

Critical Realism; by 1962 more than 800,000 copies of his books had been sold in Communist countries. Unfortunately, the literary appeal of his writing is all too often diminished by the uncompromising hatred of the capitalist society in the Federal Republic that Heinrich Böll reiterates in his novels. The author here plays the fatal role of the *Praeceptor Germaniae*, the moralist and prophet of his nation, the Nestor of our century. Böll's last two major publications, *Absent Without Leave* and *End of a Mission*, are tendentious in an obtrusive manner, leaving little to the imagination in their overzealous criticism of West German militarism.

None of this is detectable in *Children Are Civilians Too*. Here speaks a true teller of tales, Böll at his best. These short sketches appeared between 1947 and 1951, when the author was trying to come to terms with the experiences of the Second World War. Böll is a devout Catholic—not an orthodox adherent of the official church doctrine, but an unwavering disciple of Christ. The six long years he was forced to fight in Hitler's war were against his inner convictions, certainly, yet he never openly took issue with Nazi despotism and crime. This contradiction, a prevalent one among the rank-and-file soldiers of the former German *Wehrmacht*, is reflected in most of Böll's early stories.

Twenty-six of them have been selected and well translated by Leila Vennewitz; together they present a valid testimony of the situation of those who do not really act in wartime, but are acted upon. Two of the

Your \$10 gift to these hungry kids can bring them \$240 worth of meat, milk and bread.

These kids subsist on a few greens around noon and some pinto beans in the evening. Nothing more or different. And not even enough of that.

It sounds incredible because it's taking place right now... in the midst of the good life so many of us are living in America. But walk down the back roads of most any Mississippi Delta town and you'll see children with stomachs bloated, eyes dulled, feet swollen, arms and legs matchstick thin.

The federally sponsored Food Stamp Plan makes it possible for needy families to convert a 50¢ food stamp into as much as \$12.00 worth of food.

The NAACP Special Contribution Fund has organized a nationwide drive to supply the food stamps. If you can do with one less "dinner out" this month, the money can mean a month's supply of meat, milk, and bread for a family of five. Just \$10.00 buys up to \$240.00 in food stamps.

To contribute to this fund, please send your tax-deductible check, for as little or as much as you can, to the NAACP Emergency Relief Fund. *Thank you.*



FRASER YOUNG LITERARY CRYPT NO. 1390

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1390 will be found in the next issue.

RPZ BDX GMWW D VDJJR EDX
TR D OPYG PH NEEPTNWNGR
NX VNO ONGZDGNPX.

—HPXGMXMWWM

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1389

It is almost impossible to remember how tragic a place the world is when one is playing golf.

—ROBERT LYND.

NAACP Emergency Relief Fund, Dept. B40, Box 121, Radio City Station, New York, N.Y. 10019

stories do not actually belong to the collection. One of them, "My Sad Face," is a somewhat lame farce about modern totalitarianism, written in the parable form of the Kafka tradition. The second, "Black Sheep," is a humorous exploration of the artist's existence. For "Black Sheep," incidentally, Böll received, in 1951, the Gruppe 47 prize, which established his reputation as a writer in Germany and abroad. All twenty-six stories, originally conceived in the laconic, careless speech of the ordinary German, are impressive for their precise settings, firm structure, and forceful, pregnant dialogue.

In his presentation of war Heinrich Böll never depicts the real fighting; he never confronts the reader with gruesome pictures of human suffering as did Theodor Plievier and others. It goes without saying that any glorification of war in the fashion of Ernst Jünger is excluded from his writings. Böll prefers to show the monotony of war, the waste of time and effort—he talks of dirt and lice and boredom and of the little yet utterly frustrating privations. He describes the war from the perspective of the plain soldier who worries about finding a slice of bread or a cigarette. Böll places his anti-heroic heroes into sick bays, crowded trains, drafty railway stations, and destroyed cities. His characters are rootless, homeless figures that fight a day-to-day battle for survival. They are preoccupied with their petty problems to such a degree that they find no time to reflect on the larger issues of the war.

Böll's stories give a gray, grim picture of wartime and postwar Germany, but few of them are completely without light and hope. "My Pal with the Long Hair" ends with the significant phrase: "We have been together ever since—in these hard times." In the title story, "Children Are Civilians Too," Böll writes: "The snow fell on her fine blonde hair, powdering her with fleeting silver dust; her smile was utterly bewitching." A glance, a smile that two people exchange breaks the isolation and solitude in a strange, hostile world. It is in the encounter of two human beings that the miseries of war and after-war are overcome. And if there is no soul to communicate with, man still is not left in the cold because there is always God. In "Candles for the Madonna" a man reflects after a visit to the church: "... my heart was lighter than it had been for a long time." Böll's figures are weak—every one a sinner in his own way—but they are, at the same time, believers who know where they can find an answer to their anguish.

