

has nothing, he is convinced, to do with fashion; it has only to do with permanent quality. He is not likely to be a collector in any orderly or elaborate way; that sort of thing he leaves to the aristocrats who collect under the guidance of a dealer and who have, he believes, no taste of their own. . . . He looks upon all culture but his own, all other standards of behavior, and all other measures of success with tolerant suspicion."

After some richly metaphorical sideswipes at "mass-produced eccentrics" and "the part-time lady," Mr. Lynes ends up by asking a question which he does not propose to answer: "What is all this uneasy concern for security in the midst of plenty? . . . Why do they [the rest of the world] distrust us? . . . Why . . . do we distrust ourselves? Why do we suspect that we are always outguessed and outmaneuvered by the Russians? Why in the world community do we act like poor little rich boys, all dressed up in our best clothes, with our faces scrubbed—and nobody wants to play with us?"

John Keats, the author of "The Crack in the Picture Window," doesn't know why either, but he suspects that we are not being helped toward an answer by the way we are crowding ourselves into vast housing developments where each "home" is a "box on a slab" costing twice what it should and condemning its inmates to a life of boredom. He constructs the fictional "average" family of John and Mary Drone, with their two children, mortgage, unpaid-for car, and their house in "Rolling Knolls," sold to them by the kindly realtor Mr. Sam O. Burmal of the SOB Land Company, the SOB Investment Company, the SOB Realty Corporation, and the SOB Suburban Bank and Trust Company.

Life in the SOB domain is particularly hard on the wives, left at home during the day while their husbands work in and enjoy the great world. "It is a hideous travesty," says Mr. Keats, to suggest the housewives of Rolling Knolls had "something in common" when the bitter truth is that they had only too much in common. It is true that the dwelling shapes the dweller. When all dwellings are the same shape all dwellers are squeezed into the same shape. Thus Mary Drone, in Rolling Knolls, was living much closer in every way to 1984 than to 1954, for she dwelt in a vast, communistic female barracks. This communism, like any other, was made possible by the destruction of the individual. In this case destruction began with obliteration of the individualistic house and self-sufficient

neighborhood, and from there on the creation of mass-produced human beings followed as the night the day."

Mr. Keats feels that the impetus toward the creation of poorly planned mass developments has come from the greed of land speculators and builders, and from the apathy of the general public toward zoning laws and community planning. The cure, he thinks, is to "recognize the fact that . . . housing is a public utility. To my mind," he writes, "construction firms could properly be brought within the jurisdiction of a public utilities commission and be assigned a certain percentage of profit on their capital investments, just as are gas, electric power, and transportation systems."

BROODING over this whole society though, William H. Whyte, Jr. sees The Organization. He is afraid that the bright (but not too bright), gregarious (but not too gregarious), original (but not disturbingly original) young managerial men are the archetypes of a future society that will be dominated by the ideals of The Organization Man.

From the new model executives all over the country you hear, says Mr. Whyte, "a new litany increasingly standard. It goes something like this: 'Be loyal to the company and the company will be loyal to you. After all, if you do a good job for the organization, it is only good sense for the organization to be good to you. . . .

There are a bunch of real people around here. . . . They don't want a man to fret and stew about his work. . . . A man who gets ulcers probably shouldn't be in business anyway.'"

The Organization Man gets on the track in college, when company placement men woo him with promises of training programs, automatic salary increases, moderate working hours, and fringe benefits. All he has to do is show himself to be the very model of intelligent, gregarious moderation that the company's psychological testing consultant believes he ought to be.

Mr. Whyte describes The Organization Man's activities and beliefs at home and in the office with the verve of a satirical novelist. His advice, directed chiefly at those who feel themselves succumbing to the enveloping caresses of the vast, loving beneficent Organization and who want to keep their souls and sanity, is to *fight* The Organization. "Not stupidly, or selfishly, for the defects of individual self-regard are no more to be venerated than the defects of cooperation. But fight [The Organization Man] must. . . . It is wretched, dispiriting advice to hold before him the dream that ideally there need be no conflict between him and society. There always is; there always must be. . . . The peace of mind offered by organization remains a surrender, and no less so for being offered in benevolence."



—Stuart H. Jackson.

The New Social Classes of Russell Lynes

A Review of "A Surfeit of Honey"
by Roger Butterfield

ARE you an Upper Bohemian? Are you a little ashamed of all the money you make in these lush times? Do you shun country clubs and the local Elks, but flock incessantly with your own kind in the remodeled brownstones of Manhattan, or the remoter reaches of Westport, Princeton, or Paris? Do you really like to eat dinner from a card table in the living room? Does your wife wear mobile earrings, and do you go in for male "separates"—sports jacket and slacks

(as Author Lynes does on the jacket of his book)? How about your sex life—are you so tolerant of what other people are up to that you find it hard to make decisions for yourself?

If your answer is a well-balanced yes to these questions—but not a loud, clear one, for Upper Bohemians don't go overboard in their opinions—the chances are good that you *belong*. The Upper Bohemians, says Mr. Lynes, are a new and useful class in our changing American society. They are neither below the three great aristocracies of the 1950s—business, labor, and entertainment—nor above the so-called

middle class. They do not look down or up at other people, but "sideways" and with "detached amusement." They seem unconcerned with conventional "success" but are proficient at whatever they do, and their mildly critical viewpoint is indispensable these days in any large corporation. Of course they spur the crudity of "How's business?" shop-talk. But they are always ready to discuss "the relationships of the company with the community" and to analyze any slump in sales as a serious "social problem."

