

heard.) If you think we need new values, why are you so dead set against far-out writers such as Alan Harrington and Richard Fariña?

A. I'm not dead set against them. I gave Harrington credit for trying to make something of an experience that is foreign to me but may be important. I did think Fariña's book got out of hand, but I believed he might make something of himself—as, poor fellow, he didn't have a chance to do. I admired *Giles Goat-Boy*, Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, and Walker Percy's *The Last Gentleman*, and I did my best to come to terms with Irwin Faust's *The Steagle* and Harry Mathews's *Tlooth*. As I see it, the far-out writers are concerned with varieties of experience that have not been domesticated, so to speak, for fictional purposes. It's no wonder that most of them fail, but I think their work deserves to be carefully thought about. One of the writers who is really far-out, though the fact isn't always recognized, is the English novelist Iris Murdoch. Her latest novel, *The Time of the Angels*, beautifully communicates her sense that the world is not at all what it seems to be. She. . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen—that is, the few of you who have remained to the bitter end—but, as you may have noticed, the janitor keeps turning the lights off and on. I fear that the time is coming when, like our distinguished speaker, he will leave us totally in the dark. Good night. (*Applause—for the chairman.*)

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

#### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT No. 1221

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1221 will be found in the next issue.

FXACNACB AD HZTO ACFOTODF-

ACB FXEC NCZKACB, IMF YODD

ACFOTODFACB FXEC YZZNACB.

—BZOFXO

#### Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1220

If a man hears much that a woman says, she is not beautiful. —HASKINS.

## LETTERS TO THE Book Review Editor



### Masada's Shekels

JAMES B. PRITCHARD quotes a passage in *Masada: Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand* [SR, Nov. 26] stating that "the largest group of shekels ever uncovered in one location" was found in Masada. This is not correct; in Jerusalem, in November 1935, a hoard of 160 shekels came to light when a new road was built near St. Stephen's Gate. After this statement Yadin continues:

. . . and this is the first time that shekels have been discovered in a regular archaeological excavation and in a stratum which belongs without any doubt to the period of the great Jewish revolt. This should put an end once and for all to the controversy of scholars; most of them it is true ascribed such shekels to the period of the revolt, but a few insisted that they belonged to an earlier era. . . .

The age of a coin found in a certain stratum cannot be established by the date of the stratum. The coin may come from any period preceding the stratum. There was rarely a family who did not keep old coins, sometimes for generations. . . . The methods in numismatic research are constantly improving; naturally the scholars spearheading the attack on obsolete ideas are, as always, in the minority. Now, while the minority shows that the shekels fit well into an era earlier than the revolt, the rest of the scholars never established a historical connection between the shekels and the great Jewish revolt. Obviously, no such connection exists. It is, therefore, rather surprising that Yadin believes he can "put an end once and for all" to the controversy of scholars.

WOLF WIRGIN.

Bronxville, N.Y.

### Weston's Daybooks

MARGARET R. WEISS in "Brief Exposures for Holiday Giving" [SR, Dec. 3] reviews *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*. Vol. I, *Mexico*, was published in 1961 by The George Eastman House, distributed by Wittenborn. Vol. II, *California*, was published in November 1966 by Horizon Press in collaboration with The George Eastman House.

The volumes are available individually or boxed together.

COBURN BRITTON,  
Vice President,  
Horizon Press.

New York, N.Y.

### Atrocities

BY THIS TIME you've probably been told about usage as viewed by Fowler, Evans, Perrin, the OED, and other authorities. But has anyone ever told you that the chief ar-

biters of what goes into the dictionary are the nation's editors?

"Englished" of course is an atrocity no matter what the dictionary may say. And you can hardly excuse the careless oversight of "except he" by invoking Theodore Bernstein [Letters to the Book Review Editor, SR, Dec. 10] . . . I'll bet you a new blue pencil that the reason the reviewer wrote "except he" was . . . his uncomfortable sense of sin and damnation regarding the objective case—as in "It's me."

RUTH GOOD.

Ann Arbor, Mich.

MALCOLM BONDY is nonplussed at the suggestion that "English" may be employed as a transitive verb. It may interest him to learn that the title page of the English edition of an early Spanish work by Nicolas Monardés reads as follows: "Joyfull newes out of the newe founde Worlde wherein is declared the rare and singular vertues of diverse Herbes. Englished by John Frampton Marchaunt, London, W. Norton, 1577."

JOHN M. FOGG, JR.

Philadelphia, Pa.

### Virginity Assumed

HARRY M. OSTROFSKY MAINTAINS that the translation of Isaiah 7:14: "the maiden" is with child, actually means the "young woman" (*almah*) rather than "the virgin."

Isn't it true that among races with the highest regard for the sanctity of home life (such as the Jews of the Old Testament and the earlier Germans) a young unmarried woman is assumed to be a virgin?

WILLIAM J. GROSS.

West Roxbury, Mass.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The New Jerusalem Bible*, page 1153: ". . . the Hebr., which uses *almah*, meaning either a young girl or a young recently married woman."

### Classics Homework

CICERO'S "OH THE TIMES, oh the morals" [Letters to the Book Review Editor, SR, Dec. 10] is "Oh the times, oh the customs." *Mōs, mōris* is undoubtedly the ancestor of the word family of morals and morality—and, not to be believed by the young, the *raison d'être* of the moral code, but it did not mean morality to begin with, except in a collateral way.

