

prose is an image better unpursued. Similarly, with respect to themes, were Royce's and James's conceptions of philosophy more "frankly humanistic" than Bertrand Russell's; or were any of these Americans' "confidence in the power of the mind to make the world over" and opposition to "any belief that set limits to what the human mind and will could accomplish" greater than those of the Enlightenment or Romantic philosophers? Was Peirce more moralistic in his approach to philosophy than Plato or even Bosanquet and Bradley?

As the question is likely to degenerate into one of degree, and in any case does not impair the usefulness of the book's selections, it may be allowed to pass. The curious feature of the book is its omission of Whitehead. If immigrants like Santayana and Morris Cohen are to be included, why not one whose stature exceeds them both?

The simplest way to place Bertrand Russell's "Wisdom of the West" is to say that it stands midway between his "History of Western Philosophy" and Dagobert Runes's "Pictorial History of Philosophy" published last year. Like the latter, it is a production: big (letterhead folio size), studded with illustrations (500, half of them in full color), and expensive (\$12.50). The illustrations — which include diagrams intended to convey ideas, as well as photographs of men, scenes, and art objects—are more successful from the esthetic than from the philosophical standpoint. They are remarkably handsome, but do little to facilitate the assimilation of thought or to re-enforce its retention.

RUSSELL credits his editor not only with assembling these illustrations, but with co-authorship of the text. This lends credence to a suspicion which early comes over the reader: that the book incarnates less Russell than his editor and publisher. No Nobel Prize would have been awarded this prose; in parts it reads as if passages of the author's "History of Western Philosophy" have been smelted down into Basic English to make them accessible to a mass public. There is no reason to disdain such efforts in principle; there are as good grounds for translation across levels of understanding as across languages. But translation is an art which has little intrinsically to do with mechanical devices like abbreviating sentences and inserting visual aids. The disappointing fact about "Wisdom of the West" is that its communicative art falls short of its visual. The result is a magnificently bound and generally beautiful volume which is less satisfying to read than to look at.

Our Moral Life

"Philosophy in the Mass Age," by George P. Grant (Hill & Wang, 128 pp. \$3.50), stimulates thought about who we are and where we are going. Sydney J. Harris is a syndicated newspaper columnist for the *Chicago Daily News*.

By Sydney J. Harris

THIS is an unsatisfying book if one is looking for answers to fundamental questions; but it is a useful book if one is looking for the fundamental questions themselves.

What is the nature of man and his relation to history? Where does his true fulfillment lie? Are values created by us or for us? Is "progress" a meaningful term without an absolute goal to aim at?

In ancient and medieval times such questions were frequently debated, and not merely by professional philosophers or theologians. It may surprise some moderns to learn that Aquinas's "Summa Theologica" was written primarily for beginning students in their teens. Today only the specialist is willing to grapple with its dense, complex, and contrapuntal logical structure.

Professor Grant, who is chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Dalhousie University in Halifax, is nobly seeking to revive the languishing philosophic appetite in the public; this book, indeed, began as "an introduction to moral philosophy" for a general radio audience in Canada. It cannot, therefore, be judged as a rigorous work of sustained thinking, but rather as a popular and discursive examination of some of the basic problems and paradoxes in our contemporary moral life.

Unlike so many 400-page tracts which could easily be boiled down to one-tenth their length, this volume of little more than 100 pages contains enough suggestive material for a dozen books: within its brief compass it boldly attempts to deal with metaphysics, education, mass culture, industrialism, Marxism, the decline of the Protestant ethic, the relationship between law and freedom, and the limits of progress. A work so ambitious in scope is bound to be deficient in depth; and it is to Professor Grant's credit that he does not pretend to be making more than a gesture toward philosophic analysis. He is worried and confused—and his book asks us to share his concerns and to address ourselves to the ultimate problems of man's nature and destiny.

The author begins with a basic position, which he does not try to defend: that there exist principles of "right

action" for human beings, that these principles can be known and acted upon, and that education is "the process by which a person comes to think clearly about the proper purposes of human life."

To this extent Professor Grant aligns himself with the rationalists and the upholders of "natural law," as against most modern schools of thought—the relativists, the pragmatists, the positivists, the materialists, all those who deny the existence of absolute truths and who affirm that man's values are made by himself and not "given" by God or by Nature.

In a real sense, no past or present "solution" of our difficulties satisfies the author. He dismisses both the Marxist and the capitalist world-views as inadequate to man's spiritual needs—the former because it turns Society into a god (with tyrannous consequences), and the latter because it turns the System into a god (with demoralizing consequences).

Nor does Professor Grant rest more easily within the traditional shelter of the Judaic-Christian outlook. Here also he finds two perversions: on the one hand, Protestantism has created the modern, secular culture which now threatens it by promising a heaven on earth through "material progress"; on the other hand, the more rigid and other-worldly aspects of Christianity tend to ignore the need for social and political reforms and to confirm men in their bland acceptance of the status quo. The crucial paragraph in his book seems to be this one:

The truth of natural law is that man lives within an order which he did not make and to which he must subordinate his actions; the truth of the history-making spirit is that man is free to build a society which eliminates the evils of this world. Both these assertions seem true. The difficulty is to understand how they both can be thought together. Either alone is wholly unacceptable.

Almost all modern tendencies, as Mr. Grant sees them, violate one or the other of these truths. Religious fundamentalists stress God's law at the expense of man's freedom, while Utopian Marxists and Utopian capitalists stress man's freedom at the expense of God's law.

