

Fiction

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erates her horrid little friend from Rouen who destroys her happiness with Pierre and drives her eventually to crime is understandable only in the light of Existentialist values. We are witnessing, not just the struggle of two women over a man, but the battle between two predatory consciousnesses.

The danger of over-charging fiction with intellectual theses is a constant threat to Existentialist writers. Much of Mme de Beauvoir's writing has too thin a coat of fictional veneer to create an illusion of life. In this novel she succeeds better than in subsequent works. The credible dialogues and realistic narrative passages are partly responsible; even more so, the remarkable portrayal of Françoise. In spite of the unconventionality of her life and concept of love, she has an authentically human appeal. We become involved in this pure and proud soul torn between her sense of honesty and her very feminine will for happiness. The world she inhabits, too, is the very recognizable city of Paris. Her associates are painted after life among the artists and actors from Montmartre to the Dôme. Simone de Beauvoir's characters, as good Existentialists, are privileged to experience the "astonishment of existing." Knowing that they are born out of theoretical speculation, we share something of their joyful astonishment, and hail a masterpiece of Existentialist writing.

Notes

ILL-STARRED FAMILY: Chester Himes's latest novel, *"The Third Generation"* (World, \$3.95), traces the destruction of a Negro family torn apart by personal and social tensions. The Taylors at first seem to have fortune on their side. William, the father, is a successful and likable teacher of mechanical arts, in love with his pretty wife. Their three boys seem headed for the uninterrupted routine of school, college, and the choice of a profession. But Lillian Taylor's sense of shame at being a Negro, and her lopsided scale of values, impel her to a compulsive restlessness which flowers into an ever-broadening neurosis. She makes job after job untenable for her husband, and the Taylors shift from one Southern agricultural college to another. For the children life becomes "a long, unending series of goodbyes." They finally move to Cleveland, where Professor Taylor becomes a night-club



—Jacket by Matulay, for *"She Came to Stay."*

"... a masterpiece of Existentialist writing."

porter. Mrs. Taylor fastens her hopes on her son Charles, drawing him into a neurotic relationship that robs him of his will, and leads to a series of bludgeoning disasters.

Mr. Himes describes the bleak odyssey of the Taylor family in a vivid style that is frequently moving and always effective. But he is not content to develop the tragedy inherent in the Taylors' family dilemma, and insists on piling up one mischance after another until the senses reel. Trauma, paranoia, venereal disease, blindness, crippling accidents, imprisonment follow one another with dismal regularity. Charles cannot touch anything without maiming himself or another. He gets behind the wheel of a car and has a horrible accident. He becomes a bus boy and falls down an elevator shaft. Mr. Himes may be trying to show, by all this, how Charles's lack of integration distorts his behavior, but he underlines his point too heavily. In spite of its excesses, *"The Third Generation"* has within it elements of great interest, and it again demonstrates that Mr. Himes's talents are of a high order.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

CAPE COD CHOWDER: Robert Lewis Taylor's cheerful and meandering novel of a Cape Cod summer, *"The Bright Sands"* (Doubleday, \$3.50), resembles the "omnibus chowder" that is the beachcomber's staple. It is composed of a casual garnering of racy ingredients, some overripe, but productive of a sustaining brew nevertheless. Into Mr. Taylor's savory mixture have gone a couple of amiable old grifters named Ezra Cobb and Uncle Veenie, a troubled young summer couple called the Willises, and Mrs. Willis's diabolical teen-age sister Joan.

The genial oldsters spend their days pleasantly angling for petty cash, and dodging the responsibility of larger sums. The Willises slowly get up steam for a marital bust-up. And sweet little Joanie does what she can to make matters worse. Mr. Taylor mulls these elements skilfully about, bringing them to boil in a raging New England hurricane.

"The Bright Sands" makes no pretense at getting anywhere in a hurry, which adds to its leisurely charm, except when the book detours too sharply away from the primary adventures of Captain Cobb and his friends. Mr. Taylor's usually neat sense of humor occasionally overflows and shifts the bemused but rational tone he has established. All in all, though, *"The Bright Sands"* is a thoroughly happy argument in favor of the simple, dishonest life, of which the most convincing advocate is Captain Ezra Cobb, theological counterpuncher and evader of wealth.

—M. L.

ROMANCE AND SECRET TREASURE: Adeline Attwood's first novel, *"Treasure of the Sun"* (Houghton Mifflin, \$3), is a story of present-day Indians living in the foothills of the Andes. Nevertheless, its plot is wanton and barbaric enough for inclusion as a colorful anecdote in Prescott's history of Peru. When Illoma's betrothed makes his way back to his mountain village, after having had the skin stripped from the soles of his feet, the Indian girl and her father, Quiello, decide to go to the Old City to pursue his enemy. The tribe in which they are members knows a great secret: the whereabouts of the Inca treasure that was successfully hidden from Pizarro. Illoma suspects that her lover was tortured to divulge its hiding place. On the way to the Old City her father kills a man—one of a group of beggars who set upon him, in an effort to extract the same information. Trying to bring about her father's acquit-

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. "A Tale of Two Cities" (Dickens—the character is Dr. Manette).
2. "The Heart of Midlothian" (Scott—the Porteous riot).
3. "Julius Caesar," Act I, sc. i, and Act III, sc. iii (Shakespeare).
4. "The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease," "Epistles," Bk. II, 108 (Pope).
5. Acts xix.
6. "Paradise Lost," Bk. VI (Milton).
7. "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," Chaps. 21 and 22 (Mark Twain).
8. "Tam O'Shanter" (Burns).
9. "An Enemy of the People," Acts 4 and 5 (Ibsen).
10. "Coriolanus," Act I, sc. i (Shakespeare).

tal for the murder, Illoma is forced to become the concubine of the Teniente, the brutal white official who is political *sina qua non*—governor, prosecutor, and judge—in the Old City. He refuses to secure Quiello's release until Illoma leads him to the Inca treasure. She takes him high up into the mountains, into a hidden valley. There, having made sure he will not be able to find his way out again, she shows him the Inca gold, and jumps from a cliff to her death. This should be sufficient to indicate the romantically wide-eyed afflatus distending the shape of the novel. It is to be regretted, because Mrs. Attwood demonstrates that she is quite comfortably able—while writing the first two thirds of the book—to create compelling mood and character. Only when the exigencies of an absurd denouement can no longer be postponed does successful illusion collapse under the weight of extravagant incident.

