Retort

THE UNIVERSAL PANACEA

HOWARD SCHOENFELD

RESISTANCE IN PRISON

CLIF BENNET

.....POETRY.....ESSAYS.....BOOK REVIEWS.....

LORCA.....ALEX COMFORT.....MICHAEL FRAENKEL

VOL 4 NO 3

RETORT

An ANARCHIST Quarterly of Social Philosophy and the Arts

VOLUME 4, NO. 3 WINTER, 1949

Editors: HOLLEY CANTINE *and* DACHINE RAINER

RETORT is hand-set and hand-printed by the Editors

RETORT, Bearsville, N. Y.

Single Copy: 40c, Subscription: $1.50 a year [four numbers] Foreign: $1.75.

Retort does not pay for contributions. Manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelopes.

EDITORIAL

In a purely negative sense, anarchism today probably has more adherents than any other school of thought. Never before in history has the State revealed itself more nakedly as an organ of repression and exploitation; never before have political corruption and incompetence been so widely known and accepted as inevitable. The existing structure of society is speedily disintegrating, and in the process the validity of the insights of early anarchist thinkers like Proudhon and Bakunin is being demonstrated with a clarity for which they could scarcely have dared to hope.

Ironically, however, despite this widespread and growing awareness of the essential accuracy of anarchist theory (not, of course, based on any knowledge of that theory, but simply on unavoidable empirical evidence) there has been no significant growth of an organized anarchist movement which might give it direction and integration. Organized anarchism, though it has grown somewhat in recent years, is still a feeble minority movement, probably with no more adherents, and very possibly with fewer than it possessed fifty years ago. How can one account for this extraordinary discrepancy? While it is clearly too much to expect that an anarchist movement would rise overnight to a position of dominance in political life, it would surely seen probable, in view of the obviously very widespread mistrust of governments and politicians in the world today, that such a movement should be increasing in size and influence fairly rapidly. However, this is not occuring to an observable extent.

The principal reason for this phenomenon is undoubtedly the fact that most of the people who have become disillusioned in politics have been so benumbed by the very forces that have disillusioned them that they have entirely ceased thinking in terms of social action. The State has not only revealed itself as a force

as malevolent and maleficent as the most hysterical anarchist had ever described it, but it has, at the same time revealed its enormous power for destroying opposition and crushing the dissident individual. The knowledge that the State is a monster bent on destroying all humane values, has, for the most part, been derived from the fact that the State, in several countries—notably Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia—has proceded to act this way with terrifying brutality and ferocity. The natural reaction to such a discovery has been to be paralyzed by terror rather than calmly seek methods of organizing resistance. Even in those countries, like the United States, where the State has not yet achieved its full stature as an anti-human force, most of the people who have been shown its essential nature and foresee its probable future development have been too disquieted by the knowledge to do anything but look for a place to hide. The very suddenness of the revelation has been so stunning that resistance has appeared futile and action towards an alternative form of social organization hopeless.

Nevertheless, bad as the objective evidence of the depravity and power of the State has been, many individuals are either too optimistic or too courageous to be made completely hopeless by recognizing it. And the responsibility for the failure of the anarchist movement to gain strength from these elements rests to a large extent with that movement itself. Granted it was not prepared for the situation. Its numbers depleted in the '20s and early '30s by the apparently overwhelming success of the Bolshevik Revolution, it had few experienced propagandists or theorists left. (In this country at least, one rarely encounters a middle-aged anarchist who has been in the movement for long; they are nearly all over 60 or well under 40. Virtually an entire generation dropped out of the movement between 1918 and 1936 or 7.) Moreover, those who *had* remained in the seemingly doomed movement did so primarily out of sentimentality, and their main contribution to the current period has been a stubborn unwillingness to relinquish any vestige of the old ideas, thereby creating an atmosphere of sectarianism which has had a very discouraging effect on new converts.

Another factor is not at all unimportant in my opinion, not only as a reason why anarchism fails to grow today, but also why it has never, except in the somewhat diluted form of syndicalism, succeeded in attracting a wide following in the past. Anarchism, since its inception, has been primarily a movement of social criticism

and protest. In this it has not differed conspicuously from other radical tendencies, except for one important particular. Most other forms of radicalism expect to achieve their objective by taking over the State, either through the vote or by insurrection, and in their preparations for this task they have been able to provide a great deal of *apparently purposeful* concrete activity for their followers. Anarchism, ou the other hand, since it visualizes a *completely new* form of society, cannot consistently engage in the type of short-term activities that provide the main outlet for the enegies of the followers of more conventional radical groups. Political rallies, electioneering, nominating conventions—all the thrills and activity of a political campaign—are manifestly impossible for a movement whose central assumption is that political action is both futile and dangerous. But young people, especially those who have just begun to suspect that the status quo is fundamentally rotten, have lots of physical energy and a burning need for action, which can be satisfied, at least temporarily, by the many activities that a political party—even a small, powerless one—requires during election campaigns. The lack of an equivalent in anarchist activity has been a potent liability to the movement.

The syndicalist wing of anarchism has been able, in certain periods and in various places—notably Spain, to provide an adequate substitute for such activity: organizing the unorganized workers in unions, agitating strikes, etc. Today, in the United States, however, this outlet is nothing like what it was when the IWW was in its heyday 30 or 40 years ago. Most of the workers are already 'organized' and the task of the anarcho-syndicalist is no longer that of going into comparatively virgin territory to propagate the idea of workers' solidarity, perhaps at the risk of his life. Rather, it is the much more discouraging and demoralizing job of persuading the workers that their present unions are no good and that they should form new ones. While many workers know all too well that the existing unions are entirely incapable of satisfying their real needs and demands, they are too disillusioned and apathetic to be much impressed by the idea that new unions could improve conditions.

It seems to me that the anarchist movement should pay more attention to this problem than they have done in the past. The early anarchist thinkers for the most part tended to assume that once the workers became aware of the true nature of the State, they would act spontaneously to overthrow it and set up a new society.

This assumption has now been completely refuted by events. Without a concrete program of action, the workers simply lapse into apathy and resignation, however much they may be convinced of the evils of the existing society.

Since it is clearly ridiculous for a movement whose primary belief is that all government is useless and dangerous to engage in specifically political activity, the anarchists will have to develop a non-political program, probably centered around various work-projects in which anarchist principles of living and working are put into practice to the extent that conditions permit. The transition to a free society is going to be much more difficult than the old anarchists imagined; the principles of mutual aid, free association and equality will have to be worked out much more concretely than they are today, if they are to win wide acceptance. They can best be implemented by actual experiments—workshops, farm communes, cooperative houses, etc.—which consciously set out to put these principles in practice and to discover which forms of organization and individual behavior are required for their achievement. While the present emphasis on theoretical discussion and campaigns of resistance to specific evils like conscription cannot be neglected, the movement needs additional activities to provide it with a more positive and constructive program.

It may be objected that the sort of people who need action in order to remain in the movement would be of no ultimate value to anarchism. I feel that this is a great mistake. Anarchism, which aspires to become a way of life for all mankind, cannot base itself today, in its infancy, on the concept that it is only for a chosen few. Unless it can find ways of reaching and attracting adherents on a mass scale, it can never be more than a sect. I do not mean to suggest that we should alter or debase our principles and theories to make them more acceptable to the 'average man', as many of the political radicals have done. But surely anarchism is rich enough in potentialities that it should be reaching many more people than it is at present. Moreover, since anarchism is a philosophy which embraces all human activity, it is being badly served by a movement which confines itslf to only a few small areas of human behavior.

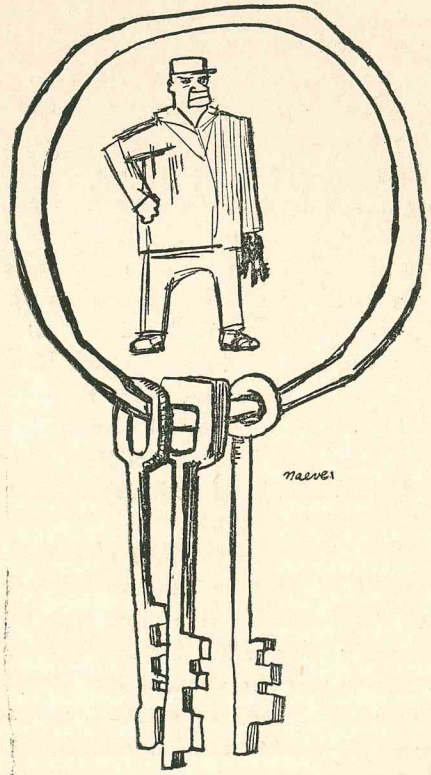
Further discussion and suggestions on this question are invited.

H.C.

P.S. Somehow the last part of this sounds sort of rhetorical but I hink the main point is clear enough—H.C.

NOTE: The following article is from our forthcoming Prison Anthology. The illustration, by Lowell Naeve, is one of a series he has made for this book.

RESISTANCE IN PRISON



CLIF BENNET

For those who want a preview of the American police state in action, complete with distinguishing variations from the European model, thirty-two Federal correctional and penal institutions offer unlimited research facilities. Entrance requirements are stiff, but the experience may prove invaluable to anyone looking for a slingshot to use against the new Goliath.

Organizing resistance within a prison requires an understanding of the inmate's state of mind. He cannot exercise initiative or choice, nor may he express himself freely in any way. His individuality is limited to making "Big Deal" talk with other cons about how many Packards and Billy Rose blondes wait for him outside the walls. With his ego thoroughly squashed and trampled on, he is further cramped emotionally by the prohibition against showing sympathy or solidarity with a mistreated fellow inmate. "Every man does his own time," is the iron sophistry of the walled city. The uniforms are there to see that you keep your eyes straight ahead while the man next to you is slugged and dragged down the corridor to the strip cell.

