

out that the theme, as in many of the short stories, is a struggle between love and separateness, and he rightly asserts that Miss Welty is writing about a particular family, not about the South; but I think that he might have made more of the way in which an almost magically evoked atmosphere permeates and controls the novel. On the other hand, he is excellent on *The Golden Apples*, and here his emphasis on mythological parallels helps one to understand not only particular stories but the structure of the whole book.

Appel's writing is sometimes rather stiff in an academic fashion. For instance, after commenting—briefly, I am happy to say—on writers who influenced Miss Welty, he writes: "Yet the versatility of Miss Welty's style inhibits the inclination to categorize." But his joy in Miss Welty's work is so strong and his expression of it so uninhibited by academic caution that I can forgive him almost anything.

Although the body of Miss Welty's work is rather small, her importance is great. As I have made clear more than once, I have the highest admiration for the writings of Flannery O'Connor, and if I compare her novels and stories with Miss Welty's it is not with the intention of disparaging her, but in the hope of helping to define Miss Welty's virtues. In the first place, she has a wider range than Miss O'Connor, not geographically—that is unimportant—but in terms of the variety of persons she can bring to life. In the second place, although she can be fierce, almost as fierce as Miss O'Connor, she can be gentler than Miss O'Connor ever was. Finally, whereas there was for Miss O'Connor only one good, the Church, Miss Welty's God, like Tennyson's, fulfills himself in many ways.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT No. 1167

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1167 will be found in the next issue.

F CQFYK LBSHZP XC LQP BSAE
PGHPG LBBA LQFL HYBMC RPP-
SPY MXLQ VBSCLFSL ZCP.

MFCQXSHLBS XYDXSH

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1166

Whenever I feel like exercise, I lie down until the feeling passes.

—ROBERT M. HUTCHINS.

LETTERS TO THE Book Review Editor



Deliberate Choice

MY CHARGE of "special pleading," in the review of James Baldwin's *Going to Meet the Man* [SR, Nov. 6], stands. In *Another Country* the one relationship presented as being beautiful is between two men. This kind of artistic choice is deliberate. Just as in many books of an older generation, if the one nasty character was a Negro the implication was all too clear.

I am not, as some correspondents implied, an anti-homosexual bigot. For the homosexual I say: sympathy, liberty, and compassion. But as to admiration, or respect for him as a representative of a valid, meaningful choice of style of life—science, as well as common sense, says no!

DANIEL STERN.

New York, N.Y.

I WAS INTRIGUED by the letter pertaining to homosexuality signed "Bergman," Los Angeles, Calif. [SR, Nov. 27]. No one here seems to be aware of what must be the definitive proof from which the writer is basing his argument for physiological etiology of homosexuality. . . . From the tone of finality with which he wrote, I assume that he must be in possession of positive confirmation from human studies rather than tenuous extrapolations from primate or lower animal studies. Offhand, it would seem that Mr. Bergman is "projecting" smugness onto Daniel Stern.

JOE S. BUSEY,
Graduate Student,
Clinical Psychology,
University of North Carolina.

Chapel Hill, N.C.

Reminiscent Motif

RICHARD DUDMAN's skillful review of six current books on the crisis in Vietnam [SR, Nov. 27] has led me to set down some of my own thoughts on this frightening subject. . . . The papers tell us, with what I suspect is more than their usual accuracy, that our top committee of military technologists is pushing for ever greater escalation of our poorly defined operations in Vietnam. Further, it is apparently becoming acceptable common knowledge that we have little intention of abandoning our major bases there even should peace break out. On the basis of all this, the difficulty of separating nineteenth-century colonialism with its Christian motif, from twentieth-century colonialism with its anti-Communist motif, should be apparent to all those who can look with some objectivity at this tragic development. . . .

ROBIN A. DREWS,
Chairman,
Sociology and Anthropology Dept.,
Lewis and Clark College.

Portland, Ore.

