

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To a Gentleman at Wayne University

SIR: Your question [whether the study of Latin has any value to writers and readers of English] raises a topic of such interest and of such ancient fishy savor that I wish there were time to exhaust ourselves upon it. Like poor old Matt Arnold, the lip-servant of ancient tongues hears your legions thunder past and plunges in thought again. Or, with Tennyson, finds all the charm of all the Muses flowering in a lonely word. So, with that wandering cuckoo-voice J. Fidler, he "respectively suggests":

I would certainly give every high-school pupil the opportunity of studying Latin, as I would give him equal opportunity to learn what makes heat rise in the pipes or gasoline vapors explode. I would quickly shill him off if he finds no delight therein. There are plenty of excellent minds that find no pleasure in shaking the dice-cup for verbal cubes. For them the great unwritten anthem is still blank paper: the Anthem for Boeotia.

Since you insist: my own meager smattering among Latin roots has been pure joy. It has given me the severe pleasure of being sneered at by many reviewers, whose stark ignorance of the mere salt-crystals of our speech makes them howl No-compre at the least twinge of usage. I am astounded (which no one enjoys?) by letters of reproach that reach me for having used familiar roots in fresh foliage. By now one is damned for loving the literature of our great sires. To have edited a new edition of Bartlett has become a stereo of disdain.

Language is not only man's prime qualification, as tool, weapon, or medium of polity; it is also his plaything; sometimes his intoxicant. To enjoy play with words—and therefore with thoughts—is the mark of the civilized creature. Do I have to remind you of Churchill, the great punchinello of verbal chess? And it was he who said at Harrow, let the clever boys learn Latin—not as a chore, as an honor. But from those who find in it neither fun nor favor, withdraw at once; hide, like the squid, in a cloud of ink. If you have no teachers touched with fire, let your unlucky students continue (as they will) to use Latin unconsciously.

Our nearest approach to interchange of meanings, or what we think we mean, is through the root-crop of Rome. Offer it to the young apes as privilege, not as penalty. If they don't savvy it, that's *their* hard luck. Now let's not ask this question again for another thirty years.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Roslyn Heights, N. Y.

## Bollingen Assistance

SIR: Fredric Wertham in his "Reply to Philip Wylie" [SRL July 30] wrote: "A non-medical apologist wrote a long defense of Jung in a medical journal; by coincidence, it so happened that he received a grant from the Bollingen Foundation."



Wertham obviously wishes to establish a connection between this article and certain grants made by the Bollingen Foundation. The article in question is my paper entitled "Carl Gustav Jung—Defender of Freud and the Jews" (*Psychiatric Quarterly*, April 1946), written after Dr. R. Hutchings, editor of that journal, had offered to me to print a report of my first-hand knowledge of Jung's position. The article was produced solely on my own initiative. At the time of writing it I had no knowledge whatever of the existence of the Bollingen Foundation. Nor had I at any time received any grant whatsoever from that Foundation. The fact is that in 1948, two years after the publication of the article on Jung, a member of the board of the quarterly *The Nervous Child*, of which I am editor-in-chief, applied to the Bollingen Foundation for assistance for the further development of this periodical, and a modest grant to assist our periodical was subsequently made through the Foundation for Child Care and Nervous Child Help, Inc. Incidentally, the board of *The Nervous Child* is composed of Freudians, Jungians, and Adlerians, as well as of representatives of other present schools of psychological thought.

ERNEST HARMS.

New York, N. Y.

## Limit on Avoirdupois

SIR: A recent issue publicized the need of the American Library in Paris for books from the United States. Unfortunately for me, I prepared a box with great care, carried it to the sub-station, only to have it refused because it weighed twenty-three pounds. The Post Office Department has a ridiculous regulation

limiting foreign parcels to six pounds, nine ounces. So I had to carry the box back home again. Now I must find four or five small boxes, cord, etc., and start all over again. You would be helping others if you gave this letter publicity.

PHILIP E. SIGGERS.

Wilmington, Del.

## "Man and the Social Appetite"

SIR: I want to tell you how enthusiastic I am about the article on "Man and the Social Appetite" [SRL Nov. 19]. I intend to quote from this article extensively in a book I am writing, which is still in the early manuscript phase, dealing with the functions of ego. The article was not only full of sound scientific thinking, but it was presented in an exceedingly convincing and intriguing way. I am commending it to all of the Fellows in the Menninger School of Psychiatry, and I am sure our sociologist, Dr. Louisa Holt, and our anthropologist, Dr. George Devereux, will be commending it widely also.

KARL A. MENNINGER, M.D.

Topeka, Kan.

SIR: I am in agreement with Ashley Montagu that the socialization of behavior in the form of love and cooperation is apparently necessary for survival. In fact, cooperation is the only solution to the distressing problems of our chaotic world of today. However, it is highly questionable as to whether there is a biologically inherent drive towards socialization *per se*, which Mr. Montagu implies in his article. I am inclined to believe that there is greater evidence to support the Darwinian theory that man is basically egocentric in his behavior.

