

South Africa has an economy based upon cheap black labor. In fact, the industry of South Africa is highly automated and is becoming more so at a rapid pace. If black South Africans went on a general strike, the economy could and would carry on: The wound would not be fatal. A mortal wound to the economic vitality of South Africa would be the loss of the white high-tech workers because of fear-induced flight from the country.

One unpleasant domestic factor must be recognized even though Neuhaus' interlocutors seldom speak of it: Most black South Africans do not have the skills or habits to make highly productive contributions to the economy. I have yet to meet an Afrikaner who did not take it for granted that a black would one day be the chief of state of the Republic of South Africa. The issues in the minds of the whites are whether this will occur before or after blacks have the educational level which will qualify them for that status, and how to finance the astronomical bills for education.

The Botha government seems to understand that economics should not be viewed as a zero-sum game but as a process whereby high technology increases the quality of life for everyone. They seem to understand, if bishops and other divines do not, that the primary function of a government is to provide the freedom and the logistical support necessary for the creation, rather than the distribution, of wealth. South Africa is increasing opportunities for its black citizens by leaps and bounds, in comparison with other countries in Africa and elsewhere. If the Marxists and their surrogates do not work quickly, blacks in South Africa will soon have progressed economically to a level where internal revolution will be improbable.

This brings us to a problem which is central to the South African crisis and which seems to be a nonproblem to most of those to whom Richard Neuhaus has spoken. It is the fact that South Africa occupies a strategic geographic position and that it has the only large supplies of many strategic metals outside the Marxist world. These two factors make it essential that those who wish the West ill see to it that all possible pressure be brought to bear on the Republic of South Africa

to insure its overthrow while there is still a chance for a Marxist takeover there. Agitprop is doing an effective job of setting the stage for the overthrow. America is now essentially convinced that the problems of the Afrikaners are of their own making, that one man/one vote would bring about democracy and peace. Few people in America ask the question, "How is it that I have the wisdom to see the solution to a problem which those, who otherwise think very much like me and who have had a lifetime of experience with the problem, cannot comprehend?" This question is so obvious that the fact we do not ask it shows that we have, in Hegelian fashion, "risen above our common sense and grasped a higher reality." It is the ability of the Soviets, their friends and dupes, to make us suspend our reason and adopt their terms of discourse which bids so ill for South Africa and for us all. In 1971 Leonid Brezhnev said with uncharacteristic candor that two areas are critical to the victory of Moscow-style socialism in the world: the Middle East and Southern Africa. With a few exceptions, the intellectuals whom Neuhaus has interviewed live in a world without wolves roaming in the night.

## Boomtown Philosophers

by Stephen L. Tanner

*Latin American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Jorge J.E. Gracia, Buffalo: Prometheus Books.

Why is it that America has noticed the "Boom" in Latin American fiction but has ignored Latin American philosophy? One obvious reason lies in the unavailability of translated texts. While novelists have energetically and strategically combined efforts to publish translations of their works in the United States, nothing of the sort has happened in Latin American philosophy. This anthology, part of a Frontiers of Philosophy series, is the first to appear in English in more than 30 years.

The task was challenging. Material

that might have been included is abundant, diverse, uneven in quality, and often scattered in periodicals difficult to locate. The editor has selected from the writings of 14 thinkers from five countries. To achieve a certain unity, he has focused on three fundamental topics of particular concern to Latin American philosophers: man, values, and the search for philosophical identity. The selections for the first two parts were made in collaboration with Risieri Frondizi, one of the writers represented in the book.

The major trends in contemporary Latin American philosophy emerged in reaction to positivism. The philosophy of Auguste Comte had been welcomed in Latin America as a corrective to the prevailing scholasticism. It seemed to offer empirical rigor and an assurance of progress in place of archaic dogmatism and fruitless theorizing. In Mexico, Comte's slogan, "Order and Progress," guided the 27-year dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, and in Brazil, the phrase was incorporated into the national flag as well as into the attitude of political leaders.

But positivism failed to deliver on its promises, and its determinism generated dissatisfaction with diminished freedom in the moral, aesthetic, and political realms. The selections in the "Man" and "Values" sections of this book display a preoccupation with ontological and metaphysical questions. Many of these philosophers were trained in the humanities and are much concerned with social and political issues—the themes of freedom, personalism, and human spirit appear repeatedly.

