear Hungarian spoken behind me—

I swing round in amazement; I see a man unfolding the local paper—I'm on the point of walking over to him before realizing where I am. This persists for the next six weeks. I can always believe that those I'm with are Hungarians, but the rest, the waiter, the bus conductor, people in the street or the cinema, remain natives, foreigners, as they've been for a decade. My brain simply can't adjust itself.

I drive on. The road is good, much better than I'd expected. And rain has begun to fall which also makes me happy. For some reason, the landscape has lived in me as lifeless and arid. A political image, I suppose. Now rain is falling, the road glistens, the grass and trees are drenched, a rich green. There's a smell of acacias. On the radio, one of the stations has excerpts from an opera, the other a series, "The Szabó Family" which has been going for years. I watch the rhythms, savor the accents of their speech. Their preoccupations are decidedly bourgeois. "*Narrator*: Bracsek decides to come back a day early from his stay at the company rest home on Lake Balaton. He goes to the hardware shop where his wife is working. But she's not there! Nor is Forgó. Another salesgirl tells him that (insinuating) they've taken time off together. . . . (Creaking of door is heard.) *Bracsek*: I kiss your hand, Miss." In the old days, he'd either have breezed in with "Liberty, Comradine!" or be soon revealed as a bourgeois degenerate and probably a stooge of the enemy. Would be fascinating to read a batch of scripts for social analysis.

Budapest. As I read the sign, reading it aloud, enunciating each vowel as best I can, a strange heat dashes down my back and I shiver and have to swallow.

Immediately I lose my way and just press on, hoping to end up somewhere familiar. Night has fallen. The streets are dark, worse lit even than New York. Neon signs have letters missing. State firms, formed in the fifties, had a passion for calling themselves by crazily contorted abbreviations. Half blacked out, they look even crazier.

Then suddenly the Danube, just across from the Parliament building, a red star glowing on its spire. (A girl, a Communist, asks me a week later, looking across from the same spot, "Now isn't that ugly? Out of style, spoils the whole building.") I look for the new Elizabeth Bridge, pride of the town. Justly. Blown up during the war, it remained a wreck for some twenty years, then they rebuilt it a beauty. I'm told that for weeks after the opening ceremony people went there to see it, to touch it, to hang flowers on it when the official ones had dropped off.

It gives on to one of the main thoroughfares. I know it by heart.

The town's ice-bar on the left, a famous old church opposite, a record shop, a big store, a cinema, a posh hotel, the insurance company's clock. It's all there. Yet it's impossible that I should be there too. I must be driving down my own mind, the street in my memory. This can't be real pavement. I almost drive through the red lights.

Because of reconstructions, I'm channeled through back streets. Strangely empty, paint flaking from the walls everywhere. A ghost town. Then a square, brighter, then suddenly I'm passing my old grammar school, the gate closed, only the caretaker's window lit. Then our street. I can count the corners in my mind but can't identify them with the ones I'm crossing. Then our house. Six stories built around the well of the courtyard. In the doorway a smell of bread from the bakery next door. Then a smell of garbage. The walls of the staircase as I left them, with the holes I'd made, screwing our key into the plaster. Must be fifteen years, twenty perhaps. And everything so small, I'm taking two—three stairs at a time, our flat too, so crowded, I never knew we had so much furniture, so many pictures and so little room. But mother's happy, and so am I.

For days Budapest remains a film set. And film people who take the set seriously. Some parts of Pest (the flat, civic, half) look like the Lower East Side of New York, only more decrepit and without all the huge cars parked. And without the dirt and the beggars. It's all very gray. Especially dull after the fresh reds and greens and yellows in merry Austria. Shops signs are small, hardly noticeable for a visitor used to Western eye-catching. And once put up, they stay there for years (or decades?) in the care only of God. Some of them are totally illegible, but there's no competition, and the locals know anyway where to go for a haircut or meat or shoes. Then I too become a local and the whole thing ceases to matter.

And then I see the town, one of the loveliest in the world, and I begin to understand what visitors rave about. It's my birthplace, yet I see it only now with eyes able to appreciate it, comparing. From the hills and by the river, its pools and squares and avenues, open spaces ten minutes by car. It's much smaller than New York or London, and people all seem to know each other, at least within circles of six or eight thousand, social villages spreading across the city and professions, and even across the country which itself is small. And yet Budapest is also a capital, a political and cultural center, that affords its people their self-respect, and its snobs, of whom there's God's plenty, their conceit. It has vigor and a spirit that's irrepressible, if not always apparent. By daytime, its people look tired, their faces drawn.

They dress badly—a yellow summer shirt with blue trousers, gray socks and brown shoes is not an uncommon sight. But after work the city comes to life. They rush off to swim, to row, to play tennis, at least the ones who have the time (they all seem to have more time, perhaps because they start the day so early and stay up late with endless coffees). Cinemas and theaters are full, and now there's elegance. Money is spent in restaurants and cafés where talk is flowing, and in dance clubs with small bands playing music only a few months out of date. And for the women, I have only one descriptive word: dangerous.

It's euphoric. The phone doesn't stop ringing. Friends, relatives, friends of friends, everybody. Come here, come there. A party. A lecture. Theater. A drink. Lunch. Meet this, meet that. A painter. An actor. A doctor, a marvelous man, down in the country. A writer by Lake Balaton. "You haven't the time," Mother whispers. I don't and yet I do. For weeks I sleep four hours a night and eat what seem sixteen meals a day.

And they talk, God do they talk, and I listen. And no Schweiking.

Unquestionably the situation has changed. Living standards are higher, and Hungarians themselves, usually known for their love of complaining, are convinced that currently they're the best off, though politically not as free as the Poles, among the peoples of the Eastern Bloc. (Which, by the way, they don't see as a bloc. One evening, I heard young Communists discussing with enthusiasm the Rumanian moves for independence within the Warsaw Alliance, just announced over Radio Free Europe.) Most things are available, though not all of them all the time, and there seems to be a lot of money around somehow. Flats or small houses, priced at eight or ten years' average wages, are immediately sold at a quarter or third downpayment, and the import list for some cars, costing from twenty-five months' average, are booked up till 1970.

Still, salaries are low, almost equally for everybody working for the State. Top officials earn not much more than twice or two and a half times the average. The best off are members of free professions—among doctors, gynecologists—and small shopkeepers and tradesmen. A tailor or the owner of a minute garage, with two men working for him, is liable to earn more than the Prime Minister, and declare less of it in taxes, which are progressive. But even young people, living with their parents and keeping only part of their earnings, or young couples, both of whom usually work, don't find sheer living beyond

their means. Food and transport, restaurants, books, theaters, cinemas and nightlife cost little by Western standards. Adult education, in which an unbelievable number of people take part, is free, and for degrees they get paid study leaves that can be as much as seventy-two days a year. It is on the industrial goods that they lose out—on a pair of shoes that may take a week to earn, on shirts and TV sets and furniture and cars. And though rents are low, new accommodation is so scarce that unless they buy something at the mortgages quoted (and this is supposing they're lucky enough to have found something to buy), they're reduced to sharing a three-room flat with as many people or families, and at times to living in disused shops and cellars in the city.

Yet to make a straight comparison between this and life in the West, especially the U.S., would be unfair and stupid. The country, which has been ravaged by wars and foreign occupation for centuries, is much poorer in resources and much less developed, and as technology breeds technology, it is even likely to be falling further behind the States, together with the rest of Europe.

Neither is there any doubt that the average Hungarian today lives better than he did before the war. The reason there's a shortage of meat, for instance, is, apart from agricultural mismanagement, that many more people want it. Not least the peasantry itself, whose poor in the thirties—a third of the nation then—survived almost entirely on bread, onions, cucumbers and bean and cabbage soups, even at harvest time, and saw no meat from one wedding to the next.

Thus the relevant question to ask is whether the country would have achieved more through democracy and free enterprise than it has under a one-party State economy. And this is what the regime itself is asking now, though not quite in this form.

The one-party system is to remain. Of this there's not a question voiced anywhere in public. Right-wingers themselves seem almost unconcerned about the subject. Part of the reason being that there's no real tradition of democracy in the country—in 1910 only 8 per cent of the people were franchised to vote and under Horthy (1919-1945) elections were practically arranged by the administration, whose promotees were popularly known as candidates of "the Government Party." On the other hand, though there's much more discussion, and people seem much better informed politically and culturally about the West than they were in the fifties, the paradox is that Communists no longer double-think or even claim, as they used to, that there's true democracy in Hungary. They obviously feel that the one-party system

has now been accepted as a fact of life, and they can be frank about their conviction that it is the most efficient for getting the right man into the right job without fuss and demagoguery. They also see it as the surest bar to fascism—the explicit assumption being that free elections would soon bring it on. This may be a real problem, but it may also be just a convenient myth promulgated on the basis of prewar experience. As far as I can judge, free elections in Hungary would probably produce a leftwing coalition. Nevertheless the myth is widespread among party members, and it was articulated for me by Dr. Tibor Éles, Head of the Foreign Section of the Hungarian Journalists' Association.

