

resolved at length to surrender himself—and his invaluable fund of information on Soviet subversion in Burma and elsewhere—to the American Embassy in Rangoon. The mortal dangers of his decision were clear, but with the encouragement of his Burmese friends he took the final, irrevocable step—only to find defection not so simple an affair. There were still harrowing times to live through, and with them increasing risk of discovery.

In the end he was resoundingly successful, and the Free World today owes a real debt to Aleksandr Yurievich Kaznacheev. Moreover, as with Igor Gouzenko, the debt is not only political, but literary.

In "Inside a Soviet Embassy" we find a moving and eloquent testimony to the deep-rooted impulse to liberty that informs all of mankind, even the Second - Generation, All - Communist, New Soviet Man.

Westerners. There is a small hint that Mr. Thomson is aware of this phenomenon, but presumably the exigencies of space forbade its development in this study.

A gap also appears in the discussion of such a significant subject as Asia's population explosion. India, Pakistan, and the island of Java, which have an extremely high population density, are not differentiated from Burma, Thailand, and Malaya, whose densities are similar to those of a number of our Southern states.

Mr. Thomson is inclined to emphasize the religious over the political in his analysis and in his suggested solutions of Asian problems. He would rely on religion to mitigate the evils of racialism.

No greater problem faces the young nations of South and Southeast Asia than internal cohesion. Governments have the prime job of giving their many minorities—with their separate cultures, their isolation, and often their own languages—a feeling of participation and of belonging. How soon these nations attain unity seems more likely to depend on the better impulses of nationalism than on most religions, which, to the extent that they are strong, assist the very racialism and tribalism that make for disunity.

Mr. Thomson's most informative chapters are his first, an essay on nationalism, and the last (before his Summary) on "Christianity in Asia." For the Westerner ignorant of Asia, the lacunae and misemphases in other chapters will matter little if only he is moved to read further and more deeply on these new-old societies.

The Minority Culture Puzzle

"Changing Patterns in South Asia," by Ian Thomson (Roy. 166 pp. \$4.25), discusses the problems of the young Eastern nations whose peoples comprise more than half the world's population. Paul Bixler has been a representative in Burma of the American Library Association.

By PAUL BIXLER

IN THIS book Ian Thomson has attempted a well-nigh impossible job. Scholars are accustomed to think of "South Asia" as encompassing India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. Mr. Thomson has enlarged the concept to include all Asian countries south of the Soviet Union, an area stretching from Asia Minor to Japan. Although he notes that Communist China is "geographically outside the scope of this short summary," its influence too is included. Indeed, the index lists fourteen passages on or references to China, compared to eleven for India. It is a measure of our ignorance of Asia and our belated effort to mitigate it that in 166 pages we can be given a kind of introduction to recent and developing events among more than half the world's population, a vast complex of religiously-oriented cultures that must baffle God Himself, let alone the groping reader.

This is not to say that Mr. Thomson is poorly or superficially informed. He comes of a family that has devoted many years of service to Asia, and he himself has repeatedly visited countries of the Middle and Far East. He has done his homework, and he is sensitive to the significance for Asians of such an event as the Bandung Conference in 1955 or the Five Principles of *Pantja Sila* (both Indian and Indonesian versions). He has met Asians on their home grounds and listened to them, and his occasional personal

anecdotes fit the context as well as lighten the book's factual load.

It is unfair to say that factual error is a basic weakness of the book. But Mr. Thomson has a problem that faces him on almost every page. The problem is space, the constant necessity to squeeze a 180-degree panorama in depth into the flat dimensions of a five-by-three-inch snapshot. This pushes him into some misleading emphases. On a late page he quotes two articles of Communist China's marriage law. "These articles," he comments, "summarize most of the legal rights for which women in many Asian countries have been fighting for years, and in some cases are still fighting for." It would seem logical to explain further that the women of certain Southeast Asian countries have certain freedoms in marriage and divorce that would surprise not only the Chinese but some

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

PLENTY OF TIME

"Time is! Time was! Time is past!" These words, spoken by Friar Bacon's Brazen Head centuries ago, become more urgent with every passing moment. Nan Cooke Carpenter of Missoula, Montana, lists here a baker's dozen of titles reflecting this interest. Can you match titles with authors? Answers on page 38.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. "A Gift of Time" | () Pierre Audemars |
| 2. "A Time for Killing" | () Robert Crean |
| 3. "A Time of Harvest" | () Leo Deuel, editor |
| 4. "A Time to Laugh" | () Loren Eiseley |
| 5. "A Time to Pass Over" | () H. Gordon Green |
| 6. "Firmament of Time" | () William M. Hardy |
| 7. "Of This Time, of That Place" | () Garson Kanin (from Lael Wertebaker) |
| 8. "Of Time and the River" | () George Kubler |
| 9. "The Great Time-Killer" | () Harold Mehling |
| 10. "The Shape of Time" | () Richard Schlegel |
| 11. "The Treasures of Time" | () Robert Spiller, editor |
| 12. "The Turns of Time" | () Lionel Trilling |
| 13. "Time and the Physical World" | () Thomas Wolfe |

