

students? Especially when, like Kohl, they "don't have the heart to punish children?"

Kohl is smart enough to realize that there is more to learning than style and approach, that content plays some part in the learning process. Unfortunately, there is no sign that Kohl ever took the trouble to acquire a store of learning or that he has the slightest idea of what might constitute an educated person. If you are not interested in the content of education, why become a teacher in the first place? After all, he points out, teachers are ill-paid and underappreciated. His response to this defeatism: "The prime reason to teach is wanting to be with young people and help them grow." No wonder we're in trouble. Kohl and his disciples are drawing good salaries (underpaid, indeed. Eight months of destroying young minds—what is it worth?) because they enjoy hanging around with children. *Growing Minds* goes a long way to persuade us that education is too important to be left to the teachers. (TJF) □

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**Malcolm Bradbury: *The Modern American Novel***; Oxford University Press; New York.

Serviceable handbooks to literature are always handy to have around the house or office; those that are pithy rather than prolix are even superior. Malcolm Bradbury, himself no mean novelist, examines, in a mere 186 pages (excluding back-of-the-book materials), American fiction from the 1890's on to our day. Works are not only placed in their social context, but also in relation to the other creations produced during their immediate time frame. Bradbury's final sentence is worth quoting in full, for, coming as it does from a

British writer, it indicates that a dream of our forefathers, that American literature be respected on the world scene, has been fulfilled:

If the novel is, at best, a deep apprehension of what it

means, in a changing world, to utter ourselves, structure our experience, name our world into being, then over the course of the century the best American fiction has become a literature of primary enquiries into the means of doing exactly that. □

## WASTE OF MONEY

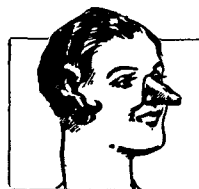
### Canonized for Confusion

**Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader**; Edited by Alix Kates Shulman; Schocken Books; New York.

In science fields, creating a false paradigm is a sure way to gain disrepute among posterity. The modern reputations, for instance, of Ptolemy as an astronomer, or of Tycho Brahe as a cosmologist are not high. In politics, however, the authors of spurious theories may be favorably remembered not only despite their errors, but even *because* of them. The apotheosis of Karl Marx is a case in point: Marx is widely revered for making historical predictions that have almost all failed. A similar paradox exists in the case of Emma Goldman, radical exponent of anarchy and "free communism" from the 1890's to the 1930's. Indefatigably, Miss Goldman prophesied that a wonderful new society was about to emerge in which the evils of government, family, religion, and traditional morality would all be replaced by "nature's forces," "free motherhood," and "spontaneity and free opportunity." The glorious result would be "individual liberty and economic equality" and a universal new sense of the "joy of life."

Yet even before Miss Gold-

man's death in 1940, her predictions were being contradicted on every hand. Her early conviction that the blissful revolution she sought was unfolding in communist Russia was cruelly smashed during the two years she spent there after her deportation from America. To her dismay she discovered that the



Russian anarchists had been, predictably, insufficiently "organized" (i.e., *governed*) to oppose the statist ambitions of the Bolsheviks, and that Marxism had turned the country into a dystopia of oppression, new class distinctions, and brutal coercion. Similarly, during the Spanish Civil War her naive confidence in the triumph of anarchism failed to take into account the hard realities of human corruption and international politics. As a young woman, Miss Goldman was confident that anarchism was about to "usher in the Dawn." But the anarchist sun so stubbornly stayed below the historical horizon that a few years before her death, she had to admit that

anarchism was "to a certain extent in abeyance," even as she reaffirmed her faith that at some unspecified future time it would yet "be vindicated."

The "free love," the rebellion against authority, and the egotistic indulgence of the 1960's did indeed make it appear for a time that anarchy was about to have its day. But Miss Goldman's notion that unbounded licentiousness would produce a utopia seemed ludicrous to sensible observers who witnessed the chaos, despair, and social disintegration of that tumultuous decade. Still, Schocken Books would not be reissuing an expanded anthology of Miss Goldman's vaticinations if their market experts did not know that the Left, which is immune to facts, will praise and promote her outmoded ideological fatuities. Radical feminists like Alix Shulman are so enamored of Miss Goldman's attacks on the family that they will eagerly embrace any philosophical absurdity so long as it is hostile to the family. If it is ever established that Ptolemy was a closet communist or a proto-feminist, somebody will put together a sympathetic reconsideration of his theory of epicycles. (BC) □