—NICOLAS MONJO.

LOST SOULS IN BOSTON: Siegel Fleisher's "The Lion and the Honeycomb"

(Houghton Mifflin, \$3.50) derives its title from a poem by Yeats, which in another part says: "Seek out reality, leave things that seem." In his novel, for which he was awarded a Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship, Mr. Fleisher plots the courses of two lonely seekers after the sweetness inherent in reality. One of them is Ralph Taber, a young man running away from grief caused by his wife's death. The other is Mabel Barnum, the common-law wife of a small-time criminal. Their lives run parallel through most of the book, touching only occasionally, and the contrast between them serves to emphasize the simple human aspirations which both share. It also accentuates the melting-pot atmosphere of the Boston slum in which they live. Ralph loses his sense of bitter futility by developing a feeling of compassion for a dying neighbor in his rooming house. The old man (significantly named Adam) rewards Ralph by giving him a heightened insight into his personal conflicts. Taber's redemption is completed by a new love. Mabel is not so fortunate;

her happiness turns to bitter ashes.

Mr. Fleisher tells these tales well, when he sticks to telling them, and he communicates a feeling of warmth for some of his characters. But it seems to this reader that he belabors his subject unduly, overlaying with surplus rhetoric what he has already made quite evident. He dilates on the themes of love and death with a literary garrulosity that tends to diffuse the strength of his novel. Echoes out of "Dubliners" float up to assail the eye and ear. Poetic interchapters, transposing the city images of Eliot, create pretentious interruptions. "The Lion and the Honeycomb" is at its best when Mr. Fleisher is directly saying what he sees and feels. At other times, the cold shadow of erudition falls between the idea and reality of Mr. Fleisher's prose.

—M. L.

TEACHERS' WORLD: "The End of the Week" (Macmillan, \$3.50) makes the atmosphere of an American elementary school so palpable that one can almost breathe the acrid odor of chalk dust, feel the entangling coils of red tape, and smell the decay of the educational process. Teachers are gray people, Virginia Chase makes one of their number observe, "... squat gray or wisp gray or mole gray ... living in a tight little world of their own ... letting their minds slip, their spirit die" Miss Chase takes a searching look at the tight little world of a microcosmic public school, and creates a kind of "Spoon River Anthology" of its inmates. Not all yield to the pervading grayness; some struggle to retain their individuality and the priceless human relationship between student and teacher (in a class of fifty pupils). But it is a three-sided battle—between the school administration which regards its wards as statistics, the teacher who tries to regard them as people, and the parent who doesn't care one way or the other.

Miss Chase captures a moment of arrested motion in the lives of thirteen teachers. Some are awaiting a shabby little party for one who is leaving, others are following their small separate destinies. In each case Miss Chase creates a believable picture of an individual's hopes, achievements, and frustrations. There is a unifying thread of suspense running through the book, and there are refreshing flashes of ironic humor. But the most abundant element in "End of the Week" is that of truth. Miss Chase has put thirteen lives on view and let them speak for themselves. There emerges not only that pathos of the gray people, but also the sad travesty of learning which public education has become in many places.

—M. L.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fact and Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE CONTENT ASSIGNMENT <i>Holly Roth</i> (Simon & Schuster: \$2.50)	British newsman trails Yank gal-friend (big-time op.) from Berlin to mid-Manhattan—	—with stopovers at Albany, Syracuse, Utica (reason: too many Reds).	Brisk show
JOURNEY TO NOWHERE <i>Nedra Tyre</i> (Knopf: \$2.75)	Jittery Va. jane (hubby twice tried to kill her) takes trip.	Long on atmosphere, short on excitement; not in the groove.	Her first still her best
THE CASE OF THE FORTY THIEVES <i>John Rhode</i> (Dodd Mead: \$2.50)	Dr. Priestley once again puts Supt. Waghorn of CID on right track.	More activity than usual for this author; big theft racket.	He's done worse
LAWYERS DON'T HANG <i>Glenn Barns</i> (Arcadia: \$2.50)	State crime investigator gored as committee prepares to move in; local legal lights worry.	Some stock characters, but rest ring true; attention-holding performance.	Clean-cut job
I'LL BURY MY DEAD <i>James Hadley Chase</i> (Dutton: \$2.50)	Midwest promoter's brother plugged; sundry other corpses clog story.	Cast large, girly, but not many of them come alive.	Sex and confusion
ALL THAT GLITTERS <i>Manning Coles</i> (Crime Club: \$2.75)	Tommy Hambleton tours Germany on trail of swiped plane plans.	Familiar mixture of international mayhem and mirth.	Peppy as ever
LOVE BADE ME WELCOME <i>John Lodwick</i> (Roy: \$3)	Paris gal throttled; Sûreté and Yard collaborate to good purpose.	Covers big territory, but yarn is told with zip and humor.	Nice going
PERSONAL COLUMN <i>Various Authors</i> (Roy: \$3)	True London <i>Times</i> accounts of British and Continental crime careers.	Case histories ignore police work; accent methods, jail life.	Excellent olio

—SERGEANT CUFF.