In the course of a meeting which he rather cutely turned into an interview with himself, I asked Dr. Éles what he thought might happen in the event of multiparty elections in Hungary. He hazarded no guess, but replied squarely that such elections were not in the best interests of the country. The people just weren't mature enough. And anyway, because of the lack of a democratic tradition "in Hungary there aren't too many politicians who are experts in their fields and also know how to make speeches, the way there are in Britain." This was an amazingly frank statement of the paternal-elitist position, worthy of a belated student of Hegel, and I was not going to ruin it by enlightening Dr. Éles about those supremely knowledgeable politicians of my adopted country. I rather asked him in what way, short of elections, constructive opposition could be voiced. Letters, he said, could be written to ministries, or to newspapers and the radio, which themselves did whole features exposing mismanagement, even corruption, and the Cabaret Theater went wild satirizing them. This is true—as it wasn't in the fifties, when any such criticism from below would have been taken as a maneuver by "the enemy"—but of course complaining of mismanagement, or even satire, is not at all the same thing as open political opposition. I asked Dr. Éles if the latter was still punishable, and if not what assurance there was that the police would not on their own initiative take people away. His reply was that the secret machinery which had ground Kádár himself and quite a few of his present colleagues had been destroyed, together with the spirit behind it, but that one could still be locked up on charges of sedition for making a public speech against the government. This I found far from reassuring. Just what amounted to a public speech, and anyway why shouldn't a government that had been wrong often enough be opposed? Dr. Éles, however, thought that opposition came

mainly from older or miseducated people, and thus it was no more than a temporary phenomenon.

Fortunately, party members don't altogether share his serenity. In fact, one of the most refreshing things I found in talking to them was what I'd call a measure of healthy pessimism. "We used to believe that people could be changed overnight," an old stalwart told me, "that they'd work for an idea like the community or the future, if we just explained it to them, that peasants would take their newly-given lands into kolkhozes in a few years, and workers let us raise the norms, because it was in their own interests. Of course we were wrong. People don't change just like that, it's much more difficult. But, as the joke goes, only the first three hundred years will be painful." In periodicals, films and books, the cultural scene reproduces this feeling of doubt, and remorse at murderous mistakes, and a skepticism about human nature from which the once sacrosanct national character itself is no longer exempt. Such doubt and pessimism, purchased through the horrible lesson of 1956 and the soul-searching that followed, is healthy because among other things it prevents a belief in taboos and an infallible party and thus the totalitarian impatience whose machinery in the fifties eliminated people for as little as a difference of opinion. One of the results of this change of feeling has been the promotion of expertise over sheer party allegiance in managerial positions throughout the economy, though of course the Old Guard fights tooth and nail against removal.

Differences, too, are now voiced. Not only in private and semi-private—such as in the street, in cafés, even in a crowded train—but also at party meetings, where for instance the furor created by the unfairness of the new wage and price scales in January, 1966, caused changes in government decisions. A friend of mine, lecturer in automation at the University of Budapest, and as such steeped in cybernetics, put it this way: "They throw out an idea, then alter it according to the reactions of the people. That's feedback." This is something new, as cybernetics itself is relatively new to Marxism. It indicates a more pragmatic approach, now in the process of general adoption.

Signs of this are mainly visible in the economy, where that question about free enterprise is being asked. They're at last facing the paralyzing effects of absolute centralization, together with the somber fact that there's as yet no substitute for the profit motive, without which managerial outfits have turned into indifferent bureaucracies

and workers into time-wasting machines no longer interested in the quality and finish of what they produce. As a result, an experimental reorganization is being put through that will give companies a good deal of freedom in their planning and make them responsible for showing a profit, the amount of which will then affect the employees' wages—Libermanism, in short. It's a radical departure from previous directives and dogmas—opposition to which has cost people their jobs, and some their freedom, even their lives—and sardonic jokes about it are endless. One of the printable: "What's the New Economic Mechanism? It's pouring new wine into our split-open heads." (Jokes are very much part of local cybernetics, and are savored by all regardless of allegiances. Indeed, according to a member of the Central Committee, "In Hungary there's division of labor. The reactionaries make up the jokes and we party members spread them.")

Nevertheless, this N.E.M. seems the most sensible idea yet tried. It further confuses people about just what in practice socialism is, but few Hungarians will mind that as long as they can live better and there's room for their initiative. At the moment there's widespread apathy and cynicism which only a combination of the profit motive and a sense of purposeful political involvement can combat, and perhaps not even that. It is the result of the succession of those mistaken and yet murderously self-assured policies of the fifties, but also of the experience of 1956 and the feeling, which has grown further since, that nothing the mere citizen of a tiny nation says or does can possibly matter. "We may talk, yes," said a man sunning his bare chest by the Danube, "we can say what we like and nobody will report us to the police or take us away. But that's because they too have realized that it makes no difference, and they know that we know it. Our lives are ruled by messages between Moscow and Washington." Then he laughed, which, although his only relief, seemed the worst thing about it. Worse even than the vision of tragic doom which has haunted the nation since the eighteen-thirties, and the thought of which the present suicide and abortion rates, among the most appalling in the world, seem once more to revive.

At the same time, there's no shortage of people who are confident and want to try, whose élan or frustration derive from the fact that they care. About the country as a whole, and about their share in it. There's a great feeling of ownership, almost unknown in the West, about every new thing that's accomplished—be it the Elizabeth Bridge or a luxury hotel by Lake Balaton or the successes abroad of the Modern Ballet. There's also bitterness at the nepotism, bribery and

general indifference that weighs down the system. To the old ones, these, like the abortion rates, are problems of a collapsing morality. The younger, many of whom seem far more serious than their Western contemporaries, want rather to get things done and to get ahead, and to them morality is also a question of morale. Some of the left-wingers are contemptuous, after all the sacrifices made, of the anticlimax of a tepid "washing-machine socialism." Much more to the right, and also more practical, a young technician I met put it this way: "When I spend months designing some equipment for export and then because nobody cares it takes three years to build the prototype, by which time the British or the Swiss have nabbed the market and the thing is useless, I go up the wall." To someone like him, as to a left-winger hungry for action, a new era of enterprise would seem a godsend. It might even move the man by the Danube.

On the way out I was prepared for all kinds of questions at the border. But the customs man merely inquired about presents I was taking, and of those asked to see just one thing, a wooden candlestick carved in the shape of a peasant doll. He weighed it in his hand, and felt round its base, looking for smuggled gold or microfilm, I suppose. Then he let me go. Driving back to Austria, I was listening to the jazz program Radio Budapest puts out apparently at the same time as Free Europe, in an effort to lure young listeners away from Munich. I'm told the experiment has proved successful. Reception is much better, you see.

Paul Neuburg

VARIETY

IN CLAY'S CORNER

Frank Conroy

The sportswriters' pique may come out of a sense of having been used. In the beginning, when Clay needed them to get the fights that would make him champion, he virtually wrote their copy himself, spoon-feeding them a selected diet of baby-food—so much braggadocio, so much outright arrogance, a dash of sexual vanity, exactly so many poems—all of it whipped together by lazy, grateful reporters and served warm to fat America. But eventually Clay stepped out of his brash bag, into his much roomier serious bag, and left the press holding another sort of bag altogether. It became clear that Clay was a religious man, and that he would apply his celebrity as heavyweight champion of the world to his work as a Muslim minister, the disapproval of a white, Christian press notwithstanding. Myopic reporters felt frustrated and betrayed, and when Clay wouldn't fight in Vietnam they attacked hysterically—sensing, no doubt, that he was escaping them forever, disappearing over a larger moral horizon than that seen in Madison Square Garden on even the clearest nights.

They call him a tool of the Black Muslims because they know he is not a tool of the press and are incapable of thinking of him as his own man. They say he wouldn't have beaten Joe Louis because it can never be put to the test. When all is said and done they are enraged at his position on the war because young Negro prizefighters are supposed to leave morality to the whites and do what they're told.

America has lost a beautiful champion. She becomes more and more blind to beauty, even her own.

Nat Hentoff

A Columbia University student asks Robert Kennedy: "Would you pilot a plane and bomb North Vietnam in good conscience?"

The Senator's first answer is: "I would not be in the air if drafted but on the ground. I would be in the Navy." The banality of evil again. Later the Senator adds: "I will do anything my country wants me to do. I would like to go back to the Navy, where I have been before. But I will go where my country sends me." Poor Eichmann. You got hung for doing just that. Life is not fair.

Muhammad Ali says in answer, not to a question, but to an order, that he is not "going ten thousand miles from here to help murder and kill and burn another poor people." And so he is no longer fit to be champion since he will not kill for his country. But Freedom House, which surely "supported" the judgment of the Nuremberg Tribunal, issues no proclamation of honor for Muhammad Ali. Instead it denounces Martin Luther King who also will not kill.

The men of Freedom House are all honorable men. And they too have become Eichmanns. But Muhammad Ali has freed himself. Even in prison he'll be free. Ah, but he is ignorant because he is a Muslim or he is a Muslim because he is ignorant. But he is innocent of murder. Of how many other Americans can that be said?

John Hollander

Contemporary American war and domestic peace have driven nobility and heroism into strange hiding places, and the few deeds one must admire become messier and less esthetic. I have little interest in, and less knowledge of, boxing; now more than ever I miss the presence of the late A. J. Liebling and his technical expertise and ear for the publicly meretricious. I am only equipped to consider Muhammad Ali's current situation as one more sad and absurd instance of our continuing attempt to launch significant personal action onto a sea of bad faith and tasteless paradox.

