

In *Hawks on Hawks*, Joseph McBride interviews the director; the comments and analyses Hawks brings to bear on the subject of moviemaking are consistent and of a piece: his approach is pragmatic and businesslike. These statements sum up the cinematic philosophy of Hawks in the most concise way: "Our job is to make entertainment. . . . You aren't going to get enough money to work with unless you get it out of universal entertainment. . . . I've worked on the profits of my pictures . . . so I'm damned interested in how much they gross." Hawks's emphasis in his work was always on the highest quality of craftsmanship and so his movies lack the self-consciousness of the products of most of today's directors—who perceive themselves as artists. (Hawks refers to "pictures" or "movies," never to "films" or "the cinema.") The only message he endorsed was to entertain, an attitude that appears time and again in his conversations here and which assured him consistent box-office success. It also contributed to the universal appeal of his movies, which transcend time and so are as enjoyable and fresh today as they were when first presented. What was conceived as craftsmanship endures as artistry. The fusion of Hollywood as both industry and entertainment was not only the reality of moviemaking but, judging by Hawks's commentary, the ideal as well. The system was good: it worked, it produced the largest number of successful movies, the ones the public wanted. In effect, the financial failures were usually those that failed to satisfy their audience.

The pivotal differences, then, in the attitudes of Louise Brooks and Howard Hawks can be encapsulated in two anecdotes. Brooks, lacking any advanced formal education, was horrified that a journalist who interviewed her for *Photoplay* was ignorant of and indifferent to the existence of Martha Graham. As Brooks writes: "I didn't realize then that this small cultural conflict . . . was merely the first instance of the kind of contempt that was destined to drive me

out of Hollywood." Whereas Hawks, college educated and perhaps more at ease with intellectuality, who mixed socially with the best writers of his era, could only be amused at a similar lack of cultural awareness. On a hunting trip with Clark Gable and William Faulkner, the talk turned to writing. "Gable asked Faulkner who the good writers were. And Faulkner said, 'Thomas Mann,

Willa Cather, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway and myself.' Gable looked at him and said, 'Oh, do you write, Mr. Faulkner?' And Faulkner said, 'Yeah. What do *you* do, Mr. Gable?'" And Hawks adds with amusement, "I don't think Gable ever read a book and I don't think Faulkner ever went to see a movie. So they might have been on the level." □

## Uncle Sam's Other Province

*A Band of Prophets: The Vanderbilt Agrarians After Fifty Years*; Edited by William C. Havard and Walter Sullivan; Louisiana State University Press; Baton Rouge.

*Regionalism and the South: Selected Papers of Rupert Vance*; Edited by John Shelton Reed and Daniel Joseph Singal; University of North Carolina Press; Chapel Hill.

by Clyde Wilson

The intellectual history of the South is yet to be written. By this statement I am bootlegging in two premises. First, that there *is* such a thing as the South with a distinctive history. Second, that Southern history includes an intellectual life worthy of study. Though persons can be found to controvert the first premise, they can easily be dealt with: their position—that there is no distinctive South—is essentially either perverse ideological reasoning (the South is bad, therefore its existence must be discounted as a temporary aberration) or materialist reductionism (the South doesn't exist because it can't be counted).

Concede, then, a distinctive Southern history, but what about its intellectual life? Here it is harder to make headway. That the South has, throughout its exis-

tence, had a life of the mind important enough for historical attention is not an uncontested thesis. Even many who are aware of the importance of 20th-century Southern literature are not aware of or not willing to concede anything of importance before this century. This scholarly consensus is mistaken. Richard Beale Davis, in his immense work *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South*, proved both the presence and the distinctiveness of a life of the mind in the colonial-era South. The 19th-century Southern intellect still awaits its great historian, but he will appear. That intellect is underrated simply because it is unknown. Everyone thinks he already knows what the writers and thinkers of the Old South had to say, so nobody has ever bothered to read them. Sooner or later someone will; Jefferson and Poe, George Washington Harris and Joel Chandler Harris, William Gilmore Simms, John C. Calhoun and others will be woven together into a meaningful picture. When that is done, at least two things will be established. First, that there was no great discontinuity in values between the Jeffersonian generation and the Confederate generation of Southerners, contrary to what has so often been declared. Second, that the 19th-century Southern mind was quite the opposite of its currently popular image—that it was classical rather than romantic, critical and ironic rather than simple and hyperbolic. But that is another story.