### Liberal Neuroses

**John S. Saloma III: *Ominous Politics: The New Conservative Labyrinth***; Hill and Wang; New York.

Because Goliath laughed when David came against him with a slingshot and five smooth stones, we may safely assume that the giant was neither a leftist nor a liberal. For as *Ominous Politics* by John S. Saloma III makes clear, liberals and leftists do not snicker when upstart foes begin to put a pebble or two into their srips. Instead, they quake,

they tremble, they gnash their teeth, and they whine "Unfair!" Indeed, there is something sublimely absurd about a book that can on one page admit the existence of "some 100 liberally oriented public-interest law firms" and on the facing page portray the recent emergence of "some dozen conservative regional public-interest law firms" as an ominous development. Given the author's admission that left-liberal causes have long enjoyed the support of "wealthy contributors, labor unions, liberal foundations, (and) some corporations" and of "the overwhelming majority of professionals in the communications media," his laments about the sinister rise of conservative think-tanks, media monitors, and

political action groups are ridiculously disingenuous. Predictably, in the final chapter of this hastily written little volume, every pretense of logic and fairness disappears in a partisan appeal to "the center-left . . . to restore the balance."

Mr. Saloma, who died a year before his book was published, seems never to have thought about the possibility that the "balance" to which he refers was actually a highly undemocratic left-liberal hegemony that excluded conservative groups, who are now quite justified in challenging their exclusion. But then the very survival of overgrown left-liberalism requires, as did the survival of the giant from Gath, that certain things not enter the head. □

## Editorial Comment

(continued from page 5)

"Comfort. Physical well-being. Money. Pleasure." are equally stupid. The answers obviously point to subjective and personal desires, goals, objectives. Values are objective notions, long-tested on mankind's scales and hierarchies of worth: integrity, compassion, tolerance, common sense. The nature and essence of values are spiritual, ethical, social. Freedom is a value, so is justice, reason, patriotism, the sense of tradition. The Democrats speak of valuables rather than values; they seem unaware that education in itself is not a value, but forming a functionally good, law-abiding, morally decent human being and citizen with the help of education is. Mr. Cuomo spoke about creating "the family of America" but his appeal to endless demands, entitlements, and selfishness of his various constituencies told us little about how to do such a thing. The family is a timeless attempt to structure authority on sacrifice, devotion, and love, and Mr. Cuomo says nothing about how he would persuade the union lobbyists, feminists, and environmentalists to accept such a social institution so threatening to their interests. The "Darwinian" Republicans, who themselves tend too often to drown in their syrupy family symbolizations, at least repeat: "Go out there, compete, build, struggle, create, work, honor law and order—and that's the best way to care about *your* family. Your enterprise, sweat, energy, playing by the rules and striving hard best protects *both* your family and a strong democratic society. You don't have to love the other guy to be fair to him and to construct a better world." The key word of this social philosophy is

"opportunity," but the Democrats somehow ceased to be the party of opportunity and turned into a party of extortion on behalf of "the needy," "the forgotten," "the downtrodden." Both Mr. Cisneros and Mr. Cuomo intone hymns to the socioeconomic heroism of their forefathers who came here, worked hard and proudly climbed the social scale, loving America deliriously for giving them *the opportunity* for doing exactly what they were doing and being certain that their toil would have results. The luxury of buoyant personal hope was largely unknown in their countries of origin.

In Mr. Cuomo's oratory the Rooseveltian New Deal helped the generation of immigrants "... to reach heights that our own parents would not have dared dream of." Perhaps, but during the last 50 years, it was not the New Deal but the Yankee, Republican, and the despised country club which offered the last refuge to those who still believed in pursuit of individual happiness through laboriousness, "rat race," economic dynamism. The Republicans tried to preserve a social ethos; the Democrats chose social engineering. The former preached the American Dream as weaved out of relentless effort, faith in ruthless work, and unbound free enterprise—the texture of Cuomo's, Ferraro's, Cisneros's, and Dukakis's fathers' reveries, for all those family founders wanted in the New World was the freedom to benefit from their sacrificial industriousness. As of now, Republicans still want to extend and protect this privilege to anyone coming here. Democrats, ruled by the old immigrants' sons, wish now to offer the new immigrants a welfare state, a thoroughly regulated reality, where charity and compassion will be enforced by governmental edicts at the expense of the will to work, accumulate, create, enrich oneself, one's family, America. Small wonder that those Mayor Cisneros spoke about, those who just came, and those who still remember their Working Fathers—all those Cubans and Vietnamese, Ukrainians, and Lebanese, as well as old Poles and old Italians—started to massively vote Republican. Grim irony is vested in the circumstance that the Cuomos and the Cisneroses want now to deprive the "new arrivals" of what they came to these shores to find.

**T**his election is going to be determined by the question each one of us asks himself: "What kind of life do we want?" The answer to this query is not economy alone. Do we want to defend ourselves and our way of life against communist encroachment—in whichever form it may invade our present reality? Are we ready to meet a historical challenge once again? Do we want to reach for the highest promise of the Judeo-Christian civilization—a community of humans that is free to pursue justice, order, and fairness?

We'd better ask ourselves these questions before we enter the polling place.