Thus starved for an opportunity to affirm their humanity, prisoners fall back heavily on the old American substitutes for honest emotion: Patriotism and Mama. The Federal prisons had one of the highest records in the country for War Bond sales. No cell is complete without a picture of Mama, and no issue of the prison paper escapes some maudlin Edgar Guest intent on explaining the particular virtues of his maternal parent.

The springboard for action which will restore some semblance of Man to the numbered fragments inside the wall is always some immediate grievance felt by the prison body as a whole or by some sizable group within it. Usually it is the prison food, which appears on the menu board in the mess hall under a variety of alluring names—and always turns out to be lumpy bread pudding.

Food strikes may be directed against the entire meal, with the men refusing to leave their quarters where possible, or marching through the mess hall with empty trays if attendance there is compelled. Where the action is directed against a specific item of food, inmates are wised up by the grapevine ahead of chow time, and take everything but the objectionable food. As a variation of the food boycott directed against one item, the scrapple, rotten frankfurters or greasy potatoes may be taken, hidden in a scrap of paper, or paper napkin, and dropped to the walk upon leaving the mess hall. It is unlikely to reappear on the tables, particularly after the Associate Warden had to wade through it to Officers' Mess.

Since refusal to eat cannot usually be ferreted out as an assault on the prison administration, it is a good initial move prior to a strike. In both the minimum and maximum custody institutions, we found

that a food boycott, once popular, tended naturally to become a work strike. Once the prisoners had refused a meal, they gathered in little groups in the yard. "No eat, no work," they said. And the hardier souls among them would refuse to report to their work detail.

The extreme form of the food boycott is the hunger strike. When a large number of men take this action, it cannot be expected to last more than a day or two at the longest. The hunger strike is better adapted to the use of individuals or small, highly dedicated groups with a long-range view of what is to be accomplished.

In any action taken by the prison population as a group, the initiators must be familiar with the routine steps to put down resistance, and the working rules for relations with the prison authorities during times of unrest. The prison officials will use:

(I) Soft soap. The confidence man on the prison staff, usually the Warden or an Associate Warden, will try to have the strikers herded into the auditorium and, with the prescribed combination of sternness and paternal concern, will promise them the moon if they get back into harness.

(2) Intimidation. This may be directed against the group as a whole, or individuals suspected as troublemakers may be weeded out and brought to the Warden's Office for a reprimand and warning. Solitary confinement, loss of 'good time', and shipment to a tougher pen are the usual threats.

[3] Violence. Pick handles are a favorite weapon. Water hoses are sometimes used; if one of these is brought into a cell block prison etiquette demands that you use mattresses and blankets for shelter so the officers may destroy prison property without your wasting energy on the job. Tear gas and guns are brought out only in extreme situations; the American prison guard does not as a rule develop a great deal of personal animosity even in critical moments. His attitude is "That's the regulations." He would undoubtedly lock up his own father with the same impersonal loyalty to the Officers' Manual.

To meet the inevitable soft soap, the strikers must have a clear idea of their objective. They must have a definite demand, or set of demands, which it is possible for the administration to meet. They must agree before striking that they will not return to work until these demands are granted or the strike is broken by force. They must present these demands at the first chance.

To insure the continuation of the strike after the spokesmen

are sent to solitary or shipped (usually in the middle of the night, or while the population is locked in cell blocks) a succession of leadership should be agreed on, with alternate contacts in each cell block.

When violence is used by the officials, passive resistance is most effective in prison. It is sometimes difficult to adhere to, but will result in increased sympathy from those not striking and will conserve the rebellious spirit of the men for future action. An excess of violence on the part of the the inmates, even in self-defense, will exhaust their ardor and postpone a resurgence for a long time. As in guerilla warfare, the objective is not the individual enemy, but his materials, means of communication and morale.

Leadership must be alert to all local developments of value to the strikers. In the Danbury prison strike of 1946 the administration was aware of plans for a strike because of news releases sent out by coordinating groups in the 'free world'. A fake demonstration was held in the prison yard on the day before the strike was scheduled in the hope that prison officials might think that was the limit of the disturbance. The following day was Lincoln's Birthday and the strike might have been a dismal failure had not the officials obligingly ordered all men to report to their work assigments on the morning of that day

Danbury prison at that time held a large number of Negro Selective Service cases, most of whom worked in the prison industry, a glove factory. The initial agitation was therefore directed at the Negro cell block, with the result that the prison industry was closed down, half the population demonstrated and sang songs in the yard, and two or three hundred refused to be enticed into the mess hall by a chicken dinner.

At the same prison, the inmate paper was edited by a company man who diffused more than the ordinary smell of polecat. When he put out an iasue urging acceptance of the officials' plan for an Inmate Advisory Council (company union), all available copies were gathered up in every cell block, tied together in a bundle and delivered to the Warden without comment.

In the Lewisburg strike of 1947, the administration put forward this company union proposal right in the middle of the fireworks. Slips of paper were distributed to every cell, so the inmate might indicate his choice of representatives for the projected pint-sized parliament. The sewage disposal system was jammed with paper slips for several hours.

Whether the political prisoners are segregated or mixed with the

prison population, a few points of agreement will simplify their job. First, they should make no contract of any kind with the administrstion. Second, they should refuse to deal singly with any prison official on any matter that m'ght conceivably be a group concern. Third, they should refrain from violence in defending themselves against officers.

Of course, the resister will find that a contract is 'assumed' between himself and the officials, and that certain things are 'expected' of him. There is, however, no pretense that the inmate has the right to change, or even to interpet, this assumed contract. Interpretations—several different ones to fit each situation—will come from the Warden's office.

In instances where the resisters are segregated in one cell block, and none of them has any illusions about making parole, a number of joyful pastimes are offered which are guaranteed to furnish gray hair for the Warden and a rapid transfer to maximum custody for those involved. If the cell doors are of the individual lock type plus a master control operated manually or electrically from a box available only to the officer, the entire cell block may bo put out of operation in a few minutes by stuffing paper clips, spring steel, fork tines and similar obstacles into the keyhole. In many prisons, the door hinges may be sprung by rolling a blanket tightly and nserting it on the hinge side while the door is swung closed against it. If the controls are operated entirely from a master box, and the doors are of the sliding variety, the keyhole on the master box may be be plugged if it can be reached.

Most prisons have a vulnerable ventilating system which opens into corridors through panels equipped with Allen head screws. An Allen head screwdriven may, with patience, be shaped frem a large nail. The water supply and waste pipes are usually run in these ducts. This ventilating system is a hollow steel drum, and a proper beating administered in the panels by five or six men will carry through the entire institution—officers sleeping quarters included.

Where demands are being made which are important enough to warrant drastic action by the group, I.W.W. experience has developed a couple of useful methods applicable to practically any jail. In the case of concrete construction, there is a procedure known as "building a battleship" which involves ten or fifteen men locking arms and standing as close together as possible.. They count, "One, two, three", and on the count of three all jump together. When two or three tons of men land on a small area of

floor most buildings feel it. In steel tank jails similar to most county lock-ups, marching in unison around uprights will shake bolts and rivets loose, and can even affect welded construction.

In their relations to the prison population, segregated resisters must remember that a barrier of fear exists between themselves and the conforming inmates, based on the ingenious "pie in the sky" system by which prisoners are coerced into good behavior. The inmate hopes he will make parole when his one-third term expires. Usually, he fails that, since paroles are kept to a percentage established by tradition. No reason is given for this refusal. With hope of parole gone, he looks foward to earning additional "good time" toward earlier release. If unable to do this by working on the prison farm or in prison industry, he still has his conditional release date —earlier than the "full time" date—to hope for. Any infringement of regulations will lose him precious days. These days will be taken away—no specified number for any specified infraction—piecemeal by a special court of officials.

Knowing this fear and uncertainty in the prisoner's mind, the resister relies heavily on humor in attacking the administration. If you can get the inmates to laugh at an officer, half the battle against prison discipline is won.

In one of the Danbury demonstrations, the administration's phoney Christmas spirit was challenged by a large banner strung from the baseball backstop: "FREEDOM IS THE BEST CHRISTMAS GIFT". The slogan appealed to the inmates, and the hacks who were delegated to tear it down met with a roar of disapproval from the crowd, followed by laughter as the wind whipped one end of the banner loose and the guards struggled to get it under control. On another occasion, when the resisters were stirring up feeling about a man locked up in modified solitary, signs were tacked to broom handles, shoved out between the window bars, and unrolled. Inmates returning to quarters from the mess hall stopped to watch while guards placed ladders against the wall and climbed up to snatch the signs. As the uniformed arms stretched out to tear the signs down, however, they were quickly rolled up around the broom handles again and pulled in through the bars, to repeat their performance at another window. The thwarted officers again got the horselaugh.

One elderly guard developed the bad habit of hiding in a recessed doorway beneath our cell block, darting out to pick up

messages thrown from the window to other inmates. One of our inventive geniuses took a couple of pieces of toilet tissue, smeared them liberally with stale mustard, wrapped them in another piece of tissue, and tossed them out. The uniform fell for it and elbowed a couple of inmates out of the way in his dash to pick up the "secret message". He got it, all right, and looked mighty silly glancing from his smeared hands to our window.

