

hero has at last, for the moment, made connections with the common life."

As Wilson now recognizes, his program weakened the book. He was so afraid of Rita's dominating the novel, whereas his plan put Daisy in the central role, that he pushed the hero's affair with Rita into the background. In spite of this, the reader does understand the importance for the Twenties of the pure Bohemianism that Rita represents. It is significant that the novel was finished in 1929, the year in which the bottom fell out of the new capitalism. If Wilson, like the narrator, felt that he was coming to terms with a business civilization, we can see why he was jolted by the Depression into taking a revolutionary stand.

In the introduction Wilson writes: "Nothing annoys me more [and that is saying a great deal] than to have the characters and incidents which figure in my works of fiction represented as descriptions of real people and events." Well, yes, that always bothers writers, and it would be stupid to say that Hugo Bamman is John Dos Passos. But it is not the reader's fault if Bamman makes him think of Dos Passos, or if Rita Cavanaugh makes him think of Edna St. Vincent Millay, or if Professor Grosbeake reminds him of Professor Whitehead. If the narrator says things that Edmund Wilson has said in print, that does not mean that Wilson has done everything that the narrator does; but we cannot be blamed if we think of Wilson at least as often as the hero thinks of Daisy.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT No. 1247

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1247 will be found in the next issue.

G MGRFGXZ JDNCPZWUR . . .

UYZK JDZ JFTJKR SCFNJD, JWM

EHUZW IEWSCWIGWN.

—ERIJD TGFMZ

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1246

It is better to have loafed and lost than never to have loafed at all.

—JAMES THURBER.

LETTERS TO THE Book Review Editor



Milestones

YOUR CATALOGUE of distinguished publications by scholarly presses, "A Quarter-Century of Milestones" [SR, June 10], was most impressive. On page 72 the Indiana University Press is credited with the publication of R. C. Buley's Pulitzer Prize-winning study of *The Old Northwest* in 1951.

No doubt you will be interested in learning that *The Old Northwest* was published by the Indiana Historical Society in 1950, and received the Pulitzer award at that time.

The Society released the type to the author and the Indiana University Press did a second printing in 1951.

HUBERT H. HAWKINS,
Secretary, Indiana
Historical Society.

Indianapolis, Ind.

WHILE I YIELD to no one in my admiration of the work which Savoie Lottinville has done both as director of the University of Oklahoma Press and in leadership in the Association of American University Presses, I think he would be one of the first wanting to correct the statement that "the Press's enlightening Civilization of the American Indian series was a natural for him to inaugurate in Oklahoma." The first title of this series was published while Mr. Lottinville was completing his work at Oxford.

Among the objectives I had in mind in starting the University of Oklahoma Press in 1928 was to create a pride among Oklahomans in their state, badly injured by a succession of incredible governors, through showing that the state actually had a long history prior to white settlement. Also, annoyed by the fact that Eastern foundations could supply endless funds for archeological exploration in the Near East but no funds for study of the American Indian who once had owned this continent, I conceived the idea of the Civilization of the American Indian series, not to be numbered in serial.

I asked a number of scholars to establish criteria by which manuscripts would be judged. The first three volumes were published in 1932. When I became director of the Princeton University Press in 1938, Mr. Lottinville succeeded me, and has continued the high standards of the Civilization series, adding to it an invaluable group of companion series on Western life, ancient cities, etc.

JOSEPH A. BRANDT.

Los Angeles, Calif.

Echoing Tocsin

CONGRATULATIONS TO GRANVILLE HICKS for his fine and stimulating article "Art Lost in Analysis" [SR, May 13]. His criticism of teachers and professors of literature for paying too much attention to a literary work in relation to its author, background,

and other literature and then carrying on analysis for the sake of analysis until "it becomes a way of avoiding the contemplation of literature itself" much needs to be said. . . .

GARY A. DEAN.

Milwaukee, Wis.

MR. GRANVILLE HICKS's article was an excellent summation of the attitudes of lit majors here at the State University in Albany.