—Leopold Tyrmand

# Burn Out

**Streets of Fire; Directed by Walter Hill; Written by Walter Hill and Larry Gross; Universal.**

by Stephen Macaulay

*Streets of Fire* has what is either a subtitle or a disclaimer: *A Rock & Roll Fable*. Moreover, as the movie opens, a title on the screen advises the viewer that he's viewing "Another Time, Another Place . . .," which, of course, provides the director, Walter Hill, with an out: he can claim that any and all rules of reason and good taste can be violated

## Notables

### Bathos

In a full-page ad in the *New York Times* Book Review for *Sex & Destiny: The Politics of Human Fertility* by Germaine Greer (Harper & Row; New York) a certain Fay Weldon's words from a piece in the *London Times* are quoted in type that's 1/2-inch high: "One of the most important books to be written this century." Now, what some people in London may know—something that fewer here in the colonies are aware of—is that Ms. Greer was once a comedian who worked with some of those men who are now best known under the encompassing sobriquet "Monty Python." Perhaps, unbeknownst to the readers of ads in the *NYTBR*, Fay Weldon's blurb is actually part of a comedy sketch. After all, the title of Ms. Greer's book does sound *rather* imposing, doesn't it? And its bulk—541 pages fat—is enough to make one imagine that this is a scholarly *tome*, enough to make one overlook the fact that the dust jacket photo shows the author not in professorial robes, but bib overalls. But when all of that is penetrated, when one gets to the heart of the matter, then one discovers that Ms. Greer's point is that many people in Western industrialized countries—especially those who die for their *Sunday Times*—subscribe to an attitude toward children noted by that great American philosopher W. C. Fields.

at will because the presentation is, after all, a complete fabrication. If that is the case, then it might be suggested that only imaginary viewers go see the film: mere mortal flesh is too weak to hold up under the audio-visual onslaught of banality and noise.

*Streets of Fire* aspires to be a "cult film," that is, one that ordinary people stay away from in droves but which others go see again and again and again, usually at midnight on a Friday or Saturday, by which time their senses are naturally or artificially numb. The term *cult film* doesn't provide an accurate sense of the makeup of the viewers; the term should be modified with descriptive terms that indicate that the attendees tend to be more than slightly masochistic. And one must be so to think anything nice about *Streets of Fire*. The dialogue makes Mickey Spillane seem like Proust; the acting makes cigar-store Indians seem to have the flexibility of a Garrick or Kean. The most disturbing part about *Streets of Fire* is not anything in the film itself, but something that it may portend: should more films like it be made, eventually society is going to sink to a level whereat *Streets of Fire* makes sense. □

## Firecracker

***Moscow on the Hudson*; Directed by Paul Mazursky; Written by Paul Mazursky and Leon Capetanos; Columbia Pictures.**

Is Bloomingdale's quintessentially American, the paradigm of this country in the late 20th century? Hollywood leads us to believe that it is so. First there was Madison (named after the avenue) the mermaid in *Splash* learning how to dress and even speak in Bloomies. Then in *Moscow on the Hudson* one Vladimir, a saxophonist in a Soviet circus band, decides to defect in the designer jeans department. Still, it's unlikely that the "big brown bag" (as the Bloomingdale's

shopping bag is designated) will achieve eagle, baseball, Levi's, or Coca Cola status. Paul Mazursky does, however, put his finger on one thing in *Moscow on the Hudson* that is intrinsically American yet regularly ignored: the supermarket. In a too-brief segment of the film set in Moscow, Vladimir is shown waiting in endless lines for goods. Shoes that are several sizes too small are a real treasure; pickled mushrooms are Olympian ambrosia. Existential fulfillment is experienced when Vladimir comes to the cramped family (including Grandpa) living quarters bearing a half-dozen rolls of toilet paper—not Charmin, mind you, but something that a typical American would probably use in woodworking. Imagine the shock that overrides bliss that Vladimir experiences when, in a conventional U.S. grocery store, he is faced with an entire aisle of coffee—everything from Maxwell House to Sanka—that he is free to choose from. He hyperventilates and must be hospitalized.

It is difficult for Americans to understand freedom since it is somehow akin to air and water: things taken for granted but which must be preserved. Paul Mazursky should be commended for showing the citizens here how good they have it. You can be sure they won't see it in Moscow on the Moskva. □

## Groveling to Glory

**Roman Polanski: *Roman*; William Morrow; New York.**

Roman Polanski on his favorite subject: "My friends and family . . . came to regard me as a buffoon. Ever eager to amuse and entertain, I assumed the role with good grace. I never minded."

Polanski could use the same words to describe his career as film director. Despite his obvious talents, Polanski has insisted on degrading himself for the amusement of the public. We can hardly blame him. His high-dive into the muck has earned him universal applause and an enviable bank balance. □