

Eisenhower to a huge crowd of South Carolinians, the band striking up "Dixie," and the General leaping to his feet, grabbing the microphone, and shouting, "I always stand up when they play that song." The General went on to say that he was the first Republican candidate to bid for Dixie votes since the Civil War, and "the crowd went wild."

If later (as, conceivably, even then) Mr. Eisenhower was less manipulating than manipulated, those who took encouragement from his moral apathy when the Supreme Court issued its desegregation ruling were not. They knew what they were doing when they devised obstructive stratagem after stratagem—the so-called interposition, the so-called freedom of choice, the so-called local-option gimmick—and when they helped to organize the White Citizens Councils for the purpose of imposing economic sanctions against those Negroes who dared hope to exercise their hard-won rights. Judged on the basis of their expressed attitudes, such men as Senators Byrd and Russell, Sam Erwin and Lister Hill (all of whom Mr. Golden names) are not less cynical, self-seeking, and racist than Governors Faubus, Barnett and Wallace (all of whom Mr. Golden also names). Shunning violence themselves, they have not influenced others to avoid it. They, too, exploit ignorance and play upon fear in order to perpetuate a system that they know is immoral and evil. Proclaiming themselves reasonable men, they are yet in thrall to those myths with which the unreasonable seek to justify a social situation based on injustice. The first of these myths "insists the Negro is happy," and, Mr. Golden goes on, if it could corrupt the imagination of a Faulkner, "think of the less astute it enslaved, and think of the malice it encouraged."

The malice thickened as the Supreme Court decision was followed by the Montgomery bus boycott, the Greensboro sit-ins, the Nashville protest parades, the Atlanta selective-buying campaign, and the rise of new Negro leaders. Not yet President, Mr. Kennedy plunged into this atmosphere with a courageous disregard of political consequences. When a Georgia court sentenced Martin Luther King to prison for a minor traffic offense, Senator Kennedy's reaction was, "Four months for a traffic violation? But it is wrong!" Thus he committed himself to a battle which he fought with all the political weapons he could command, with the prestige of his high office, and with all the strength of his moral conviction.

In *Mr. Kennedy and The Negroes* Harry Golden follows every turn of fortune in that struggle, describes every significant action, applauds every hero, and excoriates every villain.

The Universe by Twos and Threes

More Roman Tales, by Alberto Moravia, translated from the Italian by Angus Davidson (Farrar, Straus. 255 pp. \$4.75), offers vignettes of Italian life away from the Via Veneto. Warrington Winters, a free-lance critic, teaches a course on the contemporary novel at Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn.

By WARRINGTON WINTERS

THE BITTER naturalism of Alberto Moravia was born in his first story "The Tired Courtesan" (1927). Two years later his first novel made him famous in Italy at the age of twenty-two. (America did not discover Moravia till *The Woman of Rome* was published here in 1949.)

This quick and yet leisurely growth of a talent occurred in a tuberculosis sanatorium. There, unhindered by financial or temporal pressures, unburdened by the clanking chains of a formal education, the young writer matured a special style which, in thirty-five years of steady production, has shown little variation—for better or worse.

So it is with these new Roman tales, all of which postdate the *Roman Tales* of 1956. Here we are in the world of the Roman proletariat—the world of de Sica, not of Fellini; but the passions are universal: lust, hatred, envy, sado-masochism, betrayal, and love. The stories unfold sometimes in duo, most often in trio form. The duo seems to demand as a third element the classical surprise ending; thus, assuming that he has impregnated his girl friend, the hero of one tale asks for her hand in marriage, only to find out—of course—that she was never pregnant at all. Again a detective discovers, long after we do, that he has spent a long, hard day on the trail of the wrong woman. Yet again, an uncle, investigating the attempted suicide of his niece, finally perceives that she was motivated by unrequited love for him.

Requiring no such outworn devices, the trio form is much better suited to the little universe of Moravia. A boy spends the day at the beach with his estranged fiancée and another girl; he favors first one and then the other; finally the three are again united. A boy



—Jerry Bauer.

Alberto Moravia—"bitter naturalism."

takes his friend and his girl for a drive in his new car; his jealousy brings them close to death on the highway; in the end, he becomes engaged to the girl but retains the friendship of the boy. A man pays a visit to a married couple; he had been the friend of the husband and a suitor to the wife, and now he strives to save their marriage.

In his easy manipulation of the triangle, Moravia often assigns the third role to a mother. A boy loses his girl; on the rebound he pays court to her young mother; the mother returns her daughter to the boy. A mother browbeats both her son and her lover until they unite against her. A beggar employs a five-year-old girl as his assistant until her jealous mother ruins the fruitful collaboration. A man has been making his living by stealing for his mother, who is a fence; he takes an honest job in order to marry the daughter of her friend.

Whether it be short story, novella, or novel, Moravia seems to hatch each work from within, so that it grows around him, like the apple around the core. It is entirely self-sufficient, a finite universe.

Coming May 30

University Press
Issue

Dr. Kien's Mad, Mad, Mad World

Auto-da-fé, by Elias Canetti, translated from the German by C. V. Wedgwood (Stein & Day. 464 pp. \$5.95), pictures a Bedlamic world in which a portly vampire and her loutish lover conspire against the arrogant Orientalist who is her quasi better half. Sergio Pacifici, whose "Guide to Contemporary Italian Literature" appeared in 1962, is working on a study of modern Italian fiction.