Professor Grant does not try to prove his thesis; he merely asserts it. As such, his book will be annoying to those whose prejudices are rubbed the wrong way; and especially to Roman Catholics, who will insist (with some justice) that his innocence of Catholic moral theology is a severe handicap in this lopsided presentation of Christian tendencies.

Radical Road

Continued from page 19

egy of Alger Hiss and his lawyers was to defend themselves by destroying Chambers. When this failed there was nothing left.

De Toledano offers two amusing specimens of the humorless fanaticism that is often found in passionate partisans, Left as well as Right. Before the trial de Toledano had applied for an interview with Hiss through one of his lawyers, who replied that he could not expose Hiss to "red-baiters." "If Hiss is the anti-Communist you say he is," was the author's retort, "why should he be afraid of red-baiters?" He didn't get the interview.

On one occasion de Toledano's mother met a judge, who asked her whether her son "wrote that terrible book about Alger Hiss." "Yes," she replied, "have you read it?" "Of course not," replied the judge, "And I don't intend to."

"Lament for a Generation" is well worth reading on several counts: as a narrative of the making of a convinced, idealistic anti-Communist, as the personal record of one whose age-group placed him between the "lost" and the "beat" generations.

Mr. Bell reinforces some of the impressions one derives from Mr. de Toledano in a more impersonal style and with a greater weight of evidence. As he sees it, the old passions were spent among the intellectuals in the West at the end of the Fifties. He finds a deep, desperate, almost pathetic anger in the search for a "cause." One can find confirmation of this in the "angry young men" of Great Britain, the violence of whose wrath seems wildly out of proportion to the causes which provoke it.

The young intellectual, Mr. Bell feels, is unhappy because the "middle way," which is overwhelmingly predominant in the political, social, and intellectual life of the United States and Western Europe at the present time, is for the middle-aged. Youth is starved for certitude, for enthusiasm, for straight black-and-white, hero-and-villain situations.

Mr. Bell ranges over a wide field, discussing crime waves (he thinks the incidence of present-day crime is somewhat exaggerated), permanent ele-

ments in American character, the American cult of efficiency, the reasons for the failure of American Socialism. Although the book does not always escape traces of occupational dialect (the author is a professor of sociology, following a period as a journalist) Mr. Bell can write crisply and brilliantly on occasion. Here is how he presents the aftermath of the Thirties, heyday of America's radical ideology:

In a few short years the excitement evaporated. The labor movement grew fat and bureaucratized. The political intellectuals became absorbed into the New Deal. The papier-mâché proletarian novelists went on to become Hollywood hacks.

Like Mr. de Toledano's more personal work, "The End of Ideology" contains interesting notes on the history of the American intellectual Left, pro-Communist and anti-Communist. And the author performs an excellent demolition job on the empty and pretentious theory of the "power elite," propounded by a fellow-sociologist, C. Wright Mills.

Both books pose the question: Whither from here? When one recalls in Mr. de Toledano's pages the silly and downright irrational fulminations of the fellow-travelers of the Thirties, the end of ideology does not seem altogether a matter for regret. But an attitude of cynical detachment, of idea vacuum, is not likely to be permanent.



Perhaps the ideal, as old as classic Greece, of self-development and self-improvement will again assert itself, despite Marxist and Freudian determinism. Old ideologies may be dead or discredited; but the very conditions which have made some old slogans seem stale and obsolete will generate new issues, new lines of division, in short, new ideologies.

Game of Profit

Continued from page 18

precedence over their interest as producers, along with stockholders who feel that their dividends do not quite make up for their increased living costs. It also takes in people, of any description, including farmers and small business men, who are sick and tired of labor-management clashes and the suffering, inconveniences, losses, and inflation they bring in their wake.

I have been unfair to Pei—partly because I think he has been less than fair to his own proposal. His arguments are more convincing than I have let on. I hope many people read this book and decide to be more intelligent consumers. Management will respond to this challenge; so will labor, I am convinced. I am in favor of anything and everything that makes us think more deeply about our "American way of life"—all of us.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 881

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 881 will be found in the next issue.

B PSBLETGO AGLC BLC
ETCWP KRLMKGWLKW
BSW BMMWPM RX LR
AWBL FBOTW.
OHABL BZZRPP

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 880

A highbrow is a person educated beyond his intelligence.

—BRANDER MATTHEWS.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

Column Two should read: 14, 2, 8, 7, 16, 1, 11, 15, 5, 3, 12, 10, 13, 6, 4, 9. Column Three should read: 8, 13, 1, 2, 11, 15, 6, 16, 9, 4, 5, 7, 12, 10, 3, 14.

Allen Drury, author of *Advise and Consent*, says of this book:

"A delightful and charming picture of the national capital in the eighties. Not only does it illuminate with a thousand human details a little-known period of our history, but it proves that the more Washington changes, the more it is the same thing—and that for those who love it, as Frank Carpenter obviously did, nothing is quite so fascinating as this fantastic, wonderful town."

CARP'S WASHINGTON

FRANK G. CARPENTER'S uproarious reports from the nation's capital, as fresh and funny today as they were when he wrote them 80 years ago for the *Cleveland Leader*. Introduction by CLEVELAND AMORY. \$5.75, now at your bookstore. MCGRAW-HILL

