

past lives in us. And not just that single episode which those who accuse us have in mind: the Civil War—but all of the past. If the Civil War is more alive to the Southerner than to the Northerner it is because all the past is, and this is because the Southerner has a sense of having been present there himself in the person of one or more of his ancestors.

The Southerner no more identified himself with the Confederacy than he did with the Union; both were abstractions. . . . Clannishness was and is the key to his temperament, and he went off to war to protect not Alabama but only those thirty or forty acres of its sandy hillsides or stiff red clay which he broke his back tilling and which was as big a country as his mind could hold, whose sanctity to him came from the fact that in it were buried the bones of his own blood kin.

Whether Humphrey's generalizations hold true or not, his own feeling for what must be in large degree his own family permeates the book. It is significant that the novel begins and ends with family gatherings, the one a pious duty, the other a gay celebration. In between lie the struggles that Humphrey describes so intensely. Although I believe that the novel goes off the track, it will be read and deserves to be, for it contains a great amount of felt experience, of experience that has been acted upon by the imagination. Flannery O'Connor often said that one of the advantages of the Southern writer was the Southern habit of telling stories. There is surely a strong oral tradition behind this book, and if this tradition misled the author at various points, it must be recognized as one of the sources of the book's vitality.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

**FRAZER YOUNG'S
LITERARY CRYPT No. 1122**

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1122 will be found in the next issue.

M VFRT PMG VFOO OFDT MR
PKNW VFEWFG WFR VFE MR
WFR FGNSPT.

NWTRETQXFTOA

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1121

Arguments are to be avoided: they are always vulgar and often convincing.
—WILDE.

ON THE FRINGE

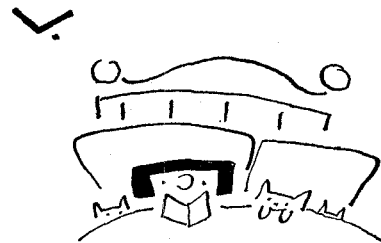
Fathers, Lovers, and Fiction

When a youngster of twenty-nine without a wrinkle to his name focuses on you from behind black-rimmed glasses and says thoughtfully, "I guess I'm an antiquarian by nature," as far as I am concerned it is time to leave the table. The party is but definitely over. As the young man of twenty-nine was named Richard J. Whalen and had backed up his statement with 200,000 words entitled *The Founding Father: The Story of Joseph P. Kennedy* (SR, Dec. 19, 1964), I kept my big trap shut and let him go on. "I mean I'd rather create a time than puff and pant alongside of the younger Kennedys. Anyway, the world did not need another book about the Kennedy boys, but it did seem to me that there was a need for some understanding of the first and indispensable Kennedy.

"The book began in the summer of 1962 when I joined *Fortune* magazine. Came there from the *Wall Street Journal*. The magazine wanted a political piece on JFK's promise and performance. As the youngest and newest staff member, maybe they figured it would cost less to assign me to the project instead of anyone else. Anyway, I got it. A boy looking at an emperor. Then I was yanked off it and switched to Joe Kennedy. We had a piece on him in our files from 1937. This became the source of our plea to JFK for cooperation on this updated look at his father. Pierre Salinger sent us word to wait awhile because of Joe's stroke. We decided to go ahead and do the piece from the outside. It was too good a story to drop.

"I worked three and a half months with two researchers. The final article, which I finished on Election Day 1962, ran to 13,000 words. The piece appeared in January 1963, and the issue, at \$1.25 a throw, was a sellout. I got calls from about a dozen publishers about doing a book. Since I had material for twice as much as I had written and since my research work had opened some doors to me, I thought okay, I'd do the book."

Except for the briefest of meetings with Bobby Kennedy in the Rackets Committee office in the basement of the Senate Office Building in 1958 and being a passenger, in 1957, on a commercial flight from New York to Richmond which Senator John F. Kennedy boarded, Richard Whalen has had no contact with the family he has "lived with" since 1962.



Was there anything beyond the 200,000 words he had already written on Joseph P. Kennedy that he might care to offer? The young antiquarian thought about it. "I admire him but I wouldn't want to be his son."

If you are at all concerned about your wife's figure, skip the candy this Valentine's Day and get her a copy of the very unusual *Love*, illustrated and designed by Vanni (Braziller, \$5). Even if you don't care about her figure or if it is too late to save it, or you are not married (I think that covers all possibilities), still take a look at *Love*, which will be released on February 14. You may recognize the story as one you've heard before but I doubt if you have ever seen a more impressive example of the printer's art.

On April 15, 1965, Farrar, Straus & Giroux will publish *In Search of Bisco*, by Erskine Caldwell. On June 15, 1964, they published his *Around About America*. I spoke with him—and his wife—sometime between books, if a sixty-one-year-old man with forty-five books to his credit can ever be described as between books.

Erskine Caldwell is built along the fullback lines of that guy who is always galloping across Marlboro country. He has a reddish crew cut and blue eyes set in a ruddy complexion. Though my tin ear didn't catch it, he said he still retained traces of his birthplace, Coweta County, Georgia, in his speech.

