

runaway inflation and worthless money. But until that happens, the real irresponsibility and almost certain bankruptcy are shielded behind the flood of dollars.

Mr. Simon declares that his greatest concern is with the loss of individual freedom and the economic despotism that now prevails in the United States. He pulls no punches in describing the impact on the ubiquitous regulations and bureaucratic controls by which they are enforced. He shows the least insight in grasping how entangled businesses are with government. The economic despotism of which he speaks is not

simply government despotism over business. Many businesses share in the despotic controls by acting as instruments of government in extending political power over the individual.

In any case, Mr. Simon has made an articulate presentation of the ills which beset us as a people and an eloquent plea for reducing and restraining government by restoring individual liberty. It took courage to write such a book. It will take great tenacity by many people to restore the identity of Americans with their country by following his recommendations. □

In demonstrating how Sylvia Plath enacts in her work the anguished cry for help of an extreme schizoid personality who yearns for "being" and rebirth in the frozen blankness of non-relationship and, ultimately, death, Holbrook is arguing that any adequate reading must take into consideration both the real and the false solutions in a work as they impinge on the central question of what it means to be human. What position we finally choose to emphasize reflects our own values out into the world, but Holbrook trusts that our creative nature will strive toward what makes for life, not toward what works against it. With this in mind Holbrook attempts a balanced perspective toward Sylvia Plath's achievement.

"Sylvia Plath tells us that the world is full of hate: this may be valuable. But where she suggests that this hate can get out of hand and cannot be dealt with by our own efforts within ourselves, she is promoting irrationality and paranoia. . . ."

One legitimately wonders, however, if Holbrook, for all his earnestness, hasn't lost sight of the poems themselves. For clearly the knowledge we are seeking to exploit in the teaching of English is something other than psychology. The solution to this problem, however, resides in the direction of time, as Holbrook is well aware when he refers to Rollo May:

"Being, as May says, should mean *potentia*—the potentiality of what we truly might be. The significant tense for human beings is the future—for this belongs to intentionality. Sylvia Plath's existential confusion is that what she took to point forward in this way actually pointed to the termination of being and potentiality."

In reaching for *power* (which is really character, morally earned) with our students in English, in developing their capacities for self-making and

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## Commendables

### Poetry, Society, Human Self

David Holbrook: *Sylvia Plath: Poetry and Existence*; The Athlone Press; London; Humanities Press; Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey.

by Gordon M. Pradl

In offering a psychoanalytical-literary critical analysis of Sylvia Plath's work, one that depends heavily on "object-relations" theory, David Holbrook, an English writer and educator, necessarily extends the conventional boundaries of our responses to literature.

"From this brief digression into the realms where poetry and philosophy—and *psychology*—merge and meet, it will be evident that for my purposes I cannot restrict myself to a mere literary analysis. We cannot solve the problems which arise from even a single phrase ('masturbating a glitter,' for example) without moving beyond the words into the realms of investigative psychology, and this

will mean, in some spheres, conjecturing, about the life . . . I believe that we cannot understand her poetry well, and at times not at all, unless we recognize that she has a topography of her own, which is that of the world as the schizoid individual sees it."

This wider context which Holbrook chooses for his analysis of Plath's creations grows out of Holbrook's pressing concern over the state of contemporary culture. He sees much of the social environment as working against our natural inclinations. The reader in turn must be made aware of Plath's relationship to these forces.

"We must defend ourselves against her falsifications, especially when they are the object of cults, in an atmosphere in which we are being urged to cultivate our psychoses and endorse decadence and moral inversion . . . One of the slogans of the German Baader-Meinhof terrorist gang was '24 hours of HATE each day': and we have this kind of moral inversion in culture as well as politics."

