

shows some characteristics of a class in a full Marxist sense. It possesses power over the means of production, it determines the direction and the course of economic events, and distributes the national wealth. . . . Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that the ruling class of the USSR lacks important characteristics of a Marxist class. The privileges of a member of this élite depend not on his private ownership of the means of production but on the functions he performs in the hierarchy of the system.

That such a new ruling class is going to permit itself to be reformed out of its class power and privileges is not a tenable thesis and flies in the face of the wealth of information in Leonhard's book about the various reforms and changes (not all changes are reforms) in Russia since 1953.

His book is actually an updated and shortened English edition of his *Kremlin ohne Stalin*, published in Germany three years ago. Unfortunately, in the abridgement the American publisher omitted his entire last section of the original edition which summarizes his "12 conclusions" about the significance of the changes since 1953.

JULIUS JACOBSON

A Tangled Vision

In spite of his new role as critic of civilization in *The Tangled Bank*,* Stanley Edgar Hyman forgets not his first calling. He is still the literary critic. Consequently, everything becomes "imaginative literature." Concepts are "myths," descriptive terms are "metaphors," explanations are "visions." Darwin is seen as only incidentally concerned with biological observation; fundamentally he was com-

posing a great naturalistic tragedy. Marx was only incidentally concerned with a critique of political economy; fundamentally he was describing a great social drama. So were Frazer and Freud. "Our four thinkers," concludes Hyman, "produced four vast dramatic works for us, four dynamic visions of evolution, that is, of struggle, adaptation and triumph. . . ." In a sense they were presenting the same vision: "a vision of the thin veneer of civilization over savagery." This, in Frazer's terms, was "the volcano underfoot"—which Freud saw as the id, Darwin as the struggle for survival, Marx as the revolution. They often, moreover, expressed this vision through common images, especially "the key metaphoric progression of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, the development from chain to tree to tangled bank." Finally and most important, they were all great literary artists. Thus they were able to capture, for a time, the fancy of European civilization, almost (at least in the case of Marx and Freud) to found a humanistic "religion." Indeed, all four of these mythmakers performed a quasi-religious mission of revelation, of enlightenment.

Mr. Hyman has written a provoking and presumptuous book, offering new insights into four disparate fields, a possible solution to C. P. Snow's problem of the "two cultures" and even a philosophy of science. We need not take Hyman seriously when he claims not to be interested in the "history of ideas." True, his main object is the pursuit of myth and metaphor, but then, as he later suggests, "ultimately the language of ideas is metaphor and essentially metaphor"—or more rashly, "perhaps *all* science is metaphor." Such a view, reducing theory to "imaginative design," raises literary criticism to the level of philosophy. It also, by divorcing science from the objects of its concern, replaces metaphysics with aesthetics. "Truth" is no longer very relevant. "The ideas of Darwin, Marx, Frazer and Freud are as true as any ideas that explain our world to our satis-

* THE TANGLED BANK; DARWIN, MARX, FRAZER AND FREUD AS IMAGINATIVE WRITERS, by Stanley Edgar Hyman, Atheneum, New York, 1962.

faction"—as true as any myth once was. In fact, accepting Karl Popper's criterion for a scientific proposition, that it state the conditions for its own refutation, their works "are not scientific at all; one cannot refute a vision, although one can replace it by another vision, as we now see the universe through Einstein's eyes rather than through Newton's..." This may be all we know on earth, but is it all we need to know? Certainly it is not a view likely to satisfy the less amphibious members of either of Snow's "two cultures." For, beneath the sophisticated imagery of Hyman's all-devouring humanism there lurks a naive and debilitating solipsism. The "master metaphor" which he has taken for his title might also be applied to his own notions. In keeping with his encyclopedic interests and his conception of literary criticism (which he elsewhere defines as "the organized use of non-literary techniques and bodies of knowledge to obtain insights into literature"), Hyman has made a methodology out of rampant eclecticism. Committed to the inverted logic of Freud and the hybrid terminology of Burke, he has indeed produced a "tangled vision."

DON KELLEY

The Need to Say NO

As A NOVELIST, a middle class man of the mid-century, a Jew and a socialist, Harvey Swados is that wonderful rarity in the United States today, a committed human being. His recently published collection of essays written over the last ten years, *A Radical's America*,* reveals his deep sense of disturbance about the quality of contemporary American life, its cant and corruption.

Unwilling to accept the latest wrinkle in sociological interpretations of the manners and mores of the American working class, Swados has writ-

ten a number of essays on the nature of work, exploitation, leisure and cultural backwardness which do an enormous amount to destroy the Madison Avenue image of the American worker as a member of the middle class. "But there is one thing that the worker doesn't do like the middle class: he works like a worker," Mr. Swados writes in an essay entitled "The Myth of the Happy Worker." "The steel-mill puddler does not yet sort memos, the coal miner does not yet sit in conferences, the cotton mill-hand does not yet sip martinis from his lunch-box. The worker's attitude toward his work is generally compounded of hatred, shame, and resignation."

In "Labor's Cultural Degradation" he gives voice to the complaint that it is the man at the bottom of the heap, the man who does the dirty work, who is the particularly exploited victim of the mass media, not given an honest possibility of developing an individual taste for individual works of the human imagination, not having the range of cultural choice available to members of the middle class. "I for one think that the working class—regardless of whether it is envied by other proletarians who would like to drive cars instead of riding bicycles, or would like to ride bicycles instead of walking—is being cheated, swindled, and degraded as ferociously as ever its English counterparts were a century ago when Marx and Engels were anatomizing them. The fact that it may not be aware of its exploitation does not alter the reality of its situation."

The very nature of work, its boredom, frustration, lack of personal fulfillment is probed in the essay "Work as a Public Issue" in which questions are raised about the possibility of those working in factories, participating in decision making affecting their own working lives; the decentralization of productive facilities to the point where their management can be at least partially controlled by the workers themselves. If he has no definitive answers to many of the problems he raises, his suggestion that "the mean-

* *A RADICAL'S AMERICA* by Harvey Swados, Little, Brown and Company, 1962, 437 pp., \$5.00.