Recently, several of us in the department of romance languages vied for admission to a highly selective new honors program in Spanish. The seven of us who finally made it were dying to really tackle some of the many masterpieces of Spanish lit. Unfortunately, the professor who was in charge of our program decided to spend an entire semester on *Don Quijote*, which she proceeded to pick apart one episode at a time. Choosing to see the *Quijote* as the "Bible of humanity," she gave us no real background material on Cervantes or the period in which he wrote. Each episode was subjected to microscopic analysis. The result was that the novel fell apart, its entire continuity having been destroyed, and the honors program fell apart: only two students remained, the others having fled lest they die of boredom.

The same cries of anguish are to be heard from the English department where each professor seems to have a fixation either on meter, or symbolism, or biography, with a total disregard of the work as an artistic unit.

Miguel de Unamuno, the famous Spanish author and classicist, approached the teaching of literature with a desire to convey to his students an understanding of the minds that produced the works and the cultures that nurtured them. I wish some of the bores that are teaching here would heed Mr. Hicks and Don Miguel before we all desert the field and enlist in the social sciences.

JAMES P. BEGLEY.

Albany, N.Y.

I HAVE LEARNED that between September and June of each year:

1) A poem is a general term for collections of metaphors and rhyme schemes colored with an underlying message.

2) A novel is a rectangular solid containing a game. The object of the game is to find all the bestial imagery and Christlike figures someone has hidden inside a useless device called the story. Reading the book is cheating and also a waste of time.

I have also learned that reading can be fun when ideas aren't treacherously mutilated, sawed into partially related and obscure images, combined with underlying messages, and dragged all over the class like a cold dead fish.

BARB WELLS.

Findlay, O.

European Literary Scene

The most gilt-edged reputation among the newer novelists of Europe (if someone born in 1904 can be so categorized) is that of Witold Gombrowicz. This Polish patrician's books were banned under the German occupation and the later Stalinist censorship. His emergence this spring as winner over thirty-three candidates (including Nabokov, Alejo Carpentier, Le Clézio, and the runner-up Yukio Mishima) for the International "Formentor" Prize assures him a wide translation. Grove Press, which has published *Ferdynand* and *Pornografia*, plans to release all his works in English.

The irony of his late fame has been noted by Gombrowicz himself: "I was almost unknown until 1957. An immigrant to the Argentine. In 1957 the Polish government, in a moment of fleeting liberalism, allowed my books to be printed. The enormous and unexpected success of this enterprise was such that I was banned once more and it became illegal to write about me."

While Gombrowicz watches with a wry smile from his sanctuary in France, back in Poland Włodzimierz Maciag, literary critic of *Zycie Literackie*, decries "sophists" of his ilk. "One must not call for a fresh style or talent at the price of rejecting the rudimentary duties of literature, duties which have not been sufficiently fulfilled by contemporary literature."

Günter Grass, whose novels (*The Tin Drum*, *Cat and Mouse*, *Dog Years*) brought him a much earlier fame than Gombrowicz's, relentlessly pursues kudos as a poet. *Ausgefacht* (Questions Asked), just published by Luchterhand Verlag (Neuwied/Berlin), is his third volume of verse, following the first by eleven years. As usual, the Danzig-born *Wunderkind* finds in poetry an even better medium for being playful and serious at the same time. As we know from the earlier volumes, Grass loves to ponder the meaning of the most simple things and situations. Folding chairs? "What manner of furniture is this that implies departure?" A sunken aircraft carrier? "Now airplanes and angels hang suspended in air with nowhere to land." A biology exhibit? "Pale earnest embryos, our aborted children sit there in their plain glass jars and worry about the future of their elders." This capricious talent is undiminished in the latest volume. One of the cycles, "My big Ja

forms sentences with my little *Nein*," illustrates Grass's ambivalence in viewing everyday situations, "the mistakes and inaccuracies of our sense-impressions and the fortuitousness of our memory," according to *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. This spring Grass proved to be an effective good-will ambassador to not-yet-embattled Israel, whose government invited him to lecture at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv Universities.