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poetic thinking, we are looking in a forward direction. Unlike psychology, our emphasis is not on understanding the past, but rather on understanding the future. And, if we will only take seriously, as Holbrook does, the dialectical relationship between literature and identity, we will insure the distinctiveness of our discipline: the quest for the potentiality of power. □

## Crozier's Warning

**Brian Crozier:** *Strategy of Survival*; Arlington House; New York.

Brian Crozier, Director of the London-based Institute for the Study of Conflict, wrote on insurgency and terrorism, DeGaulle, Franco, and Chiang Kai-shek. Now he turns to the Cold War, to what the West's response should be to what he does not hesitate to call the Soviet aggression. He sketches the sorry history of the past three decades—the initial post-war rush across the maps of Europe and Asia by Stalin, then the period of Krushchevian laxity, and currently the very successful policies of Leonid Brezhnev.

"This has been a different kind of war," Crozier notes, "'fought' for the greater part with nonmilitary techniques, such as subversion, disinformation, terrorism, psychological war and diplomatic negotiations, including conferences. More strikingly still, and unlike previous wars, the Third World War has been almost entirely a unilateral war of expansion from the Soviet land mass: a war of aggression with the rest of the world at the receiving end. The Western powers have occasionally reacted when their individual special interests appeared to be threatened. . . . But there has been no concerted response on the Western side."

Brezhnev's policy of détente has fueled the naiveté of those who would believe passionately the Soviets are perennially mellowing despite the perennial evidence to the contrary. Following

the launching of his "Peace Programme" at the 24th Soviet Party Congress, Brezhnev pumped up the Red military budget, stirred up the Middle-East cauldron, financed world terrorism, jailed dissidents, and unleashed Castro on the African continent. These events of détente have not deterred the West from expanding avenues of trade with Moscow or letting down even further its already tenuous military guard.

Crozier warns that those of us in Moscow's "Target Area" (a term he prefers to the amorphous phrase "Free World") are approaching the crisis stage vis-à-vis Soviet imperialism. He urges the adoption of a new and realistic attitude to replace hazy visions and shabby posturings.

The Soviet Union, Crozier maintains, still has a variety of weaknesses the West could exploit if it possessed the will: the shortcomings of its economic system, the rising tide of internal dissent, the disloyalty of its satellites, its subject nationalities (the Ukrainians, the Baltic peoples, etc.), the Sino-Soviet split, and even (although this is tricky) the possibilities inherent in "Eurocommunism."

He urges a strengthening and enlargement of NATO with emphasis on rollback, counterterrorism and internal security. A "Department of Unconventional Warfare" would be created in the North Atlantic Alliance to present a unified response to Communist subversion. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty would be reinvigorated as part of an overall beef up of "overt and covert propaganda and information"—even including the possibility of direct beaming of television signals in the Soviet bloc. He calls for the cessation of economic and military aid programmes to Third World Marxist governments and a tightening of trade with Moscow, and he argues for an amplified Western guerrilla-warfare potential—including "the possibilities of guerrilla action in Communist countries."

"The time for compromise and evasion is over," says Crozier, "There is

no time left. . . . Unless the West reacts *now*, meaning before 1980, the chances are that the tide of retreat will be irreversible. And yet *the point of no return has not yet been reached*. If we react now, in the short time span we have left, we can turn the tide back and win." (DP) □

## Molnar's Reflectiveness

**Thomas Molnar:** *Christian Humanism: A Critique of the Secular City and its Ideology*; Franciscan Herald Press; Chicago.

Humanism is a much-discussed topic these days. In his June commencement speech at Harvard, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn identified the central role of humanism in the ongoing degeneration of Western civilization. Federal courts are continually urged to remove it from the public schools in recognition of its essentially "religious" character. The *Humanist Manifestos* (1933 and 1973) proclaim the independence of man from the shackles of vain and restrictive religion, and foresee a humanistic future of international peace, cooperation, and atheistic brotherhood.

So this work by Thomas Molnar, professor of French Literature and intellectual history, is certainly a timely contribution to the ongoing discussion. Like his other books, it takes care to present the subject in the richness of its intellectual career, which in this case is nearly coterminous with that of Western civilization itself. Beginning with the origin of the celebrated humanism of the Renaissance, he traces the sequence of perversions of the traditional Christian vision of reality, a transformation which culminates in the humanism of the twentieth century, a full-blown secular ideology intent on replacing the Christian heritage of the West.

Professor Molnar's work reflects the