

Joyce's work, like that of the eight Catholics dealt with in *Maria Cross*, uses "the Catholic language, the *lingua franca* of suffering" and is very much in "connivance with sin" (Conor Cruise O'Brien's expressions). A sentence like the following from *Maria Cross* applies splendidly to Joyce: "The considerable satirical power that all these writers possess, and use in varying degrees, derives in part from their underlying sense of discrepancy—the discrepancy between the modern world, seen coldly, and the past, so warmly felt." *The Conscience of James Joyce* makes much the same point in respect to the manipulation of the *Odyssey* parallel in *Ulysses*, especially in the implicit confrontation between the heroic Odysseus and the sexually ridiculous Leopold Bloom.

I have digressed this much from Darcy O'Brien's thesis only to point out certain ways in which he might have broadened his approach. If *The Conscience of James Joyce* has a weakness it is that it refuses to be a "comparative" study; the optics are too narrow. In talking about Irish Catholic morality and its effects on Joyce's work a reference to Sean O'Faolain's "Parnellism" (Conor Cruise O'Brien's word) might have been useful. It is a pleasure, of course, to read a book in which the theme is as consistently maintained as it is in *The Conscience of James Joyce*. Still one would appreciate an occasional nod to the side or rear to convince us that Joyce belongs to a tradition of twentieth century Catholic writing—which he held on to, unwittingly, through his Jansenist discomfort with sex.

Reviewed by MELVIN J. FRIEDMAN

## *In a Time of Famine*

**Mansions of the Spirit: Essays in Religion and Literature**, edited by George A. Panichas, with an introductory essay by Thomas Merton. *New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1967. 414 pp. \$8.95.*

THE SEVEN ESSAYS in the first part of this book appear under the rubric "Theory and Aesthetic," and they tend, as does Thomas Merton's introductory essay, to be more immediately interesting when they are concerned with interpreting specific literary works than when they are concerned with theory. Thus, for example, whether or not we see in the same way as Thomas Merton the distinction between "religious" and "sapiential" thinking, it certainly enables him to make some very penetrating observations about Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* and *The Wild Palms*; and all except one of the contributors to the first part of the book have interesting things to say about specific works of literature. The exception is Mr. Hanna, who confines himself to theory and makes a strong and impressive attempt to define the "religious literature" which may or may not be the general subject of the book. We shall refer again to his essay, and will only say now that it is fortunate that the editor was not bound by Mr. Hanna's rigorous definition but allowed his contributors all the latitude they could wish for in interpreting the word "religion." Thanks to this latitude, the second part of the book can be described as a collection of a dozen highly accomplished essays on modern writers, in which their work is considered in relation to the religious crisis, or famine, of our age. Among the most interesting is Mr. Madden's essay on some nineteenth century novels in English, beginning with *The Heart of Midlothian* and ending with *Lord Jim*. Some of the novelists he discusses had very little concern

with religion in any strict sense of the word. And in another essay, even Trollope is able to find a place, for Mr. Hillis Miller introduces him with complete relevance into his study of the evolution of subjectivism in Victorian fiction.

Another extremely rewarding essay is Professor de Sola Pinto's on D. H. Lawrence, with some luminous observations about *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* and a slight over-appreciation, it seems to me, of *The Man Who Died* and the later poems. And excellent in a different way is Mr. Birnbaum's exposure of the artificiality of Aldous Huxley's religious syncretism. His criticism is all the more effective for its respectful tone. The quotations from Huxley are allowed to speak for themselves in all their shallow obtuseness, but none of them, unfortunately, illustrates Huxley's better side—the diligence and even, sometimes, the humility of his search for truth. It might indeed be difficult to illustrate this aspect of Huxley by quotation because, although he was scarcely middle-aged when he ceased to be an *enfant terrible*, he never outgrew the cheap glitter and staleness of his “mandarin” style. But if Mr. Birnbaum seems a little hard on Huxley, this is nothing to Dr. Florovsky's treatment of Tolstoy. After giving two brilliant and masterly sketches of Gogol and Dostoevsky, he then presents Tolstoy as a belated rationalist of the Enlightenment, a sort of nineteenth century Bertrand Russell, with a tendency to regard Christ as “just a teacher of the happy life.” It is, of course, possible to make a case against Tolstoy along those lines, but to dismiss him in this way in three and a half pages is like dismissing Dostoevsky as an epileptic fascist, or Goethe as a worldling, or Rousseau as a psychopath.

