

ride to critical success.

The acclaim has been his, the formula still works. It calls for explicit agnosticism, in varying doses, or at least a fastidious distaste for organized religion, especially Catholicism. Adventures with homosexuals are also necessary, and they must be genteel and educational experiences, since homosexuals are deemed tolerant and enlightened beings. Simmons cites a telling example: his protagonist's doctor, a homosexual, informs him that his mistress who let him sleep with his head on her stomach is therefore a friend as well. This remark, be it crude and slugheaded, is paraded by Simmons as a veritable thunderbolt, its presence on the page dwarfing, with measured understatement, everything else in the chapter. Things such as this stand out starkly in *Wrinkles*; they are difficult to miss.

The most predictable ingredient in Simmons' best-seller recipe is preoccupation, no, obsession with sex. Here, his kinship with Gilder's stereotype looms large, for the bombardment of sexual meanderings is almost clinically consistent with the fantasies of the burnt-out refugees from the war of the sexes that *The Naked Nomad* is devoted to. Again, the author salts it with his goatish philosophy: "If the lover's hidden desire is frustrated, he seeks greater satisfaction from sex; if this fails, love dies." Simmons' tone changes when he writes about copulation and sexual opportunism—it becomes harder, more introspective, as if to compensate, with his character, for a growing coldness toward the world.

But it may well be instead that Simmons abandons his pretensions of writing serious literature with the sex, and betrays an easily recognizable desire to sell copies, sell them to anyone. His sailors' language and insatiability are free of preliminaries. For him, sex is pornography, and no more. Through it there is not a hint of seriousness or commitment; his "falling in love" with somebody after his marriage dissolves is

not in the least convincing or interesting. It is a front for writing about sex, as if Simmons worried that he wrote too many chapters without it.

Wrinkles falls into a familiar category, as Simmons hopes it would. His book, with all its speechmaking, is a confused, pernicious sham. His prota-

gonist ends up knowing less about life in middle age than as a child. It is a run-of-the-mill novel about an author's self-indulgent fantasies, coated with a cheap sheen of nostalgia, which, of course, always sells. The tragedy of Simmons' *Wrinkles* is its gimmicky triteness, a tragedy for us, the readers, and for him. □

Wouk's American Epos

Herman Wouk: *The Winds of War*; Little, Brown & Co.; Boston. *War and Remembrance*; Little, Brown & Co.; Boston.

by Otto J. Scott

The Thirties were the golden days of radio. It was then that people turned toward their sets as to a dream machine. Radio retained that special quality even as the decade drew toward its close and the world toward war. Radio personalities loomed as giants in the mental life of the nation, and a writer who fed material to such a personality was considered successful. Herman Wouk was one such writer, and the personality for whom he wrote was Fred Allen, whose gravelly voice and acerbic wit convulsed millions.

Later Wouk was swept into the war effort and, after a year promoting bond sales, served during the Solomon and other campaigns in the Pacific aboard two consecutive destroyer-minesweepers. The first of these ships was decorated; on the second Wouk—a Lieutenant—was executive officer, and second in command. In all he was at sea three years, and during that time he worked, between duties and dangers, on his first novel.

That novel, now largely forgotten,

Otto Scott's latest book is the Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement.

was called *Aurora Dawn*. It was published in 1946 and was chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club. As everyone knows, that meant instant commercial success, wide distribution and attention, and general respect from publisher's row. Many writers struggle for years for that particular sort of home run; it has been known to unhinge several who were briefly so lucky. But Wouk was no accidental success. His second novel, *City Boy*, was selected for condensation by the *Reader's Digest* and was made into a movie. Two such successes in a row are rare enough to indicate the appearance of an author with a remarkable rapport with large numbers of people.

Wouk's next effort was also unusual: he wrote a play. It was mounted on Broadway, itself a triumph, and was titled *The Traitor*. It dealt with a betrayer of atomic secrets and came under immediate liberal attack. The theme was timely: the first Hiss trial had been held, and the air was heavy with fears about spies and Soviet threats, but it was *avant* in the sense that nobody realized that such secrets were, in truth, being betrayed. It was clear that Wouk was closely attuned to the general audience and also clear that despite his success, he was not inclined to pay homage to the powerful liberals of the theater.

Wouk's third published novel, *The Caine Mutiny*, appeared in 1950. Its central character was a paranoid U.S. naval officer in command of a small ship.

