

tial mechanics; who excluded all data that are not "uniformly subject to verification by experience"; who said that more errors than truths are obtained from knowledge of the processes of the mind; and who objected to the concept "end" because it lies equally far outside the experimental field and is even more unknown than the concept "good." Here's the respect that makes calamity of so subjective a theory. Ends and means and norms are not uniformly subject to verification by the methods of objective science, they have—semantically speaking—no referents, and they can neither be observed nor measured. A sociology of the subjective is about as scientifically useful as a sonnet to a skylark, and the "voluntaristic theory of action" would make William James—and probably Pareto—turn in his grave.

Although this book can be recommended without stint as the most complete treatment in English of Pareto, Durkheim, and Weber, it neatly articulates the direction sociology cannot take if it is to be an empirical science. Therein lies its greatest significance; it is a stop sign at the end of a blind alley—but with an excellent map of the alley posted on it.

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Speculations of a Poet

A VISION. By W. B. Yeats. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

SOME twenty years ago, through his wife's experiments in automatic writing, the greatest poet of our time believes that he received communications from the other world at first purporting "to give you metaphors for poetry." The communications finally built themselves into an entire geometrical system of symbolism, including "cones" and "gyres," aided by exposition in sleep, and thwarted by those the communicators referred to as the Frustrators. It will all seem as bewilderingly esoteric to the layman as the prophetic books of Blake or the Swedenborgianism of Coleridge. The poet Yeats, of course, has always possessed a metaphysical mind of great subtlety, and the fabulous, from childhood, has been his meat and drink. He is the most psychic of Celts. But what surpasses all this in importance is that he is a great poet, a magician with language. His conjurations with words are the most extraordinary in our time. And whatever you may make of his Michael Robartes and Owen Aherne—in both the stories and the poem "The Phases of the Moon" that here concern them, there is magical writing. Perhaps it is a limitation of my mind that it can consign the diagram of the Historical Cones to limbo since, on the facing page, stands that superb poem concerning Leda—and I had rather read "All Souls' Night" at the end of the book than the thoroughgoing explication of all the symbolism of the "Vision."

Yeats is a poet of imagination all compact, but also an artist whose hand has never swerved or botched. There is a decided kinship with Blake, for these reasons, despite the differences of nationality.

Nothing Left Out

HOW SLEEPS THE BEAST. By Don Tracy. New York: M. S. Mill Co. 1938. \$2.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

THIS is a piece of tough-minded, tough-skinned reporting, not journalism but cinema, and it could be reviewed as though it were a film. It is the story of "Fury" and "They Won't Forget" told more completely, leaving absolutely nothing out. We caught snatches of this mob-violence in "Fury" but we couldn't get beneath the surface of the crowd and watch the madness grow in each man and woman, as we can here. "They Won't Forget" had something of the psychological feel of the lynch spirit, but had to stop short of consummation with a symbolic shot of a mail bag jerked off a cross-bar. Tracy's story follows the facts through from the beginning to the bitter, ghastly end, and those who read it will learn, if they have not already suspected, the limitations of symbolism. Imagine him with his candid camera, in the general store of a Maryland town, picking up intimate shots of some of the main characters lolling at ease before the thing happens. Then a brief view of the unhappy slattern, kicked and slandered by every man in the town, until her violent death sanctifies her. Here Tracy faces his issues squarely; the criminal, and the eventual victim, is a Negro crazed with corn liquor.

Now the beast stirs, lynch law. We're following the camera again, and see the restlessness in the streets, the men looking at each other and picking their leaders. It is a folk-drama according to a fixed pattern, everyone knowing the end and moving toward it. Tracy covers it all in straight reporting with no fancy shots, no symbolic short-cuts, to the lynching itself, in such a description as has probably never been put down before. This reviewer has received an eye-witness account and knows this story to be free of exaggeration; its power and terror are the effects of true reporting. This effectiveness depends entirely, as I have said, upon its cinematic qualities, its sequence of sights and sounds. There are natural breaks here and there that have to be joined with narrative passages, and then the writing falls down visibly, often into stilted phrasing and clumsiness. This seems an unnecessary weakness in a writer who can catch so well the accents of men's speech and the pitch of their emotions.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 206)

S. DANIEL: "ULYSSES AND THE SIREN"

Ulysses, O be not deceived
With that unreal name;
This honour is a thing conceived
And rests on other's fame;
Begotten only to molest
Our peace and to beguile
The best thing of our life—our rest,
And give us up to toil.



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The New Books

Fiction

WORLD'S END. By Pamela Hansford Johnson, Carrick & Evans. 1938. \$2.50.

Miss Johnson longs for peace, not the peace of the spirit, but world peace, that will allow people to pursue their own happiness in their own way. In the story of Arnold Brand and his wife Doris, living in modern London on the fringe between employment and the dole, and always with the dread hanging over them of what the heedless world around them will do next to affect their security and their happiness, she expresses the need for freedom from even the shadow of war in private, modest lives.