It is astonishing in a different way to be told by Professor Wilson Knight that Masefield “has a Shakespearean power of rising to a supreme occasion” and that some of his lines “have a dramatic force scarcely equaled, certainly never surpassed, in English;” but it is interesting to learn that this decent and simple-minded poet was chary

of words like “goodness” and “faith” because he held that “ethical terms are soiled.” And this brings us to Professor Panichas's beautifully sensitive study of Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*. No modern novelist is more aware than Salinger of the debasement of our vocabulary caused by the weakening of the idea of value, and none is more aware of the responsibility of literature in a situation of world-wide religious famine. As Mr. Panichas rightly says, the dialogue between Franny and her intellectual boy friend in the first half of the story is the confrontation between a faltering and tentative consciousness that is still oriented towards the good and a consciousness irrevocably steeped in all the poisons of twentieth century pseudo-culture and inspired by “the spirit of ruin.” Professor Panichas very appropriately compares this passage to Dostoevsky's parable of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*. At this level the distinction between religion and literature no longer holds. Nor did it hold for Lawrence who, as de Sola Pinto puts it, embarked, after finishing *Sons and Lovers*, upon the adventure of transfiguring the novel “by giving it a new dimension to make it express his religious apprehension of a reality different from that of the spatio-temporal universe;” and even Albert Camus, distrustful as Masefield of the ethical vocabulary, could write, as Mr. Cruickshank reminds us, that “nothing can discourage the appetite for divinity present in the human heart.” It might have been better to say that nothing can *finally* discourage this appetite because the whole religious, political, and social history of mankind is a record of how it can be frustrated, misled, and deceived and also of how it can frustrate, mislead, and deceive itself; and never more so than in the 20th century.

In the light of these considerations, some of the essays in the first section of *Mansions of the Spirit* appear somewhat academic. Mr. Hanna, for example, tackles with vigor and ability the formidable question: “What does one mean by religious literature?”

and concludes that while a metaphysics of literature is possible, there can be no theology of literature. Therefore, he says, there is in *belles-lettres* "no specific type of literature that can be categorically religious other than those literary works which overtly deal with a publicly recognizable presence of the divine." From which it seems to follow that a book can be of great religious interest and importance without being categorically religious. And as to Mr. Waggoner, who is so perspicuous and interesting about Hawthorne, I find him obscure when he speaks about scholarly objectivity. "It is not assimilating literary study to the exact sciences," he tells us, "to say that the scholar must strive for objectivity, in the sense of transcending his own dearest beliefs if and when necessary. The more firmly he holds his beliefs as a private person, the more lightly he must hold them when he works as a scholar." But, however it may be with dogmatic religious beliefs, it is not every belief that can be held firmly at one time and lightly at another; and there are some beliefs which it would be impossible for those who hold them to "transcend" or to "hold lightly" without falsifying their own mental processes. And these beliefs are the very ones that are most in need of affirmation today.

Consider, for example, Simone Weil's belief that "to recognize something good as being good, and to hold that its origin is evil is the sin against the Spirit, which is not forgiven."<sup>1</sup> Simone Weil is here criticizing the idea of a naturally evolving morality, a criticism which has also been vigorously expressed by T. S. Eliot: "Man is man because he can recognise supernatural realities, not because he can invent them. Either everything in man can be traced as a development from below, or something must come from above. There is no avoiding that dilemma: you must be either a naturalist or a supernaturalist."<sup>2</sup>

Middleton Murry is more subjective but equally definite: "I do not know what metaphysical status to assign to spiritual realities and experiences; nor, I am afraid,

would it profit me much if I did. I already know they are the most precious part of my life; and no intellectual determination of their status would alter that."<sup>3</sup> And here is a belief of Simone Weil's about literature: "Every activity is related to good and evil twice over: by its performance and by its principle. Thus a book may on the one hand be well or badly written and on the other hand it may originate either from good or from evil."<sup>4</sup>

Once again, I do not see how Eliot, Murry, or Weil could transcend or hold lightly any of the above beliefs without falsifying their own mental processes. The specific religious and philosophical opinions of these three thinkers may have varied widely, but all of them shared with D. H. Lawrence the belief which de Sola Pinto describes as a "religious apprehension of a reality different from that of the spatio-temporal universe." All of them rejected, as Lawrence did, the naturalistic, evolutionary ethics of modern humanism, Marxism, and other progressive philosophies. All of them were in some sense transcendentalists, or what Eliot calls supernaturalists; and it is precisely the confrontation between supernaturalism and naturalism that is epitomized in the Salinger dialogue which Panichas so perceptively glosses.