Squaring off the Corners

"Big Sur," by Jack Kerouac (Farar, Straus & Cudahy. 241 pp. \$4.50), tells of a forty-year-old boy hipster's latest voyage. Novelist Herbert Gold's most recent book is a collection of essays, *"The Age of Happy Problems."*

By HERBERT GOLD

THE TIME and the book have come for the Kerouac revival. In the span of about five years, Jack Kerouac, promoted from the rank of boy wonder, shot across the horizon with the adolescent, the jaded, and the symptom-coddlers in hot pursuit; and thus he arrived at the difficult position of a shopworn ancestor while still learning to be a writer. Multitudes at first read every word he wrote and then, almost at once, stopped reading any word he might write. Kerouac himself insured his decline. The flood of trivia that followed *"On the Road"* simply wearied many readers despite all its willed exuberance.

Now at last, in *"Big Sur,"* Kerouac has begun to fulfill the promises of humor and pathos that could be found among the goopy pretenses of his thirteen (yes, I counted them!) other books. The story is, as usual, frankly autobiographical. The writer returns to the scene of his crimes in beatnik San Francisco, thinks himself cracking up, revives his old friendships, goes on a binge, thinks himself cracking up some more, hies himself to a cabin in the woods, writes a poem on a beach, insists he is cracking up, flees, parties, finds boys, finds girls, finds a *real woman* (her son watches them make love), and finally really does crack up due to too much sweet wine. Then he recovers and takes to drinking dry wine.

Well, that sounds something like his other books, doesn't it? (Or don't it? as he writes in his populist mood.) But it is different. There is real pathos in the forty-year-old hip hero whose house is invaded by high school rebels wearing sweat shirts labeled "Dharma Bums." He is their cause. But where is *his* cause? He meets the fact squarely that he is not the great sex hero he has made himself out to be; he loves his mother and his cat. He is not a



Jack Kerouac—"troubling and touching."

Zen saint either; he is a weary boozier. He finds that he doesn't enjoy hitchhiking and gets blisters from walking too much. He makes a bed and recommends it as "good for the back"—an older man's recommendation for a bed.

He still uses those words—"goopy," "gooky," "goofy"—with a small-boy delight in Jello and horseplay; but he knows a little of where they belong and something of who the man using them is. Or if he doesn't know, he gives honest evidence. The book is full of sweet scenes of gabble and camping, woodsy rustlings and city chatter; there is a marvelously funny and touching description of a dodging and ducking inability to make a formal farewell to a friend in a tuberculosis sanitarium. The friends tease and jump and camp and really care for each other.

Of course, the pretensions of style and the sticky indulgences of egotism have not been extirpated. Literary references to everyone from Proust to Emily Dickinson still belie the purity and innocence of the attack on experience. A section devoted to delirium represents a naked launching into the techniques of William Burroughs and therefore fails to produce the effect of horror intended. A pastiche is not a nightmare is not a direct experience. And the poem by the hero Jack Du-luoz-Jack Kerouac, which concludes the book, has none of the justifying power of the poems written by Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago or John Shade in Nabokov's *"Pale Fire."* It reads like what

Demosthenes might have howled at the sea if he had filled his mouth with gook instead of pebbles.

Nevertheless, the portrait of the beat monster trying to escape from his role, to regain his role, to grow up, to remain a child, is in focus, troubling and touching. Kerouac no longer has to bark "Wow!" and parrot Zen catchwords in order to assure us that he is deep and has a soul. He gives a shrewd estimate of his role as a self-conscious actor in "God's movie, which is us," and finds it limiting both for God and to himself. He views his own willed simplicity with a harder eye. This developing severity is a real accomplishment. His misery is that of the twice-born man. "A long way to go," he says, and we know that he is thinking of death and of how short the way really is.

There once seemed a chance that Jack Kerouac might be a writer in addition to being a phenomenon. *"Big Sur"* tells us that the chance is not only still alive and glowing, but that Kerouac is on the right road at last.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 999

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 999 will be found in the next issue.

STERN APBA GELCA TLA
DLNA MPBA APFH APKQR
MTLEXQ'A GF NT GBX
KS APFH APTLWPA.

RKQ PLGGBCX.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 998

*To learn your offspring to steal
make them beg hard for all that you
give them.*

—BILLINGS.