

Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding, by Daniel Moynihan, who charges that officials plow ahead on given programs without fully realizing their consequences.

The self-assured intellectuals of the Kennedy-Johnson era have now given way to the managerial class brought in by Nixon. One may well question whether the change is for the better—or whether, indeed, there has been much change at all. What is certain is that the problems are massive and insistent, and that they will not easily disappear. A stronger government must still be accountable to the people. Bundy notes this necessity, but does not explore it sufficiently. Any new theory of government must reconcile efficiency and accountability.

If our governors are to plan more systematically and comprehensively, they must have an immense reservoir of hard factual data, valid conceptions of goals and purposes, and a means of projecting the possible accomplishments of alternative policies. None of these is presently available to anywhere near the degree needed. We can no longer afford the luxury of floundering around, testing this or that, in attempts to resolve abrasive social problems. We had better know what we want, and soon, for we do not have much time.

Bundy's theory, if adopted, could contain hidden dynamite. It may necessitate a realignment of the "power structures" through which official decisions are made in this country. Looking only at the Washington bureaucracy, it is obvious that many agencies have become either surrogates for or captives of the very groups they ostensibly regulate. Professor Grant McConnell documented this in *Private Power and American Democracy*, in which he concluded that "a substantial part of government in the United States has come under the influence or control of narrowly based and largely autonomous élites." Such élites are concerned not with the large issues of statesmanship but with those that touch their own particular concerns. Bundy's conclusion is similar: "*Laissez-faire* economics and pressure-group politics are equally inadequate. . . . Both in economics and politics there is need for a wider view of what is good." The "invisible hand," that is to say, is no more viable in politics than in economics.

The message for Nixon is clear: the quietude of the Eisenhower years is a luxury Americans can no longer afford. The "passive virtues" belong to a passive age, not to the turbulence of today. Government must govern; must be able to leash and manage the forces of rampant change. That is Bundy's central theme, and one hopes it will get through to the new Administration.

A Nonagenarian's Threefold Philosophy

Aspects of E. M. Forster: Essays and Recollections Written for His Ninetieth Birthday, edited by Oliver Stallybrass (Harcourt, Brace & World. 195 pp. \$5.95), and *E. M. Forster's Other Kingdom*, by Denis Godfrey (Barnes & Noble. 228 pp. \$7.50), discuss the author's recurrent theme of "connection" with other persons and with the invisible power behind the world. Daniel J. Leary, professor of English at the City College of the City University of New York, wrote the recently published "Voices of Convergence."

By DANIEL J. LEARY

AS E. M. FORSTER ENTERS the sparse ranks of celebrated living nonagenarians, we can expect a deluge of studies and tributes. A collection of critical pieces, edited by Oliver Stallybrass, and a work by Denis Godfrey, professor of English literature at the University of Alberta, Canada, are among the year's first, and both of them are worth reading.

Two contributions contained in *Aspects of E. M. Forster* are of real critical value: Wilfred Stone's "Forster on Love and Money" and Malcolm Bradbury's "Forster as Victorian and Modern." Stone, writing about *Howards End*, reaches conclusions that remind one of Norman O. Brown. And Bradbury,

focusing on *A Passage to India*, explores the implications of a plot that deals with certainties in a manner that seems to deny all certainty. These two essays, in their coupling of antagonistic values, reflect the epigraph of *Howards End*, "Only connect . . ." which could equally well be applied to all Forster's writings, both fiction and criticism. In other pieces Benjamin Britten recalls his collaboration with Forster on the opera *Billy Budd*; Elizabeth Bowen explains that for her Forster's "magic was . . . in the manner, the telling, the creation of a peculiar, electric climate in which anything might happen." Reminiscences by friends in publishing, in broadcasting, at Cambridge, David Garnett's recollections of Forster and Bloomsbury, W. J. Spratt's evaluation of him as a humanist are all pervaded with the sense of human connections, making it glowingly apparent that Forster's friends honor him not only as a writer but as an influence.

Although it was the connection of individual with individual that Forster stressed, his ability to absorb the spirit of a country is underscored in essays on his travels in Rumania, in America, and most notably in K. Natwar-Singh's "Only Connect . . . : Forster and India."

In a speech given in 1907 Forster explained that connections are threefold, involving three moral questions: 1) "How shall I behave to the people I know—to my relatives, friends and acquaintances?" 2) "How shall I behave

(Continued on page 106)



Henry Goldberry
"Are you trying to tell me, Miss Brimberry, that there is a fly in each of our 500,000 jars of ointment?"

SR Goes to the Movies

Hollis Alpert

Fall of the British Establishment

REVOLT AGAINST the British Establishment is hardly a new theme in British film-making, but familiarity does little to dull the impact of Lindsay Anderson's new film, *If . . .*, which is set in an Establishment training ground, a boys' boarding school. Anderson first impressed us with *This Sporting Life* some five years ago; since then his technique has become more experimental and to such a degree that we are never sure, with *If . . .*, whether what we are seeing is to be taken as reality or as fantasy.

