

tribes who are just beginning to know the God of Wrath. There is the confused and treacherous record of David's harem—from which comes the tale of Amnon and Tamar and the ambitious Absalom, among others. For David, gaining the crown of Judah after the death of Saul, must wait for Abner's death too, and meanwhile he is "a most domestic man."

It is Joab who does the necessary evil that good may come of it, and who finally shows David the way to conquer Jerusalem and unify the nation. The combination of conscience and ruthlessness in these early tribes is also treated nicely, and the parallels with modern Israel are sometimes very pointed. Mrs. Chinn interprets some of the ancient myths rather literally, but "The Unanointed" remains an attractive romantic novel.

LOST AND FOUND: "The Good Wife" (Rinehart, \$3.50) is a first novel by a newcomer whose talents markedly outdistance her first-run shortcomings. At this stage, Aurelia Levi's excellences include a gift for clearly conceived storytelling, and a compassionate sense of irony. Her specific weakness is a tendency to subordinate character delineation to the exigencies of the narrative; but the story of a woman's belated acceptance of her own individuality carries the reader swiftly with it.

Still luminously beautiful at forty-two, Garnette Marden, the "good wife" of the story, is a woman who has unconsciously sacrificed her own identity to the power-obsessed man she married when she was a gentle, sheltered girl of seventeen. By nurturing the delusion that her husband's ruthlessness is an uncompromising "strength," she justifies her total submission to him. Thus, the stage is set with Garnette in the public role of cherished wife to the most influential man in the Southern town of Hendrie City, and a private role in which "the few pitiful false tokens of wifehood and maternity" are a mockery of conjugal and filial love. Then she meets a young pianist, visiting the city on tour, and is plunged into a deep emotional attachment. She desperately reveals the falsity of her existence, yet—when challenged by him—fears freeing herself. Ultimately, through the anguish of loss, she is forced to face up to the degradation she has clung to, and to take action resulting in a drastic realignment of her life.

In concluding on a note of selfhood emerging, rather than selfhood regained through one of those improbable fictional conversions, Mrs. Levi concludes in an atmosphere of psychological as well as artistic validity.

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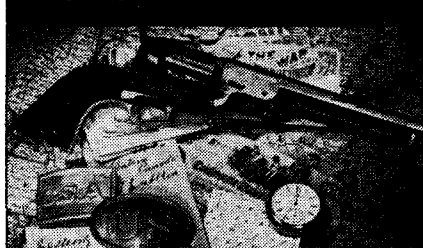
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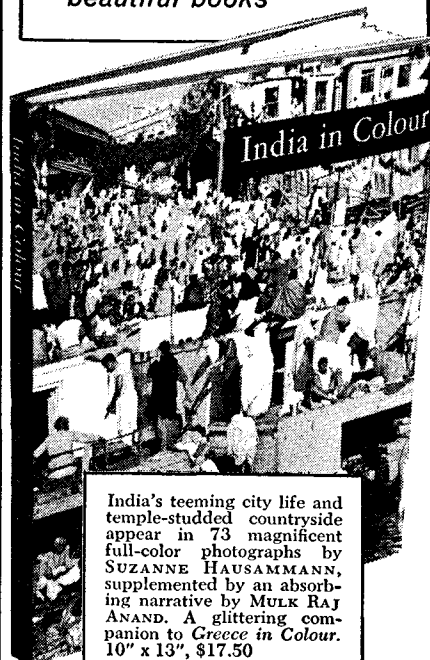
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FOUR NEW FACES IN FICTION