The most pervasive and characteristic concern of Latin American philosophy over the past hundred years has been the search for philosophical identity. Is there, can there be, or should there be a distinctively Latin American philosophy? Part three of this anthology provides sample answers and concludes with Arturo Andres Roig's arguments for a "philosophy of liberation." Rejecting the classic conception of philosophy as contemplative and disinterested knowledge, Roig looks to Marxism and Freudianism to provide a basis for the social function of knowledge. Philosophy, he insists, should acquire substance by involving itself in the historical process: "The 'theory of

freedom' that fills the discourse of our 'founders' [the philosophers represented in part one of this book] must, no doubt, be replaced by the 'theory of liberation' that should have as its fundamental task the elaboration of new integrating categories beginning with a redemption of the historical sense of man."

The anthology thus moves in its considerations from the inner life of the person to the external concerns of collectivism, from universal concerns with human freedom to political liberation in the particular context of Latin America, from philosophy as metaphysical questioning to philosophy as political ideology. It is a pattern characteristic of contemporary Latin American experience in general and one that the United States must soberly reflect upon.

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## Sense and Sensibility

by John Skonnord

*Bathsheba on the Third Day* by Jane Greer, Omaha, NE: The Cumming-ton Press.

It is a rare American poem, this late in the 20th century, that dares to be understood. Jane Greer's slim volume, *Bathsheba on the Third Day*, is full of such poems, which give this first book a mature heft and solidity.

The maturity should not be surprising. Jane Greer is the founding editor of *Plains Poetry Journal*, and her own poetry reflects the high standards she has set for her nationally recognized journal. What marks Jane Greer's writing is its sureness in handling poetic traditions for her own purposes and effects—themselves highly personal and original.

The strength of individual poems in this collection is matched by their organization into a book with the old virtues of a beginning, middle, and end. The unifying topic is love, as the allusion in the title poem suggests. But this most traditional of subjects—Robert Graves called it the only

subject of true poetry—is also the most difficult to handle successfully, that is to say, with economy and effect. The title poem is a good example of the novelty of approaches Greer uses to handle the oldest of themes:

Hot, hot, hot  
is all those spooky crows  
can think to say. We ought  
to have some people over,  
take in a funny show,  
redecorate this tent.  
Aren't you listening, lover?  
We'll just have to invent  
our own fun, take a course  
maybe, in the fall, and  
then . . .  
Oh, please, babe, not *again*!  
We never *talk* any more.

The contemporary and satiric tone is one of the many registers found in the book. Here the banality of desire and modern "concerns" undercut one of the oldest and most powerful stories of sexual temptation, sin, and death resident in Western culture. The poem achieves its effect by ignoring the moral burden of the biblical *locus*, and dares the reader to ignore it, by giving a voice to the naked body seen that

## Poem

by P. J. Kavanagh

'And must I sing? What subject shall I choose?'

—Ben Jonson

Perhaps as easy to try a poem  
As to do nothing, in a morning  
Already dispersed by radio 'News at One'  
(An attempt to keep in touch—with something.)  
Pessoa discovered another self, Caeiro,  
Who didn't bother with rhyming: 'Seldom  
Are two trees equal, side by side.'

To write a poem . . . what for? For fame?  
A laugh! A granny with a baby on her arm  
(One old photograph, lying about at random).  
In another, your girlhood's pensive chin,  
Angled nostril, clay-stuffed now. A landslide!

For sticking up a muddied head through time.  
Never, dear God, from boredom!

spring afternoon by King David.

Allusion is one of the most traditional of poetic tools, to be used lightly; and, consequently, a very different kind of allusion is present in "Pastoral":

There is a primly tended park  
where, in the noon sun,  
shadows quiver;  
there is a muddy blood-warm  
river  
murmuring lies from dark to  
dark;  
and, in between, a snarl of  
grass  
the mowing man, in the heat,  
forgot.  
Knee-deep, waist-deep,  
steaming in hot  
sun, it lets no lovers pass.

Young men and women shed  
their clothes  
without relief among the trees:  
Ardor is dampened by degrees.  
But in the long grass  
something grows  
importunate of appetite  
and roots its deepest self in  
mire,