William J. Schwarz

Criminal Record

Fact

Where Did the Justice Go? The Story of the Giles-Johnson Case. By Frances Strauss. *Gambit*. \$6.95. On a sultry evening in July 1961 the Giles brothers, John and Jim, along with their friend Joe Johnson, exchanged insults with a white youth sitting in a car with a white girl. The youth fled, leaving his date behind him, whereupon she offered her favors to the blacks. The three were convicted of rape and sentenced to die in Maryland's gas chamber at Baltimore. By the time the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the decision the trio had spent six years behind bars. Believers in justice were largely instrumental in bringing the facts of the case to public notice, and Mrs. Strauss's book is designed to serve a similar purpose.

It is not her first book. She has written, among other titles, *So You're Going to Get Married*, *Cookbook of Leftovers*, and *New Ways to Better Meetings*. The present work is a valid contribution to the history of the democratic process.

Fiction

Code of Conduct. By Elliott Arnold. *Scribners*. \$5.95. Mr. Arnold has neatly blended fact and fiction and come up with a novel of international intrigue which is a far cry from the routine never-never-land escapades that glut the market. The setting is Switzerland, but what happens to an American Intelligence officer and his wife is tied up with the capture of the *Pueblo* in Korean waters.

What Did Hattie See? By Kelley Roos. *Dodd, Mead*. \$4.50. Hattie saw a stolen Velázquez on her boss's mantel (a museum guard had been killed during the theft). Truth to tell, Hattie was too nearsighted to recognize the canvas, but the killers who are closing in on her don't know that, and Hattie doesn't know why they are closing in. It's cleverly plotted suspense, pulled off with a light touch by the team of Audrey Kelley and William Roos.

Fengriffen. By David Case. *Hill & Wang*. \$5. An ancestral home on the moor, a curse, and a beautiful woman in peril—in short, here are the near-classic elements of the supernatural horror story. The author's style ("He began to see the terrible fear that gripped his wife's sanity in the fetid talons of dread") hits just the right dusty note. If the tale is not as "chill-

ing" as promised, it will do until Mr. Case's next book.

The Blessing Way. By Tony Hillerman. *Harper & Row*. \$4.95. A corpse is found with sand in its mouth, and a mysterious figure wearing a wolf skin stalks the Navajo reservation. Obviously, here's suspense enough for anyone, but what makes this first mystery by Tony Hillerman outstanding is the wealth of detail about the Navajo Indian—customs, rites, way of life—with which he has crammed his pages.

An Affair of the Heart. By Jean Potts. *Scribners*. \$3.95. Muddying the facts about the death, apparently from a heart attack, of a married man in the wrong bedroom plants the seeds of a follow-up murder. Short, neat, competently done; but there's nothing special here other than the length, which makes it suitable for planes and trains.

Nightmare at Dawn. By Judson Philips. *Dodd, Mead*. \$4.50. How much excitement can you handle? In Connecticut Peter Styles's new bride disappears, a dog is killed, a boys' school's records are vandalized, and a major figure in the South African black nationalist movement is murdered. Add two British diplomats gunned down in New York, and you've got complications of the sort that only a top pro could handle with clarity and at a brisk pace. Judson Philips (sometimes known as Hugh Pentecost) is as pro as they come.

The Pushbutton Butterfly. By Kin Platt. *Random House*. \$4.95. Private eye Max Roper is hired to find a missing girl; the search takes him to Haight-Ashbury, Berkeley, a hippie commune, etc. The characters are the expected weirdos. Also expected are the occasional druggings and sluggings of the hero, with a sprinkling of corpses along the way. All these, however, run a poor second to the cliché out-of-the-corner-of-the-mouth narration. This is Max Roper's debut, but surely we've met him under other names a thousand times before.

A Good Place to Work and Die. By Winfred Van Atta. *Doubleday*. \$4.50. This tale of stock manipulation by party or parties unknown—with attendant murders—is a bit too complicated to appeal to the garden-variety escapist reader, but if Wall Street is your duck soup, this well-plotted novel is your meat (and let the metaphors mix where they may). **Sergeant Cuff**

