

Battle for the Mind

By William Sargant. New York: Doubleday and Company. 260 pp. \$4.50.

Myth and Guilt

By Theodor Reik. New York: George Braziller, Inc. 432 pp. \$5.75.

These two books are in manifold and fruitful opposition. Dr. Sargant is an eminent British psychiatrist. He is religious in background, physiologically slanted through his enthusiastic belief in Pavlovian control by conditioning the reflexes and his reliance on laboratory experimentation with drugs and nerve stimuli. He is hopeful of the outcome in this *Battle for the Mind* between the varied ideologies if only we realize we are in the Psychological Revolution and will use these newly sharpened weapons of the mind and the newly cut keys to the spirit.

Dr. Reik is a patriarch of the Freudian faith, deeply learned in Western history (as orthodoxists should be) and holding fast to the revelation given by the Founder. Charmingly, he blends a theory of tragedy (as a dramatic rendering of the precultural murder of the sire of the pack by his sons), an hypothesis about Original Sin (our ancestral guilt springs from the same source), and a proposal as to why Judaism with its stern Je-

hovah and Christianity with its God of Love appear as aeonic antagonists. He is compassionate and sad. Know the truth as psychoanalysis has revealed it, he seems to say, and the wisdom it imparts may be tonic enough to take you off the dangerously elational drug called Hope.

Dr. Sargant's confidence in re-conditioned reflexes and nerve drugs does seem a little premature. He tells us that the deep mind can only be altered by three forces — fear, hatred, and ecstasy. He shows, convincingly, the profound alterations now routinely produced by fear and hatred. But he says nothing about the effects of ecstasy — although he makes some interesting comments on religious conversion and the revivalist techniques of John Wesley and later evangelists. Wesley did “rebound” his converts into happiness, but it was by first bouncing them off the red hot floor of eternal Hell. This technique is still used but it works less well each year, and with fewer people. The others await a truly contemporary set of “spiritual exercises.”

Dr. Sargant proposes that, if we are not prepared to “Pavlovize” all our people, we had better cultivate a sense of humor. Humor, he thinks, holds up better against present police or popular fourth and fifth degree methods of mind-

changing than does rational conviction or conscientious loyalty.

Dr. Reik's pessimism, on the other hand, happily seems no better founded. He appeals to history. But, with the too common provincialism of Western man, he confines his survey to the Semitic Mediterranean outcrop from the main stratiform layers of man's story. China and India he leaves aside. Had he considered the entirety of these deposits in the light of psychological history, he would have detected, as historians today are coming to recognize, that the guilt in our social tradition arose as a natural reaction following the Heroic Age. After "Heroic Man" (the proto-individual) had (circa 1500 B.C.) with violent *hubris* smashed the ancient "hypnocratic" cultural pattern, this epoch of violence is of necessity succeeded by the next stage (circa the eighth century B.C.), the Epoch of Guilt with its expiatory method, Asceticism.

And further, if we survey the entire process now available to the historian, (as I have attempted in *The Human Venture*) instead of a *damnosa hereditas*, we can detect a vast period of successive ordeals and initiations whereby Man is, through these labors and rebirths, gradually becoming aware of where he is, what he is, and who he is.

GERALD HEARD

The Coming Caesars

By Amaury de Riencourt. New York: Coward-McCann. 384 pp. \$6.00.

The Coming Caesars may be described as an extended essay on historical patterns which makes some bold predictions about the future of the West. The author's thesis is that America is now well on the road to Caesarian government, and that, since American power will inevitably dominate the world, the age of Caesars is here.

The argument derives such force as it has from a grand historical analogy. In a long and detailed survey, Mr. de Riencourt maintains that Europe stands in the same relation to America in which Greece stood to Rome, and that just as Rome was fated to overcome Greece and master the world, so America is fated to take over Europe and dominate the world of tomorrow. This is supported by a concurring analogy, in which European culture is likened to Greek culture and American civilization to Roman civilization. In his analysis, culture and civilization are distinct stages; a civilization always follows upon a culture and, in a manner of speaking, lives upon the capital the culture has created. As Rome absorbed and to some extent maintained the culture of Greece, so America is absorbing and to some extent maintaining