

play a gift of leadership—in peace as well as in war—and who are by way of having a fairly strict code of conduct which they often break. For a social élite, they generally appear to have few social inhibitions. As Hilaire Belloc pointed out, neither rich nor poor are socially over-conscious. But,

*"The people in between
Look underdone and harassed
And out of place, and mean,
And terribly embarrassed"*

The 16-year-old Lord James Beauclaerk ran away from Eton in January 1965, not because of the food, but because of the discipline. The Public Schools produce a tough as well as privileged upbringing. Labour's attack on them will produce tough reactions—perhaps the biggest social struggle in Britain of this century.

This struggle will take time to get fully under way. For the Minister, Mr. Crossland, will work circumspectly towards his objective, by negotiation at first and by legislation afterwards. Negotiation has begun and one of the oldest Public Schools, Marlborough, has just offered to take 20 State-subsidised boys from the nearby town of Swindon—as from next September. The Labour Government's programme is under way.

LETTERS:

Herzog on Bellow

Sirs:

"The unbearable Maxwell Geismar" more or less sums up the feelings of this observer of the literary scene. Mr. Geismar's piece on Saul Bellow in the March issue is really too much. It is one thing for a critic to be an independent spirit, excoriating the bland generalizations and special pleadings of one establishment or another. It is a wholly different matter when a critic becomes a self-conscious maverick, going against the grain because he feels that the pose becomes him. Geismar was once an interesting, responsible critic and literary historian who could be counted upon to go his own way. His recent performances have been resoundingly poor, with the Bellow article a case in point.

Geismar is a professional, no doubt about that. He sets us up for his "outré" attack on Bellow by demonstrating at the

outset that there are plenty of things that suit him just fine. He isn't one of those unreasonable people who don't accept anything—not him. He enjoys Curtis Zahn, and Jakov Lind, among others. What a catholicity of appreciation—I suppose that's the expected response. But Bellow—well now, how about "the great literary scandal of the year." Geismar goes to work on *Herzog* with a combination of innuendo and free association. He tells us that last year, Mary McCarthy's *The Group* had the same overall reception as *Herzog*, which is, besides being irrelevant, absolutely absurd. No critic of any stature claimed more for *The Group* than that it was one of the year's important novels, which it may not have been. Those who have applauded *Herzog* have seen it as the major work of this country's major novelist. That is a different sort of thing entirely.

... his sleazy
citation ...

Geismar then conducts a survey of carefully chosen periodicals which contained favorable reviews of *Herzog*. The innuendo is apparent in his sleazy citation of Philip Rahv's favorable review, Geismar referring to Rahv as "that eminent Jamesian." Geismar doesn't feel compelled to make his connections explicit. You see, those who admire Henry James are naturally depraved intelligences. So reasons Geismar. The fact that Bellow could appeal to Rahv immediately established Bellow as a sop. Oh well, such travesties of critical integrity are really minor compared to Geismar's more extended treatment. Geismar simply demonstrates that he doesn't know what *Herzog* is all about. I am astonished that he claims to have read it. If there is one thing that Bellow's book is not, it is nihilistic. Geismar sees it as "sheer nihilism," which should not serve to condemn the book anyhow. Actually, *Herzog* represents a great deal of suffering, but it is purposeful suffering. *Herzog* develops in the course of the novel. His understanding of his problems as largely self-determined is a gradual enlightenment gleaned by imaginatively watching himself banging his head on the wall to no avail. He does not deny the validity of man's perpetual struggle to come to terms with himself and his milieu. Is it nihilistic for *Herzog* to declare, at the very end of the novel, that he is "pretty well satisfied to be, to be just as it is willed, and for as long as I may remain in occupancy." Geismar's assertion takes on the color of pure wilfulness and arrogant disregard of his professional obligations.

... "sheer
nihilism" ...

It would require considerable space, and considerable effort, to discuss *Her-*

a layman's
powerful critique
of the
Catholic Church
in America

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by Edward M. Keating
Editor-in-Chief of Ramparts Magazine

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... not all
sacred cows are
vulnerable ...

zog with the fullness that it obviously requires, regardless of one's ultimate convictions about its literary value. Geismar throws off one barbaric inaccuracy after another without explaining anything. Not once does he quote from the novel and examine a passage to illustrate his contentions. Even critics of major stature must support what they say, and in Geismar's case, with the stature as uncertain as it is, there can be no relaxation of our imperative. Who gives a damn, Mr. Geismar, whether or not you consider the Jewish tradition a great one? How can anyone give a damn when you make a flat, blanket statement of that sort without bothering to examine it for us, explain yourself, make the all-important distinctions? And why should Bellow's inability to draw inspiration from that Jewish tradition reflect upon your evaluation of his novel, unless of course he snaps off judgments and conclusions as flippantly as you present yours in this review?