The Upper Bohemians are just one of many discoveries in this wise and witty and slightly wicked book. Mr. Lynes takes his title from Shakespeare's "Henry the Fourth, Part One": "They surfeited with honey and began To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little More than a little is by much too much." The application to the Eisenhower era is obvious, and so is the appropriateness to Mr. Lynes's subject, which is American society in a period of unalloyed security. The old, crass, but well-defined distinctions, he finds, are melting down into a sticky mass of "togetherness." High society, as in

Mrs. Vanderbilt's day, is non-existent or non-important. The phrase "servant class" has no meaning in the 87 per cent of American households where husbands are part-time wives, washing dishes, changing diapers, or flourishing the strings of their barbecue aprons. Mr. Lynes holds out little sympathy (or hope) for the husbands. "They have made their own beds, and now they must lie in them," he says. "Furthermore, the chances are that they must get up in the morning and make them again."

EVEN success is losing its importance, Mr. Lynes finds, as he examines the answers to questionnaires sent to hundreds of college seniors. A craze for "adjustment" is sweeping the younger generation, and the old-fashioned word "achievement" is rarely mentioned. "No life in the ulcer belt for me," writes one young man, and another says, "Why struggle on my own when I can enjoy the big psychological income of being a member of a big outfit?" American youth no longer looks for frontiers to push back—it seeks to swim along in the wake of a prosperous profession or corpo-

ration. And the girls want husbands who are "ambitious but not dangerously so."

All of this Mr. Lynes rather acutely blames on the Depression of the 1930s, which he believes left deeper scars on the American psyche than are generally recognized. "Faith in money as a goal to which to devote one's entire energies was destroyed," he says. But so far nothing equally compelling has risen to take its place with a large part of the population—at least as individuals. They seem to be content to subtract a drop of anonymous sweetness from the over-all store—and hope that nothing upsets the hive.

In his last book "The Tastemakers" (SR, Nov. 6, 1954) Mr. Lynes gave us an excellent summary of the fads and frenzies that have helped to shape American culture. In his famous *Harper's* article "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow" he defined some intellectual levels that have prevailed during the current decade. In "Surfeit of Honey" he is breathing right down the neck of social history and stealing a look at the near future. What he says is not all honey, but it is all entertaining and remarkably illuminating.



—Fairlington.

The Nightmarish Suburbia of John Keats

A Review of "The Crack in the Picture Window," by Siegfried Mandel, who lives in Long Island suburbia.

MY REVIEW copy of John Keats's bilious indictment of suburbia has by now been well-thumbed by friends and neighbors who took to its gratuitous needling in very unkindly fashion. It's one thing to characterize the millions of suburban-development denizens as potential "Mongolian idiots" or "fools living in this nothing-down paradise" consisting of a range of \$5,000 boxes-on-slabs to \$50,000 split levels enveloped by a "steamy culture of social sickness," and another to make those tags stick.

We so-called fools became tired of putting up with scandalous postwar housing situations in the cities, and—especially veterans—took advantage of favorable low-interest mortgages to find a place in the suburbs for our

growing families. True, some of the "pioneers" who bought the first best thing they could get found that mercenary builders had presented them with a cat in a sack, but others who spent a little more time shopping came up with a substantial investment. Over a period of years what has a "renter" to show for his money? We suburban "idiots" on the other hand, who have been slowly whittling down the principal on mortgages, find that should we decide to sell all this money comes right back to us. Keats ridicules, for example, the Levittown developments, one of which is neighbor to my own on Long Island, but I have yet to hear of a Levittowner who did not turn a profit when selling.

Aside from the financial angle, the element of comparison is absent. When we suburbanites relax and recharge our mental batteries after a hectic day in the city and breathe the fume-free air in the quiet of the eve-

ning, we think with pity of our urban brethren cooped up in numbered apartments that resemble so many cells in a prison corridor from which they can reach the street by negotiating a mountain of stairs or a two-by-four elevator box instead of walking, as we do, right into a private backyard where our children can play on lawns rather than asphalt.

To John Keats our suburban developments are unrelieved nightmares peopled by such soapish characters as John and Mary Drone, who hopelessly overextend themselves to buy a home with less selectivity than drunks: Ronald Suave, a slick sales agent; Robert Razor, the builder who cuts corners and throats of victims; and the SOB Bank that specializes in fleecing operations. For good measure Keats sticks the Drones with a group of viciously cartooned neighbors whose names—the Fecunds, Spleens, Amiables, Faints, and Mrs. Ardis Voter—indicate their inadequacy. For recreation our suburban wives indulge in endless "hen" sessions and daytime coffee *klatsches* topped at night by unmentionable party games. Afflicted by bottomless despondency incurred by deadly routine, hounded by financial insecurity, and engulfed by mass mediocrity, Keats's creatures bear so little resemblance to fact—as I have observed it on Long Island and

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