



least lays a glossy screen over the grinding of axes. There is no axe-grinding here; neither is there any of that aura of noble hero-worship and special mystique found in Vardis Fisher's "Children of God" or Maurine Whipple's "The Giant Joshua." There is Joseph Smith, full-blown, egocentric as a mule full of corn, erotic as a Barbary ape, enormously gifted, always fascinating, indubitably paranoid. Neither the narrator nor Mr. Furnas makes any "judgments" about him; he is simply there, like a force of nature, and this is his book. To put a living man in front of us, and to let him live, is by itself a job better worth doing than any amount of cautious semitheological speculation. But Mr. Furnas does even more.

By putting the emphasis where it should be, and letting it all roll from the mouth and soul of Joe Pomeroy, he allows us the freedom of our own definitions. And Joe, though fictional, is a "creation" who, for mother-wit, originality, and blighted but bountiful humanity, is fit to stand alongside Huckleberry Finn and breathe the same honest air. His laughter is real as a river, and his grief rings like Hoosier ground in iron December. He holds the lapels of the listener from start to finish, and one shuts the book with a satisfied sigh—only to open it again and marvel at the vast amount of research that has found its way into an absolutely convincing yarn. There are, no doubt, juicy, controversial areas here; and today's Mormons may well become angry about the whole approach. But if they are wise, they will let it stand without comment; the spirit in "The Devil's Rainbow" is intensely real, and therefore holy.

One can think of no greater compliment than to say that Bernard De Voto would have relished this book. It has that shock of greatness that may with luck come to a discerning and hungry searcher a dozen times during his life.

NEUROTIC QUARTET: The publishers of "Interchange" (Knopf, \$2.95) are to be congratulated for offering the reading public 273 pages for under three dollars. Beyond that, this first novel by Judith Shatnoff is no bargain.

Though Miss Shatnoff possesses talent, she has done everything within her power to prevent the reader from recognizing it. To begin with, she has made the common mistake of assuming that neurosis alone makes a character interesting. Therefore, she has taken four neurotics and turned them loose without the help of a solidly constructed plot, believing that the very qualities she describes as distasteful in them will make them highly palatable to the reader. They don't.

Her story boils down to nothing much more than a fat, unattractive, pseudo-intellectual female deserting her hypochondriacal husband to run off with her lover, who eventually abandons

her in favor of a stag-party harpist (she strums stripped to the waist). Around the fringes are the abandoned husband and a schizophrenic bellboy, who wander off on their own tangents.

The style that Miss Shatnoff has chosen to encase her novel would test the strength of a well-seasoned author. Each character narrates in the first person whenever his or her turn comes up to inch the story along. This trick construction automatically demands four styles of writing (there are a few moments when, trapped in her own invention, Miss Shatnoff sneaks in the bellboy's sister for some solo passages). Unfortunately, the quartet, regardless of sex and background, all speak with one voice, and you know whose that is.

Let's hope "Interchange" represents a purge rather than a way of life for Judith Shatnoff. If it's the former, she should be all ready for a good novel.

—HASKEL FRANKEL.

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

WHICH IS WHICH?

Here are sundry historical and fictional personages who are sometimes hard to tell apart. James P. Killen of Chicago, Illinois, asks you to tell them apart. Answers on page 49.

1. Catherine Howard and Catherine of Aragon were two of Henry VIII's six wives. One was divorced, one beheaded. Which was which?
2. Castor and Pollux were mythological twins. One was famous for his boxing skill, the other for his horsemanship. Which for which?
3. Hero and Leander were legendary lovers. One swam the Hellespont to reach the other. Which swam?
4. Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger were an uncle-and-nephew literary team of ancient Rome. One is noted for his "Natural History," the other for his "Letters." Which for which?
5. Charles Lever and Samuel Lover were native Dubliners and nineteenth-century novelists. One wrote "Handy Andy," and one wrote "Charles O'Malley." Which did which?
6. There was an American Winston Churchill and there is an English Winston Churchill. One wrote "The Crisis" and the other wrote "The World Crisis." Which wrote which?
7. Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, first Earl of Lytton, was the son of Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer, first Baron Lytton. One of them wrote "Lucile," and the other wrote "The Last Days of Pompeii." Which did which?
8. The Prince and the Pauper were two young Mark Twain heroes. One was named Tom and the other Edward. Which was the Prince?
9. Sohrab and Rustum were legendary father-and-son warriors. One killed the other in battle. Who slew whom?
10. Tweedledum and Tweedledee were a couple of Lewis Carroll characters. One accused the other of stealing his rattle. Who accused whom?