M. DODGE.

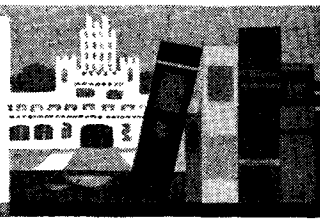
Miami, Fla.

IT SEEMS THAT NEITHER YOU nor Malcolm Bondy has been doing his classics homework. "O tempora, O mores" comes from Cicero's first Catilinian Oration, not his third.

SHAYE COHEN.

Forest Hills, N.Y.

# Perspective



## World of Savages

QUIANT as okapi or pandas, the relics of savage mankind live on in the thick inaccessible forests of the Amazon and Congo or the fractured, jungle-covered mountains of New Guinea, or they are pushed into the fierce, inhospitable deserts of Australia and South Africa. At the worst, they are penned up in reservations, there to be viewed like wild animals in the zoo and, like them, they learn the tricks that please. Haunted by journalists, plagued by photographers, bored by inquisitive anthropologists, these primitive peoples are fixed like flies in historical amber. Travel books about them (they are always good for a quick dollar) lie thick and glossy on the coffee tables: books that gleam with naked, bosomy, Technicolor girls; startling men with curved penis-holders the size of tubas and nostrils pierced with tusks—riveting the attention of adolescents. The text is usually mildly erotic, with descriptions of initiation ceremonies for boys and girls, strange marriage customs, or the exchange of wives. And there is generally a boring chapter on myths, totems, and the complex rules of feeding and marriage. If one pushes on beyond the glossy books to the monographs on the Aranda or the Nuer, or those strange Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert (really physically different from the rest of mankind), the photographs are drab and the text not much more illuminating. One learns with increased detail what one can or cannot do with one's mother-in-law, or is regaled with ill-translated chunks of myths and incantations. It is only when you advance from the monographs on individual groups and tribes to the books on anthropological theory that the world of the savage becomes a world of truth, immediate, insistent, and very near. This is particularly true of the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose stature in anthropology is in the heroic mold.

Lévi-Strauss's books are tough: very scholarly, very dense, very rapid in argument. But once you have mastered him, human history can never be the same, nor indeed can one's view of contemporary society. And his latest book, *The Savage Mind* (University of Chicago Press, \$5.95), is his most comprehensive and certainly his most profound. Everyone interested in the history of ideas *must* read it; everyone interested

in human institutions *should* read it.

As intellectual subjects go, anthropology has had a short history. For centuries it largely comprised mythical, strange fables of monstrous humans—men with one eye or with heads between their shoulders; hermaphrodites; dog-faced tribes: from Herodotus to Shakespeare it is the same tale.

After Columbus's discovery of America and the increasing contact with the Far East in the sixteenth century, man began to look at men as a species, to wonder about the strange differences in habits and beliefs. At first, observation was descriptive and distorted. Primitive or sophisticated peoples were cited to criticize or praise European cultures and rarely studied for their own sake. Aimable Persians or Chinese, at the service of a Montesquieu or a Goldsmith, wandered through the streets of Paris and London, expressing their good-natured surprise in urbane French or English. The Chinese became the models of reason, the savages of the Pacific noble in virtue. Diderot eulogized the sexual bliss of Tahiti in order to denigrate the repressions of Christianity. True, the duller travelers were steadily piling up mountains of fact, but none of this knowledge was organized systematically or used with any analytical skill: very little, indeed, entered into the common currency of Western culture. Not until well after 1800 did anthropology emerge as a science.

How it emerged and grew is told with real literary panache by John Wyon Burrow in his *Evolution and Society*

(Cambridge University Press, \$8.50), a book as easy to read as Lévi-Strauss's is difficult. Burrow sparkles with intellectual gaiety, and his gallery of weird Victorians amuses as much as it instructs. An odd bunch, the first anthropologists included racists like Hunt, who believed passionately in Negro slavery; Richard Burton, preoccupied by the phallus, oriental pornography, and the headwaters of the Nile; Dean Farrar, the author of *Eric, or Little by Little* (you can guess his tastes), and Algernon Swinburne, as well as a miscellany of doctors, lawyers, academics, and cranks. There has, of course, always been a strong Peeping Tom element in anthropology so it had a magnetic attraction for those Victorians who liked to disguise their pornography as science. Yet within fifty years anthropology had become an academic discipline. Haddon and others had begun to live in savage societies, and Tylor had laid the foundations of an enlightened anthropological theory that was to be crowned by the works of Lévi-Strauss. Even so, it proved a long haul. For many decades archeologists and collectors of folklore dominated anthropology, which concerned itself with artifacts and customs and paid scant attention to the logic of savage thinking.

This Lévi-Strauss has changed profoundly. He demonstrates that the savage brings the same qualities of observation, intellectual application, and abstract thinking to his universe as does a modern scientist to ours. The management of tribal territory was sophisticated, not haphazard or dominated merely by hunger and need. Although often inward-looking, the savage mind could cope with change, even *will* it. Lévi-Strauss shows, I think conclusively, that the Neolithic revolution was the result of thought and experiment (magical, perhaps, rather than scientific) but not accidental. Even more importantly, he reveals the comprehensive nature of the culture of these "intellectual dandies," as he calls the Australian aborigines,