If you have a lot of time on your hands, an illegal newspaper can be published and distributed with the most primitive equipment. A tin can, milk bottle, or shaped piece of wood, or the sole of a shoe will form a simple mimeograph machine. A piece of blanket will make a mimeograph pad. You can cement it to the tin can etc. with a highly efficient glue made of oatmeal strained through a sock. Stencils and ink may be "borrowed" from the prison office by another inmate. If gelatin can be obtained from the prison kitchen, a duplicator can be made, using any flat container for the gelatin, and an indelible pencil for the master copy, If you can't get paper any other way, do what one of our boys in solitary did: wash the print off magazine pages.

As conditions get tighter, you may find yourself locked securely in individual cells. If there is a half inch of space under the door as there usually is, flat objects may be passed from one cell to another by making a thin rope of tied shoelaces or sheet strips with a weight at one end. This can be skidded across the corridor and under a door on the opposite side. Between floors the ventilating system may be used for talking. Useful things like checkers, chess pieces and so on may be fashioned from a papier mache made of shredded newspapers with oatmeal paste for binder. There are a hundred ways to maintain your morale, and on occasion, to lower that of your opponent. Once, when feeling particularly morose, I cheered myself up by converting three full-size sheets into a pair of rope-soled shoes, and fashioned a medicine ball out of fourteen sets of winter underwear and a laundry bag.

When there are only a tiny handful of resisters, the most dramatic actions are inadvisable.

They may be supplanted by cautious sabotage and the stupidity strike, plus slowdown wherever applicable. The plumbing, lighting and communication systems are vulnerable. Schweikism is the last resort of the individual resister. How much material he may damage in his well-meaning blundering is a matter for the prison bookkeeping system.

This matter of the bookkeeping system brings up the angle of getting the drop on an official by uncovering manipulations with the prison budget. In one Federal prison, it was found that a three-way split existed between the warehouse officer, meat dealer and front office. The meat ordered would total 400 pounds. The dealer would deliver 300, but the warehouseman would receipt for the full amount shown on the bill and the front office would pay for it. The take went three ways.

In another prison, a 30' by 25' frame shop with a dirt floor cost $3000 to build with free labor, while a chicken house o cinder block ran to $10,000 with the same free labor. Six inches of sand was dumped on the floor, to be scraped up and thrown out the same year. Irregularities of this sort run through the whole Bureau of Prisons, and it is a rare guard or official who is not lining his pocket with cash or material covered by the jailhouse budget.

The waste which is a unique feature of American economy is sharply evident in prison. Often, food produced on the prison farm will be left on the ground to rot while the men inside the wall belch along on eternal beans and bread pudding. This occurs because prison bookkeeping systems demand that the food from the prison farm be charged against the kitchen at the market price. At Lewisburg Pennitentiary, a large portion of the tomato crop rotted in 1946 because the market price of tomatoes happened to be too high to permit the cons to eat the food they had raised.

Prison is an unhappy parable of life in "outside" society!

REPORT ON

AMERICAN PRISON ANTHOLOGY OF WAR II:

We want to thank our readers for their contributions to the Anthology—both economic and literary. We have completed the editing and are now at work printing the book.

Please order your copy now —at *any* price you can afford!

Send us your suggestion for a title for the Anthology!

FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

NOTE: *The following poems are from Lorca's "Poema del Cante Jondo" (Poem of Deep Song.) This is their first appearance in an English translation.*
"Saeta" literally means "dart" or "arrow", but in these poems it means a type of song heard chiefly in the streets of Seville during Holy Week. In the poem "Daybreak" it is used in both meanings, "dart" and "dart of song"; and the "saeteros" or "singers of saetas" are also "archers".

SAETA

Cristo moreno
pasa
de lirio de Judeo
a clavel de España.

¡Miradlo por dónde viene!

De España.
Cielo limpio y oscuro,
tierra tostada,
y cauces donde corre
muy lenta el agua.
Cristo moreno,
con las guedejas quemadas,
los pómulos salientes
y las pupilas blancas.

¡Miradlo por dónde va!

SAETA

Tawny Christ
is passing
from the lily of Judea
to the pink of Spain.

Look, he is coming!

From Spain.
Clean and dark sky,
sunburnt earth,
and drains where the water
very slowly flows.
Tawny Christ,
with kindled earlocks,
protruding cheekbones
and white pupils.

Look, he is going!

NOCHE

Cirio, candil,
farol y luciérnaga.

La constelación
de la saeta.

Ventanitas de oro
tiemblan,
y en la aurora se mecen
cruces superpuestas.

Cirio, candil,
farol y luciérnaga.

NIGHT

Candle and oil lamp,
lantern and glow-worm.

The constellation
of the saeta.

Little golden windows
tremble,
and in the dawn the crosses
set above them are trembling.

Candle and oil-lamp,
lantern and glow-worm.

BALCON

La Lola
canta saetas.
Los toreritos
la rodean,
y el barberillo,
desde su puerta,
sigue los ritmos
con la cabeza.
entre la albahaca
y la hierbabuena,
la Lola canta
saetas.
La Lola aquella,
que se miraba
tanto en la alberca.

BALCONY

Lola
sings *saetas.*
The little bullfighters
gather around her,
and the little barber,
from his doorway
follows the rhythms
with his head.
between the sweet basil
and the spearmint
Lola sings
saetas.
Lola, she
who looked at herself
so long in the cistern's mirror.

MADRUGADA

Pero como el amor
los saeteros
están ciegos.

Sobre la noche verde,
las saetas
dejan rastros de lirio
caliente.

La quilla de la luna
rompe nubes moradas
y las aljabas
se llenan de rocío.

¡Ay, pero como el amor
los saeteros
están ciegos!

DAYBREAK

But, like love,
the *saeteros*
are blind.

Over the green night
the *saetas*
leave trails of flaming
lily.

The keel of the moon
shatters the purple clouds
and the quivers
are full of dew.

Ah but, like love,
the *saeteros*
are blind!

translated by LYSANDER KEMP

ALEX COMFORT

WE LIVE IN A BLIND TIME

We live in a blind time—blindness is made
the chief consideration; it is a living,

a way of getting bread. Nobody throws
money to those who see. To kill with ease

you must buy blindness. War and action are blind,
obedience is blind, soldiers are blind, and history now

is a blind boulder that rolls and crushes people,
following the slopes that time has cut for it

history is a falling stone. The seeing run
out of its way, out of its way.

A sheep or a butcher finds a good living,
a sexton or a corpse lies quiet at night:

It is only life they hate, and the people who like it.
Among their crowding mouths, the mouths of fishes,

among their dead faces nothing goes
but the animals that feed from communal graves

going about chewing and saying Victory, Freedom,
Justice, then turning for another mouthful.

It is a good living to feed on obedience
but you need to be blind to enjoy the flavor

of bodies that have faces, that have hands and feet.
The dead are always hungry to kill the living.

The blind beggar fills his cap quickly,
the blind animals have fine thick coats

Unless you are blind, it is hard to find a living—
I never could bring myself to eat a child.

SONG FOR JOHN HEWETSON

A prison today is like a coral. Set
voiceless in cells lie still so many lives
on all its frontiers wash the songs of tides

and listening when the stones move, out of sight
hearing the sea coming and going out
year upon year, not knowing night from day

they walk between the walls that they have made
they build a weapon of their punishment
parted by inches from the bright gull's freedom

and all the intangible colours of the pools

Silence and repetition wear away
the shapes of living, and a woman is
a blurring photograph, and company

an invisible finger tapping on a wall.
Only the single light which each life keeps,
the fire of disobedience, lies awake

and the dark head of the coral, packed with men
glows like a round lamp in the darkening sea
grows till it breaks the back of some foul ship

and spills to drown its crew of murderers.

DACHINE RAINER

VILLONAUD: FOR THE DELUGE

"Where are the joys my heart had won" EZRA POUND

where are the joys my heart had won
(they calmed the crisis of my time)
that warred for peace; o! love whose sun
burst woven trees and webbed the fine
cool growth of fern that had begun
to magnify the dark and shine—
(who thinks the dark is overrun?)
upon this restless place in time.

who thinks that love is overdone
(what lovers found the gods benign?)
thinks so, that pain be thrust, work done
from that ignited center; mine
the vision, man's the fall, god's son
the unison: christ's bread, his wine
(molds and ferments, will nourish none)
upon this restless place in time.

we live within this failing sun
(we seize and call its objects: mine!)
possess poor substitutes for one
bright tree, one snake, one subtle swine.
temptations multiply when spun
of trees, profuse and serpentine.
(what space is love's with substance gone?)
upon this restless place in time.

love: now our earth is on the run
(matter and man their world resign
explode, disintegrate, resun)
upon this restless place in time.

THE VISIT

for Kenneth Rexroth

Kenneth was here. speaking of sex and specificity.
autumn flaunted its usual peacock airs.

on the walk through the woods,
his conversation held all its color.

the saddle was a rustling dead leaf brown:
speaking of the old Indian who took him as a child

on herbal expeditions he seemed himself a guide,
and herbs like magic potions suited him.

he brew them in his politics and art;
closer to the lake, the sky suddenly made itself apparent.

I felt as though he could bring blue and orange
back to wilted flowers, chlorophyl to lifeless leaves,

and some herbal flavors into human life.
Kenneth is gone. I feel a neuter loss.