You set out, Mr. Geismar, to attack what may indeed, unfortunately, become a sacred cow, much as you set out in your Henry James project. But not all sacred cows are vulnerable, particularly when attacked without the appropriate critical tools. These tools include a willingness to be fair, to suspend predetermined conclusions while the examination is in progress. To illustrate what I mean, which is more than you did, let's take a look at the question of Herzog's Jewish tradition. Does he at any moment manifest in his behavior what you disgustingly call "the shame of being a Jew?" Not at any moment. Your assertion is absolutely indefensible. Herzog manifests a profound awareness of his cultural identity as a Jew. He draws on his heritage for his sense of a rich emotional life, and despairs that in moving away from his roots he has increasingly lost contact with himself, with his drives and ambitions. In an especially poignant moment (page 140), Herzog laments the passing of a warm, passionately competitive communal existence sanctified by the glow of tradition, encompassed by the imperatives of ritual: "... the bootlegger's boys reciting ancient prayers. To this Moses' heart was attached with great power. Here was a wider range of human feelings than he had ever again been able to find. The children of the race, by a never-failing miracle, opened their eyes on one strange world after another, age after age, and uttered the same prayer in each, eagerly loving what they found." This is one passage selected at random from several I might

have chosen. Need I belabor this indictment of Maxwell Geismar any further?

Robert Boyers
Flushing, New York

Sirs:

Regarding Maxwell Geismar and his superbly pointed piece in last issue on "The Unbearable Bellow." In a review I did some months back on *Herzog*, I spoke of Bellow's latest (and, according to the Establishment, his supreme triumph, etc.) as possibly the most irrelevant piece of prose styling since, perhaps, a Hemingway African travelogue. Quite naturally, it is sweetly pleasing to see that someone of Maxwell Geismar's literary eminence is in agreement with me. The only other review of *Herzog* which took a properly dim view of Bellow's "decadence" was a superb analysis by a woman reviewer in the Kansas City Catholic Reporter (Michele Murray or somebody). . .

William McLaughlin
Runnemede, New Jersey

Sirs:

Maxwell Geismar is one of our most estimable literary critics, so I'm sure he can easily bear with my reaction to his handling of Saul Bellow's *Herzog*. I make no brief for the book, but Mr. Geismar's attempted demolition of it falls far short.

It would not be too much to say that almost the whole of Geismar's analysis proceeds *ad hominem*. Early on, he cites all the rhapsodic praises of establishment critics as though they constituted prima facie evidence that the book *must* be inferior. Given the current state of the establishment, this argument is tempting. But it is also dangerous. We can imagine a parallel to the Warren Report. When so many people are so totally convinced (say they are), scepticism seems a justifiable, or even a necessary, attitude. But if one doubts, as I do, the cogency of the Report's case against Oswald, one should be prepared to produce strong arguments in support of such a seemingly heretical view.

Does Mr. Geismar present such evidence? Well, it would be hard for him to do so, since he leaves himself so little room for that effort. Not until the third to last paragraph does he get around to discussing the *book*. Until then, he is busy giving hell to contemporary fiction in general. This is bad enough. Yet even in the final paragraphs the charges are sweeping and without detailed reference to the novel in question. I am not asking for textual criticism but for criticism that exposes the writer's venality, if it exists. Of course, if Mr. Geismar assumes

that we have read the book, and if he further assumes we agree with his specific biases, his approach may be understandable. But if we assume all this, how do we explain the mystery of his being asked to do a review in the first place? Perhaps this is why he leaves us bemused by a reference to the "gifted English novelist, Gabriel Fielding." If only we could have had a review of one of his books!

But drollery must not be allowed to obscure my point! As one who shares many of Mr. Geismar's prejudices, I simply mean to say: we must offer the world a fairer measure of our dissent and not merely raise its volume.

R. D. Lakin
Los Altos, California

Sirs:

The nature of Maxwell Geismar's vigorous article on writer Saul Bellow has provoked this comment. "There are no extremes here," he says of the book *Herzog*. Perhaps not, but his review makes up for the lack.