"It was not manly, 'twas not fighter-like. If he was sure of the victory (as he was not), the less said about it the better. Modesty should accompany the Fancy [i.e., the fight game] *as its shadow. The best men were always the best behaved."* This is perfectly all right from Hazlitt, in 1821, who goes on in a bit of mythmaking to record how the boaster Hickman was beaten by Bill Neate in a famous contest. Given the history of the sport in the intervening century and a half, it was unforgivable that the working press should have taken this tone with their current (champion-in-exile, is it?). But strangely enough, the boxing people and their toadies on the press (by their assent), in stripping Clay of the title, have made his position morally unassailable. The myriad ironies of the whole situation need hardly be listed; not the least of these is one underlined by recent events in the Middle East reminding us again that the crescent, under which Muhammad Ali is being nonbelligerent, frequently resembles a scimitar in shape rather than an olive branch. But Clay's being deposed somehow further authenticated his refusal to be inducted, which, in turn, gave a shape to his whole career which perhaps no amount of privileged information (is he really a great fighter? or the best of a dreadful lot?) could have supplied. The most ungenerous interpretation of his act would have to admit that, all in all, it was contraindicated for his career. Neither would it be slavish admiration to observe that, as a free man taking a free man's option, Clay has provided a better model of American Negro masculinity than he could even as a clowningly problematic heavyweight. If the government is so stupid and tactless as to jail him, his prison number will in the long run constitute something much more like the hero's discovery of his name than the awkward and improbable Muslim clichés.

Robert Lowell

Refusal to report to the army is certainly the most effective way a young man can protest an unjust war.

Norman Mailer

I'm working on something else now, so don't want to get started writing about Muhammad Ali, because I could go on for a book. Suffice it that the most interesting original talented and artistic prizefighter to come along in at least a decade has been cut off by the bully-boy mentality of the American sporting world. A great athlete is almost always an extraordinary man, but a mediocre athlete has a character which is usually no prettier than the life-style of a mediocre writer. The sort of mugs and moguls who run our amateur and professional sports and write about them are invariably mediocrities, second-rate athletes, rich boys—they gravitate to running sports and writing up the canons of sports, and they ran Muhammad Ali right out of boxing. Their basic reflex is, after all, to kiss ass (it is their connection to the primitive) and patriotism is thus their head-on sublimation for such kissing. Therefore we are all deprived of an intimate spectacle which was taking place in public—the forging of a professional artist of extraordinary dimensions. Yes, I could write a book about Cassius: he was bringing a revolution to the theory of boxing, and bringing it into that monarchical spook-ridden class where every theory runs into a bomb—the heavyweights. Those who don't know boxing don't know the frustration one feels that he couldn't have the run of his own true career for the knowledge he offered was mint.

Richard Poirier

Cassius Clay is not the first American heavyweight champion of the world to be accused of draft-dodging. That honor goes to the now beloved Jack Dempsey, rumored in WW I to have evaded the draft by falsely claiming dependents and prosecuted to be found innocent in 1920. But Clay is the first champion of any kind in this country who has refused to bear arms out of religious and humanitarian

convictions and whose declaration against a shameful imperialistic adventure shows an intelligence far superior, despite the kind of education given Kentucky Negroes, to the saphead sports columnists who call him a dolt, a fake and a coward. "I'm not going ten thousand miles from here to help murder and kill and burn another poor people simply to help continue the domination of white slave masters over the darker people the world over." He has made an immense sacrifice of fortune which the promoters are delighted to exploit in a farcical elimination tournament for a new heavyweight champion that nobody in his right mind will recognize, and he is being exploited for still other purposes by the Black Muslims. The press has mostly ignored the first exploitation and everywhere points to the second. But Clay has chosen to do what many young Americans could more easily afford to do in a country where everyone is exploited for some purpose or other: he has at least chosen who may exploit him. He would rather be "used" by his religion than by the present Secretary of State.

A STATEMENT ON THE CIA

We, the undersigned, would like to make public our opposition to the secret subsidization by the CIA of literary and intellectual publications and organizations, and our conviction that regular subsidization by the CIA can only discredit intellectually and morally such publications and organizations.

Thus, in view of the facts so far disclosed, we must say we lack confidence in the magazines alleged to have been subsidized by the CIA, and we do not think they have responded appropriately to the questions that have been raised. We would have expected more serious and more searching statements than we have so far seen by responsible editors, and some indication of genuine reorganization of these publications. Instead they seem to be content to go on as though nothing had happened, either remaining silent, or acting as though the importance of the entire matter had been exaggerated, apparently on the assumption that the storm will blow over.

We are aware that many people were innocent recipients of various literary and travel grants to meetings and congresses, but we believe a distinction must be made between such occasional grants and continuous and secret subsidizations by the CIA of any intellectual publications claiming to be independent and open to all views however radical or critical of American policies and institutions. And in the case of the publications, we find the attempt to play down the whole issue a not

very satisfactory way of dealing with the questions posed by the original deception about their financing. Obviously, intellectual and literary publications must have their biases; and they often receive contributions from various individuals and foundations who share these biases. But if they are to have the respect of an international intellectual community and any influence on it, it seems to us a basic principle that their steady support should be of a kind—and this may include grants from the government—which they are not ashamed to make public, so that there can be no question of their editorial bias being affected by surreptitious financial support.

Henry David Aiken
John Arden
Hannah Arendt
Paul Goodman
Stuart Hampshire
Lillian Hellman
John Hollander
Dwight Macdonald
Norman Mailer
Steven Marcus
Iris Murdoch
William Phillips
Richard Poirier
V. S. Pritchett
Philip Rahv
William Styron
Angus Wilson

BOOKS

IN THE LION'S DEN

CANNIBALS AND CHRISTIANS. By Norman Mailer. Dial Press. $5.95.

"In the meanwhile, 'these are thy works, thou parent of all good!' Man eating man, eaten by man, in every variety of degree and method! why does not some enthusiastic political economist write an epic on 'The Consecration of Cannibalism.' " Norman Mailer on America in 1966? No, Charles Kingsley on England in 1850. And what about this? "The disgrace and grief resulting from the mere trampling pressure and electric friction of town life, become to the sufferers peculiarly mysterious in their undeservedness, and frightful in their inevitableness. The power of all surrounding them for evil; the incapacity of their own minds to refuse the pollution, and of their own wills to oppose the weight, of the staggering mass that chokes and crushes them into perdition, brings every law of healthy existence into question with them, and every alleged method of help and hope into doubt. Indignation, without any calming faith in justice, and self-contempt, without any curative self-reproach, dull the intelligence, and degrade the conscience, into sullen incredulity of all sunshine outside the dunghill, or breeze beyond the wafting of its impurity. . . . And thus an elaborate and ingenious scholasticism, in what may be called the Divinity of Decomposition, has established itself in connection with the more recent forms of romance. . . ." The sentiments could be Mailer's, but the prose is Ruskin's, from a brilliant lecture in which he shows how the conditions of modern urban living conspire to produce a fiction which is preoccupied with violence, madness, disease and death. One can almost see Mailer taking up this point when he suggests, in an interview, that the modern condition may be "psychically so bleak, so over-extended, so artificial, so plastic . . . that studies of loneliness, silence, corruption, scatology, abortion, monstrosity, decadence, orgy, and death can give life, can give a sentiment of beauty." Where Ruskin speaks of "Decomposition" Mailer talks about the "endless expanding realities of deterioration." I am not, of course, suggesting any direct links. But to appreciate Mailer's particular rhetoric it is worth recalling that from the start the modern city provoked sensi-

tive men to seek out new uses of words, new metaphors, in an attempt to convey their apprehensions of the new horrors around them and to project their intimations of doom and apocalypse. Ruskin made the point clearly: "the peculiar forces of devastation induced by modern city life have only entered the world lately; and no existing terms of language known to me are enough to describe the forms of filth, and modes of ruin" which are endemic to that life. When the young Kingsley explored the slums of London he could only transmit his response by describing it as hell, and its occupants as cannibals and victims. Dickens (in *Bleak House*) saw that same London as a foggy darkness permeated with a fatal pestilence which the city itself had nourished. In our time Norman Mailer seems to have made it a practice to expose himself to everything the modern city offers, or imposes, and he is echoing an older tradition when he selects as his key metaphors for modern American life cancer (or plague) and cannibalism. Mailer himself is very conscious of the importance of his quest for metaphors. Near the end of his latest book he says: "the argument would demand that there be metaphors to fit the vaults of modern experience." Modern man is being systematically dulled to the possible meanings of his environment and Mailer's contention is that "a future to life depends on creating forms of an intensity which will capture the complexity of modern experience and dignify it, illumine—if you will—its danger."

"Forms" is a word we might pick on to suggest one of the problems that Mailer has encountered. His insights are as idiosyncratic and intermittently brilliant as ever; his uncompromising willingness to expose and anatomize his own inner life (from cerebration to bowel movement) is still compelling; and his ability to feel his way into the mood of occasions of power (boxing matches, political conventions), and to empathize with the men who meet in the arenas of American life, remains remarkable. He offers endless diagnosis ("the country was in disease"); warnings of doom ("Apocalypse or debauch is upon us"); appeals to the latent panic in all sensitive men ("the legitimate fear we feel is vast"). It is vivid stuff, even if some of it is familiar stuff. But where are the new forms? Mailer has tried to provide a form for this collection by dividing it into four stages—Lambs, Lions, Respites and Arena—but it is a pretty arbitrary arrangement brought to a somewhat theatrical conclusion with a story about the end of the world. Essays, book reviews, poems, speeches, occasional stories, interviews—these are what make up the book and it would take more than an introductory assertion to metamorphose them into a new form. Instead, certain obsessions, worries and images provide a sort of febrile continuity, and Mailer offers one kind of justi-

fication when he says "if what you write is a reflection of your own consciousness, then even journalism can become interesting."