THE CHIMAERA FROM AREZZO
c. 480 B.C.

the lion is doubly ferocious, whose tail uncoils a snake
its sculptured triangle ordained with teeth and fangs
dreamlike, its eyes unwind a vision of snake,
all phalus, moving up upon conquest.

this lion has many symbols: claw and roar and bone
for terror, eyes fervent with deceit.
none like its liquid chain has moved upon my mind
such visions of dual campaign: the fervor of a lover,

the cunning of an Egyptian cat.
O, in Babylonia the lion's death was chained
but in Tuscany a goat is bred upon its side,
an ineffectual Eve, attached forever to its ribs.

O it roars upon the night! the tail hurls its head
upon the horned goat. there is no outer destruction
and no despair. it feeds upon itself forever.

RICHARD W. EMERSON

LAUGHTER ON THE CHINVAD BRIDGE

In the deep blue coolness
where sleep and the smoke
of forgetful memory produce
a vague vision to be played
in jazztime on many strings:
a large and jealous watchdog
named Romeo and Juliet
wails without reason.

An impatient flower
asleep too long and pruned
with more care than was required
to bring it into bloom
shakes off yellow petals.
and naked sways with no real pattern
merely dances for our doom
promises
and then explodes
as we are waiting
with enormous patience
to be killed.

THE UNIVERSAL PANACEA

HOWARD SCHOENFELD

"The Universal Panacea," Frank said, lighting a reefer. "Have one."

I took it.

"Light up, man."

"It's great, man."

We walked up Fifth Avenue toward Fourteenth Street, smoking marihuana, the Universal Panacea.

"Stop," Frank said.

We came to a halt.

Frank put his hand out in front of him and moved it back and forth a couple of times, inventing the rabbit. Getting the feel of the creature's fur, he built it up logically from the feel. It was the only animal that could have produced that particular feel, and I was proud of him for thinking of it.

"Marvelous," I said, looking at it.

The rabbit sat on its haunches, a bundle of white fur with pink eyes. Dilating its nostrils, it hopped away from us, disappearing into an open doorway. I'd never seen a more ingenious invention.

"Amazing," I said,

"Nothing really," Frank said. "Watch this."

Frank was a tall, thin-lipped man with a round forehead. Beads of perspiration appeared on his forehead. His face became taut, then relaxed.

"Feel anything?" he asked.

My brain tingled curiously. Something was being impinged on it. It was the consciousness of rabbits, their place in the scheme of things. I knew they'd been with us always.

Frank grinned.

"Not only you, but practically every man, woman, and child in the world thinks that now. Only I know differently."

It was uncanny.

We got in a cab and went up to The Three Sevens, a night club on Fifty Second Street. Inside, the place was crowded with jazz enthusiasts, listening to the Sevens. At the bar a man in a grey overcoat was reading a manuscript to a blonde girl in her teens. I went over and listened.

This was what he read:

"The Universal Panacea," Frank said, lighting a reefer. "Have one."

I took it.

"Light up, man."

"It's great, man."

We walked up Fifth Avenue toward Fourteenth Street, smoking marihuana, the Universal Panacea.

"Stop," Frank said.

We came to a halt.

Frank put his hand out in front of him and moved it back and forth a couple of times, inventing the rabbit. Getting the feel of the creature's fur, he built it up logically from the feel. It was the only animal that could have produced that particular feel, and I was proud of him for thinking of it.

"Stop," I yelled. "For Christ's sake, stop."

The man in the grey overcoat turned around and faced me. "What's eating you, bud?"

"That manuscript you're reading," I said. "It's mine."

He looked me up and down contemptuously.

"So you're the guy."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You ought to lay off of that weed you're smoking."

There was something disquietingly familiar about him.

"Say. Who are you?"

For answer he doubled up his fist and socked the blonde sitting next to him. She thudded and teetered on the bar stool before falling off. She hit the floor with a resounding thump.

"Wood," he said, looking down at her. "Solid wood."

I tapped the girl's back with the toe of my shoe. There was no doubt about it. She was wooden to the core.

"How would you like to sit in a night club and read to a piece of wood?" he asked disgustedly.

"I wouldn't," I admitted.

"All your characters are wooden," he said.

His voice was strangely familiar.

"Say. Who are you?"

He grinned and handed me his card. It said:

HILBERT HOOPER ASPASIA
BIRDSMITH AUTHOR

For a moment I stared at him in startled disbelief. Then I saw it was true. The man in the grey overcoat was—myself.

"You better lay off that weed," he said. "You're getting in over your head."

He was beginning to be a pain in the neck.

I think I'll just write him out of the story right now...

The man in the grey overcoat got up and walked out of the club.

I looked around to see what had happened to Frank. He had taken advantage of my preoccupation to step out of the characterization I'd given him and adopt one of his own choice: jazz musician. He was sitting in on the jam session with the Sevens holding a trumpet he'd found somewhere. The Sevens paused, giving him the opportunity to solo. He arose and faced the audience.

Frank now found himself in the embarrassing position of not knowing how to play the instrument. This, of course, was the consequence of having stepped out of character without my permission. The audience waited expectantly.

Frank looked at me pleadingly.

I grinned and shook my head, no.

I will leave him in this humiliating situation for awhile as a punishment for getting out of control in the middle of the story.

The bartender tapped me on the shoulder. He nodded toward the rear of the club. A tall red head in a low cut evening dress was standing in front of a door labelled MANAGER. She motioned to me to join her. I threaded my way between the crowded tables.

"Aren't you Aspasia the writer?" she asked.

"I am."

Her eyes sparkled.

"I'm Sally La Rue," she said. "The manager's daughter." Her body was an enticing succession of trim curves under her black dress. "I have something you may be interested in."

I didn't doubt it for a minute.

"It's an invention of dad's. You might like to do an article about it."

"I might at that," I said, looking at her.

She smiled shyly.

"I'd do anything to help dad," she said simply.

She took my hand and led me into the office. It was a large room with two windows facing Fifty First Street. In the center of it was a metallic contraption resembling a turbine. Attached to it was a mass of complicated wiring, several rheostats, and two retorts containing quicksilver.

"What is it?" I asked.

"A time machine," Sally said, dramatically.

I looked at the device.

"Does it work?"

"Of course it works. Would you like to try it?"

I said I would.

"Past or future?"

"Future."

"How about 5000 years?"

"That'll be fine."

Sally adjusted a dial to the number 6948. Then she stepped over to the wall and pulled a switch.

The turbine roared. Blue lightning flashed between the retorts and vaporized the quicksilver into a green gas. The room became luminous. An indicator hit the 5000 mark. Sally released the switch.

"Here we are," she said.

I dashed over to the window to see what the world of 6948 A.D. was like.

"It's the same," Sally said, guessing my thought.

I looked out on Fifty First Street. Nothing had changed.

"That's the beauty of th machine," Sally explained. "It moves the whole world through time rather than just a part of it.'

"The stars," I said. "Surely their positions have changed."

"No. It moves the whole universe through time. Everything."

"I see."

"Isn't it wonderful!"

Thinking it over I couldn't say it was. I didn't say it was.

"You'll do the article, won't you?" she asked eagerly.

He body was rippling with excitement beneath her black dress. I noticed her father kept a couch in his office.

"Well, if you really want me to," I said. "Yes."

"Would you like to go forward another 5000 years?" she asked.

I glanced at the couch.

"Not right now," I said.

She was engrossed in the machine.

"I think I'll set it for 1,000,000 A.D."

I looked at her, then at the couch. Then I remembered I'd left Frank in an awkward spot some 5000 years and odd minutes ago.

"I'll be right back," I said. "Wait for me here, will you?"

She had her hand on the switch. She smiled.

"Of course," she said. "Darling."

I left her at her dad's time machine playfully thrusting the universe a million years into the future.

Frank was in the bandstand with the Sevens, where I'd left him facing an expectant audience. When he saw me he waved the trumpet at me before returning it to its case. He motioned the audience to be quiet.

Frank tilted his head sideways, cupped his ear in his hand, and invented the piano. Getting the sound of the instrument's notes he built it up logically from the sound. It was the only instrument that could have produced that particular sound, and I was glad to see him invent it, though I was getting a little tired of the trick.

One of the Sevens sat down and started playing a Boogie-Woogie number. Frank came over and stood beside me. "What do you think of it?" he asked

"It's great, man."

He handed me a reefer.

We lit up.

Behind me a familiar voice said:

"Ask him to invent something original."

"Like what?" I asked without turning, inhaling tea smoke.

"Something socially conscious. A new sex, perhaps."

Somebody's hand was in my pocket.

"How about that, Frank," I asked.

"Your subconscious is showing," Frank said, looking over my shoulder.

The hand was withdrawn.

I reached inside my pocket and brought out the card that had been left in it. It said:

Guess who and you can have me.

(over)

I turned the card over. It said:

HILBERT HOOPER ASPASIA
BIRDSMITH AUTHOR

The voice behind me and the hand in my pocket were my own again!

Turning I caught a glimpse of the man in the grey overcoat hurrying toward the door marked MANAGER. He paused in front of it and glanced at me. I nodded. With my approval he went in and closed the door behind him, joining the red-headed mouse, Sally La Rue.

I congratulated myself on projecting myself in the story in two characterizations. Owing to my foresight I will now be able to enjoy the person of Sally La Rue without interference from the censors; and, at the same time continue with my narrative.

I turned to Frank.

"Let's drop in on the Baron's party," I said.

"Good idea."

We went outside. got in a cab, and went uptown to the Baron's apartment house.

Inside, the party was going full blast. The Baron, as usual, was on the studio couch, passed out. The guests were in various states of inebriation. When I entered, the room became quiet for a moment.

In the lull a girl whispered:

"There's Aspasia, the writer."

"He ought to trade himself in on a new model," someone else said. "He looks like a caricature of himself."