Usually when you interview an author there is a definite book to be discussed. In Erskine Caldwell's case there were two possibilities. I asked what book he chose to talk about. "I've done forty-five books. Why should I single one out?"

So I chose *In Search of Bisco*. "It's a personal reminiscence of life in the South of the past fifty years. Bisco was my Negro playmate when we were both in our early ages years ago in Georgia. I don't know any more of his name than

that. Maybe I was too young to find out or to remember his last name. There may have to be a Part Two to the book. Every so often I hear of him or of someone who sounds like him. Though it's not necessary for me to find him so much as to follow him. The Negroes in the South have been migrating. Other counties, states, North. Knowing many Negroes in my time, I've put them together into one—Bisco—to find out what they think. The Muslims, Martin Luther King—whom will they follow?

"For Bisco my wife Virginia and I, starting in February '64, made four trips to the Deep South. We've been in six states, two states per trip. Each trip took a month, and there were two or three week breaks in between. The whole thing took about six months. Every time we entered a new state we changed plates at the nearest Hertz office. In the old days an out-of-state car was an event. Today, unless you are a traveling salesman, you are met with so much suspicion. You might be connected with CORE or Freedom Riders.

"About myself, I work like any stenographer or bookkeeper. Regular hours, and I never got beyond the two-finger typing stage. I guess that's newspaper training. I throw away more than I keep. The more you throw away, the better the book.

"Writing is an individualized service. It's not a public service like garbage collecting; you are doing that for somebody else. When you write you are doing it for yourself. You've got to please yourself first. You can't do that by getting too esoteric. You have to forget yourself and identify with your characters, and they will tell the story. The characters have to explain the story to others, not to you. You know, you have to write for somebody—and I don't mean that the way I meant about doing it for yourself. You write for somebody much the way an artist paints. He doesn't paint a picture and burn it. He puts it up for somebody else. And that's what a writer does. Or maybe used to do. Writing now is like the greeting card business. It's a question of how wild you can get.

"Most of the big novels are compendiums of knowledge with a few lines of dialogue sprinkled in. I never make a note, never look things up. If I don't recall every character something is wrong. That's why life is so rough; I have to know so I travel a great deal. What I don't retain I consider useless to me.

"My last two books are nonfiction. I've got to get back to fiction. Once a fiction writer, always a fiction writer."

Virginia Caldwell, who had happily yielded center stage to her husband, smiled. "What he's saying is fiction is addiction."

—HASKEL FRANKEL.

Selecting a Nuclear Strategy

***The War-Peace Establishment*, by Arthur Herzog (Harper & Row. 271 pp. \$4.95), summarizes for the troubled layman the conflicting views held by participants in the arms debate. Stanley Hoffmann is professor of government at Harvard University.**

By STANLEY HOFFMANN

THE WORD "establishment" is beginning to suffer from misuse—and overuse. Aside from the fact that all are engaged in a quest for peace, the only thing common to the men or organizations covered by Arthur Herzog is participation in a confused and heated dispute. This book is a study of the "arms debate," not of the "warfare state" or of a "power elite," for he is not concerned with, say, the businessmen or the military leaders whose activities are directly related to the deterrence or the waging of war but whose views are rarely expressed in public.

A little over a year ago an economist from the RAND Corporation, Robert A. Levine, analyzed and classified the several positions in this debate. But Mr. Herzog's book differs from his in two respects. Mr. Levine's was a study written by an expert primarily for other experts or scholars; Mr. Herzog's volume is the report of a journalist for the troubled layman. The sophisticated and searching analyses in *The Arms Debate* were based on the writings of the authors Mr. Levine discussed. Mr. Herzog's summaries are the products of

interviews and conversations he has had with those men, rather than distillations of their published works. Consequently, his book is easier to read, but it is also much more superficial.

Mr. Herzog's dilemma was tough. If he went too deeply into the analysis and critique of the various stands, he would have duplicated Mr. Levine's effort and failed to reach the general public. But if he tried deliberately to write a "popular" book he was bound to oversimplify and distort highly complicated bodies of thought. It is to his credit that he should have, on the whole, avoided distortions, although he has not been able to give more than a breezy outline of the views of many. However, even mere outlines are enough to make the reader dizzy, precisely because Mr. Herzog has tried to be reasonably faithful to those views. As a result, he tantalizes without satisfying, and he bewilders more than he clarifies.

This is less his fault than that of the subject matter. And herein lies part of the tragedy. Strategy in the nuclear age has become so monumentally complex, the calculations and uncertainties are so huge, that the layman is left with a sense of impotence. On the other hand, if he feels sufficiently incensed to take a stand, his contribution will be worthless or misleading unless he diligently tries to think through all the implications, risks, and opportunities connected with his choice.

Whereas Mr. Levine distinguished five schools of thought, Mr. Herzog envisages only three: the deterrents, the ex-