One drawback is that each piece was originally written for a specific occasion and was meant to have its own self-contained climax and impact. Brought together and read consecutively they provide perhaps one or two climaxes too many. Mailer at times gives the impression of crying wolf about once a page: so much high-pitched warning occasionally has the unintended effect of somewhat inuring us to the dangers that Mailer perceives. This is a pity because many of the dangers are very real, and there is a good deal of biting truth in these pages. An example at random: "an unjust war, an unnatural war, an obscene war brutalizes what is best in a nation and encourages every horror to rise from its sewer." Exaggerated, perhaps; but true enough to worry over. Such insights, or opinions—and they range over modern architecture, the Vietnam War, sex, politics, art, religion, psychology, etc.—are spasmodic; they are ejected from the prose which is kept simmering at a high degree of excitability just short of hysteria. Mailer's observations are passionate rather than considered, emerging from the heat of the moment; inevitably, for every one that seems penetratingly right, there is at least one that seems wildly wrong. The book, then, is one of those endlessly interrupted, endlessly renewed monologues from the extreme psychological edges of modern experience which Norman Mailer has offered us before and will, I hope, again. For all that it is not a new form. In its fragmentary spasmodic structure the book really exemplifies an aspect of modern life which Mailer catches vividly in a few pages on the cult of the absurd. "The absurd is an art which is built not only on interruptions but annoyance. . . . It assumes that annoyance, not love or passion or dedication or climax or interest or mood or mind or even matter, but annoyance is the foundation of modern existence, and the progressively most common condition for everyone alive is interruption and annoyance. . . . One plans to eat—one has to wait for the food to unfreeze; one calls a friend on quick impulse—the line is busy; start to contemplate—the refrigerator will begin to speak; look to pour a friend a drink—the telephone will ring; begin to watch a show—a commercial comes in!" (etc., etc.): "we are talking of modern man's ability to swallow nausea . . . his consciousness is formed on collisions and interruptions. . . . The children who came after the Second World War grew up . . . on interruption—so the arts of the mid-century are the arts of the absurd and deal with categories and hierarchies of discontinuity and the style of their breaks. Art is here on earth to uplift us, to encourage the religious and the nonreligious to feel a heavenly glow—so declared

the caretakers of art for two thousand years. But now art is a heart pill —nitroglycerine—it binds shattered nerves together by shattering them all over again with style, with wit, each explosion a guide to building a new nervous system. . . . We live, remember, in a time which interrupts the mood of everything alive. . . . A people deadened by interruption go mad." What are the chances of creating new forms in such times, under such pressures and with such distractions as these? Mailer himself gives the impression of not being able to get beyond the interruptions long enough to develop those new forms he thinks are so necessary. He is constantly engaging in rhetorical clashes with the chaos of modern life which as constantly besets and interrupts him. In his sustained passion, tinged with madness, there is, oddly, a touch of Carlyle about him. He is a prophet of the Age of Interruption.

Like many prophets he is not too good on short-term predictions (Goldwater did not become a great power; Lindsay did get elected) and he can be irritatingly irresponsible. For instance, he continually utters his loathing of contraception as a sign of our modern sickness, but he has no comment to make on the more terrible problem of overpopulation; and for a man who sets so much store by the seed well planted, Mailer is unusually silent on the subject of children. Still, looking back at his previous collections, one readily concedes him the gift of being able to catch and articulate the general inner mood of certain key moments in postwar America: wrong about surface facts, he is often right about subterranean feelings. It is thus disturbing to note that although all his books have been frenetic, this one is more deeply pessimistic than any previous one. "If one's country lives like a woman in some part of the unconscious dream life of each of us, if beneath all our criticisms and detestations of America's vulgarity, misuse of power, and sheer pompous stupidity there has been still some optimistic love affair with the secret potentialities of this nation, some buried unvoiced faith that the nature of America was finally good, and not evil, well, that faith has taken a pistol-whipping in the last months. The romance seems not even tragic or doomed, but dirty and misplaced." It would be quite out of place for someone writing from England to pronounce on the current state of America; but judging from the depressing symposium on the subject in the last issue of *PR*, Mailer's antennae are picking up many bad vibrations which are indeed in the air. One knows that Mailer is fairly committed to a rather comminatory tone, and it would probably be quite possible to find a foolishness or an exaggeration on every other page of this book. The fact remains that I would be a lot less worried if Norman Mailer were a lot less worried.

To dispatch a summary of Mailer's topics and opinions from England to America would be to send rockets to Cape Kennedy. But seen from a distance his recent work does reveal a pattern which may be worth mentioning. Let me start with a tiny symptom, from this current book. Asserting, improbably enough, that he has learned more of his fictional technique from E. M. Forster than from any other writer, he quotes a sentence he particularly admires from *The Longest Journey,* thus —"Gerald was killed that day. He was beaten to death in a football game." Now, the sentence actually reads: "Gerald died that afternoon. He was broken up in a football match." Anybody can get a quotation wrong, but the transformation which Forster's sentence has undergone in Mailer's memory is revealing. What was originally seen as an unexpected accident has become a thuggish and murderous assault. Beaten to death, indeed! (Even allowing that Mailer is probably thinking of American football and Forster most certainly was not.) Mailer's imagination inhabits a world of extreme violence in which hostile forces threaten the annihilation of the individual at every turn. In this connection it is significant that Mailer feels a good deal of sympathy with the work of William Burroughs and his vision of a possible world to come. (One of his telling asides is: "If World War II was like *Catch-22,* this war will be like *Naked Lunch.*") Take this statement, for instance: "Life may now be intolerable to some other conception of Being—I would not know what else to call it but a plague—which is different from ourselves, more powerful perhaps, some conception so antagonistic to the Vision by which we try to discover our life that its presence has invaded our world, perhaps even our universe. The intent of such a plague is to deaden the soul of all of us, invite it to surrender." That could stand on the jacket of *Nova Express* summarizing the main dread in Burroughs' apocalyptic vision. I offered some comments on the demonism in Burroughs' work in a recent issue of *PR* and it is interesting to note that Mailer, in his own way, is also undoubtedly a demonist in as much as he sees existence as a battleground between superhuman forces. The paranoia and sense of proliferating invisible threats which seems endemic to life in the modern city ("the power of all surrounding them for evil," in Ruskin's words), rises to a crescendo in Mailer's writing. "New York is ill beyond relief. There are forces in the city, Left, Right and Center, which are out of control . . . their only logic is to grow by themselves." And the forces which are seen as gradually bringing death to the modern world with malevolent purposefulness are ultimately "mysterious" (again, as Ruskin said they would strike the city-dweller). Underneath Mailer's specific political concerns there is a feeling that "the war

between being and nothingness is the underlying illness of the twentieth century." The ultimate fear is not that Johnson may trigger off the war that ends us all—though that is there—but the fear that God "may have lost His way" and may now lose to the Devil. "It is the heart of existential logic that God's ultimate victory over the Devil is no more certain than the Devil's victory over God—either may conquer man and so give Being a characteristic Good or Evil, or indeed each may exhaust the other, until Being ceases to exist or sinks through seas of entropy into a Being less various, less articulated, less organic, more like plastic than the Nature we know." Again, that could come from Burroughs (note, in passing, the increasing popularity of the metaphor of "entropy"). Mailer thinks it is disastrous that modern man lives in an "antisupernatural" society, and he finds a greater psychic health in "medieval man . . . [who was] able to live with gods, devils, angels, and demons, with witches, warlocks, and spirits." It is one of Mailer's avowed intents to attempt to restore to modern man some of the more primitive dreads in the interest of renewed psychic vitality. This was clear in *An American Dream* where Rojack asserts: "Yes, I had come to believe in grace and the lack of it, in the long finger of God and the swish of the Devil. . . . I had come to believe in spirits and demons, in devils, warlocks, omens, wizards and fiends, in incubi and succubi. . . ." Interestingly, Rojack maintains that civilization is an "invasion of the supernatural . . . and the price we have paid is to accelerate our sense of some enormous if not quite definable disaster which awaits us." Mailer's demonism, then, is perhaps an attempt to provide identities for unidentified threats and forces, a way of transforming an enfeebling paranoia into a vitalizing dread. "Today the enemy is vague," he revealingly said in an earlier essay, and one can see how throughout his more recent work he has tried to dissipate that vagueness by postulating pairs of opposed extremes. Mailer once said he was excited by the "tendency to reduce all of life to its ultimate alternatives" and we can see various moves in that direction in some of his own pairings: "assassins and victims"; conformists and outlaws; the cancerous forces of control resisted by the brave healthy energy of the hero or the hipster; magician and artist (as in the classic account of the Liston-Patterson fight, which Mailer transformed into a cosmic victory of black magic over the weakened forces of light); "being and nothingness"; *Cannibals and Christians*; finally, "God and the Devil." As I said in relation to Burroughs, I think this simplifying schematization runs the risk of melodramatizing reality. That is not necessarily a totally bad thing, of course. A certain amount of timely melodrama may serve to awaken us to nightmare as-

pects of our common life to which we have become too easily acclimatized; it may revive feelings of nausea in too complacent stomachs. On the other hand, I still maintain that there is a real danger of complete loss of hope and passive despair lying in wait for the man who refers all the threats he feels and the aids he needs to external nonhuman forces. For what can man himself do if he is caught up in some vast conflict between angels and demons, a victim of voodoo, a suppliant of grace?