It was fast, easy reading; the dialogue was realistic but not coarse, it contained humor and built toward an agonizing climax in the form of a court-martial for the mutineers. At the very end of the novel the author turned the tables, in a nearly O. Henry manner, by having a genuinely mature officer tell the youthful mutineers what they—and their like—had been unable to see: that the pressures of war break men in diverse ways—both psychic and physical.

It was neatly done. Wouk managed to lure both readers and critics down the garden path, for in 1951 it was a literary fashion—since expanded into obsession—to see in the fighting men of the United States incipient or actual fascists, cryptohomosexuals and/or buffoons. Sarcasm and disillusion come into vogue in postwar periods, but the intellectuals of the United States astonished the world by the eagerness with which they clutched such caricatures, and called them portraits. Mailer's homosexual major-general and Irwin Shaw's opportunists in uniform were accepted with strange raptures while James Jones' lowly but virile peacetime soldiers were dismissed.

Since most of *The Caine Mutiny* seemed to fit the denigrator's mold, Wouk was widely applauded. His novel, meanwhile, made publishing history. Condensed by the *Reader's Digest* and tapped by the Literary Book Club, it received a Pulitzer, was translated into a dozen languages and sold over three million copies. Hollywood produced its version, in which Bogart made a memorable Queeg, and Wouk wrote a spin-off called *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*. Henry Fonda, Lloyd Nolan and John Hodiak all appeared in the play, to rapt audiences. Over and beyond all this, Wouk had created a fictional character who entered the world's dictionary of memorable stereotypes; an achievement of high art that can be neither planned nor forgotten. That was a wreath fate seldom bestows.

Some might have retired after such triumphs, but Wouk has remained dili-

gent. In 1955 he produced *Marjorie Morningstar*, which was held aloft by the Book-of-the-Month Club and the ever-admiring *Reader's Digest* condensators; in 1962 he wrote a very serious but unexpectedly popular work titled *This Is My God*, on Judaism. Again, a Book-of-the-Month Club choice. So was *Don't Stop the Carnival*, which appeared in 1965. Novels, such as *Marjorie Morningstar* and *Youngblood Hawke* not only achieved huge sales, but were also made into movies. Meanwhile, the incredibly successful author also wrote *Nature's Way*, a comedy for the stage, and a pocket book called the *Lokomoke Papers*, and collaborated on a movie script (*Hurricane*) with Richard Murphy Slattery.

These triumphs, however, began to have the effect of successive artillery salvos. Astonishing and impressive at first, they began to deafen and finally to bore intellectuals. It was clear, as time passed, that Wouk could not be coaxed into becoming an issues-clown, like Mailer, nor a dejected semi-outcast like James Jones, nor would he fade away, diminuendo, like Irwin Shaw. His religiosity, his literature classes at Yeshiva University, his ability to make a routine of success; his stubborn insistence on chronology, plot and normal, recognizable characters and situations have made him, in the eyes of Tom Wolfe's radical chic, nearly invisible.

But the public buys Wouk's books by the millions. When *The Winds of War* appeared in 1971, copies vanished from bookstore stacks and the title stuck to the best-seller lists for many weeks. Last year the second book on the events leading toward and contained in World War II appeared. *War and Remembrance* is still, at this writing, selling in large numbers. The duo really comprise one immense work which carry the same fictional characters through real events for over 2,000 printed pages. Crafted with the author's customary and renowned skill, they are carefully plotted and contain fascinating

descriptions and lucid assessments of the world, the war and its people. But for the first time the reader can discern the lineaments of the author, and the nature of his close ties with millions which his prodigious storytelling ability had formerly masked.

This is mainly possible because of the changes that have taken place in American fiction in the years since Wouk first began to write professionally. Fiction, in these years, has precipitately declined. One of the major, if not the main reason for this decline has been the rise of new taboos, as fierce and forbidding, as ominous in their sanctions, as any of their predecessors. Because these taboos are new, and rose while older taboos were falling, they are not as openly admitted, nor violated as often in secret, as the older ones against explicit descriptions of sex, or of impudence toward authority figures such as clergymen and soldiers, judges, presidents and the like. The new taboos—still so fearsome their very existence is denied—forbid the modern writer from describing the real world, and insist upon portrayals that are actually liberal fantasies; distortions of persons, classes and principles. Serious literature has, in consequence, been eroded almost beyond recognition by propagandists, by political fanatics, by perverses promoting their vices, by persons projecting hatred of the human race, by campaigns against traditional religion and traditional symbols, and by actual agents of anarchy, terror and totalitarianism.