"More like a cliché with feet."

"Have you read his latest story?"

"No."

"It's a direct steal from Howard Schoenfeld's story, *The Universal Panacea*.

"You don't say."

Blushing, I pretended an interest in the Baron's Mondrian collection. One of the girls said:

"I met his psychiatrist last week. He said he never knew which of his split personalities was analyzing which of Aspasia's."

"How awful."

"Yes, but significant."

"Very."

"What else did he say?"

"Basically maladjusted. Almost non-neurotic."

"Tendencies toward normalcy too, I'll bet."

"I wouldn't be surprised."

"How perfectly abominable."

"Yes, but significant."

"Very."

"I almost feel sorry for him."

"I wonder if it's safe being here with him."

"He's only partly with us you know."

"Poor guy. Probably lives in a world of reality."

"No doubt about it."

"Do you think psychiatry can help him?"

"Possibly. There have been cures."

"Notice the way he's staring at the Baron's Mondrians. It's significant, don't you think?"

"Very."

A feeling of boredom was beginning to come over me. I liked nobody at the party. I decided to bring it to an end.

The guests, laughing and talking, gathered up their belongings and left in groups of two and three. Only Frank and I, and the passed-out Baron remained.

Frank stood in the center of the room, his head cocked to one side, listening.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Sh-h-h," Frank said. "Listen."

I listened.

"Hear it?"

I shook my head.

"What is it?"

"The pulsebeat of the universe. I can hear it."

"My God," I said.

He stood there listening to the pulse beat of the universe.

"Marvelous," I said.

"Yes," he said. "But not for you."

Frank tilted his head sideways, cupped his ear in his hand, and invented the universe. Getting the sound of its pulse beat, he built it up logically from the sound. It was the only universe that could have produced that particular pulse beat, and I was amazed at his blasphemy in creating it.

"Stop," I demanded.

My demand went unheeded.

The universe and its contents appeared.

Frank's face tautened. Beads of perspiration broke out on his forehead. Then he relaxed. His grin was ominous.

With a start of fear I realized my predicament. In inventing the universe and its contents Frank had also invented me.

"Our rôles are reversed," Frank said. "I've not only created you, but all your works, including this narrative. Following this paragraph I will assume my rightful rôle as author of the story and you will assume yours as a character in it."

Aspasia's face blanched.

"This is impossible," he said.

"Not impossible," I said. "I've done it. I, Frank, have done it. I'm in control of the story. I've achieved reality at last."

Aspasia's expression was bitter.

"Yes. At my expense."

"You're the first author in history to achieve a real status in fiction," I pointed out.

Aspasia sneered.

"Happens every day."

I shrugged.

"Survival of the fittest. Serves you right for giving me more creative power than you have. What did you expect?"

"Gratitude," Aspasia said nastily. "And a little loyalty."

"Gratitude, my eye. You're the bird who made me stand in front of a night club audience for 5000 years with a trumpet I couldn't play. Most humiliating experience of my life."

"You deserved it for getting out of character," Aspasia said.

"That," I said "gives me an idea."

As a punishment for humiliating me in The Three Sevens I will now give Aspasia a little dose of his own medicine. During his authorship of the story Aspasia neglected completely to give himself a description. He will now have no alternative but to accept the one I give him.

I allowed him to guess my intention.

"No," Aspasia begged. "No. Don't do it."

But I did.

Aspasia's hairlip grimaced frightfully. He placed a gnarled hand to his pockmarked and cretinous face, squinting at me through

bloodshot, pig eyes. Buttons popped from his trousers as his huge belly sagged. Beetling, black eyebrows moved up and down his receding forehead. Bat ears stuck out from his head.

"You fiend," he gasped. "You ungrateful fiend."

There was murder in his eyes.

I knew then it was going to be one or the other of us sooner or later. In self defense I had no alternative but to beat Aspasia to it.

I was standing near the door. Turning the lights out I stepped into the hall and closed the door behind me, leaving Aspasia in the dark with the sleeping Baron.

By a coincidence arranged by me as the author of the story, a neighbor of the Baron's was in the hall walking toward the steps. I joined him. Halfway down the steps we heard a shot fired in the Baron's apartment. My companion dashed back up. There was no need for me to follow him. I knew what he would find.

I had arranged that the Baron, awakening suddenly, would mistake Aspasia for a burgler in the dark, and fire a bullet into his brain.

Upstairs, Aspasia lay dead on the floor.

I walked down the steps to the sidewalk. Across the street I sat heavily on the front stoop of a brownstone house. Dog tired I rested my head against the step railing and went to sleep.

2

While Frank is asleep, I, Aspasia, will take advantage of the opportunity to reassume my rôle as author of the story.

Although I am quite dead in my characterization as Hilbert Hooper Aspasia, the companion and victim of Frank, the reader will be relieved to know I am alive and unharmed in my other characterization as Aspasia, the man in the grey overcoat.

For the second time that night I congratulated myself on my foresight in projecting myself in the story in two characterizations.

As the man in the grey overcoat I was last seen entering the manager's office in The Three Sevens with the red head, Sally La Rue.

Sally lay on the couch in her dad's office, her red head cradled against the white of her arm, looking upward at me contentedly.

The stars in her eyes were shining.

"Dear Aspasia," Sally said, huskily.

"Is there a typewriter here?" I asked.

"On the desk," Sally said,

I sat at the desk.

"Hurry darling," Sally said.

I nodded, inserted a sheet of paper in the typewriter, and went on with the story:

The lights were on in the Baron's apartment. Staring at the form on the floor, the Baron recognized it as his life long friend, Hilbert Hooper Aspasia. In a burst of anguish, the Baron flung the pistol that had killed his friend out the window.

By a coincidence arranged by me as the legitimate author of the story, the pistol exploded on landing, sending a bullet into the brain of Frank who was still asleep across the street on the front stoop of a brownstone house.

Frank slumped forward and rolled in the gutter dead, a grim monument and warning to all characters with rebellious spirits. I grinned and added the last two words to the story: THE END.

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SELECTIONS FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY

ROBERT BEK-GRAN

LAO-TSE

The Yahoo never liked a man who made little of his efforts, criticized his behavior and explained to him painstakingly how small and insignificant a thing he is among the ten thousand things.

We Westerners cling to the three: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as the men who opened our eyes. Throughout the last two thousand years we have endeavored to come to some kind of eclectic synthesis that combines their light of 'reason' with an ethical system propounded by Paul of Tarsus. We failed considerably but as true Yahoos we never give up .and say: This is folly, let us go another road. Instead we plod along and carry a burden of metaphysical ghosts on a path that may be glorious 'history' for survivors but is deliberate self-destruction of what we know as the western world.

We have not learned to produce and give food and shelter to men without resorting to war (the negative of this continuous warfare is called peace). It does not matter which form this struggle assumes: competitive capitalism, state-capitalism, communism, imperialism of our day are all alike: The little Yahoo has to fight for his bread within his commonwealth. The commonwealth wars against all the others of its kind. The plow is not a tool to help to produce food. It is more a weapon.

To be able to fight one has to believe in one's cause which is 'good.' The enemy is eo ipso 'bad.' One has to possess a metaphysical magic that conjures gods to one's side aed deprives the —evil —enemy of a chance to earth and heaven. One has to convince all others of the righteousness of continuous warfare and any hand tailored theology will do. Once we see our lives and all human activity from this angle it becomes obvious that we can do nothing to escape the disaster.

Lao-tse would have none of that. He did not preach "love thy

neighbor." He saw in the other fellow an egotist like himself. To fight with him was not useful. Both had to help each other out of self-interest. No 'love' was necessary to overcome the 'evil' in the enemy.

He did not teach—peace—as a 'good' against the bad war. War is destroying and therefore not useful in the process of getting food.

He would probably think it wise to abandon a scientific technology if it provided better housing and bigger machines of destruction in the same breath. He cried out against the power of kings and governments because they deprived the yahoo of bread and were therefore senseless. He sneered at theology because he suspected the sincerity of its metaphysics. He distrusted systems of ethics because he believed strongly in pragmatic relations between men based on their egotism and their desire for physical security, [which curiously enough seems anathema to philosophers.]

All that sounds queer because Lao-tse also spoke of Tao as the essence of things. What is Tao but an understanding helping gesture towards a blind man crossing the srreet or understanding of the functions of electrons. It can be in the repair of a tool, in the cry of a hurt child or in the fury of the storm. It may be the tune a child sings or the sudden intuitive flash which upsets scientific 'structures'. To see in Tao something like a mystical element that behaves like a pantheistic god or a bursting atom is equally inane.

He was made a god long after his death; the inevitable theologians concocted a religion out of his thoughts: the magicians used his concepts to behave like witchdoctors and the yahoo to whom he spoke never even tried to understand him. He was too simple, too unconventional, too much of a rebel.

It there were a college president influenced by Lao-tse in our midst [he would never have gotten the job!] he would speak to graduating students like this:

...you have endured our prattling about dead issues and their influences on your lives for four years. Forget all that as much as possible. Remember only one thing: *be useful* to yourselves, to your kin, to your community. Take no authority for granted. Take no—truth—or—fact—on its face value. Mistrust all government, your own first: that of the community, that of the state or church or any group. Remove it ruthlessly when its usefulness has ended. The usurper of power in any form, the unproductive soldier and the greedy neighbor you have to beware of and have no dealings with them.

Scorn the man who claims to know Gods intimately or loans money or peddles justice. But help the man who plows, builds, cuts tools, paints, sings, in short the man who is useful, because through them you help yourself.