Still, Mailer's metaphors, even at their most extravagant, do serve to give rudimentary outlines to the sensed threats of modern city life. "Society is a sea," said Wallace Stevens; the image is apt since the sea is precisely that element the power of which is least amenable to shaping and defining. Its shape is simply itself and all that swarms within it. Mailer, then, is trying to find metaphors for the sea of urban life in modern America—and for the beasts of that sea. His way of coping with the oceanic threats of society is not Stevens' way, and the difference is instructive. Stevens said: "Resistance to the pressure of ominous and destructive circumstance consists of its conversion, so far as possible, into a different, an explicable, an amenable circumstance." Mailer may want to make the destructive pressures explicable, but he is far from converting them into amenable circumstances as far as art is concerned. Stevens, intent on creating works of art despite all external interruptions, spoke of the artist's need for "a violence from within that protects us from a violence without. It is the imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality." Mailer's way—part bravery, part limitation—is not to press back with the imagination, but to let the violent pressures goad him to immediate outcry. For this he has an audience in mind, "that audience which has no tradition by which to measure their experience but the intensity and clarity of their inner lives" and his contention is that "I have a consciousness now which I think is of use to them." Take his most recent book, not as a new work of art, nor as a series of conclusions and prescriptions, but as the record of an unusually sensitive modern urban consciousness, and it has a great deal to tell us about the way we live now. Or, perhaps Mailer would say, the way we die now.

Tony Tanner

MARX A LA MODE

POWER IN AMERICA: THE POLITICS OF THE NEW CLASS. By David T. Bazelon. New American Library. $7.50.

Bazelon's *The Paper Economy* was not a very original book to be sure, but it brought Thorstein Veblen up to date, and that was a worthwhile enterprise. In his new book Bazelon attempts to bring James Burnham up to date, and the result is dismaying.

"Intellectuals favor ideals too much," argues Bazelon, "and our more practical men lack both the ideals and ideas. . . ." The author proposes to remedy these deplorable deficiencies; he offers a realistic preachment to the New Class, that "group of people gaining status and income through organizational position," on how to overcome their present frustrations, to become "thinkers-ahead," tough-minded molders of America's future. C. Wright Mills once called Burnham a Marx for the Managers; Bazelon sounds like a Lenin for Scarsdale.

Comparing Burnham to Bazelon is an injustice to the former; he at least wrote in a clean and sparse style while Bazelon's hepped-up pseudofolksy manner would make one wince even were he to agree with the book's content. A writer who starts a sentence with, "Now doesn't it turn a bulb in your head," who proposes to "lay a stethoscope on the heart of the House" and who refers to the Supreme Court as "nearly the core-slice of American Apple Pie" (incidentally, what on earth *is* the core-slice of an apple pie?) either thinks vulgarly or believes that such vulgarity is necessary in addressing the as yet insufficiently developed sensitivities of the New Class. To judge from the evidence of Bazelon's earlier writing, I think that the latter is more likely.

Bazelon's reasoning is as shoddy as his writing is corny. When speaking of members of the New Class who, regrettably, "over-identify with some more traditional grouping," he mentions "the urban Jews [who over-identify] with problems of social justice." Why is social justice a traditional grouping? And what's wrong with overidentifying with justice anyway? Sometimes it is literally impossible to understand what the author is driving at. I have shown the following passage to

half a dozen of my students, and none of them could make sense of it: "But with academicism/scientism we have, once again, a willed and artificial community: the ideal is right, but that particular high road to it leads to a stinking Eskimo village—the fancy part of New York City lies in the other direction." Period, end of paragraph!

Bazelon evidently sees himself as a very deep thinker indeed. One can almost visualize his unsmiling face when he set down words of wisdom such as "the essence of the problem of power, this unequaled social problem, is whether you obey the life force or the death force." Gads.

But enough; let's have a closer look at the thesis of the book. Bazelon has discovered that Marx was all wrong (so, what else is new?). It has turned out that it wasn't the working class that would make the revolution for itself; it was the New Class. "The New Class is the cream of the proletariat: and the cream has separated from the curd." And so our author has resolutely discarded all his Marxist baggage, has "stepped firmly off the transatlantic ship" as he so delicately informs us, and has become the self-appointed advocate of "the cream." OK, but why must he in the process distort the thought of the old master, as when he writes: "[Marx] thought that the factory worker everywhere and always was inevitably and exceptionally revolutionary." Marx didn't think so at all, *vide* his subtle use of the notion of false consciousness.

I have always thought that it is the obligation of a book-reviewer to summarize as best he can the content of a book under review. But how can one summarize an *olla-podrida* in which the self-indulgent author delivers himself of a variety of *obiter dicta* on a multitude of topics, from the "inability of America to become a coherent nation," to the victory of science over religion; from the lack of adequate organization of power in the House of Representatives to the dangers of homosexuality, "a personal disaster far beyond a bad marriage," from the Supreme Court redistricting decision to Negro sexuality, and so on and so on. Right in the middle of this slovenly argued verbose mess there is even a thirty-page chapter entitled, "An Essay in Defense of Lying by a Compulsive Truth-Teller," which isn't related to anything else in the book and only manages to suggest that a) we are all liars and b) this is really a good thing. La Rochefoucauld said as much in three pithy sentences.

The book deals with a great variety of things, but the major subject which the title of the book makes us expect, "Power in America," is not dealt with at all. Bazelon alleges that the "Big

Principle" for understanding the American power structure is that it is a "grouping of gangs." So be it. But he doesn't deal with the major gangs. There is nothing here, nothing I repeat, about the armed forces, nothing about the military-industrial complex, nothing about the corporations or about the unions. This is Hamlet without the Prince, a *bouillabaisse* without seafood.

As for the rest, dear reader, do not despair, you too are part of the cream that has separated from the curd, you can identify with the core-slice of the apple pie, obey the life-force and join the Reform Democrats in Scarsdale. By and by you will even elect a congressman who will help reorganize the House and aid in overcoming the confusions and contradictions in the American system. There is no need to get all worked up about the obscenity of LBJ, the lying of Dean Rusk and the strutting of General Westmoreland. Just follow Bazelon, get off that transatlantic ship, join the suburban elite and know that you too can be among the New Samurai.

Lewis Coser

THE FREEDOM TO WILL

THE FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL. By Stuart Hampshire. Harper and Row. $3.95.

In an age of monstrosities, it is natural that even analytical philosophers should address themselves to problems of free will. Unfortunately the human relevance of their probings into the logical anatomy of our ideas of freedom and necessity, choice and action, what is and what ought to be and the rest is usually left for others to divine—not a safe course at a time when to overwrought activists clarity suggests shallowness and understanding merely a lack of concern. The remarkable fact remains, nonetheless, that the activists, who fancy themselves as *the* exponents of free action, have acquired allies of a sort in a quarter where most of them would disdain to look: that is, among some linguistic philosophers who for a good many years now have been desultorily sorting out forms of language indispensable to the conduct of our daily affairs. In fact, the philosophers of ordinary language, as they are called, argue convincingly against their own elder "analytical" opponents—in particular, the positivists, the physicalists and logical behaviorists, and, more generally, the "scientific" philosophers—that what we

understand by "the human mind," conceived in familiar ways as a faculty of active powers of imagination, deliberation, judgment and decision, cannot be explained in terms appropriate exclusively to our conceptions of physical objects, and that we land in confusion when we combine the idea of an automaton with that of a responsible man. Patterns of change, however subtle, do not remotely add up to a purposive action, nor, in particular, do oddities in the behavior of a featherless biped amount to the misbehavior of a human being. And this, not because there are facts about the behavior of persons that cannot be accounted for in terms of facts about the behavior of featherless bipeds, but rather because what we are *saying* and so *doing* in discussing the one is of a wholly different order from what we are saying and doing in talking about the other.

None of the exponents of linguistic philosophy has practiced that discipline with more concern for the forms of language that protect the life, and hence the freedom, of the individual human mind than Stuart Hampshire, lately of Oxford and the University of London, and currently Chairman of the Philosophy Department at Princeton. Few philosophers have so well understood how that life and that freedom has been eroded by the misplaced exactitudes of scientistic logicians who ask us to treat everything as the value of a variable or who deny intelligibility to statements not verifiable by the procedures of physical science. Significantly, the classical philosopher with whom Hampshire has most closely identified himself is Spinoza. For of course it is Spinoza who, whatever may be said for his simulations of the geometrical method, conceived the overriding purpose of his whole austere philosophy to be the elucidation of the idea (and ideal) of human freedom. Hampshire practices his own more informal logician's and grammarian's art with so straight a face that few perceive what he has been up to: the protection of the integral activities of the mind from the prevailing and paralyzing confusion with the bodily processes that may be correlated with them. Most of his writings are concerned with spheres of its activity which nowadays are designated as "the humanities." But every lover of freedom, including indeed lovers of scientific inquiry, are in his debt, and none more so than those philosophical apes of science who know not whereof they think.

In *The Freedom of the Individual* Professor Hampshire opens his defense of the idea of individual freedom rather obliquely by contrasting two forms of impossibility: one of them (call it "physical impossibility") is exemplified in such a statement as "the gas cannot escape now"; the other (call it "human" or "personal impossibility") in such a statement

as "the prisoner cannot escape now." (The difference of course is that the behavior of gases, like that of other natural phenomena, and unlike human behavior, is not thought of as determined by the gases' active concerns.) Hampshire goes on to discuss other no less distinctive features of statements of personal impossibility (and, now, possibility). For example, "He can't do it" may be offered in certain contexts as one of three characteristic alternative reasons why a person won't perform an action, the others being that he really doesn't want to or else that he believes he ought not to do so. This point is significant for it brings out the fact that in the case in which a person doesn't want to perform a certain act, it is assumed that if he possessed the will, or power, to act, and this in full measure, he normally would do so. The powers of physical objects have nothing to do with matters of volition or will, and hence nothing to do with freedom, in the active sense in which we ascribe it to individual persons.