Popular writing is menaced by these pressures, and is not what it was. The attitudes and judgments it projects in its selection of heroes and villains, and in its turn of plots and situations, reflect the new values. Sexual explicitness, still relatively new, diverts the attention of readers and masks a new cant by coating it with veneration. Amid tides of obsessive politics, the popular writer is more severely constricted by powerful groups inside the publishing "industry" than ever before. Fiction being published by the major New York houses now

comprises only ten percent of their new titles. A smaller number of fiction writers make larger amounts of money than ever before, however, so the situation bedazzles even as it contracts the numbers of those who furnish the national chambers of imagination. The freedoms of fictions have been dissected into categories: gothic, mystery, spy, historical, science-fiction and general.

This bureaucratic regimentation, stifling the freedom of creativity and impoverishing culture, has favored another notable new aspect of the

Wouk's two novels have appeared at a time when our civilization is menaced by Dostoyevsky's devils, and when not one, but a series of holocausts have occurred. This is not ordinarily the stuff of which popular novels are made, but the Second World War occupies a peculiar, almost unprecedented time-war.

Most huge and ruinous wars have been followed by a period of bitter cynicism, and World War II is not completely different in that respect. But unlike its predecessor, the Second World

"It is depressing to discover finally that a novel whose size, scope and method remind us of *War and Peace* and whose theme is bound to remind us of Mann's *Doctor Faustus* has for its real hero the United States Navy."

—*The New Republic*

modern novel in the United States: its increasing addiction to surface realism and special pleading. In that sense, fiction has drawn closer to nonfiction; has become a sort of pseudononfiction. Novels like *Hotel* and *Airport* by Hailey, attract attention by the verisimilitude of their backgrounds as much as by their cleverly choreographed turns of plot.

Both *The Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance* use the new emphasis to excellent advantage. The accuracy of their detail and their documentary approach to describing various settings and activities contain their own fascinations for a fact-drenched audience. Some reviewers, by noting that Wouk has played his fictional characters amid the scenes of a real war, have drawn attention to the earlier example of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

The surface resemblance, indeed, exists. But there is a vast gulf between the audiences to whom Tolstoy addressed his efforts, and the multitude today. Tolstoy wrote when the Czar was on his throne and Christendom ruled the world. The educated levels of his audience were still professing religionists, and virtually all the West was united—if not on matters of faith—at least on matters of morals.

War has evoked no outcries against munitions-makers or profiteers; no accusations that it was unnecessary. It stands, in truth, as the shining moment in Britain's history that Churchill predicted, and in the United States only the truly perverse hold our effort in retroactive scorn.

The fact is, however, that a phenomenal amount of literature on World War II is in circulation. The Nazis seem to strut the screens of Hollywood and in television in greater numbers than when they were in power. They always lose, of course, and the heroism and skill with which they are outwitted might persuade the young that in their day Nazis were buffoons. Such retroactive victories hide a mountain of shame; of French retreat before reality and English humiliation on the battlefield; of American ineptitude and Soviet intransigence, and a host of dark and bristling issues as yet not fully defined or resolved.

Such issues have expanded since the end of World War II into the tangled situation we know today. But long before our times, the West took a downward path. Many argue that the First World War was launched for what was then considered good and sufficient reason—that is to say, for colonial dom-

inance — and nonetheless flew completely out of hand. That governments then deliberately wasted the lives of millions can be considered evidence of the Western collapse of traditional faith, of morals in the deeper sense, and of sanity. Only lust for power remained. At its close, the fallen men of Versailles completed their butcher's work in a treaty that made a renewal of the war inevitable—whether Hitler rose to rule Germany or not. The road to war in the Thirties, however, could not be admitted by the responsible groups to have been a logical outcome of preceding errors. Therefore the Thirties remain an essentially unexamined decade, and the Satanic Hitler, the most useful peg ever discovered upon which to hang all responsibility. World War II, a continuation of this explanation, then dwindles to an adventure tale in which the white hats won—made more vivid than most such yarns by the horrors of Dachau and the villainies of the Gestapo. As a result, the period from 1935 to 1945 is etched in the minds of millions as though unique, separate and apart from the flow of history before or since—as fascinating, in a grisly way, as figures on a new urn, carved by new artists of a generation ago, repeated and radiated by later copies.