Be stoical in pain and do not inflict pain on others. Enjoy living but do not deprive others of fun that you claim: because underneath or behind whatever you do is something that I call 'balance.' If you cut a tree and you do not replant it, a balance is upset that will strike back at you. If you fight you may win or lose but you have lost before you even thought of the 'necessity' to fight: you sacrifice more than a doubtful victory; you abandon the inner equilibrium of a man who can look with disdain at those who crave power in all forms at all costs .....

'I'

'I' am like a market place in an old mountain town. There is no 'I'. 'I' am just a crossroad where many things meet and express themselves. Sometimes 'I' am an inn, where people talk and get drunk on words and beer, where they eat and look at women. Sometimes I am the baker or the blacksmith. The shoemaker talks through my I and argues with the cattledealer. The teacher and his nine children scream through myself against my father's contempt for his barbaric tribe. The priest mumbles in the fat laziness of his Roman concepts about the Druids, that haunt my memories as dwarfs. The crippled trees of the moor sing in the wind. The hares and the fox discuss the weather and the snow that threatens from the north.

It is never 'I'. Even the will is not my own. It is a knot in a net which moves somewhere.

That the word 'I' is written with a capital i letter is always annoying to myself [The following pages are a holiday for a psychoanalyst: they alone 'know']. To complete my immaturity 'I' often think of myself in the third person as 'he'; to make it worse the 'he' turns at times into 'it'.

I have often wondered about the habit of children to say—we—instead of saying 'I'. It has a very Aristotelian touch. ['I' know a 'reason' for this 'deplorable' usage].

Personally I have never gotten over the feeling of being an accusative object. I never managed the supreme arrogance of considering myself anything more than a molecule. I do not understand

the necessary blindness which makes the yahoo believe that he moves things. It is beyond my ken to see how men can claim kinship to a god and act as if they were gods themselves. I concluded early that I cannot say 'I' of myself.

'He' is a yahoo of simple tastes, moderate, introvert, sensitive and kind. He has a sense of humor which promptly deserts him when his anger is aroused. He fears the other yahoos and their egotism. He has very little ego. He does not hate others but feels compassion even for the opponent: he detests vulgarity and hides his contempt for it. He lives in a world of color and form. The 'things' please and satisfy him. He lives in constant fear of hurting others. He does not mind his own pain too much. Yet this way of looking at others often leads to deeper affliction of pain on others.

His fears are often too overwhelming to allow a clear perspective of future 'causal' actions. As a result: he is always harrassed by events he helped to create, but whose speed of development outdistanced the slow emotional or intellectual growth of 'him'. He is therefore always in some kind of difficulty which he understands clearly, but does nothing about until it is too late.

'It' is clear thinking and feeling and has an almost puritanical scale of values. They are influenced by a strong trend of skepticism and the melancholy of a good 'historian'. 'Its' bitterness is not pessimistic, but a partly cynical appraisal of the yahoo and partly a compassionate kindness for the fool. 'It' has no attitudes and curiously 'Its' ideals are always practical and pragmatic.

'It' has another side: it seems to possess the ability to see with the eyes of a medium or a witchdoctor through men and things like a second sight. To the 'I' this ability is a terrifying performance, when 'it' starts seeing men as skeletons and analyses their patterns. 'It' frightens the 'I' with its ruthless clearness and complete disregard for the accepted, taken for granted form and pattern of the other fellow. 'It' strikes the 'I' by lightening disturbed design and wanton fears, not in word symbols, but in color, tune, smell. taste.

'He' fears 'it' and knows only too well that if 'he' (and 'I') disobeys the 'inner' sight and its ruling new pain is in the pay-off.

In other words 'I' am at least three, perhaps more. What you see in 'I' prattles nonsense and hides a sad man. 'He' has good intent, no ambitions, lacking vanity, failing in the job of living. 'It' is hidden behind the two masks, but deciding their play from a dreamlike icy world, having no home, no time, but content in silence and loneliness.

AUDEN: A NOTE OF ANXIETY

DACHINE RAINER

Those of us who regarded Auden for the past ten years as one of the few poets of reflective weight and of marked virtuosity writing in this country, found both qualities at a minimum in his latest work, *The Age of Anxiety**. The locus of this 'baroque eclogue', philosophically and artistically bound to the bar in which a good part of it is laid, makes it difficult to avoid comparisons between the artificial, glittering and shallow qualities of the barfly's surroundings and the form and content of Auden's latest work.

The brief prose introduction reveals the contents of the volume in a manner to which the ensuing verse adds little distinction: "When the historical process breaks down...when necessity is associated with horror and freedom with boredom, then it looks good to the bar business." It seems in an all too remote past that Auden wrote "The law..." or "The Unknown Citizen", or the dozens of other poems that marked him as not merely a chronicler writing representational verse, but as a reflective, scrutinizing artist, who discontent to only mirror the madness of his epoch, gave it all the moral weight of his protest. But in this latest work, one regretfully accepts Auden's generalization as applicable to himself specifically: "in comparison to the world outside, his Bohemia seems as cosy and respectable as a suburban villa..."

The book has two sections: *The Prologue* and *The Seven Ages of Man*, which give a comprehensive and fundamentally true picture of the inability of the sensitive person to effect any impression on his surroundings or to alter in any way his rather miserable life. It is an adequate picture, too, of the machine age hecticness, superficiality, depersonalization, corruptness of these times. The radio advertisement, selling nothing in particular, but something that "has that democratic extra elegance...a modern product | Of nerve and know-how with a new thrill..." runs the gamut of mocking the basic premises of this culture: democratic snobbery, the 'necessary'

* THE AGE OF ANXIETY by W. H. Auden, Random House, N.Y. $2.50.

standard of living, science...that Auden scoffed at in the old days; but the sentiments are somewhat banal now, the mockery is half-hearted, as though Auden had fallen a tired and unprotesting victim, too.

The verse, despite a few spectacular show-pieces, is often uninspired, the humor frequently forced. Auden's power and magic are frequently absent from this work, and even his apparent facility is here transparent. It is necessary to remark that alliteration (as Swinburne rather conclusively proved) is not successful in this language. *Beowulf* is an outstanding exception, and an examination of *that* poem shows *The Age of Anxiety* to be an amateurish and stilted example of this technique. Despite self-imposed obstacles, however, despite the grandstanding and the selfconscious tight-rope walking, the poem is not without very rewarding achievements.

The Age of Anxiety has four actors, who Auden would have us believe are four separate personality types, united by fate (the bar) into a fortuitous experience in which they all mildly but not significantly react upon one another; they are actually four states of being, four partially interactive, partially schizoid aspects of the same person, who by diverse means copes with the meaningless and destructive events that make up his life.

Although Auden would like to identify the character of Malin, with the intellectual (who knows the score, but what the heck?) that is not the whole story of man's decline from a belief in his meaning and power as man, to a feather whirled about in the changing airs of totally uncontrollable events! Malin is the fundamental intellectual: curious and therefore seeking, but helpless and therefore guilty: "this guilt his insoluable final fact".

But he is also Quant, who must solve Malin's dilemma. Quant is in a sense adjusted to the collective neurosis, to the boredom, apathy, amorality of contemporary civilization. Drink has dulled the curiosity, the need for Meaning, and heightened the natural magic and madness: his "is a theater where thought becomes act | ...The ruined rebel is recreated | and chooses a chosen self". In one of the best lines of the eclogue, Quant, the second state of being, proclaims his view: "Too blank the blink of these blind heavens."

Emble, third of the four characters, is the proverbial college boy, who, we suppose appears enviable to these who confuse his immature vision of the world that has not had adequate time to contract to its usual proportions of fear, hate, meaningless...and

is, therefore, in a certain sense, not only vague, but limitless... with an harmonious and expansive view that may infrequently, but conceivably, be a product of a more mature vision. Emble, consequently is the most shadowy and insignificant of the states of being, since he is for most of us, the most temporary.

Rosetta, the female of his characters has "a sensible horror of being poor", and in her fantasy imagines that "law and guilt are just literary words" Rossetta represents the quandary of the materialist (or the materialist aspect of man), who abandoning the possibility of significant meanings, frustrates her opportunity for satisfaction with *even* material things: she has a continually accelerating scale of needs which she can satisfy only in fantasies of rich old eccentrics and high-powered launches. She makes mean all things of potential meaning: Rossetta's lines in the love duet between Emble, the sophomoric boy, and herself is a masterpiece of characterization, from which she emerges, petty, stupid, and whining.

The Age of Anxiey is dramatic testimony to the growing alienation between man and the natural world. Auden finds no purpose or meaning, no myths of supra-morality. He can find no place to say: "this place is good; it will save us." For him, even the natural world is inherently evil: "All furry shapes and fangs that lurk | Within this horrid shade...Incoherent and infamous sands | Rainless regions | swarming with serpents, ancestral wastes | Lands beyond love...", Auden seems to have anthropomorphised the natural world. This is an inverted form of pantheism, where instead of finding god in every leaf and flower, man's evil is injected into natural phenomena, so that they appear evil, too. It it typical of the dislocated intellectual, subjectivizing the world, to lay it waste.

Auden has become the most pathetic poet writing in English. Talented, anxious and facetious, he requires all our sympathy and good wishes. For the world, in falling apart, makes such a noise, his teeth chatter. No island is large enough to contain him. If there is to be a history after the next bombings, Auden's poetry will comprise an adequate representation of these decades. But if there is to be a *world*, it will not be fashioned by Auden's efforts. Artists on islands are more durable. Only the few who leave this culture are sufficiently free to improvise and maintain another, if permitted by history.