By SERGIO PACIFICI

ELIAS CANETTI'S cryptic novel, whose title brings to mind the ceremonial death imposed during the Inquisition upon those heretics who failed to recant their beliefs, is a narrative that is amusing and terrifying, as well as ponderous and pretentious.

It is a story, *sui generis*, about an arrogant savant, Dr. Peter Kien, and his confrontation with a mad, improbable world. The first fourteen chapters introduce us to the isolated life Kien leads in his windowless ivory tower, where he produces those great papers on Oriental language and culture that bring him fame but no happiness. One day he decides to marry Thérèse, a stout, middle-aged housekeeper who has been faithful to him, his cause, and his books. But she soon turns out to be a vampire whom he must, at all costs, escape. The

first part of the story moves along clearly and smoothly. But the pace soon changes, and the narrative becomes tortuous and jumbled. Dr. Kien begins associating with Fischerle, a hunchbacked dwarf, who is a master chess player and pimps for his own wife. Meanwhile, Thérèse takes Pfaff, a brutish concierge, as her lover, and together they conspire to sell Kien's precious library. A brawl that takes place between the four causes the arrest of Kien. After a lengthy interrogation, the scholar is sent back to his apartment, where his former wife and her lover keep him locked in, hoping to finish him off by starvation. Alerted by Fischerle, Kien's brother George, who is a

successful psychiatrist, rushes to the aid of his brother. He tries to diagnose his complexes and, when he believes Peter is well enough to be alone, goes back to Paris. But shortly after he leaves, Dr. Kien sets his library on fire, and dies in the blaze.

Perhaps Mr. Canetti intends to dramatize the predicament of the intellectual living in a society whose values he no longer accepts, let alone understands. If that is the case, the author should have tried to make his hero a more credible human being. As presented in the tale, Kien is a selfish, nasty boor, totally without compassion and (in so far as we can perceive) without commitments, a scholar whose professional competence is, in the last analysis, insignificant. Nor is the connection between the scholar and the community illuminated by Mr. Canetti, for the world created by his vivid imagination is one distressingly monotonous in its confusion and brutality. There is, in short, no genuine meaning in the protagonist's final sacrifice.

Return to Winter of Torment

The Long Voyage, by Jorge Semprun, translated from the French by Richard Seaver (Grove. 236 pp. \$4.50), reflects on five days of torture during the winter of 1943. Emile Capouya's column *The Real Thing* appears regularly in SR.

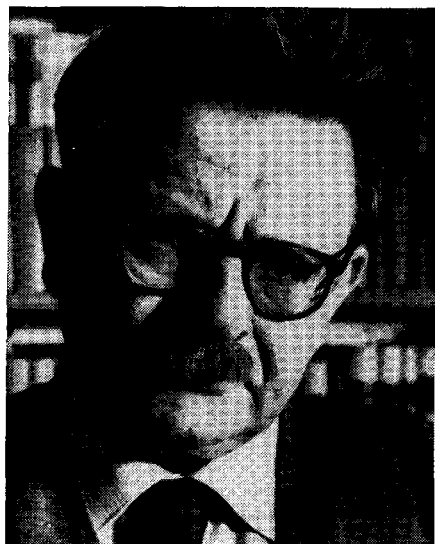
By EMILE CAPOUYA

JORGE SEMPRUN'S *The Long Voyage* won the Formentor Prize, which assures that the book will be issued more or less simultaneously in thirteen countries. For all the extraliterary considerations that govern the awarding of literary prizes, I think the custom a good one. It pays lip-service at least to literature, and in the best cases heart-service too. Then it rewards an author with a purse, mostly unlooked for, and substitutes a kind of regal largesse for the ordinary condition of literary production. The great majority of writers, including some of the most useful ones, keep body and soul together by some occupation that has nothing to do with writing; they wring their proper work out of their leisure time, and mean and sweated work it often proves. The plain fact is that literature is at a discount with us. We must have it in order to survive,

but we are unwilling to pay for it properly, and luckily we need not, for there is a literary proletariat ready to labor for the sake of our blue eyes. So all honor to the literary prize-givers, who evoke for a moment Pericles and Lorenzo de' Medici.

Particularly when they choose an excellent novel like *The Long Voyage*. The author, Jorge Semprun, is the son of a diplomat of the Spanish Republic, and thanks to General Franco he was raised and educated in France—one of the many talented Spanish writers now contributing to a literature other than the one they were born to. For *The Long Voyage* was written in French; Richard Seaver's English version successfully reproduces the vigor and beauty of the original.

Literally, the long voyage is a journey in a boxcar across France and Germany to a concentration camp. There are 120 men in the car, and among them is the narrator. His thoughts, ranging backward and forward in time—the story is told nearly twenty years after the winter of 1943, in which this and similar journeys took place—give a larger meaning to the five days of torture recorded. Memories of the Resistance, of the Liberation, of childhood, of the concentration and extermination camp, are evoked and



—Helen Craig.

Elias Canetti—"cryptic."