Herman Wouk, therefore, although a veteran of the conflict and a member of a group whose sufferings under Hitler were deliberately devised, entered upon these scenes as a novelist skilled in portraying what American audiences like to read. Half his audience, we must remember, recalls the period. The other half was not then alive. One half, therefore, does not want its settled convictions disturbed, the other half has already been educated to the official version, which contains neither origins nor afterthoughts.

Such speculations are not, of course, necessarily novelistic. A novelist chooses a period that is essentially a slice of life and of time. His choice can range from hours to years, and a war, which has a certain physical beginning

and a physical cessation, is a large swatch to select. World War II, with its global, multi-ringed circuses of struggle and death, was so sprawling and kaleidoscopic that few writers have dared to depict more than one sector, one aspect, or one arena of its activity. Wouk has taken the entire spectacle and it is astonishing that he uses only a bare dozen of fictional characters to choreograph against every setting and important backdrop and event of the period.

Of these dozen characters the most important is Victor Henry, who enters the stage in Washington, D.C. as a U.S. naval captain. He is forty-five, short and a career officer, whose knowledge of the German language and analytic ability bring him to the attention of FDR. Wouk's FDR is exactly as one recalls from the newsreels: charming, jaunty, shrewd, democratic but also lord of the manor. Captain Henry and his pretty, country-club wife Rhoda are sent to Berlin, where he meets and she charms Hitler in the Chancellory. The settings are described with all the realism and sense of immediacy of a photograph, and the action moves as speedily as if we are in a movie theater. There are endless complications, clues are scattered shrewdly, and the reader is switched so swiftly from person to person, scene to scene, that the predictability of much of the plot is seldom apparent.

One of the Henrys' two sons is a naval jock and the other a more introspective sort; their daughter is slightly rebellious. She goes to New York City and falls in with a sleazy radio personality—a setting Wouk brings deftly and surely to life. The older son enters the naval air service; the younger visits Europe and falls in love with Natalie Jastrow, a "liberated" New York beauty who is tending her rich, famous uncle, Aaron Jastrow, author of *A Jew's Jesus*. Natalie, involved in an affair with a State Department bureaucrat who refuses to marry a woman of Jewish descent, decides to visit her lover in

Poland—and she and young Henry are caught there during the German invasion.

Meanwhile Captain Henry gradually learns about Nazis, meets an English radio correspondent traveling with a pretty daughter, and the author speedily entwines the reader into a series of simultaneous personal and political developments. All the historic personages appear: Stalin, Churchill, various high officials in all camps including Goering at Karinhall as well as frightened refugees. *The Winds of War* describes the war by the Japanese against the British in Asia, the triumphs of the Nazis in France and in Eastern Europe, the strategy and the surprises of the early war with clocklike, nearly computerlike expertise. From time to time

both fictional adventures and real developments pause while a mythical German General Armin von Roon is quoted at length from an equally mythical tome titled *World Empire Lost*, in which German rationalizations and boasts are refuted by a later, retired, translator, Victor Henry. The readers are, thereby, assured that the hero will survive, and are also provided an overview of the various military developments, lest they lose their way amid the tangled stories.

That line extends for over 1,000 printed pages in *The Winds of War*, and the paperback version issued in 1978 carried the legend on its cover: "Over Three Million-Copy Best Seller." There seems no reason to doubt that claim; the first novel is eminently readable and puts Natalie Jastrow into the

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture*:

The Ugly Beautiful People

"For over six decades, Hollywood mirrored the character and dreams of the nation. It did it in an unrefined, even garish, way, and was called the cradle of a new, vibrant, popular and folksy art. Simple-mindedness and tinsel, which has always determined Hollywood's *modus operandi* and has always been associated with its image, did not prevent it from capturing some essential truths about America, which, in turn, have commanded attention, sympathy, sentiments and even respect from the world at large. During the '60s, Hollywood was put on another course, hailed as 'creative' and 'introspective' by liberal elites. Movies began to reflect the marginal rather than the essential, distortions and aberrations of reality rather than reality itself. Instead of dreams, we were offered nightmares which were declared self-questioning insights into the actuality of both the desires and character of the nation."

from "Editor's Comment"

"John Updike is a practitioner of what must be the dominant literary form today—the unfunny comic novel."

from "Void Camouflaged
by Vocabulary"
by Whit Stillman

also:

Opinions & Views—Commendables—In Focus
Waste of Money—The American Scene—Screen
Music—Liberal Culture—Journalism
Polemics & Exchanges

arms of young Byron Henry, then sends him away while she is menaced by the Nazis in Italy and her uncle Aaron blandly refuses to worry over such civilized people. Meanwhile Pamela Tudsbury, the uninhibited English daughter of the famous correspondent, falls in love with hero Victor Henry, whose wife mistreats him. The reader is introduced to Berel Jastrow, a Polish Jew who is able to become a Soviet soldier after the collapse of Poland and the disruption of his native village.