Cooperative and altruistic tendencies, while they aid survival, are derived from this more fundamental motivation. It can be shown that even altruism is ego exalting.

There is no evidence to indicate that the child is innately driven to giving love. Socialization is a learning process. As the child grows older he learns to condescend to the wishes of the parents and to the rules of his society only as a means of protecting his ego—to avoid punishment or the loss of love. But though our motives are basically egoistic, they can and should be directed into channels of social value for the ultimate good of the individual and society as a whole.

EDWARD J. POLDER.

Brecksville, O.

SIR: Have you heard about the cannibal chief who took his son to a psychiatrist? "I can't get him to eat *anybody*," the chief complained. Seems that the poor boy had lost his "social appetite."

Ashley Montagu overlooked the cannibals. A glaring omission. Studies have demonstrated that a highly developed social appetite exists among cannibals (excepting, of course, neurotic individuals among them—the social deviants). They love their kind so much they could, and do, eat them.

ALBERT B. DAHLQUIST.

Chicago, Ill.

SIR: Please mark down one appreciative reader for "Man and the Social Appetite" by Ashley Montagu. I hope that we can make fusion equal fission.

MARK STARR.

New York, N. Y.

### "The World in the Attic"

SIR: Kenneth S. Davis's review of Wright Morris's "The World in The Attic" [SRL Sept. 24] has a singular felicity, in the midst of its pained disparagement, that might perhaps go unnoticed: he has managed to dis-

cuss a book in the high comic tradition without even a passing reference to its humor and its comedy. If this sort of reviewing becomes common, deaf men will become music critics and blind men will become connoisseurs of painting. Even if Wright Morris's Nebraska existed only in his imagination, even if he had not taken scores of marvelous photographs to document his fantasy, "The Home Place" and "The World in The Attic" would still have a special claim on anyone who respects the comic genius and who knows how little of it is left in a nation of wisecrackers, gag-men, and serfs. Unfortunately, Mr. Davis is not alone in this kind of color-blindness; most reviewers have discussed Morris's work as if he were a mere trader in Americana, with no reference to his delicate ear, his perceptive eye, and his deep vein of humor. But what can one do with a reviewer who castigates an author for qualities he dislikes in the principal character in his work? He might as well blame Mr. Morris for the bad manners of Clyde Muncy's children; because, as it happens, Mr. Morris has no children. But Mr. Morris—I write as a friend—does know his Nebraska from the subsoil up and he loves its old integrities, and anyone who does not understand, from Mr. Morris's books, the quality of that knowledge and that love might also easily overlook the fact that Wright Morris is a writer of no small dimensions, not to be humorlessly lectured and talked down to.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

New York, N. Y.

### The Pearls of Publishing

SIR: Have just sat me down to record the items in your article "The Pearls of Publishing" [SRL Nov. 19, 26]. It is most helpful; just what a librarian can use.

JANE E. ERRETT,

Librarian,

West Chester Library Ass'n.

West Chester, Pa.

SIR: Thank you for "The Pearls of Publishing," which should keep the lending library and me busy for a few weeks. But to whom, I ask bewilderedly, do publishers expect to sell all these books? Had I unlimited income, I'd still have no place to put the minimum of five books I read every week. Eventually I expect to see all books published with paper covers, to sell at not more than fifty cents. There will be permanent covers, available separately, into which the book may be placed for protection if it is worth a lasting place on the shelf.

EDITH LODER THORNTON.

Philadelphia, Pa.

### On Anti-Catholicism

SIR: I am in complete sympathy with Taylor Caldwell's feeling [LETTERS, Nov. 12] about anti-Catholicism based on Ku Klux grounds. There is no place in America for prejudice against any man's religion as such. But when a vast and powerful organization which has political as well as religious implica-

tions openly attempts to legislate for those outside its membership, what are the outsiders to do? Take it lying down, never mention it, for fear of being accused of religious prejudice?

As Paul Blanshard and many others have demonstrated, the Roman Catholic Church is bent on telling not only its own adherents, but all of us, what we should read, what movies and plays we should see, even how we should vote. It opposes divorce and birth control, not for its own flock alone, but for us all. It tries to obtain for its own privately operated schools the tax-supported benefits which should accrue only to tax-supported schools—to which its children are welcome, but from which they are excluded by their own parents at the behest of the church. In a dozen secular fields the church makes its weight felt by threat of boycott, thus regulating not only its own life but the life of the non-Catholic population. Witness Macy's reluctance to sell Blanshard's book openly; witness what would happen to any newspaper which would dare to publish an item unfavorable to the church.

In the face of this situation, it needs no fantastic nightmare of a secret conspiracy to bring on war to explain why public-spirited non-Catholics expose this very real danger to democracy.

MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD.

San Francisco, Calif.