PHILIP ALSTON STONE, so far, is the season's writing prodigy. The eighteen-year-old Harvard freshman is the author of "No Place to Run," a bloodcurdling first novel of political demagoguery, nymphomania, and murder. He began work on his novel during the summer before his senior year at Hotchkiss School and finished it after his graduation at his home in Oxford, Mississippi, the home town of William Faulkner. Despite the fact that his father, president of the state bar association, is reportedly the prototype of Gavin Stevens, the lawyer-hero of many Faulkner novels, young Stone has deliberately not read much Faulkner. "I've read a couple of his short stories," he says, "but I don't want to be influenced by him. I know that my people and my stories come from the same ground as his Yoknapatawpha County. I think of my novel and future ones as part of a long saga—maybe ten, twenty books—all with the same characters and the same locale. I don't want to write in Faulkner's shadow." At Harvard, where he is a classics major, Stone is purposely avoiding his more natural inclination toward modern literature. "I don't want to write dissertations on symbols and Mauriac and things like that, or to have to write anything that may interfere with my own ideas about fiction."

JOAN VATSEK looks exactly the way the heroine of a novel of international intrigue ought to. She is the author of just such a book, "The Fiery Night," an April Literary Guild selection, which tells a violent story of modern Egypt, from love along the banks of the Nile to the burning of Shepheard's Hotel. Miss Vatssek herself is exotic and expensive looking, with just the slightest inflection in her speech to indicate that she might (and does) speak foreign languages easily. Just before World War II, she interrupted her studies at McGill to accompany her father, a Hungarian diplomat, to Alexandria, Egypt, where she whirled away two years in a round of parties, frequented by vintage cosmopolites. Emotions ran hot in wartime Egypt, and Miss Vatssek found herself caught up in a whirlpool, turgid with pro-Nazism, anticolonialism, and, churning beneath it all, nationalism. After the war, Miss Vatssek married writer Robert Arthur, had two children, and moved to a twelve-room farmhouse in Yorktown Heights, an hour away from Manhattan. She began to write short stories, many of which were published in women's magazines. But Miss Vatssek now says that she wants a broader canvas; she is already at work on a new novel about Hungary during the postwar decade.



PHILIP ROTH's first book, "Goodbye, Columbus," containing a novella and several short stories, has already received considerable advance acclaim, including the Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship. His stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *Commentary*, in the 1956 Martha Foley collection, and last year, in Paris, he accepted the Aga Khan award from the princely hands of Sadruddin, brother of the current Aga. Most often his stories are about middle-class Jews, who rise from their urban environment to make the arduous trek to the suburbs. Roth himself was born in 1933 in Newark, New Jersey, in a predominantly Jewish middle-class neighborhood, from which his parents moved to suburban Moorestown. After his graduation from Bucknell, he took his master's degree at the University of Chicago, and stayed on for two years to teach English. He left just in time to miss the Beatniks, for which he is grateful (they are, he says, "talentless children"). Roth is often compared to J. D. Salinger, a comparison which he finds both flattering and ridiculous. "If you italicize a word you are accused of mimicking Salinger," he says. Recently married (six weeks), Roth lives in the suburbs of Greenwich Village, otherwise known as the lower East Side.

GRACE PALEY's success should encourage every harassed housewife who harbors writing ambitions. Mrs. Paley, the author of a book of short stories, "The Little Disturbances of Man," has a husband, two children under ten, and a walk-up apartment, which she cleans herself, in Greenwich Village. "I suffer from an acute case of household chaos, but through it all, I'd have to be dragged to the suburbs." Born in the Bronx in 1922, Mrs. Paley, a confirmed New Yorker, prefers city life for her own children. "It makes them stronger, more able to confront life when they have to." Active in local Village community activities, she takes an avid interest in her children's public school education. "I myself had little formal education," she reports. "I went to Hunter for a while, but I was sort of thrown out. Actually after the sixth grade my interest in the academic routine was over." In the early years of her marriage she wrote poetry, which seems to account for the meticulous concern for language in her own stories. Her output is small. This slim volume contains all the prose work she has written. She was chary about submitting it for publication; it was, in fact, her husband, movie cameraman Jess Paley, who sent her manuscript to Doubleday.

—ROLLENE W. SAAL.