By many such stages it is thus made to appear (though with continual hesitations and qualifications which begin after a while to suggest a deep uncertainty in Hampshire's own mind about the full scope or significance of his contentions) that what he means to establish is a difference, not between two species of a common genus called "behavior," but rather between two whole forms of thought in which, at the least, the term "behavior" works in entirely different ways. Briefly, the differences between the behavior of prisoners and that of gases, unlike those between the behavior of gases and solids, is not an empirical or natural difference, but a difference between two categories of discourse in which different things are being *done* by the speaker himself. And (so it would seem) it is for this reason, and not because of its allegedly greater complexity or subtlety, that the behavior of man has not hitherto been explainable in terms of reliable laws of nature.

In general, it appears that in talking and thinking about the possible behavior of physical things, we place ourselves outside of any frame of reference in which, on principle, what we say about it could have any necessary bearing upon the nature of the changes in question, or, no less important, upon our own bearing, as speakers, toward it. On the other hand, in speaking about the conduct of persons whom we are prepared to treat as agents responsible for their own behavior, we do in principle believe that what we, or they, say and think could *of itself* significantly affect our demeanor toward it. Our thinking about physical objects would be self-defeating if, as such, it affected either their behavior or our own conduct toward them, whereas our thinking about men, their purposes, their actions, their works and achievements would be self-defeating could we not thereby affect either their conduct or our own.

Now, as I understand him, Hampshire's contention is that powers of physical things, including our own bodies, are merely general capacities or dispositions to receive change; as such, they have nothing to do with the actual determination of behavior. And it is precisely for this reason that John Locke referred to them as "passive powers." But the "powers" of individual persons to make choices and to act, as Locke, long before Hampshire, also pointed out, are not long-term capacities or dispositions at all, but efficacious present causes of action. And, again, it is for this reason that Locke called *them* "active powers." Just on this score, however, the difference between Locke and Hampshire is instructive, for it displays precisely the difference between the new approach to language of the contemporary linguistic philosophers and the approach of most traditional philosophers. For Locke the term "active power" (like the terms "yellow" and "sweet") is simply the name of a certain simple abstractable idea. But for Hampshire what we call the active power of an individual to do something is not an abstractable quality of any sort; on the contrary, in speaking of our active power to do something, we *serve notice* of our determination to do it, and, by implication, that the form of discourse in which we are involved has a practical rather than a merely descriptive or abstractive intention. And though both Locke and Hampshire connect the freedom of the individual with his active power to initiate change, their accounts of this freedom are accordingly entirely different. For Locke, again, the "discovery" of one's active powers is, paradoxically, no different from the discovery, through perceptual discrimination, of a distinct sense quality or taste; all, that is to say, are mere *objects,* the discriminating contemplation of which is not intrinsically connected with what we do. But for Hampshire, the discovery that one can do something is not the perception of an object or datum of experience, but itself a setting of the mind to do something, an initial stage in fact in the doing of it.

This leads to a further stage of Hampshire's argument. Unlike the empiricists, of whom Locke is a somewhat uncertain progenitor, Hampshire in effect denies that all knowledge derives essentially from observation. What we call self-knowledge turns, on the contrary, on our active powers of will and on our awareness of what we really want or ought to be and do. This knowledge, which Socrates regarded as the ultimate aim of philosophy and most classical moralists identified with wisdom, is itself nonobservational, although of course it depends upon experience and is formed in the light of experience imaginatively relived and reenacted. And, although he does not himself employ the term, it is in this wisdom of critical self-knowledge that Hampshire locates the core of personal freedom.

The discussions of the intellectual obstacles, the muddles and misconceptions, that stand in the way of self-knowledge are among the most enlightening in Hampshire's book. And both his increasingly Spinozistic view of the way to self-mastery and freedom through knowledge of the causes of the passions, as well as his Baconian belief that the more a person knows of the laws of nature (including the laws of human nature) the greater is his power and freedom of choice, are freshly and imaginatively argued. Most impressively, he makes us realize that the return to a kind of logical and linguistic dualism which opposes facile reduction of the modes of thought to those of physical behavior does not in the least entail either indifference to the natural order or hostility to the intellectual operations and attitudes proper to its understanding. Just the opposite.

In his closing pages, Hampshire drastically hedges his bets about the scope of the difference between that conception of "behavior" which is translatable in terms of purely bodily changes and motions and that which connotes action and purpose. Perhaps from a residual anxiety lest he appear to challenge the proper prerogatives of empirical science, he now concedes that determinism, conceived as the doctrine that all human behavior is explainable in terms of scientifically correlated "inputs" and "outputs," may be true. Surprisingly, he is also prepared to admit that statements containing such intentional verbs as "to desire," "to act" and "to believe" may be "replaceable" by physical state descriptions of the sort that could enter into precise and experimentally testable natural laws. His only reservations about determinism are now that there is a normative factor inherent in certain *first-person* statements in the present and future tenses about some states of mind and some types of conduct, and that this element would not be reproduced in the descriptions of a scientific observer. To me, however, it appears that this is by no means all that Hampshire was arguing for in his earlier accounts of possibility and of volition.

Now I do not deny that there may be general and impersonal knowledge of "human possibilities"—what men generally want or desire in particular circumstances. This is the sort of knowledge which, added to the knowledge of the forms of human discourse and of life dependent upon them, largely constitutes what we call the knowledge of human nature. But this knowledge, as Hampshire himself shows, is (as we used to say) not reducible to knowledge of mindless processes explainable, as Spinoza would say, in terms of the attribute of extension. And if this means, as no doubt it may, that a normative element such as he imputes to first person present and future tense statements may be present in all statements about mental "facts," then so be it.

Hampshire's conclusion leaves the reader dissatisfied in another way. Just as it stands it would not be hard to construe Hampshire's work simply as an informal and somewhat discursive contribution in that branch of linguistic studies concerned with the "logical geography" of our chat about practical possibilities, active powers of choice and will and self-knowledge. To me, at least, its philosophical interest is very great, not only because it helps me to remove sources of confusion and vacillation in my own linguistic practices, but also because it enables me to overcome a misplaced scientism and rationalism. But Hampshire has left it up to me to make the connections that establish the philosophical relevance of his essay.

Is it possible that, after all, Hampshire himself is still subtly tied to the rationalist (and Spinozist) view of philosophy as a kind of proto-, or super-, science? Is it possible that, despite his concern to free our notions of self-knowledge and personal freedom from confusion with the forms of knowledge characteristic of what, in this country, is called "behavioral science," he is still a bit reticent about exercising his right to engage publicly in forms of speculation that might have self-knowledge explicitly as their end? Here, it seems to me, he might take a leaf from the Socratic dialogues of Plato, from the essays of Charles Peirce, or even from that other austere philosophical moralist whose own writings about the human mind he finds most enlightening and enlivening, namely, Spinoza. When he does this, as his talents and inclinations naturally entitle him to do, he will, in my judgment, move onto a plane reserved for a very few philosophical writers.

Henry David Aiken

OF THIS TIME, OF THAT PLACE

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. By Martin Duberman. Houghton Mifflin Co. $8.00.

In a bibliographical note appended to his *James Russell Lowell*, Martin Duberman dryly but fairly summarizes the deficiencies of previous Lowell biographies and inadvertently underscores the virtues of his own. Horace E. Scudder's two volume "monument" to Lowell, published in 1901, for all its massive detail, was Boston hagiography written without recourse to manuscript materials now available. Ferris

Greenslet plundered Scudder without adding anything substantially new. Robert C. Beatty, less derivative but more tendentious, glared at Lowell through the glasses of Southern Agrarianism; and Leon Howard made literary evidence carry a heavier biographical burden than it warranted. None of these books, moreover, is so well-written as Mr. Duberman's, and none is based on such meticulous and exhaustive scholarship. He has ransacked manuscript collections in thirty-eight libraries here and abroad, consulted living Lowells and assorted specialists on Lowell's world and attached 116 pages of bibliography and notes to his lucid and uncluttered text—the tip of the iceberg.

Mr. Duberman has no wish to inflate Lowell's current literary reputation (he concedes his success as editor, teacher, diplomat and public commentator), but he greatly admires Lowell's character, and he feels that in rehabilitating him as a superior "human being," he may counter the "fashionable view of the 'Brahmins' as smug, limited men, ineffectual shadows of their Puritan forbears." His biography, then, is in part an evaluation of a man and to a lesser degree of a generation and a place. Lowell's career is not scanted, but each event or personal detail the biographer elects to focus upon contributes to a finished portrait that neither flatters nor debunks its subject. Here is James Russell Lowell with his gifts and weaknesses unambiguously revealed.

An exact contemporary of Melville (whom he missed entirely despite friendships they had in common) and of Whitman (whose muse he mistook for a strumpet), Lowell is often presented as their stuffy antithesis, nurtured by an indulgent society, applauded by uncritical friends and rewarded far beyond his deserts. Mr. Duberman, while never relaxing his critical stance, rebuts these half-truths and in so doing makes Lowell complex and interesting. Success, he shows, did not turn Lowell into a complacent man, nor was his career one unimpeded triumph. His adoring and adored young wife died after they had buried three of their children. Money was always a problem. Lowell struggled doggedly for meager financial reward until almost the end of his life. Eventually his books sold pretty well, and he could rely upon an affectionate claque to praise him, but not all critics smiled upon him, and at various times his writing, politics and character came under attack.