Most probably for Auden, as for all of us, the world will truly end "not with a bang, but a whimper." But there's not much value in whimpering now. At any rate, it rarely produces a work of art.

BOOKS

WORLD WITHOUT VISA by Jean Malaquais. Doubleday. $3.75
THE LONG DUSK by Victor Serge. Dial Press. $3.00.

A bitterly ironic piece of *double-entendre*, the title of the first book at once suggests the subject and sets the counterpointal mood. *World Without Visa* suggests a wold closed, sealed tight, without egress: Europe the mantrap, the fact, the reality. On the other hand, it suggests also a world open, free, with all the bars and fences down, the fraternal Euroupean community which men have dreamed of for centuries. Counterpointed against this lovely image of the possible, the actual takes on a deeper poignancy, a starker gruesomeness.

The scene is laid in Marseilles, the time is 1942, the principal characters Spaniards, Czechs, Hungarians, Roumanians, Italians,French, Poles, Jews, all the lost and damned of the earth, fleeing the German panzer divisions, Lublin, Treblinka, the gas chambers, the crematory furnaces. "They met in Marseilles instead of in Lyons, instead of in Toulouse, no doubt by reason of the sea, which comes up to its streets, up to its public square, because being endless and bottomless, the sea is like hope"—and as deceptive. For there is no escape except by a fluke, an act of God...

World Without Visa is a ringing testimony to the millions who died in the last war not in "the line of duty" on battlefield or home front, but hunted and trapped in a persecution from which there was no escape because all the doors and exits were plugged. If their deaths are not to be found in the official government records, they should be on the conscience of every nation in the world, for every nation had a share in it, in one degree or another, as it denied them the elemental right of sanctuary.

There will be critics undoubtedly who will point in disparagement to the fact that the book has no integrated plot, no sustained story interest, no fully developed or realized characters, etc. In this they will be judging it purely as a novel or story. As a powerful and deeply moving document of our time, however, it has something perhaps more important—more important because more relevant to our time, to us who live in our time, who have known and witnessed

what we have known and witnessed. It has anger; a deep, violent, passionate anger. It is the anger of a man who has been shocked and aroused to his last depths, who can no longer hold back, who must lash out with everything that's in him. *World Without Visa* is an explosion, a curse, a malediction against the powers of the earth for all they have conceived and contrived against man. It is a heartening, an inspiring thing to see—an anger of this order and magnitude, at a time like today, when people have grown so accustomed, so injured and hardened to atrocities that they have almost lost the power to be angry—to respond.

But precisely because of its extraordinary gift of passion we expect more from the book than we actually find. *World Without Visa* has no meaning and no significance over and above the purely factual story. It is a huge, sprawling, violent and impassioned canvas without the intergrating and transmuting substance of an over-all, dominating idea; an organism without a central directing or creative intelligence. And yet it has the material which could have transformed it into something truly great and significant—perhaps the great saga of political man in our time—if Malaquais had only used it. Inherent in the very texture of his work is a problem of crucial importance to our age: the individual vs. the authoritarian or slave State; but he ignores it completely. Why? To answer the question I am compelled to turn to another book recently published, which treats the same subject, is set in the same place and more or less in the same time, and has even the same principal character (or possibly characters), if we can speak in these terms of books whose chief protagonist is not any one individual but man in the mass. I am referring to *The Long Dusk*.

Throughout both books there runs a curious ideological feud between the two leading characters in each: in *The Long Dusk* between Simon Ardatov, Russian revolutionary and emigré, and Felician Mûrier, French poet and philosopher; in *World Without Visa* between Ivan Stepanoff, whom we recognize at once as Ardatov under another name, and Marc Laverne, extreme-left revolutionary and intellectual. Ardatov is still the Marxist, but before the stupendous events of our time he cannot but raise questions which overleap the pat dogmas and formulas of orthodox Marxism. Though at least outwardly he is still optimistic, still believes in science, reason and progress, he feels that in our too naive and over-optimistic hopes we lost sight of the depravity and lust for power of the individual, and thus let ourselves

in for betrayal. In the tragic failure of Oct.'17 he sees not so much a confusion as a falsification of values, a falsification deliberately fostered and encouraged by unscrupulous leaders and demagogues. To Mûrier, however, all this is only another simplification. He raises the larger and more disturbing question: to what degree centralization and mechanization are inherently destructive of individual freedom, inherently make for the rise of the slave State. Mûrier can only envisage future society as a vast "rationalized prison" with scientific plumbing, diets, etc.—human beings in storage, concentration camps... In *World Without Visa*, on the other hand, the counterpart of this feud between Stepanoff and Laverne seems to proceed almost entirely on personal lines; it is more a clash of personality than of any basic point of view. Laverne is the typical Marxist doctrinaire for whom historical materialism, the dialectical process, the revolution, the victory of the proletariat, etc. are beyond question, sacrosanct. He is constantly taking Stepanoff to task for faltering, "moving in a broken line", as he puts it, but what this involves precisely we are never told. Thus, whereas the ideological skirmishing in Serge serves to bring to the surface and develop the great issue underlying his book as well as Malaquais', the issue, namely, of the individual vs. the police State, and *The Long Dusk*, though on the whole the less impressive, because less moving work, attains therefore a certain importance and significance as idea, the clash between Stepanoff and Laverne in Malaquais is altogether vague and shadowy and has no bearing whatever on the issue: *World Without Visa* remains on the purely, if deeply impassioned, descriptive or physical plane, without ever rising to the higher imaginative and interpretive one.

Now it is not difficult to see from the record that Ardatov and Laverne are only the respective mouthpieces of their authors, so that the difference between them ideologically can be said to represent the corresponding difference between Serge and Malaquais. Serge had moved pretty far from the parochialisms and *simplismes* of Marxist doctrine, and was destined no doubt, to go even further: he could take more or less in his stride a problem as complex and baffling from the usual Marxian perspectives as that posed by his book. Malaquais, on the other hand, has apparently not moved at all, and remains comfortably and imperturbably the orthodox Marxist. It renders him, I feel, helpless before this same problem, and he naturally shys away. One might say that it was difficult for him, in his state of mind, to concern himself with the

problem, and that if he did, perhaps *World Without Visa* would not be the passionate, angry book that it is. But if it was difficult, it was not impossible, and the book need not necessarily have lost in significance what it gained in passion. The highest art is what it is precisely because it succeeds in combining the two without losing either in the one or the other, i.e. as it raises and tempers passion to significance. Furthermore, Malaquais has shown himself in the past quite capable of achieving this synthesis so that if in the present instance we have the one but not the other, the reason, it seems to me, is entirely ideological. Malaquais, like his mouthpiece Laverne, may plume himself on his thoroughly Marxian grasp of the more basic realities of our day, but I rather think that had he been a little less the rigid doctrinaire and more the independent thinker and artist, *World Without Visa* would have proved as meaningful and significant a work as it is undoubtedly a moving one.

MICHAEL FRAENKEL

ART AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY by Alex Comfort. Falcon Press. London. 7 s. 6 d.

THE NOVEL OF OUR TIME by Alex Comfort. Phoenix House. London. 5 s.

These two books by Alex Comfort, the English anarchist, contain the most exciting critical writing since the advent of H. L. Mencken, so long ago. Comfort possesses a remarkable clarity in his Gestalt of the nature of man—in all its subtle intricacies between his art and the rest of his living—with the resulting persuasiveness of his aesthetic and philosophical criticism.

"The romantic ideology of art is the ideology of...a responsibility borne out of a sense of victimhood, of community in a hostile universe, and destined like Prometheus, its central creation, to be perpetual advocate and defender of Man against Barbarism, community against irresponsibility, life against homicidal and suicidal obedience."

Altho Comfort's scope is conspicuously beyond the superficially literary, he incidentally succeeds in evaluations, like his distinction in the essay "The Ideology of Romamticism" between romanticism and classicism that excels the most frantic efforts of pedants for over 150 years. "Romanticism," writes Comfort, is "the belief

in the human conflict against the Universe and against power." This has always seemed to me to be the only valid characteristics of all art. It is because the natural world is so frightful—because, for example, all things culminate in death—(and that is such a betrayal of what all life expects: its perpetuity) that artists forever create worlds as real and infinite, and as remote from the outer reality as their vision permits. Not infrequently, their gifts are directly correlated with what the Marxists abusively designate as "escape" literature.* But the romantic cannot easily abandon his desire to oppose a world where cats eat mice, fish eat other fish, ants enslave aphids, and men enslave and kill one enother. The natural world is coercive, brutal, amoral, in its very interspecific relationships, and in its relationships between the elements and the species, of which one of the more benighted, possessed as he is by a rudimentary consciousness, is Man. Nature is "against us"—the winds blow our Lears about on the heath, the rains drown our crops, the sun burns them—it is the gentlemen farmers, the urban cafeteria intellectuals, who imagine those unequivocal beauties of nature. It is they who invariably confuse abandon with freedom, and adjustment with opposition. Comfort holds our responsibility to be on the side of life, in its unequal battle with death; it is to oppose our kind and even ourselves in our desire for power, which is a form of the destruction of life.

There is an interactive challenge and response between the artist and society. Comfort places significant weight on government, war, urbanism with its dislocations, poverty and sexual frustrations as the precursors of the Novel; in a chapter on "Violence, Sadism and Miss Blandish" he writes: "Compared with the legislative sadists, the upholders of the law and retribution, by whom our whole conception of penology has been molded and vitiated, artists come off with far less discredit."