That series of major involvements, with some lesser figures that can be relied upon to remain around for a time, manages to hold attention even while enormous, cataclysmic events are described with admirable clarity and speed. There is no question that Herman Wouk knows his trade well. He has mastered all the techniques by which to retain attention, to keep action moving, to create suitable dialogue for various characters, and to portray believable, even familiar men and women. Their very familiarity, in fact, lulls suspicion and increases the reader's credulity, so that one accepts the uncanny appearance of one or another of these actors amid every great happening of the period. That is, of course, the great fascination of fiction, which releases the controls of the mind and allows the flight of imagination to take over—and that is also why fiction is so apt a vehicle for propaganda.

The second novel carries the Henrys into the war along with the United States, and places the Jastrows before the Nazi juggernaut. It contains descriptions of war at sea, war in Russia, events both great and small that carry heavy emotional charges. *War and Remembrance* has a number of war scenes that ring as true as any ever written. Byron Henry's commanding officer, for example, is wounded atop the submarine he commands, and orders it to submerge without him, lest it be destroyed by the Japanese enemy force. Natalie Jastrow Henry and her baby are, after ex-

cruciating ordeals, enslaved inside Germany by the Nazis; eventually she and her uncle are swept off toward the gas chambers. It would be unfair to the author to tell their fates in this review; readers are encouraged to learn it for themselves.

Other changes overtake the original cast of characters: the English correspondent dies and his daughter moves closer to hero Victor Henry, who rises in the navy to rear admiral. He is so puritanical, however, that Wouk has to maneuver Rhoda Henry into infidelity before her husband can be divorced. Even then the author is careful not to reduce Mrs. Henry; she remarries and finds happiness and wealth. The other characters who lure reader loyalty are fittingly rewarded. The second novel continues the rationalizations of General von Roon, and adds *A Jew's Journal* by Aaron Jastrow. These balance one another with remarkable symmetry; both contain interesting flashes, insights and glaring exaggerations, but both are extremely functional devices that fit the semi-documentary style so fashionable today.

Both novels deserve the great sale and attention they have received though neither for the reason that their dust jackets cite. They are not accurate histories, nor do they reflect the real war that took place. They are, in the political and strategic sense, firmly inside the great body of generally accepted opinion. The most glaring deficiency in that respect is in the portrayal of the Soviets, who are given credits à la Harrison Salisbury, their great apologist. The role of the Vatican is not denigrated so much as diminished; the French do not receive due credit for their suffering and the European Underground does not often receive the spotlight. The figure of Berel Jastrow, a Jewish fighter and underground agent is somewhat exaggerated, but then so are the abilities and ubiquity of virtually all the central fictional characters. There are some excellent, truly first-rate, scenes of

naval war, and some events—such as the Battle of the Coral Sea—receive credit for their significance that not many novelists have matched in terms of strategic understanding.

The second novel has made a heavier impact than the first. That is natural enough; American audiences are more apt to be caught by scenes of a war in which this nation figures than by events of the Thirties which largely involved other peoples. Both novels are capable of being turned over to the scriptwriters as is; both are clearly material for cinematography; Wouk himself could turn either of them, or even parts of them, into new vehicles as he did a generation ago with *The Caine Mutiny*. That is not to deprecate, but to stress the author's immense technique; his craftsmanship. There is another quality to Wouk's work, moreover, that is outstanding: in a period crowded with writers who smear their fellow countrymen, and especially the military, he holds to the old attitudes. Wouk does not look back upon the American Navy in World War II as a haven for fascists or buffoons: he recalls men who fought and died for their country, and leaders who made mistakes, but who also rose brilliantly against high challenge. Throughout both *The Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance*, Wouk makes it clear that ancient standards of villainy and heroism hold in this century as well. He does not sneer at the weak, and even allows one State Department sophist to mature into manhood. In similar fashion his women are fallible but charming, capable of love and decency; his Nazis are as repellent as, indeed, they were in life.