Theodore Parker, for example, once said that Lowell was "resentful and jealous as a woman," that it was his first wife—"the good angel who sat or stood with broad wings behind his study chair"—who supplied and directed his inspiration. Parker wrote this after Lowell's reformist zeal had somewhat abated, but he was unfair to Lowell whose abolitionism antedated his courtship of Maria White. What Parker took

for apostasy was probably the recrudescence of a rational strain never quite extinguished even during Lowell's "enthusiastic" period. Age and experience simply made him less doctrinaire and readier for compromise. Mr. Duberman shows Lowell's radicalism gradually mellowing into Mugwumpery, his angry eloquence into pious exhortation; but he also notices the light of the trenchant humorist and moralist flickering behind the platitudes.

The Lowell emerging from this biography is at once more human and less grand than the minor deity of the New England pantheon and more deserving of consideration than his latter-day detractors would admit. Mr. Duberman makes no excessive claims for Lowell as a poet (*The Bigelow Papers* and a small number of humorous and satirical poems excepted) nor does he rank him very high as a critic. But he quite properly acknowledges Lowell's brilliance as a political essayist (surely *The Anti-Slavery Papers* and the Civil War pieces alone justify this estimate) and his importance as a literary force. Lowell's decision to give up the law for literature was both risky and courageous. As editor of three important magazines, he displayed a characteristic sloppiness about details, but he raised the standards of American journalism by publishing serious writers and refusing to knuckle under to vulgar popular taste. To young writers he was invariably generous and solicitous.

It would be hard to disagree with Mr. Duberman's inference that Lowell's career and personality owed much to his Cambridge environment and to the influence of the Brahmin ethos. If Martin Green is right, Boston until 1845 was the only city in the Union in which a high culture was possible and where "powerful forces of will and intellect were harmonized firmly to moral purpose." Something of its strong civic sense and reverence for the moral mind rubbed off on the young Lowell and formed him into a humane and "clubbable" man. And yet this happy attachment as writer and reformer to a prosperous and public-spirited society seriously concerned with the care and culture of men may have hobbled as much as helped him. At least it might explain why he ranked good-fellowship higher than poetry. Mr. Duberman notes that Lowell, even as a hot reformer, remained fundamentally an insider. A kind of neoclassical correctness tinctured his radicalism and held his romanticism in check, so that when he elevated the Heart over the Head, it was never done at the expense of the proprieties.

With the absorption of the minor causes into the Great Cause of anti-slavery, and with the ostensible settling of that wrong, Lowell's instinctive conservatism deepened. By 1860, the Brahmins still adhered to the gospel of Stewardship, but the prewar agitation that had prevented

(to borrow Emerson's phrase) a "maudlin agglutination" gave way to a genteel consensus. Lowell reflected the parochialism and boyishness of that society, and although he learned how to enjoy the charm and variety of foreign scenes—especially London—he tended to measure a place or a social group by the Cambridge touchstone.

There is no need to apologize for his innocent snobberies or mild racial prejudices. Far more outspoken in defence of Negroes than most of his friends and as an exposer of "vulgar errors" about the Negro race, Lowell winced at his own inconsistencies. It was Emerson, not Lowell, as Mr. Duberman shows, who is said to have blackballed Frederick Douglass when the latter was proposed for membership in the Town and Country Club; and no less an abolitionist than Theodore Parker far exceeded Brahmin Boston's distaste for Jews, Negroes and Irish Catholics.[1] Lowell's ambivalence about Jews and Jewishness might be described as only a peculiar form of a class obsession.

He wasn't warped by the discreetly held antipathies of the Saturday Club, but the contentment with which he browsed in Boston's cultural pastures and his impatience with any kind of "extra-vagance" (as Thoreau hyphenated that word) might be regarded as less fortunate consequences of his Brahmin upbringing. Thoreau brought out the worst in him even though a few of Lowell's animadversions were as insightful as they were ill-natured. Most of Lowell's contemporaries were no more prescient about Thoreau than they were about Whitman and Melville, but since he was ordinarily a great appreciator on the look out for fresh talent, one can only conclude that his Harvard Yard esthetic did not make him receptive to wildness or innovation.

Had he escaped from the Brahmin brotherhood, very likely the symmetry and rhythm of his useful life would have been broken. Perhaps he needed their definitions as well as their regard, and there is no

1 "Religious Emotion—religious Will I think never went further than with the Jews. But their *intellect* was sadly pinched in those narrow foreheads. They were cruel *also*—always cruel. I doubt not they did sometimes kill a Christian Baby at the Passover, or the anniversary of Haman's famous day! If it had been a Christian *Man* we should not blame them much, considering how they got treated by men who worshipped a Jew for God. They were also *lecherous*, no language on earth I think is so *rich* in terms for sexual mixing.—All Shemites are given to flesh, what *mouths* they have—full of voluptuousness, only the Negro beats them there. The African has the largest organs of generation in the world, the most erotic heat; he is the most polygamous of men. The Negro girls of Boston are only *chaste* in the sense of being *run after*. After their first menstruation they invariably take a man—so say such who know. I think the Jews come next—their *mouths* are African." Theodore Parker to D. A. Wasson, Dec. 12, 1857.

profit in speculating about the kind of writer he might have become had he turned away from his bookish culture and yielded to his natural bent. "The failure of his 'earnest' verse," Mr. Duberman remarks, "may have been largely the result of attempting to squeeze a joyous temperament into the fashionable prophetic mold." Lowell, he continues, "was far more comfortable—and original—as a humorist, and it was as humorist, ironically, that he was also most successful as a moralist." He agreed with his contemporaries, however, that humorous poetry was a low form of art at best and kept his natural spontaneity and irreverence in check. A less inhibited or more alienated man, similarly endowed, might have produced bolder and better work.

Some time during his middle years, Lowell composed his own epitaph:

Here lies that part of J. R. L.
That hampered him from doing well.

Mr. Duberman's penetrating and urbane analysis, in bringing out Lowell's amiable character and substantial if trammeled talents, reenforces the suspicion that in the Mount Auburn tomb "lies infinitely more" than Lowell ever wrote.

Daniel Aaron

THE NEW CLASS

ORGANIZED LABOR IN AMERICAN HISTORY. By Philip Taft. Harper & Row. $12.50.

Strictly speaking, there are no new classes. Society is confined within a fixed perimeter that encompasses upper, lower and middle. But within the perimeter shifts can occur that are so profound as to be revolutionary. As a group moves within a society onto a different class level, there is not created a new class; an established class is changing its membership. And while the new members may affect the collective personality of the class—if only because they enter it with the differences of the *arriviste*—deeper and more permanent is the impress of the class personality on its new recruits. Movement from one class to another may come only through civil warfare when it requires the displacement of those with the strength and will to resist. Or it may be achieved with less violence when resistance is less stubborn, as can be the case when

objective conditions make it possible to accommodate an enlarged membership from a class below without serious displacements. Such has been the way up for the American worker.

In 1886, the first English translation of *Das Kapital* was published and the American Federation of Labor was formally established. A common outlook inspired both. The infant Federation declared in its preamble that a "struggle is going on in all of the civilized world between oppressors and oppressed of all countries, between capitalist and laborer, which grows in intensity from year to year. . . ." Given the evidence of its time, that outlook seemed reasonable. An entire class, degraded, exploited and alienated, had no stake in the social order.

One of the great achievements of the twentieth century is the integration of the working class into Western society. Labor is neither stakeless nor stateless in the Western world. And in America that achievement has been most fully realized—but not, as Marx prescribed and predicted, because American labor has effected any significant reconstruction of property relationships. Instead, the institutions that labor built to further its interests (free of revolutionary and utopian ideology, if not always free of such rhetoric) adapted themselves to the opportunities that were found in both the strengths and weaknesses of American capitalism.

To the despair of the ideologue, the American labor movement, once in motion, refused to accept a *Weltanschauung.* It used intellectuals for their vocational skills and rejected their politics. The limited nature of the goal it strove for—economic and social status within the existing order—was scorned by visionaries. Yet in this striving it was brilliantly successful. The once-proletarian wage earner now populates the middle class.

In his monumental work, Professor Taft concentrates on the organizing, growth and functioning of unions. It was through these institutions, different from any to be found elsewhere in the world, that labor achieved its status. Thus, perforce, Taft has written a larger history: the rise of the American worker.

The indigenous characteristics of the American economy only partly explain the uniqueness of our native unions. A leadership greatly gifted with a sense of the opportune, a contempt for the utopian and an instinct for the possible welded polyglot, immigrant workers into aggregates of economic power in the face of bitter, and often brutal, hostility. The history is replete with drama, much of it already part of our folklore. But Taft's definitive reach adds more than has before been recorded. The method of his scholarship also corrects historical errors that have appeared in earlier works. Whenever possible, he has gone back beyond

contemporary newspapers and publications, from which so much has hitherto been taken, to primary sources: court records, official union documents, files of correspondence and memoranda.

While the scholarship is impressive, there is another quality in Taft that marks this work from its genre. Since John R. Commons and Selig Perlman, most chroniclers of American labor have been its critics. They have seen a bourgeoisified labor as an ossified labor movement. For predilective socialists and social reformers, American unionism has proved a bitter disappointment. All of the gospels called for organizations of workers to produce the leading anticapitalist cadres. But to measure our native unionism by what it has achieved in basic social change can be an account only of failure. It must be said that we have had important insights from such critics. But we have also had large distortions from the many efforts to make the data support a doctrine.