The 20th-century Southern mind has

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been explored somewhat more thoroughly, especially its literary aspects, but it, too, still lacks its historian. When that historian appears, these two works will be valuable grist for his mill. In *A Band of Prophets* a group of mature Southern scholars considers the meaning of the now-famous Agrarian manifesto *I'll Take My Stand. Regionalism and the South* is a collection of writings by an eloquent antagonist of the Twelve Southerners of the manifesto—Rupert Vance of the University of North Carolina, who, besides his significance as a key Southern liberal thinker, is an important figure in the development of American sociology. Thus, with the protagonists of these two books the scene is set for a classic 1930's confrontation of progress and reaction.

The South is different. Even when Southerners do the same things as other Americans, it is often for different reasons. They sympathized with Richard Nixon, for instance, not because they thought he was any good, but because they thought he was no worse than his enemies. The South is America's Basque provinces—a region which has always contributed more than its share to the nation, yet one that is not quite a respectable part of it; it is the most conservative part of the nation, yet it is particularist and runs athwart the mainstream even when the mainstream flows conservative. The Agrarians of *I'll Take My Stand* would seem to fall to the right of any American center line, but one wonders if they fit into the national left/right dialectic at all. When William F. Buckley, Jr. edited an anthology of American conservative writing a few years ago, he did not include any of the Agrarians, nor even so relevant a follower of theirs as Richard Weaver; yet he included a number of writers and themes that could not seriously be considered "American."

Southern liberals have almost as much difficulty fitting in as Southern conservatives. In fact, one may safely maintain that no Southerner can ever be fully

respectable as a liberal. No matter what excesses he may indulge in to expunge his taint, he will never succeed. Jimmy Carter knew the things one had to say and do, and he said and did them. But many Americans simply could not accept his performance. (The same thing happened to Truman and Johnson, which indicates the degree to which liberalism embodies ritualistic role-playing rather than substantive issues.) Unwittingly, by his frantic effort to live up to the role expected of him, Carter exhibited how mechanical and formalistic and empty liberalism had become and thereby rendered a great service.

If it were not already a cliché, I would be tempted to suggest that American conservatives are largely 19th-century bourgeois capitalists (though never quite as consistent in practice as in theory) and American liberals are 20th-century social democrats (except that whereas European social democrats are fueled by class antagonism, American ones are driven by puritanical fury and hypocrisy). Southerners, on the other hand, whatever side they might come down on in national politics, are still 18th-century republicans in their basal political instincts. They have always had—and still have—by and large a different sense of the dividing line between the public and the private, a different sense of the range and purposes of the state. This outsider viewpoint has its uses. George Wallace was hated by both liberals and conservatives, but by coming, as it were, out of another league, he was able to upset the convenient and self-serving way the game was being played by the major teams and to restore some competition to the contest. His smashing of the phony consensus of the early 1960's by his success at raising neglected issues during the Northern primaries was a decisive element in establishing the current political dialectic. Its power, for example, is forcing the Republican Party toward a grass-roots conservative position that it would never have adopted on its own and against which it struggles.

Rupert Vance was, in the terms of his

time, a Southern liberal. He believed that his land, the South, was in critical respects benighted and that the knowledge and techniques of social science could be employed to illuminate some of that darkness. This put him, in Southern terms, on the left, and made him, at least superficially, an American liberal. Yet one need only compare Vance's approach with the direction sociology has taken in recent decades to grasp the significance of the "Southern" in "Southern sociologist." For one thing, Vance always maintained an aristocratic aloofness, and his sense of discipline was a high, rigorous and demanding one. For another, his critique of the South was from the inside, which is why his essay "Is Agrarianism for Farmers?" is the most effective as well as the fairest of the many contemporary attacks on *I'll Take My Stand*. Vance was as much a Southern patriot in his own way as the Agrarians. It was, after all, his life's work (unsuccessful in the judgment of his editors) to establish a *regional* sociology.

Thus, given the perspective of time, the gulf between the Vanderbilt group and the Chapel Hill "liberals" appears narrower today than it seemed to them in the 1930's and 1940's—almost a *tactical* rather than a fundamental parting. (What is said for Vance in this regard goes equally for at least some other Southern liberals: his Chapel Hill colleagues Howard W. Odum, another sociologist, and W. T. Couch, a publisher, for example.) Alas, Southern progressives fit almost as poorly into the national dialectic as Southern conservatives.