However understandable the pleasures of dissent are, a critic, if he wants to be read as an authority and not a neighbor, must either abstain or explain his position in a thoroughly detailed, responsible, and professional way. I have read so many *ad hominem* reviews lately that perhaps it is unreasonable to balk at another; if American criticism continues on its present course, it will be unnecessary to write in order to establish a literary reputation and reviews will be published based entirely on autobiographical facts and a quasi-psychoanalytical impression of the superfluous book. Geismar may well know Bellow intimately and find him unbearable in person and in spirit, but surely the critic's function is to review the *book*?

What does it matter whether *Herzog* is autobiographical? Our concern is with the protagonist. *Herzog*, the man, is drawn at a time of disorientation during which his love, his relating to others, and his suffering (all denied by Geismar) are perceptively exposed. The letters, "mad, disorganized, fragmented," are composed in the mind of a man deep in emotional trouble, still aware and involved with "contemporary reality." Under the circumstances, how could they be other than shapeless and aborted? Because a man undergoes a period of emotional turmoil and disorganization and recognizes the process, is he a "wailing infant?" He is in trouble *because* of involvement; his suffering is not that of an "infant-hero," but of a man deeply committed to *understanding any inter-per-*

. . . so many
ad hominem
reviews . . .

. a parallel
to the
Warren Report.

sonal relation—a Jewish closeness not “false” in any sense.

I suspect that neither Mary McCarthy nor Saul Bellow are unhappy over the success of their books. *The Group* is not an enduring work; McCarthy's people are deliberately caricatures. Badly-jointed episodes comprise a nasty, anti-human but unimportant novel. The structure, the people, and the motivation of *Herzog* are in no way comparable. The protagonist is palpable, intelligent, mortal, portrayed during a period of immense inner conflict—a man who will survive because, despite his pain and struggle, he is able to cope with truth without abandoning love.

It is accurate enough that a hero “without any sense of understanding, or recognition, or . . . sense of his own personal or moral responsibility,” has neither reality nor stature nor enduring value. I have no way of knowing whether Bellow, the man, can be so described; I do know that *Herzog*, the man, cannot. I suggest that Maxwell Geismar turn to another nominee for the National Book Award, Richard Kim's *The Martyred*, for a blatant, current advocacy of self-deceit and moral irresponsibility. The thesis of this amateur novel is as old as totalitarianism: The Church must teach lies, for the bulk of men cannot survive knowing the truth.

(Incidentally, Geismar, “an authority on the American novel,” should know that the Nobel Prize is awarded, not for the production of an individual work, but for a career of continued accomplishment in literature.)

E. S. Rock
Sunnyvale, California



Maxwell Geismar

Sirs:

Cheers for Mr. Geismar! He has done a much-needed piece of criticism. *Herzog* is a novel of complacency and a comfortable life. Mr. Geismar's attack on Saul Bellow hit the nail on the head. It's about time that we ended the celebration of the old hat in literature.

Sol Landau
San Francisco, California

Sirs:

The April number is extraordinarily outstanding. Mr. Donovan Bess has given us some brilliant insights. And the editorial was topnotch.

Harry Golden
Charlotte, North Carolina

fan and
non-fan
mail

Sirs:

How different!
How unique!
How inspiring!

to read *Ramparts* every month and see and read how one group of editors can openly bring reason and honesty to the peruser.

Your editorial on the Students at Berkeley was priceless and one of the very few who understood its meaning and did not castigate and label “communist.”

Alvine Bullock
South Fork, California

Sirs:

Blemishes in the legend of Dr. Tom Dooley, Black Establishment, Menace of Barbie Dolls, Hogwash! You sound like *Parade* or *Saturday Evening Post* for pseudo-intellectuals. I haven't time for emasculated imitations of muckraking journalism. Shouldn't you say that you espouse hypocrisy, not expose it?

Is the blindfold of the American Eagle any greater evil or handicap than your hallucinations or errors of recognition?

No, I don't want your puerile imitation of the *Saturday Evening Post*, which may use more erudite words, but is possibly even more sanctimonious than the first.

Lawrence Lynch
S. Miami, Florida

Sirs:

Lucifer, too, was “fiercely independent.” Are you following his lead?

If so, you may end by joining his company down below. Eh?