To say, after all this, that this is not enough seems ungrateful and surly. Yet it must be admitted that all the skills of broadcasting and Hollywood, and of smoothly turned plot and technique did not serve this nation well enough in the Thirties, did not make the issues of World War II clear in the early Forties, and have not helped us much in the world since. We have need, of course,

of decent men in the arts, and Herman Wouk is among the more honorable and admirable of our native writers.

But the world has well rewarded Mr. Wouk for his efforts, and although these are decent and readable and even virtuous, they do not stir the depths that are needed in art, to aerate our souls and to lift our hearts. In the years since 1945 we have all learned some new lessons and acquired new needs. We have learned that German torturers are not unique; we have learned that the Soviets massacred whole peoples deliberately, and in Cambodia we have watched a leadership decimate its own race. We have discovered that the Chinese are capable of sending millions to their graves and that Vietnamese Marxists are also imperialists; we see Africa in flames and tremble on the brink of new holocausts today. In short, we have learned so much about the nature of totalitarian societies and ideologies, and about their conflict with humanness, that the World War II experience seems to us now a rather simple exercise in ruthless brutality and murderousness.

In such times we can enjoy good artists, as always, but our craving is for greatness—and greatness is in very short supply. The comparison may, perhaps, be made clearer if Tolstoy is recalled. His *War and Peace* was replete with acute observations, stirring descriptions, believable characters and dramatic war. But over and beyond all that was the brooding and eternal sense of God, whose judgment determined the outcome of the struggle, though the means He employed were so subtle—a delayed message, a change in the weather—that neither the men who obeyed His summons, nor those who were defeated, were ever really aware or sure of even their own roles.

It was that great recognition that lifted Tolstoy's work and has kept it so influential through the years. And it is the lack of that assurance, despite all the other elements—the believable characters, the dramatic incidents, the actual episodic backdrop—that make Wouk's novels excellent, but not great. □

puzzled that there is an author, Curtis Cate, who is interested in the Berlin Wall. Why on earth? Isn't it something natural, ordinary, humdrum? It exists. So how can or could it be otherwise? What's interesting about it?

A great deal, as the reader can find in Cate's book. The author undertook a labor which recalls both Hercules and Don Quixote: to interest the public in something it perceives as a natural part of monotonous, dull reality.

For inhabitants of the Soviet colony West Berlin was, as Cate shows, what Russians call a "breathing vent." Preparations to stop the vent had long been afoot, but, of course, the Western intelligence services were the last to notice them. Yet the population of the Soviet colony knew or guessed or suspected. The exodus to freedom surged past the three thousand per day mark. Effectively combining scholarly precision with psychological skill, Cate gives both an impressive documentary panorama of the event and close-ups of individual human destinies involved. One of the aspects of this panoramic-mosaic view is an important insight into the psychology of freedom. To me this insight was a revelation. Let me explain why.

The Berlin Wall: To Be Taken for Granted

Curtis Cate: *The Ides of August: The Berlin Wall Crisis*; M. Evans & Co.; New York.

by Lev Navrozov

One of our favorite pastimes in Moscow was discussing how quickly human beings everywhere take for granted any new reality as something inevitable,

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natural, usual. For example, we were sure that once the Soviet regime had been established in the United States, in no time at all Americans would just be puzzled that someone could see in it something unusual, avoidable or even interesting.

Imagine someone in 1939 saying: "The present generation will see a Soviet wall—yes, of the kind of the China Wall—passing through Berlin—yes, Berlin, the capital of Germany, which will be an island amidst a Soviet colony." A wild fantasy, of course, yet how fascinating, from the realm of fictional literature.

Today many Americans would be

Germany is a Western country. Kant lived in Königsberg, not in White Plains. Americans can stereotype the 100-odd nations of Russia as bearded, wild 16th century "Russians." But they can hardly stereotype Germans as patriarchal Orientals, unable to understand the modern Western wisdom of the *New York Times'* editorials. There was a danger that the capital of this Western nation would be divided by a wall, and so the inhabitants on the eastern side of the wall would remain in a Soviet colony forever. The result? More than 3,000 a day escaped from a Soviet colony to freedom. Yes, but how insignificant all these figures are in relation to those who could have fled, yet stayed.

"The small flat they [a German fam-