The ground is solid enough, however, during the film's first half, allowing for a somewhat unsettling and seemingly haphazard mingling of black-and-white and color processes. The winter term is about to begin, the boys arrive, and we're taken into their traditional but peculiar world. New boys arrive and are known as scum; the seniors are higher up in the hierarchy and are allowed certain privileges; above them are the prefects, known as "whips"; at a further remove are the administrators. With great and telling skill, Anderson delineates these gradations in the school's structure. He reveals the learning routines and the grilling of recalcitrant students, suggests the tinge of homosexuality among prefects and the lower orders, and then focuses on his main concern, student rebelliousness and its possible consequences.

As the title indicates, he is not showing us an actual condition—although he does this better than any film, or perhaps a literary work, has done in the past—but what could happen. Three of the seniors in particular have lost their respect for hallowed traditions; they're of a new and contemporary breed. They become troublesome and eventually they break out into open and violent revolt. But do they? This is where the film does not make itself fully clear. For, at about the midway point of its progress, the mood changes. Two of the malcontents head for a nearby town, steal a motorcycle, and drop in for refreshments at a local pub. The girl behind the bar is a teen-ager. She is pretty, but mean. A seduction of the girl takes place. A kiss, a grab leads to nude writhing on the floor. Anderson doesn't give us a clue as to whether we are to regard this as actuality, or as fantasy. We may assume the latter, but in whose mind is the fantasy occurring? We don't know that either.

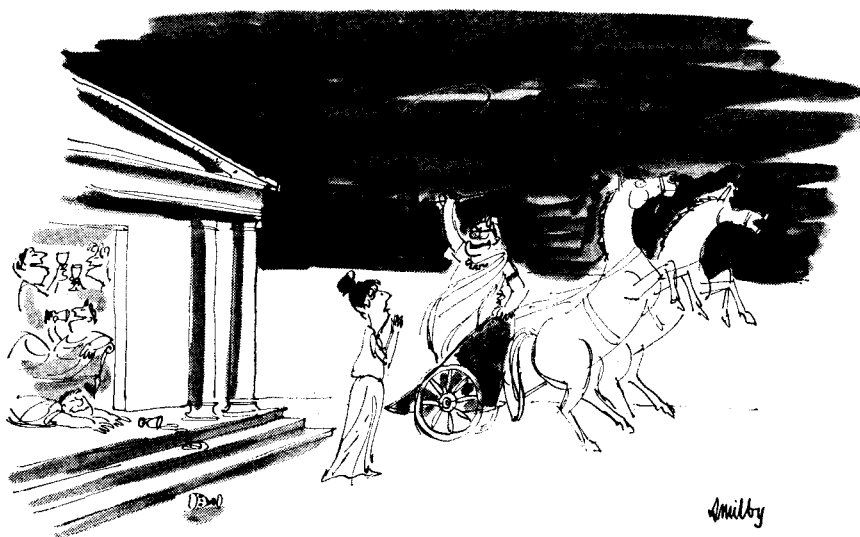
From then on the blend is both real and surreal. Since we are given no viewpoint from which to regard the action (there is no leading character as such) the film grows progressively bewildering. During some military exercises, the three rebels use live ammunition in their guns and shoot and bayonet the chaplain. Real or unreal? They are disciplined by the headmaster, and in the middle of this the chaplain, alive and

smiling, is brought forth in a drawer of a huge chest, then pushed back in—a bit of black humor that, in the context, simply makes no sense.

Eventually, the three boys uncover a cache of weapons in the cellar of the college hall and stage—with the help of the bar girl, who suddenly appears again—a full-fledged and lethal revolt. At the end, the full fury of the Establishment is aroused and open warfare breaks out. The possibility has become the actuality. Anderson himself has said that *If . . .* was not meant as a mirror of contemporary political and social problems, but that the theme, rather, involves "the fantasies and adventures and conflicts of youth, which often mirror, to a surprising degree, the world we think of as adult." Clear enough, perhaps, but the film doesn't really make this clear. It is striking, no doubt about that, and there is hardly a moment that is not fascinating, even when the material is repellent. The acting is altogether first-rate (no "names" of any consequence, by the way); the details are sharply observed. But somewhere along the line the causality was allowed to lapse, and we are left with a sort of Chinese puzzle. A comment in itself, perhaps.

This would appear to be boys' school week in the British cinema, for out of England has come another film set for part of its length in the rooms and grounds of a far seedier boarding school. Based on Evelyn Waugh's classic satire, *Decline and Fall*, the film, for some idiotic reason, has been retitled *Decline and Fall of a Bird Watcher*. Whoever at Twentieth Century-Fox was responsible should be immediately transferred to other and less meddlesome duties. The title, however, should not discourage anyone from seeing the film, for it is as good a satire as I have seen lately. If there is a problem at all, it is that the satire, updated as it is from the period of the Waugh novel, has lost a bit of its bite.

Even so, the fun is there and fairly constant. Robin Phillips is altogether likable as an ecclesiastical student expelled from Oxford for what is wrongly assumed to be licentious behavior. There is nothing for him to do but take a position at a demoralized boys' school, and from there on his adventures take him through several strata of British society. One delightful, but unfortunate encounter is with a rich and beautiful lady, played elegantly by Genevieve Page, who is one of a whole cast of remarkable "characters." For the most part the film is neatly directed by John Krish. But he does occasionally allow the sparkle to fizzle out of his material. Not for long, though. Even when a lag does occur there is always the humorously fantastic décor for the eye to dwell upon.



"Nonsense, woman, of course I'm fit to drive."