SIR: Like Taylor Caldwell, I receive a good many tracts, leaflets, etc., from anonymous senders, but every one bears the imprimature of the Roman Catholic Church and practically every one contains derogatory remarks about Protestantism as a whole, with each particular Protestant sect held up to particular scorn. I do not deal in lies or transmit unverified rumors. I can authenticate (with pages, titles of publications, names and addresses of Roman Catholic authority sponsoring same) every accusation I make. Why is the blame for creating dissension put upon those who criticize the Catholic Church rather than upon that church, which starts the dissensions by seeking special privileges for itself, while its printing presses are at work all over the country seeking to undermine Protestantism, because it looks upon Protestantism as the one obstacle to its ever-present determination to make this country "a Catholic nation"?

ELIZABETH EMMETT.

Wakefield, R. I.

SIR: You cannot generalize and say Catholics are less guilty of hatred than Protestants, and by the same token you cannot say Catholics are more guilty.

ALICE M. LAINE.

New York, N. Y.

### Literature in a Nutshell

SIR:

To broaden,  
Read Auden.  
If smarter,  
Try Sartre.  
To admire Ezra Pound  
Go deep underground.

NORMAN ANNING.

Ann Arbor, Mich.





# Seeing Things

## CASTLES IN SPAIN

**W**HEN we seek to describe the agonies and ecstasies of passion, we reach of necessity for violent words. Passion for everyone is identified with heat at its hottest. It is something beyond thermostatic control. We all know its sickening strength, its bliss, and its annihilating force. We recognize it as a fever of the emotions which dizzies the mind, lulls the conscience, and burns the body. With Prospero we concede "the strongest oaths are straw to the fire i' the blood." Admitting the completeness of its bondage, we liken those who are consumed with passion to slaves. We have no other choice than to compare it, as Hamlet did, to a torrent, a tempest, or a whirlwind.

I mention the sultriness and the storms of passion because they are palpably the concern of "That Lady,"\* the romantic drama about Philip II's Spain to which Katharine Cornell is lending her beauty and her skill and which Guthrie McClintic has lovingly produced. The play, which Kate O'Brien has made from her novel "For One Sweet Grape," is in its every line and scene a study of passion. It is the tale of a monarch as complicated in his jealousy as in his statecraft, who because of his unfulfilled fondness for a noblewoman, a glamorous widow at his court, ultimately tortures her and her lover. The lover in question was once Philip's friend and Secretary of State; a fact which, at least according to Miss O'Brien, makes it the more impossible for the king to forgive him for having an affair with a princess dear to Philip's heart.

In spite of its absorption with court intrigue, royal passion, and characters whose actions are at the mercy of their desires, Miss O'Brien's novel is hard going. It is intelligently observed. As the picture of an industrious ruler believing in the divinity of his own kingship and demanding acceptance of that belief from others, it can claim its interesting subtleties. Certainly in neither style nor ap-

proach is it to be confused with the usual run of bosom and boudoir historical romances. It belongs on a higher and quite different echelon of effort. Yet the blight of monotony devitalizes its pages, smothering their intended heat. Set in a colorful age against colorful backgrounds, it never manages to turn passion itself into more than a conversational indulgence.

The faults of Miss O'Brien's novel loom the larger in her dramatization of it. They loom the larger notwithstanding a production set and costumed by Rolf Gérard with the elegance of a Velasquez, well directed by Mr. McClintic, and including some valiant performances. Henry Daniell, for example, is a Philip bowed down by the burdens of kingship, a harassed autocrat as enigmatic in his kindnesses as in his cruelties. If he has his hammy moments, he is driven to them by a script which, being essentially hammy itself, offers him no other choice. Torin Thatcher,

though less romantic than he might be, brings style and intelligence to his playing of the lover. And Douglas Watson, so unforgettable as Eros in Miss Cornell's "Antony and Cleopatra," contributes an effective bit as Ana de Mendoza's son.

As for Miss Cornell herself, she gives of her best to the widowed Ana, who becomes the mistress of Philip's friend. Her faith in the part, however misplaced, is as unquestioning as if she were playing Juliet or Cleopatra. She does everything that she can within her extraordinary powers to make Ana hold the same interest for an audience that she plainly does for Miss Cornell. The patch she is condemned to wear as a princess who in her youth fought a duel and lost an eye is unable to obscure her radiance. In no time it is taken for granted. As always, Miss Cornell is lovely to look at and moves with a wonderful free-limbed grace.

**B**UT the sad and disturbing truth is that, in spite of the distinction which is hers and the beauty of the production, "That Lady" fails to come to life. The passion of which it talks incessantly is not projected across the footlights. Its heat, though felt on stage, never warms the auditorium. The result is as if we were left standing in the cold outside, peering through a closed window on a room where a fire is blazing on the



—Vandamm.

Henry Daniell and Katharine Cornell—"sultriness and the storms of passion."

\**THAT LADY*, by Kate O'Brien. Staged by Guthrie McClintic. Settings and costumes by Rolf Gérard. Presented by Katharine Cornell. With a cast including Katharine Cornell, Henry Daniell, Torin Thatcher, Henry Stephenson, Joseph Wiseman, Douglas Watson, Esther Minciotti, etc. At the Martin Beck, New York City. Opened November 22, 1949.