It is well known that Southern writers can write. Less well known is that Southern historians can write. Not known at all, but true, is that Southern *sociologists* can write. Vance's thought was always in focus and his prose always lucid. He could explicate methodological problems, statistical findings, or philosophical points with equal clarity and ease. He was no piker as an old-fashioned social commentator either, as one can see by perusing his two satirical pieces on late

19th-century Southern politics, "Tennessee's War of the Roses" (about the feuding Taylor brothers) and "A Karl Marx for Hillbillies" (about Arkansas's Rabelaisian Governor, Jeff Davis). Vance was not alone. Humanistic sociologists are a Southern tradition. That was true of Vance's colleague Odum and it is true of his successor at Chapel Hill, John Shelton Reed, co-editor of the Vance essays and one of the contributors to *A Band of Prophets*.

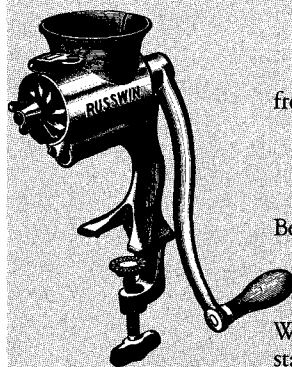
*A Band of Prophets* is a collection of some of the papers given by the cream of Southern scholarship at a conference held at Vanderbilt University in observance of the 50th anniversary of *I'll Take My Stand*. There is some irony in Vanderbilt's sponsorship of this respectful celebration. The university and the Nashville business community, until quite recently, were anxious to be modern and progressive and were deeply embarrassed by the only two things they had that were of interest to the outside world—"country" music and the Agrarian writers. Both prejudices have been overcome, but one fears for the wrong reasons. Despite the irony, these papers are the most significant commentary to appear yet on the Agrarian work; they are, themselves, important contributions to the still-to-be-written history of the life of the mind in the South. Reed's paper is concerned with the degree to which the Agrarian statement and movement adumbrated a Southern nationalism analogous to European movements. It is the most original and groundbreaking of the essays, although they are all richly varied and worthy of attention. Charles P. Roland describes admirably the Southern historical background of the 1920's out of which *I'll Take My Stand* emerged. Lewis P. Simpson considers the Agrarian cast against the intellectual history of Western man and concludes that they were a part of the Republic of Letters engaged in artistic revolt against modernity and its solvents. George Core presents an astute history of the New Criticism and its relation to the Agrarian movement. Robert B. Heilman

gives a Northerner's carefully considered appreciation of the prophetic power of the work. Louis D. Rubin celebrates the success of *I'll Take My Stand* as a piece of literature, as a poetic work in the tradition of Christian humanism. The least satisfying part of *A Band of Prophets* is the transcribed discussion between the three living Agrarians: Lyle H. Lanier, Robert Penn Warren, and Andrew Lytle. Disappointing is a relative term here, since the discussion was skillfully led by Cleanth Brooks, certainly one of America's most inspired scholars. (Brooks, indeed, should be awarded the title Thirteenth Southerner. He was just too young by a hair to be in *I'll Take My Stand*.) As the editors of *A Band of Prophets* point out, the surviving Agrarians have maintained a remarkable stability of viewpoint; their discussion takes up almost as if *I'll Take My Stand* was a conversation left off yesterday.

But perhaps that is what I find disappointing. Lanier and Warren have long been cut off from the day-to-day life of the South. Only Lytle is still rooted there. One gets the sense that the former two are fighting yesterday's rather than today's battles. Warren's preoccupation with Nixon leads him at times very near the banality of any conventional Northeastern university professor. (As if a politician lying were something new, or of very high priority for a social commentator in a country where millions of people's incomes are disappearing before

their eyes, where nearly half the families are broken, and where as many as 150,000 children were kidnapped, raped, enslaved, and murdered in one year.) Lanier, quite rightly, is still concerned about preserving a humane scale against gigantism in business and finance and about protecting the natural world against destruction and pollution. That is all well and good, and the continuity is consoling, but these threats to the humane order do not loom quite so large, proportionately, as they once did. I would argue that the plain people of the South and perhaps of America have succeeded to a remarkable degree in humanizing the city and the factory—not completely but to a remarkable degree. The problem of economic and political gigantism is secondary, a problem solvable given sufficient will and intelligence. Our pressing crisis is not industrial pollution but cultural pollution (though, of course, the two are related, which was a large part of the burden of the Agrarian message). What threatens us most is not the unintended disruption fostered by urban-industrial life but the intentional destruction wrought by morally and intellectually corrupt policies—the deliberate discouragement of religion, family, community, and tradition.

That is why I find Lytle's comments the most rewarding. He still has the old fire, still keeps the original enemy in view, but seems to realize that the enemy may wear more than one face. Lytle is



#### Passions in America

According to press information, one Ms. Jeanette Minnis from Illinois:

... was sentenced Wednesday to 25 years in prison for murdering and dismembering her husband last fall.