No doubt in London the possibility of international war has a more personal application than it has in North America. It may also be that Arnold's life of economic insecurity would lead him to dwell upon all the dangers about him. He is not portrayed as a weakling, yet he acts as a weakling would, and Miss Johnson's effect is to make the reader feel that her people are afraid of life itself, wasting the present moment in dread anticipation of the future. And her story bears out that that is what they have done, for Doris dies in childbirth, suddenly and unreasonably, as such deaths are, and Arnold, with all that bound his uncertain life together gone, goes off to face his own destiny fighting for the Loyalists in Spain. He tells himself that he seeks to make the world safe for his son that will never grow up, and for other men's sons that will, but the reader knows that he is going to face down his own fears, to conquer them in combat or die in the attempt; life is not worth living with them.

The theme might be said to be the sep-

arate destinies of man and woman, but Miss Johnson could have made her intention clearer. As long as women face death in childbirth, must not men face it too, and share the danger of living in their own way? Are not the worth-while ends of life obtained through struggle? These are questions for which the Brands seem to have sought negative answers, until at last they had to accept the affirmatives. Arnold is not quite a finished portrait, nor is Doris. The minor characters are more successful. This is not a novel on the grand scale; its tone is level, like the lives of its characters, whose decisions, instead of being deliberate and therefore dramatic, are forced upon them from the outside.

L. H. C.

TONIA. By Yuri Herman. Knopf. 1938. \$2.50.

The author of this excellent book is a young Russian who combines in it the charm of the old Russia with the modern setting of the Soviet Republic. "Tonia" is the story of a girl, orphaned at the age of sixteen, who has to face problems and situations in Soviet Russia which spring from the wide difference between her background and the outlook that prevails at the present. We are carried through her first marriage to the likable, good-for-nothing sailor Skvortzow, her remarriage to the old man Pavel Pavlovich who has gradually assumed the role of protector of herself and her child, and her tearing away from the security he gives her. Living with a very modern Soviet family, Tonia gradually finds herself. At the age of thirty she has organized a Child Welfare Center and is within a year of being a doctor. She has met the man she loves, and we leave her on the platform of the

railroad station while he speeds to Central Asia and she returns to her studies, both of them parts of the relentless Soviet machine.

"Tonia" is somewhat lengthy but its interest never flags. Against a background of vividly drawn characters the heroine advances through all the stages of development, yet it is not she who matters principally, but the modern Russia that surrounds and molds her. The book is of particular interest to those who want to learn something about Soviet psychology. Its style is easy and entertaining, and its point of view balanced. The author succeeds in winning at least a tolerant hearing for the outlook and problems of Soviet Russia.

Z. R.

THE DEATH OF MARK. By R. E. Spencer. Bobbs-Merrill. 1938. \$2.50.

D. H. Lawrence, in "Lady Chatterley's Lover," had occasion to deal with the problem of a young and attractive female attached to a paralyzed husband. Mr. Spencer has taken the same theme for "The Death of Mark," but he has dealt with it in such lofty terms that large stretches of his novel read like dream-versions of Plato. Mark, the strong-willed and dominant male, had always suppressed his love for Rita and forced her to deny her own for him. Unwilling to face the loss of his personal independence after the accident which destroys his manhood, he defies his own nature and vainly urges Rita to find fulfillment for hers in an affair with his brother. But the strain of his determination breaks his spirit and, temporarily, wrecks his mind. Reborn to sanity, he resigns himself to his dependence, while Rita, having found some inner freedom, reconciles herself to a life of outward sacrifice.

This story is told in terms of the successive states of mind which Mark and Rita undergo. But these states of mind, described for the most part in the imagery or poetic landscapes, take on a sort of categorical absoluteness. Even confusion becomes an idealized confusion in which such abstract entities as Love, Obedience, and Renunciation vie with one another. This may be perfectly consistent psychology in the ideal, but it is not human psychology. Since it is not humanly recognizable, it cannot give the reader that intimate personal concern for the fate of its subjects which is an important criterion of successful fiction.

L. J. H., JR.

THE WALL OF MEN. By William Rollins, Jr. Modern Age. 1938. 25 cents.

To the reputation Mr. Rollins earned with an excellent labor novel a few years ago, this little book will add nothing. Ostensibly a romance set against the present Spanish war, it is doubly marked, by haste, and by a partisanship out of all proportion to the story's dimensions. That is to say, the life of the book is in its author's sympathies, and not in its characters. It is easy enough to share in these sympathies, and to feel at the same time that the sketchy and "flat" people here involved—the heroic loyalists, the cowardly rebels, the good priest and the bad priest, depending upon which faction he

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