

verted philosophy of existence," centered in the ancient sophistical conviction that "goodness and justice consist in the satisfaction of desires." (p. 35). Hobbes would have agreed with Polus that each man would be a knave if he could, and also with Callicles' definition of justice as "the rule of the stronger over the weaker." Like Callicles, Bentham identified pleasure with virtue, and condemned self-denial as weakness. It would be a simple matter to correlate the fundamental assumptions and arguments of the ancient sophists with those of their modern counterparts, and to draw out the consequences to society. The modern disciples of ancient sophists are legion: jurists who make no distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* law, sociologists who confound normative and discursive reason, and convert existential facts into categorical imperatives, politicians who operate concentration camps on the

basis of mass production in murder. And then there is that vast army of the philosophically stillborn, with one leg in each camp, leaning either way, who don't quite know how they feel about the struggle, and want to know first who will win before they commit themselves, or who, when they are not the victims of sophistry, face away from its horrible consequences.

The social disorders of our century are not merely the result of intellectual confusion, although that is important; at bottom our worst catastrophes reveal a disorder in the souls of modern men. Voegelin's analysis of the principles of order in Greek society transcends even Plato and Aristotle, because he writes from the vantage point of our era. Every discerning reader of *Order and History* will perceive its rich application to modern society, and will understand better how the order of history is determined by true philosophy.

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### *Blues in Chicago*

In a little club  
In Chicago  
At two  
Someone says,  
"Play the blues."

A melody on piano  
Is picked up by a trumpet  
While a bassist bemused  
Nods his head  
To the beat.

People listen and drink:  
A marine and a beer,  
A blonde and a gin,  
A professor  
And scotch-on-the-rocks.

Sounds distinct  
Are combined  
To produce the blues  
In Chicago  
At two.

JOHN REECE DRING

## *Inhibition and Innocence*

JACK JONES

*The Contenders*, by John Wain. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958.

*Afternoon of an Author*, uncollected stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Arthur Mizener, ed., New York: Scribner's, 1958.

THROUGHOUT JOHN WAIN'S new novel, *The Contenders*, there runs an odd refrain: the birthplace of the protagonists is always "the town I musn't name." At first the refrain seems only tasteless and mildly irritating, but one gradually begins to feel a deeper though involuntary meaning. In this tale of rivalry among three young men of the Welfare State, their ambitions—even their characters—are those of convention, not of desire, and what might be their real concerns are buried so deeply

that they never get dug up or even "named."

The absence of this dimension, also that of serious writing, prevents this novel from being more than light entertainment but on this level there are some good things. Mr. Wain writes clearly and swiftly. The competition begins in school with "Bloater-baiting"—Bloater being a tyrannical master (and also, no doubt, "the Establishment") emotionally indifferent to the boys, wrapped up "in some intricate figure that left him no energy to spare in saving lives." Robert, the artist-to-be, torments the Bloater with his imaginative flair (quotations from non-existent sources); Ned, the future executive, with cold organizational efficiency (he actually puts together a class textbook upon the subject) while fat Joe—the ordinary joe—looks on passively and admiringly. Robert and Ned half-relish, half-hate each other's mode of talent. When Ned leaves school to start a pottery factory, Robert serves for a while as "chief genius"