Before being sentenced, Ms. Minnis said, on the record:

I miss my husband very dearly.

Which part? Or perhaps reassembled? Under the circumstances, this seems in need of more specifics. □



concerned with the peril posed by the progressive Western loss of the sense of the sacred, of place, of craftsmanship, of family, of political genius. His remarks,

archaic and anecdotal in style (they were referred to playfully by Brooks as "Rutherford County metaphysics"), are still as relevant as eternity. □

## The Insecurities & Envy of the Liberal Mind

David Lodge: *Souls and Bodies*; William Morrow; New York.

Joan Williams: *County Woman*; Atlantic/Little, Brown; Boston.

by Gregory Wolfe

The novel which sets a story against a backdrop of turbulent social upheaval—civil or foreign wars, revolution—has wide appeal. At the lower end of the literary scale are the thick paperbacks on the supermarket swivel-racks; their covers feature such depictions as a plantation owner in a torrid embrace with a half-naked slave woman, with the burning plantation in the background. The social unrest in these novels is used primarily to echo and intensify unrestrained lust—which is what they are all about, anyway. On the highest end of the scale are works like Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. What transforms these tales into literature is the complex interplay between character and destiny, between the range of human choice and the larger social movement. However, the danger of the historical novel is a tendency toward ideological reductionism; it easily becomes a morality play promoting the author's particular ideological viewpoint; something which has been all too common in an age ravaged by "isms." Both of these novels, in differing degrees, fall into this trap.

A review of Malcolm Muggeridge's diaries written by Lodge may shed some

light on his way of thinking. In it, Lodge says that the "recycling" of Muggeridge has reached its limit, and that Muggeridge "had the courage, or arrogance, to assume that his life has representative significance." Very soon it becomes obvious that Lodge thinks it arrogance; after comparing Muggeridge's spiritual pilgrimage with those of Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, Lodge claims that because Muggeridge was not an artist like them, he turned to journalism and self-promotion. Such a view of Muggeridge, which ignores his talent as a writer and the depth of his religious insight, bespeaks a mind unlikely to see through the pretensions of secular liberalism. Lodge's tone is confident, even judicious. He can certainly afford to be so confident: at a very young age he has written some of the most popular comic novels and books of literary criticism (in Britain, at least) of the last 15 years. Some reviewers compare Lodge favorably to Greene and Waugh. In *Souls and Bodies*, Lodge turns his self-confident tone to good advantage, for his persona as narrator is very much the Fielding-esque scholar-gentleman, interrupting the story to make short disquisitions, commenting sympathetically on his characters, even sharing his thought processes as he decides what to name his characters. This self-conscious artistry encourages the reader to assume an ironic detachment and at the same time points to Lodge's artistic mastery, his ability to make the story come alive. Another device he employs is to use the transcript of a TV documentary (on a liberal Catholic organization) to end the novel on a note of comic irony.

The epigraph for *Souls and Bodies* is, significantly, from Hans Küng; it is a series of what might be called "fundamental" questions ("What can we know? . . . Why are we here? . . . What will give us courage for life and what courage for death?"). It turns out that these questions are important because they deal with the universal problems that Christianity seeks to answer and that stand in contradistinction to the accumulation of dogma and moral casuistry which burden modern Roman Catholics and cause them serious difficulties in life. For the most part, Lodge's criticism along these lines is light and comic: life for Roman Catholics is seen as a game of moral Snakes and Ladders, where the object is to avoid Hell by arranging one's moral status (by means of confession, communion, rosaries, indulgences) so as to die in a state of grace and thus go straight to Heaven. The main question for Catholics who seek pleasure while being confronted with moral prohibitions is: How far can one go? Lodge has great fun with this casuistry as he traces the premarital and early married lives of his characters, and the humor often lapses into farce.

But Lodge lets us know that this is not merely a comic novel like his *Changing Places*, a bouncy satire on the campus unrest of the late 60's and on English and American academic life. In *Souls and Bodies* there is a tragic element that is supposed to give bite to the satire; reviewers call this a "dark power" and even "stark tragedy." What it comes down to is this: Catholic sexual morality in general, and, more specifically, the doctrines on contraception embodied in the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* are seen as having destructive effects, in both a practical and a psychological sense. The great obstacle is the safe method of contraception (otherwise known as rhythm, or the sympto-thermal method in its developed form), which is often ineffective, sexually restricting, and just plain tiresome. In fact, the closest this novel comes to "stark tragedy" is when one