Taft's approach rests upon unreserved acceptance of the unions' own goals as they are defined by the active commitment of union energies and resources. When, as occasionally happens, he considers a professed social goal with a lip-served place in labor sloganeering—as, for example, racial equality—he verges into apologetics for the performance gap. This is not to say he has elided over matters that are discreditable and base in labor's history—corruption, self-serving leadership, betrayals. But for Taft, the conversion of an uncompromising idealist into a practical administrator of business unionism is no betrayal. It is the evolutionary development of American unionism paralleled in the life cycle of an individual.

Wages, conditions, insurance, leisure, pensions, job security, bilateralism in the workplace; these are the matters to which American unionism has devoted itself. But none of them is fixed or static. Action for higher wages a century ago meant fighting against malnutrition and impoverishment; today it means a color television set, a newer model automobile or sending a child to college. In spite of such great secular change, union militancy has hardly diminished. The Gompersian "More, always more!" has been the one constant, and in its pursuit, as times and circumstances changed, the unions developed new structures, new tactics and new demands. The intrinsic and ineluctable dynamism in organizations created and led for the sole purpose of getting more material welfare has kept labor-management relations from stabilizing, except for the briefest intervals. Our unions dilute none of their coercive economic power in political enterprises. Their muscle is reserved for bargaining with employers. If this has become class collaboration, the news has not yet reached the business community.

Those who despise the unions' success in getting what they seek, because they are after only more of what they already have, cannot fail to concede their success in getting it. Such success is confirmed not only by statistics of real wages, vacation pay, pension benefits, home ownership, bond holdings, etc. The substance, as well as the achievement, of this success is endorsed by the unskilled who emulate the craftsmen who led the way, and are followed in turn by all the diverse ranks —clerical employees, civil servants, teachers, professionals—for whom organizing, striking and collective bargaining seem the most effective way to shake the money tree.

To be sure there have been left far behind the unemployed, the unorganized and the colored millions, except as they may have benefited from the liberalized politics of the country, which derives, to some degree, from the significant part of the electorate that is unionized. But to expect that a private-interest group as pragmatic as the unions would be willing, in its upward thrust in its own behalf, to pause to help those outside its trades or industries is to impute to American unionism an attribute it simply does not have.

For the American worker today, his revolution is over and won. The unlimited aggressiveness of his organizations in pressing for limited goals has carried him into the middle class and made him a bulwark of the status quo. His insatiable appetite for more is for more within the system; a change in the system would seem to threaten what he has. He will hardly be convinced that his unions have taken him in a wrong direction. And it is even less likely that the American employer will believe that because the unions have aged and prospered they have lost any of their belligerence.

Merlyn S. Pitzele

LETTERS

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Sirs:

In describing his position on the Vietnam War in the second installment of the symposium, "What's Happening to America," Mr. Conor Cruise O'Brien makes rather extended reference to my contribution to the earlier installment. Perhaps surprisingly, Mr. O'Brien and I seem to be in some agreement in our opposition to American policy in Vietnam: we both believe that the war runs counter to the American national interest. But, expectably enough, Mr. O'Brien is concerned to make it clear that he does not share my view that the South Vietnamese are resisting Communist aggression. This is of course an important disagreement. I write here, however, not to argue this difference in view, but to note the method Mr. O'Brien employs in taking issue with me—in particular, his curiously misleading use of quotation marks.

In his first paragraph Mr. O'Brien accurately quotes a sentence from my contribution. This is followed, a few lines later, by the repetition of several phrases from the sentence, which Mr. O'Brien properly puts in quotation marks. It is after this that his procedure raises questions of propriety. Toward the end of the paragraph he writes: "If indeed it is unthinkable that 'Vietnam should go Communist,' then American military force and overt control had to be applied." Since it is I who am previously quoted, there would seem to be the clear implication that I am still being quoted, especially because of Mr. O'Brien's use of the reinforcing word "indeed." But the phrase "Vietnam should go Communist" appears nowhere in my statement. Nor did I say or even suggest that such an outcome was "unthinkable."

Again, in the fourth paragraph of his contribution, Mr. O'Brien will once more refer to me by name. Here, in this paragraph, he uses two phrases which I should suppose were in the public domain but which he puts in quotation marks: "preventing the spread of communism" and "containing Communism." And he goes on to attack the ideas embodied in these phrases. It is hard for me to imagine what Mr. O'Brien intended a reader to conclude from his putting these words in quotation marks except that I had used them. I did not. Since it is highly improbable that the readers of *Partisan Review* will put my contribution to the symposium and Mr. O'Brien's side by side to check the accuracy of his report of my piece, I find it necessary to call their attention to his procedure.

One other comment on Mr. O'Brien's style in argument. Mr. O'Brien writes:

> In Vietnam the actions of the United States give about the same impression of virtue as did those of the Soviet Union in Hungary in 1956. Apologists for the Soviet Union too had their own version of what was done there, and this version was the mirror-image of

> Mrs. Trilling's language: the Russians were "helping the Hungarians to resist Fascist aggression." This was rightly regarded as loathsome hypocrisy on the part of the Russians. On what grounds should equivalent American language on Vietnam be regarded in any other light?

The answer to this question could not be simpler: on the grounds of verifiable truth. Myself, I have no recollection that the actions of the Soviet Union in Hungary were ever justified as resistance to Fascist aggression, but it may be they were: in the *Daily Worker* or some such place—in which case the justification was palpably "loathsome hypocrisy" because there was no shred of truth in it. If, in the face of all the contradicting evidence, Mr. O'Brien is convinced that the Communist effort in Vietnam is wholly indigenous, without support from the Communist powers, it is of course his privilege to say so. But what I think calls for note, especially in our present period of acute response to political and cultural ugliness and violence, is Mr. O'Brien's characterization of my view and language. The charge of "loathsome hypocrisy" is not to be taken lightly.

Diana Trilling

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A PRELUDE

Landscapes, Characters and Conversations from the Earlier Years of My Life

In his foreword, Mr. Wilson writes: "In the summer of 1914, I began keeping a notebook, which eventually turned into something more like a journal — though it never became for any length of time a day-by-day diary. I never noted the weather or recorded everything that I did but only aimed to catch *sur le vif* things that struck me as significant or interesting. This volume is a first installment. At this stage, my notations were scrappy, and I have had to fill them in with something in the nature of reminiscences. Later on, I came to develop this chronicle on a very much la scale, and even to some extent organize it in the form of episo that consisted of interwoven ments of experience...."

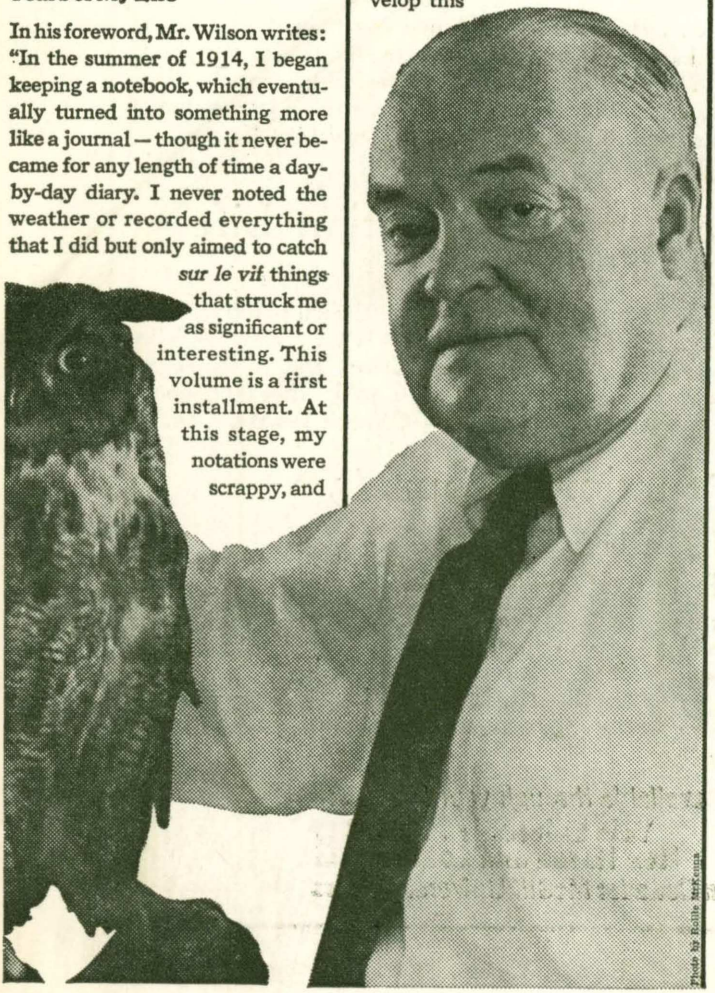

Photo by Rollie McKenna

The sections of this journal "First Trip to Europe," "Fam "School and College Friend "Princeton, 1912-1916," " Army, 1917-1919." A PRELU also includes "The Death of a S dier" and "Lieutenant Frank $6

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Edmund Wilson writes: "*I Thought of Dai* first published in 1929 and written m under the influence of Proust and Joyce, intended, like *Ulysses* and *A la Recher du Temps Perdu*, to be a sort of sympho arrangement. This narrator is supposed to a typical example of the American intel tual of the twenties, who is always attem ing to formulate an attitude toward life the United States, and Daisy the Americ reality, which is always eluding his grasp

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