

Or they may have gone to make the Navy's \$64,000 film entitled "How to Succeed With Brunettes," showing officers (not enlisted men) how to help ladies with their coats. Then again, they may have supplied the Bee-Keeper Indemnity Program with \$2.9 million to pay bee-keepers for bees killed off by federal pesticides.

Mr. Lambro contends that over \$100 billion of taxpayers' money is wasted each year. He divides the book into two sections: the first deals with wasteful administrative practices common to many agencies. He cites \$25 billion in white-collar cheating in subsidy programs, half a billion written off as uncollectable bad debts, \$140 billion in outstanding accounts and receivable payments, and over \$3 billion spent in government travel (with over 20,000 bureaucrats in the air at any given time) as examples. The second half of the book comprises a Bureaucratic Hit-Parade of the top 100 wasteful federal agencies.

Mr. Lambro cites the \$1.2 million Office of Small-Pox Eradication, whose officials beg for the program to be terminated. They are bored, you see. Other than one case in 1963, there has been no small-pox in the U.S. since 1947. According to a study by the American Bar Association, cited by Mr. Lambro, the FTC issued complaints that companies did not disclose that "navy shoes" were not made by the Navy, that Indian trinkets were not made by American Indians, and that flies were imported.

*Fat City's* effect would have been strengthened by a discussion of what causes bureaucrats to perform unnatural acts with the budget — the built-in incentives for demanding a higher budget every year. But his exhaustive research, readable style, and astounding findings are reasons enough to buy this book. The moments of brilliant irony are memorable, such as the \$400,000 spent on the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Commission, which has sat since 1955 trying to devise a suitable memorial to the man. One wonders what could be a more suitable memorial than a federal commission which squanders hundreds of thousands of dollars and never gets a single thing done.

*Fat City* is an indispensable source of material for speeches and articles or simply fascinating reading on its own. It deserves a place on the bed-stand of every Reagan Administration appointee.

— S. J. Masty

Eliseo Vivas

*Two Roads to Ignorance: A Quasi-Biography* (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Ill.) 1979.

Behind the flimsy veil of an *alter ego* named "Alonzo Quijano," Professor Vivas writes actually about his own journey through the intellectual dark wood of our age. The author of several important ethical and literary studies — including mordant book-length dissections of D. H. Lawrence and Herbert Marcuse — Eliseo Vivas learned from his experience of the academy and of the world generally the falseness of Marxism and the feebleness of liberalism. He grew into one of America's leading conservative scholars.

This meditative memoir, though a narrative, describes the climates of opinion among men of intellect from the early 1920s to the present day. Professor Vivas is particularly telling on John Dewey, by whom he was at first attracted, but whose ideas he later assailed. *Two Roads to Ignorance* contains observations on such scholars and writers as George Herbert Mead, Joseph Wood Krutch, Ernst Cassirer, Sigmund Freud, Miguel de Unamuno, George Santayana, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Morris Cohen. Also, there occur merciless accurate sketches of academic charlatans and ideologues, notably of one Maximilian Klotz.

Like Socrates in more ways than one, this distinguished professor of philosophy is wise enough to declare that he knows little. With courage, Eliseo Vivas set his face against the sophists of the twentieth century. Once he declared that it is one of the marks of human decency to be ashamed of having been born into the twentieth century. Despite his profession of ignorance, Eliseo Vivas has stood eminent among true American teachers in the dark wood.

— Russell Kirk

#### Dmitri Shostakovich

*Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (Harper & Row, New York) 1979. Related to and edited by Solomon Volkov. Translated by Antonina W. Bouis.

One need not know anything about Dmitri Shostakovich or even care about music to find these memoirs riveting, compelling reading. The narration, dictated to and edited by Solomon Volkov, is not very well organized, but that makes little difference. (The manuscript was smuggled to the West and published posthumously, as stipulated by the composer.) Nearly every page offers such strange and haunting stories that one soon wonders whether the Soviet Union is simply a nightmare or the reification of black comedy. Midway into the account — by which time one can hardly tote up the number of people who have simply disappeared — the most staggering thought is that millions of people who live in this world thought of this — and think of this — as “normal” living. The great director Vsevolod Meyerhold one day did not turn up at his theater. Work went on. “The name Meyerhold immediately disappeared from conversations. That was all.”

Of course, the shadow darkening most of this volume is that of Our Teacher, Our Friend and Leader, The Great Gardener — Stalin. Shostakovich gives us pages and pages and pages of humans cringing before their Friend. Stalin, who “worked like all criminals at night,” took a break from his favorite Tarzan films to institute nocturnal viewings of Soviet films in the presence of the director, who could receive criticism directly from the great film critic. The first director so honored was a friend of Shostakovich. Stalin seated on the last row, the director was placed on the front row, from which position, not daring to turn around, he listened to every creak in The Leader’s chair for approval or oblivion. An aide entered with a cable. “What rubbish!” Stalin responded. The director immediately blacked out.