Literature is one of the subjects involved, but the controversy is religious in the fullest possible sense of the word—which is to say that it involves not only literature but politics and every aspect of human life. At the moment, naturalism—which implies the belief that value is a product of evolution and therefore that "matter is a machine for manufacturing good"—is in the ascendant all over the world, as it has been for many years and is likely to be for many more. But its complete and definitive victory is impossible because there is something in the human spirit which will always, even if blindly and unknowingly, reject it.

One of the French students who occupied the Odéon in Paris in May of this year proclaimed from the stage: "We cannot accept a consumer culture;" and it is safe to guess

that the contemporary mania for organizing "Protests" on every conceivable and inconceivable pretext is based less upon any real or imaginary grievances than upon a presentiment—dim, untutored, unformulated, and perhaps unconscious—that the ideal of the progressive philosophies is no more than a tower of Babel with all modern inconveniences luxuriously built in. If any justification is required for a book like *Mansions of the Spirit*, it is that it may help to clarify this situation and encourage a few readers to prepare their minds to meet and face it.

Reviewed by SIR RICHARD REES

<sup>1</sup>*La Connaissance surnaturelle* (Paris, Gallimard, 1950) p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>*Selected Essays* (London, Faber, 1932) p. 447.

<sup>3</sup>*Love, Freedom and Society* (London, Cape, 1957) p. 232.

<sup>4</sup>*On Science, Necessity, and The Love of God* (Oxford University Press, 1968) p. 161.

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## *On the Trail of Treason*

**Special Counsel**, by William A. Rusher,  
*New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington House,*  
1968. 295 pp. \$6.00.

FOR EIGHTEEN years the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee has been investigating subversion in the United States. So voluminous are the published reports of its hearings and findings that most persons are discouraged from delving into them, and those who do so soon find themselves overwhelmed by the tremendous mass of revelatory evidence, startling and sensational though much of it is. For most old-timers these records are chapters of forgotten history; to the newer generation they are virtually unknown.

William A. Rusher, now publisher of *National Review*, was special counsel to the subcommittee during seventeen months of 1956-57 and thus had close acquaintance

with a few of the many important cases included in that vast compendium of frightening but fascinating information about the evil in our midst. His book brings these cases into precise, even microscopic focus. For such of the young as are not occupied in protest marches, campus insurrections, or psychedelic voyages, it should be an eye-opener; as for their elders, it should help them to recall some of the stages whereby our country arrived at its present international, domestic, and economic debacle. It shows how the Communists have burrowed into almost every phase of American life and society. As he conducts his reader through just a few of the scenes from the sinister melodrama called "Scope of Soviet Activity in the United States," Mr. Rusher presents an amazing cast of characters, ranging from some of the lowliest to some of the highest in the land. He introduces us, for example, to the program director of New Orleans' largest and most influential television station who refused to answer any questions concerning Communist Party membership or Communist activities; to an executive of a large travel agency who monotonously pleaded the Fifth Amendment to every significant question; to the executive's wife who invoked the same constitutional privilege in declining either to admit or deny that she had ever belonged to a Parent-Teacher Association; to the humble busboy in a New Orleans restaurant who turned out to be none other than the district organizer for the Communist Party and, incidentally, Southern Director for the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King's Southern Leadership Conference.

From Mr. Rusher we get at long last the whole story concerning the suicide of E. Herbert Norman, Canadian Ambassador to Cairo, which produced an international sensation. The liberal press both here and in Canada accused Robert Morris, the subcommittee's able and conscientious chief counsel, of having hounded Norman to his death by "unsubstantiated charges" and