RICHARD DUDMAN STATES that U.S. "combat troops" being committed to Vietnam "soon could match the 275,000-man American peak in Korea." It is unclear what purpose he sought to serve by citing this figure but it is quite misleading in conveying the size of our Korean commitment. Why ignore, for example, the Air Force, which saw much combat and had 7,452 casualties, or the Navy, which lost 6,077 (exclusive of Marine Corps casualties more than four times larger)?

According to official statistics, the total personnel engaged in the Korean conflict numbered 5,720,000, with the Army accounting for 2,834,000 of the number. Casualties for all branches of service were 157,530.

If Mr. Dudman seeks to infer that our Vietnam involvement is approaching our Korean effort in terms of manpower, he will have to marshal far more detailed and reasonably verifiable statistics than the figure of 275,000, which he attempts to use in *ex cathedra* fashion.

WILLIAM A. KINNEY.

Washington, D.C.

For Indices and Reference Notes

BERNARD GREBANIER [Letters to Book Review Editor, SR, Nov. 6] wants to hear how the "general reader" feels about indices and reference notes for his *The Great Shakespeare Forgery*, since Harry T. Moore [SR, Oct. 23] criticizes the lack of these. . . . Doubtless the editor hoped that *The Great Shakespeare Forgery* would appeal to the general public as a novel, and that indices and references would frighten away "novel-readers."

He should have had more faith in a book as good as this, and one as delightfully written.

EDNA D. BERNSTEIN.

New York, N.Y.

PLEASE TELL Bernard Grebanier to convince the publishers that for their constant readers in general (nonfiction, of course) and researchers in particular, a full and thoughtfully prepared index is a *must*.

CORINNE TENNYSON DAVIDS.
Manchester, Vt.

Phlegmatic

ONE OF YOUR READERS has contributed to the gap in my reading of modern literature. Just as I was about to start *Herzog*, I glanced at SR and saw the letter to the Book Review Editor from Bloomsburg's Sally Freeman [SR, Nov. 6]. It ended, "I recommend *Herzog* to anyone with any emotions at all." As I have none, I decided against reading *Herzog*.

RICK WILMER.

Paris, France.

The European Literary Scene

Two high priests of the French New Novel, Robbe-Grillet and Butor, have recently put out curious novels that are commanding attention, although they have not yet rivaled the neck-and-neck sales in France of Troyat's *Les Eygletière* and Françoise Sagan's *Chamade*.

His first novel in six years, Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Maison de rendez-vous*, or "House of Assignment" (Editions de Minuit), has Hong Kong as its setting, adventure as its climate, and exoticism and eroticism as its accessories. The characters who frequent the vast blue house are elegant men, exquisite prostitutes in Western and Eastern costume, dope pushers, pimps, police stooges, and supernumeraries. This volume, of 216 pages without a break, has the adagio flow and somnambulistic quality of Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad*. There is the same indistinct relationship between characters. A flimsy plot concerns a possessive man whose love for a prostitute leads him back to the blue house and a police trap. Some of the New Novelistic tricks are here: use of the present tense, preoccupation with speech rather than narration, juxtaposition of different versions of events (one thinks of *Rashomon*). Robert Kanters in *Figaro littéraire* ("Robbe-Bond ou Joyce-Grillet?") draws the usual analogy between the author's novels and films. "The successive scenes, the differing versions, the false starts, the beginnings-again in this novel of Robbe-Grillet, as the critic Bruce Morrisette has demonstrated in an almost scholarly way for the earlier ones, are rigorously chained together, the linkings being furnished by words, analogies, or resonances strictly calculated." Interviewed last month on his Normandy farm by Thérèse de Saint Phalle, Robbe-Grillet denied that his "following the slope of reverie without being concerned with what was rolling

over it" meant that he has turned his back on narrative. "I have never sought to suppress from my novels everything anecdotal. I have merely treated it in my own way. I have said that it was no longer possible to 'tell a story' as people did a hundred years ago."