Speaking of politically motivated poets, I find in the latest issue of *Literatur und Kritik* from Vienna an untypically polemic series of "Vietnam Epigrams" by the Austrian Wolf Biermann. I translate the first of these, entitled "*Morgenspruch* [i.e., Oriental saying] *des General Ky*":

A régime that need fear nothing
Other than its people
Can long endure,
So long as the folk has nothing to fear
Other than its régime.

Particularly savage is Biermann's "Epitaph for an American Soldier," "sent out as a butcher and ending up as cattle for the shambles."

It was inevitable that Greece's new oligarchs should single out for punishment the poet Yannis Ritsos, now in his fifty-eighth year. Ritsos, whose free verse has long sung of man's hopes for a better world, was the perfect scapegoat. Recalling the literary prizes Ritsos had won and hailing him as one of the great poets of our time, some 100 writers of France protested to Athens about his arrest, as well as the blackout of literary expression. The distinguished signers ran the gamut from Far Right (Mauriac) to Far Left (Elsa Triolet). By contrast, our own writers have been singularly quiet and disunited on Greece, a mutism perhaps explained by the official attitude of Washington, which merely regrets and does not condemn, which continues to support the oligarchy with our own tax monies.

A welcome phenomenon on the Spanish literary scene is the slight thaw toward books by exiled Spanish Republican authors and others who are non grata to the Franco régime. Thus Pablo Neruda's collection of verse *A House on the Sand* is his first since the fall of the Republic to be available there. Although I agree with the master Juan Ramón Jiménez's judgment of the Chilean Neruda ("a great bad poet") and

regret Neruda's debasement of poetry to win his Stalin Prize, I was pleased at least to see this particular book on sale.

A more important writer, Ramón Sender, is not only sold but even published in Spain, as has been noted here. I have just read with pleasure his *Tres novelas teresianas* (Destino), best translated as "Three Novelettes on Saint Teresa." These dramatize three facets in the life of the famous Spanish mystic: her acceptance of her religious vocation, her relations with the amoral courtesan Ana de Eboli, and her commerce with the court chaplain Fray Bernardo, which enabled her to understand the politics of Philip II. Sender has been fascinated with this visionary, who founded seventeen nunneries and fifteen monasteries, ever since 1938 when he wrote his capricious biography, *El Verbo se hizo sexo* (The Word Became Sex). The title pokes fun at the amorous ecstasies inspiring Teresa's religious outpourings, those ecstasies which Bernini captured in marble. In Sender's writing the exalted saint of the letters and autobiographical works is brought back to earth, personalized but viewed with sympathy.

William Golding's first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, appeared during his forty-third year; but he had solidified his tardy career by 1959 with *The Inheritors*, *Pincher Martin*, *The Brass Butterfly*, and *Free Fall*. He won praise for the careful structuring not only of his stories but of the world they portrayed. As he put it, "In all the books I have suggested a shape in the universe that may, as it were, account for things." Yet within an ordered universe there is always a disordered humanity. Golding allegedly set out to "trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature." His latest book, *The Pyramid* (to be published here this fall by Harcourt, Brace & World), makes no attempt—despite the geometric title—at form or levels of meaning. It recounts three moments in the life of the protagonist, Oliver, in his home county of Wiltshire. In the 1920s Oliver tastes the forbidden fruit with Evie, daughter of the town crier. Later he becomes involved with members of the local opera society. In the 1940s he visits the grave of his former music teacher, Miss Dawlish. He finally realizes how pointless, at least in his case, is nostalgia. All these friends were meaningless to him, for in his relations with them he had failed to "make for himself love, the beginning and end of the heart." Yet even when one tries to generate affection (we remember poor Piggy in *Flies*) life is anything but fun and games. The *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer advises his readers not to seek philosophic lessons in
(Continued on page 28)