Yorkshire Rebel in Silken Chains

"O Dreams, O Destinations: An Autobiography," by Phyllis Bentley (Macmillan. 272 pp. \$4.50), describes the difficulties encountered by a middle-class Englishwoman in becoming a writer and an independent human being. Lillian Smith's "Killers of the Dream" was recently published by Norton in a revised edition.

By LILLIAN SMITH

EVERY man, as Paracelsus says, is the son of two fathers—one of Heaven, one of Earth. I thought of this as I was reading Phyllis Bentley's autobiography. She is earthbound and she knows it, but she never ceases to reach toward the sky—sometimes with a longing so intense that she almost tears herself in two in a silent effort to free herself from the fixating stuff of Yorkshire County.

Her account of her longing to write, her need to escape the soft, silk-covered chains that bound all middle-class girls of her generation, is so drily written that a careless or blunted reader may fail to perceive the drama, the pathos, and the mastered ordeals that are revealed in its pages. She yearned for adventure, yearned to write "a great novel," yearned to express the humor and wit she knew she possessed in words that would endure; now she knows that she has not achieved what she wanted to do. That she has achieved excellence as a woman and a true *areté* of spirit she seems only dimly aware, although, with good Yorkshire understatement, she might defend the rightness of her life *for her*, if you questioned it.

She was a most intense and ambivalent member of that first generation of girl rebels. Her family were Tory; her father and brothers were textile mill-owners; she loved the initiative and courage and hard work that built up the textile industry; she respected Yorkshire "tycoons" even as she smiled at them; at the same time, she was concerned about low wages and bad housing, was unillusioned about war, and knew well the difficulties women met as they tried to take their place in a man's world. But she found it almost impossible to rebel openly against



Phyllis Bentley—"a muted poignancy."

the evils she saw so clearly, for at the moment of seeing the evils she also saw the good entwined with the evil; when she was most strongly tempted to be a changer, a maker of a new world, she also felt the value of the conservators, the maintainers of what was good in the past. Phyllis Bentley's mind was not a mind that supports itself easily on an ideology, either of reaction or of progress.

When she speaks of Yorkshire, of its industry, its patterns of economic and cultural life, of its people's psychology, I found her book of much interest. Her mind is tough and perceptive, she is shrewd, and she has interesting things to say.

But what I miss in the book is poetry. Again and again, I was reminded of Emily Dickinson: curiously enough, there is something of Emily in Phyllis Bentley—if we can think of an Emily without the talent for expressing the poetry of her inward-looking spirit. But Miss Bentley writes only prose. This is her weakness as an artist

—and perhaps her strength as a Yorkshire daughter. She split herself into dreamer and daughter, and pushed the dreamer so deep down inside her that she rarely had access to it. She seems blocked off from the fury and wildness and sweetness of imagination, from the surprises that the mythic mind might have offered her had she been able to communicate with it.

Her writings reveal the profound difference between daydreams and imagination. Her habit of secret daydreaming from early childhood undoubtedly gave her facility in making up all sorts of fictitious people and situations, but they were curiously thin, superficial, and, at times, of a naïve quality. Perhaps her love of the Brontë sisters, a lifelong preoccupation, suggests that she felt they made journeys into places of the imagination to which she could obtain no passport. Yorkshire County, which she loved and is loyal to, held her prisoner on too many levels of her being.

One has only to remember the autobiographies of Pasternak, Stendhal, and Rilke, or Dorothy Wordsworth's journal, or Virginia Woolf's diaries, or the letters of van Gogh to know at once that "O Dreams, O Destinations" does not achieve a high quality of human revelation. Nor can it touch Vera Brittain's "Testament of Youth" in eloquence, or Paul Nash's perceptive powers of observation of the countryside in "Outline."

What her book does give us is an earthy sense of Yorkshire County. We feel we have lived among its sheep, wandered across the Pennines, stared at its smokestacks, and watched its people make a community of themselves. The book also gives us a hurting awareness of the twentieth-century woman's difficulties in becoming simply a person; and we listen carefully as in her whispered agony Phyllis Bentley describes the difficulty of writing in a household where a mother's soft, smothering hands held her inaccessible to the tumults and the exaltations of passionate relationships with her world. When she tells of these matters she achieves a muted poignancy that is not soon forgotten by the reader.

Preface to a Poetry Reading

By Samuel Hazo

SINCE eyes are deaf and ears are blind to words in all their ways, I speak the sounds I write, hoping you see what somehow stays unheard and hear what never is quite clear at sight.