His colleague Michel Butor, who also shuns simple narrative, was inspired by a 1962 visit to Niagara Falls to undertake his latest work, *6,810,000 Litres of Water per Second* (Callimard). This noisy milieu moved him to attempt a new type of novel, akin to the tape-recorded novels to which we have become accustomed. "The importance of the sonorous aspect made me choose a dialogue form suitable to radio scripts, and my experience at cutting tapes required for radio to limit a text to a short duration let me foresee the cutting in advance." Thus, as in Robbe-Grillet, dialogue is paramount: the speech of the guide (for some reason varying again and again the famous description by Chateaubriand of the Falls he had possibly never seen), the discourse of the couples and the monologues of the loners. Butor continues to exhibit a fascination with typography on the loose: boldface, roman, and italic fonts jostling one another, uneven margins, incomplete lines, etc. We have seen Butor working up to this in other recent works (*Mobile*, *Réseau aérien*, *San Marco*), and I for one remain much happier with the solid experimentation of the earlier *Modification*. Through twelve chapters (April through March) the "interpersonal communication" (in the speech professors' phrase) of the newlyweds and long-married couples describes a "cycle of marriage or love throughout a lifetime." As the critic of *Figaro littéraire* puts it, "Among the words of these characters, indications of time, place, and weather, touristic data, noises and the brief snatches of Chateaubriand, M. Butor establishes at every moment, in minute detail, correspondences or resonances through sound or meaning." As if this were not enough, Butor gives us seven *réglages* of intensity and ten "channels," suggesting how we can suppress or muffle voices during one reading and then read the "stereophonic novel" *da capo* as a different work by restoring these voices and noises.

This novel, like a drama, calls for reading aloud. Not many of us would wish to read aloud a book about Niagara, especially after the power failure and

the drought. Nor do many really look forward to struggling through the typographical patterns of Butor's newest books. Indeed, some critics are beginning to fear that Butor has ceased to be a writer entirely. True, we live in the age of the tape-recorded novel. But M. Butor doesn't even bother to turn on the magnetophone.

Robert Graves has just sounded two strings of his versatile trichord. His *Collected Poems 1965* and his thirty-five verses of *Love Respelt* have appeared under the Cassell imprint. The span from his student days at Oxford to his return there as professor of poetry includes two world wars and long sojourns in Cairo and Mallorca. These years formed him as a poet, novelist, and mythographer. Less influenced than his contemporary Eliot by symbolist and metaphysical predecessors, Graves as poet blends a loftiness of vision with brusque and realistic language and metaphor. A reviewer of the *Collected Poems* in the *Times Literary Supplement* momentarily forgot this tendency and informed his readers that Graves's "Bird of Paradise" was an allegory of an old and distinguished poet impressing his mistress:

At sunset, only to his true love,
The bird of paradise opened wide
his wings,
Displaying emerald plumage shot
with gold
Ungessed even by him.
True that wide crest
Had blazoned royal estate, and the
tropic flowers
Through which he flew had shown
example
Of what brave colors gallantry
might flaunt,
But these were other. She asked
herself trembling:
"What did I do to awake such
glory?"

Mythographer, *sic*. Allegorist, *non*. A fortnight later the *Times* carried Graves's blast from Mallorca: "'Bird of Paradise' is a simple poem of wholly natural experience and impulse. . . . Why does your reviewer who considered it a miniature allegory of an old poet not realize that if I had meant this, I should have said so plainly?"

The blushes of the gladiators who review for the *Times* redden fortunately anonymous cheeks.

At the same time Cassell has brought out Graves's *Collected Short Stories*, covering almost as long a period, 1924-62. They reflect life in three milieus of interest to Mr. Graves. There is the little Nepenthe of Mallorca, with its *faits divers* recalling Norman Douglas's *South Wind*, including a splendid contribution to the literature of taumachy. Some

Michel Butor—dialogue paramount.