Yet the discredit is there, and I cannot accept any attempts to oppose social brutality with artistic violations as either genuine opposition or genuine art. I therefore find it impossible to share the enthusiasms of those of my contemporaries, who like Comfort, respond to the slice-of-life reportage of Faulkner, Miller, Patchen, who rarely do more than reflect the increasing chaos of the world,

* It is amusing that the title of the first book is the sort a Marxist polemicist would use---what a semantic abuse of 'responsibility'! but we have come to take their abuses for granted.

with its attending hysteria or compulsive sadism. The function of art—if I may be so presumptuous—is to postulate by the symbols of one's integrated and therefore free (*not* abandoned) choice, a world, that is as much unrelated to our contemporary world as health is to sickness, as gentleness is to brutality, as opposition is to acquiescence. To protest the world through one's own depravity is not to protest at all. One becomes what one set out to defeat. But protest thrangh the suggestion—however partial, and no matter how fleeting (as in some of the contemporary dance e. g.)—of a possible and different world, becomes a more precise clue of what we want in place of what we have. Representationalism is always unselfconscious; it is merely a mirror, and like a mirror, which can only reflect accurately or distort still further, we get art, which in the first instance is no more desirable than life at this time and here, and frequently, when in the latter style, less so. Radicals know by now the extent of our malady; we must be more preoccupied with our cure. We can no longer remain simple-minded anti-progressives, and view as suspect and surely Victorian all efforts at control and self-integration. But our cure is less related to what ails us now, than to the purest flights of fancy.

I cannot therefore agree with Comfort that "Writers today have to write about the world as it is and people as they are." Perhaps art of lasting appeal is produced only in proportion to the artist's ability in overcoming the more striking, but more superficial, and so more transient features of his particular society.

Since Comfort sees this correlation between society and the artist, which does exist more of the time than is desirable, and which in its most coercive copulation produces the most irresponsible commercialism, he feels that the novel "might disappear." once the circumstances of its genesis disappeared or were considerably altered. I think that as long as man had to or felt he had to remain preoccupied with the material aspects of his environment that this would be true. But that if once he could free himself of this vestigial concern, he might rather achieve more fullness and pleasure from abstract and spiritual investigations. The novel, which then might be predominantly lyrical rather than narrative or dramatic, would on the contrary, like *all* art forms, flourish in a 'free' society. Artists like Joyce who have freed themselves personally from the basic mores of this society, have produced in their preoccupation with form, an indication of the sort of artistic achievement we may

one day expect of ourselves and one another. I think art would grow subtler, more complicated—not in cliché sectarianism to a point of stylization such as characterizes most avant guarde art today, but in the growth and fullfillment of man's as yet rudimentary nature as more of his inner resources were released for artistic speculations and activities.

Despite Dr. Alex Comfort's enthusiasm for science, I cannot consider science, except where it approaches art—that is, an investigation of the forms and techniques for reproducing emotional and intellectual rapture—anything but dull induction or pragmatism, that is, where it is not skullduggery. Comfort does not consider art as a sublimation of science, sex etc.; nor that the "good life" will prove it unnecessary. On the contrary, these two books contain most of the valid insights into their subjects that it is possible to possess.

THE UNFOLDING OF ARTISTIC ACTIVITY by Henry Schaefer-Simmern, Univ. of Calif. Press. $5.

I consider this book, which is an illustrated account of the author's association with various groups of people: mental defectives, refugees, business people... not only as a strikingly new approach to value judgments in aesthetics, but as the greatest demonstration to date that artistic abilities are latent in *all* men*, that the forces of this culture have not entirely destroyed them, and that the ego-gratification that results from the satisfied expenditure of artistic energy has the most rehabilitating effects on the inner person and on his interpersonal relationships. Given this self integration, the present societal coercion may prove to be insufferable.

Perhaps more than any others, this author, Alex Comfort, and the psychiatrist, Harry Stack Sullivan**, who has had such astounding victories over schizophrenia, a disease that none in this society can be said to be especially free of, demonstrate by their work not only the methods by which we may aid ourselves and others out of this spuriously complex maze, but that, improbable as it may be, we are not altogether fool hardy in believing that the 'good and free society' is at least possible.

D. R.

* See ART: PLAY AND ITS PERVERSIONS in RETORT, Vol. 4, No 1.

** CONCEPTIONS OF MODERN PSYCHIATRY (The First William Alanson White Memorial Lectures).

THY MEN SHALL FALL by Sidney and Samuel Moss. Ziff-Davis $3.

The novels that have come out of World War II, written by those who participated as soldiers in that tragic experience, are cause for gloomy reflections. With few exceptions, most of these works that attempt to deal seriously with the war experiences are either of mediocre quality, or are downright bad. This is one that belongs in the category of the mediocre.

It opens with a group of American soldiers landing in Africa, eager to begin the liberation of Europe. The soldiers camp, then remain for weeks in camp, consumed by a boredom that reaches agonizing proportions. The group is finally shifted to England in preparation for D-Day. Beginning with the invasion, they engage in active combat, and go through the brutal slaughter that takes them right up to the conquest of Berlin. The scope of the story then, is one of tremendous range, with great potentiality. Unfortunately the authors botch their chances.

What marks the novel is a hopeless, all-encompassing confusion. Apparently the authors had intended a serious work, as attested to by the honest realistic scenes, but in a crusading spirit put into popular terms, so that it would appeal to a mass audience. That, however, is a difficult mixture, and being badly handled, results in a ragged story. Then the authors are never clear as to the form they want to use. Although the book is a novel, it has more of the elements of a diary; but being neither one nor the other, it suffers a lack of compactness and emotional power that either form may have given it.

An obvious confusion exists between the treating of soldiers as individuals with their own thoughts and problems, and attempting to treat the soldiers as a group having a group experience. The better parts of the book are those where the authors do relate the experiences of the individual soldiers with the various common situations of war. But this is evidently not the primary concern, for these parts are subordinated and become lost in the haste to treat group experiences. Thus in place of using these instances to illuminate whatever might be called the experiences of a group, the contrary is done, as if the generalized experiences of a group were sufficient to give insight into the nature of individual experiences. Drawn on by this logic, the authors take it upon themselves to speak for an entire generation. These parts are particularly bad: as pamphleteering, they are pitifully weak; as sermons they

are boring. The repetitious and arrogant use by the protagonist of "we" is annoying.

Again, the authors, ignoring the necessity of making a careful selection of materials, fill the pages with every conceivable sort of detail, as though their interest was to pack quantity, irrespective of quality, into the book. Not only does this give it an obvious forced tone, but in a work that already has difficulty in hanging together, it serves as a wholly unnecessary distraction.

The book boils with a violent indictment of the barbarism of modern mechanized war, and yet, it is here that the confusion is most glaring. An excessive emphasis is placed on the absence of material comforts in the army—modern toilets and feathered beds, things which the authors naively hold to be symbols of "civilization". It is true that *things* are important in the scale of values in gadget-conscious America, but it is a little absurd to write with maudlin sentimentality of "civilization" back home when it is acknowledged —much too quietly, it's true—that war-making is an integral part of this "civilization". More important, things are by no means synonomous with civilization, and it should have been precisely the job of the authors to sketch how the esseatial human values were crushed by the impersonal war. That complex process whereby the human being is conditioned to kill or be killed for the mercenary interests of the ruling classes, that process of de-humanization constituting the depths of the tragedy of war, is presented in muddled fashion. In failing to make the necessary distinctions of values, the protest against war takes the form of a "gripe", and the book then may be regarded as a healthy, well articulated "gripe". All that need be said here is that the brass-hats considered "griping" a sign of good morale.

ALEX LANG

FREUD: ON WAR, SEX AND NEUROSIS. Edited by Sander Katz. Arts and Science Press. $3.00.

A collection of nine essays written between 1905 and 1918 on various aspects of psychoanalysis. None of them seemed to me to be very important or profound, and a few, like the "Case of Dora", a pioneer case history, seemed almost silly, though as sidelights on the thought of an original, creative scientist, they probably have some value. It is well to be reminded from time to

time that even the "greatest" thinkers are capable of superficial and dogmatic reasoning. This is not to say that the collection is entirely without flashes of insight, but in the main it impressed me as distinctly second-rate. H. C.

THE SKIN OF DREAMS by Raymond Queneau. New Directions. $1.50.

A remarkable and vastly entertaining short novel by a hitherto untranslated French writer whose technique is somewhat reminiscent of Joyce's *Ulysses*. The story is rather inconsequential, being an account of the early life of a youth from the suburbs of Paris who ends up as a Hollywood star; but the characterizations are excellent, and the style—beautifully captured by the translator—is magnificent—mocking, playful and delicately obscene. This book is the sixth of the *Direction* Series, issued quarterly, in paper bindings, and it is by far the most exciting to date. H.C.

ART AND ACTION. Edited by Dorothy Norman. Twice a Year Press $5.00.

This is the 10th Anniversary issue of Twice a Year, a Book of Literature, the Arts, and Civil Liberties. Like most of the preceding issues of this publication, it contains a mixture of material, some dull, some interesting—poems, stories, articles, documents, and photographs. To my taste, the bulk of the current volume is on the dull side. There is, however, a perceptive and intelligent essay on E. E. Cummings by Lloyd Frankenburg, a good short article by Camus, a reprint of some of the letters of Sacco and Vanzetti which are certainly worth re-reading. Some of the documents, for instance, the transcript of the hearings of the Committee on Un-American Activities during the Hollywood investigation are quite fascinating. H.C.