J. M. Eisenbaum
Wichita, Kansas

Sirs:

The fact that a Bishop would have the nerve to take the floor at Vatican 11 in

defense of nuclear weapons shows to what deceitful standards of Christianity our Rome has succumbed. Bishop Hannan must have read the Bible and forgotten or decided to eliminate the teachings of Christ.

Christ taught no kill-your-enemy way to enter heaven. Christ taught Christians to have no enemies—only love of neighbor. Thou shalt not kill and thou shalt not be angry were words of Christ. It is a fact to all thinking peoples that human beings killed by any kind of bombings are innocents murdered. Even today men of intelligence, education, and organization kill only because Rome is so silent.

The past history of Rome and of Popes upholding the pugnacious man as some kind of male ideal has been responsible for much of the world's bloodshedding. Many who would follow Christ in perfect love of neighbor are led astray by Rome's weakness. Mental institutions are filled with supposedly sick individuals who are but followers of the Sermon on the Mount.

As a military wife who has tried prayer, divorce, and even written two Popes to free her husband from a perpetual air power career, I say the infidelities of Rome are infecting decent standards of Christian livelihood. Indeed these Catholic men are without compassion; they are without repentance, and they proudly lead their sons even in teenage into following the bloodied paths they knew. Is contraception or abortion so bad when Catholic men who have participated in the massacre of women and children and the unborn go boldly forth with a "Mary of the Air Medal" and teach the young men to follow them in pride?

Saint John who walked with Christ and must have understood better than present Rome the meaning of Christ's words, states: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him." (1 John:3) As long as the Hierarchy so perpetuates all methods of warfare, the Pope will never stand as any kind of peace symbol for hope in the world. When one plans to kill people unknown there can be no love, and I go further and say there can be no Blessed Sacrament on a continually bloody altar as in a military chapel. The deceitful ways of Rome must end. If it takes more plays like *The Deputy* to awaken some conscience in Rome's splendor, then I say let the thinking theater go forth and preach past sins, so less sin occurs in the future.

Irene Hansel
U.S.A.F. Academy, Colorado

... led astray
by Rome's
weakness.

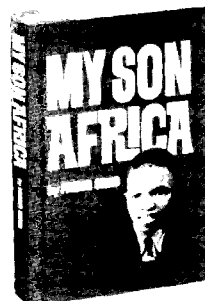
*"What color is
the face of God?"*



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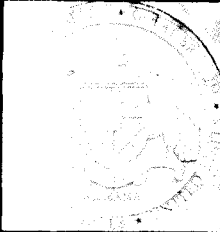
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The South at War

INTRODUCTION: THE YELLOW ROSE OF TEXAS



It is no mere coincidence that virtually the last battle of the Civil War took place in Selma, Alabama, since the latest battle of Selma is in reality a continuation of the Civil War begun in 1861. In that year the Southern states claimed they were in secession, and over this a war was fought. The South is still in secession and the Civil War still goes on.

President Lincoln's sole purpose in prosecuting the first phase of the Civil War was to preserve the Union, and union cannot countenance secession. The War then was fought over the principle of the primacy of union, and the continuation of the war today strives to achieve the same objective.

But built into the principle of union is the essential ingredient of justice. Therefore, when the Union was preserved, the citizens of the United States, now including millions of Negro Americans, could reasonably and legitimately conclude that justice would be extended to all citizens of the Union. Tragically, this was not to be; justice left the American scene.

The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, as well as all of the Reconstruction statutes, which were intended to grant national citizenship to Negroes, were allowed to lapse, victims of the political ambitions of Northerners and Southerners alike. The choice that faced the political manipulators in the 1870s and '80s lay between full integration of the Southern states in the American political and economic community, or federal insistence on the rights of Negroes. The South presented the rest of the nation with this choice, and the rest of the nation abandoned millions of Negroes to the Southern way of life.

The South lost the War, but it won the peace.

The South once cried for secession; now it cries for "States Rights." In both instances the desired end has been power to control the Southern Negro. "States Rights" is the South's indispensable bargaining tool in negotiating national policy with the rest of the country.

Once the promise of justice had been withdrawn by the Federal Government, Negro Americans living in the Southern states were returned to their masters who once again possessed the power of life and death. But now, instead of cutting off a man's hand for attempting to learn to read or write, his dignity was excised by constructing the grotesque institution of "separate but equal" institutions, whose sole purpose was to destroy the humanity of its victims. The final thrust lies in the additional fact that Negro Americans are required by both Federal and State law to help pay, through taxes, for their own debasement.