

lives in a kind of Frank Capra America in which the worst crises become the crucibles for democratic achievements of the highest order. Curiously enough, the best piece in the book is a recollection on his mentor, H. L. Mencken, whose cynicism about Americans stands in utter contrast to Manchester's eternal optimism. Nor is Manchester's prose in the walnut-cracker Mencken tradition. It is straightforward American reportage, and the farther back he goes—to the Spanish-American War and World War I (which he of course calls "The Great War")—the less engaging is the story. His profiles of Adlai Stevenson and Walter Reuther seem dated and quaint, as does his puckish assessment of the eccentricities of *The New York Times*. But in such essays as "The Island War" and "Corps d'Elite" (about the marines), Manchester has an unerring sense of the best anecdote and its best place in the paragraph. If he is a slippery historian, he is still one of the best storytellers around. If you like your history painted in broad, nostalgic strokes, let William Manchester write it all.

JOHN F. MARIANI

### The Devil Finds Work

by James Baldwin  
*Dial*, 122 pp., \$6.95

Appropriately enough, James Baldwin's first full-length work of film criticism darts from movies themselves to social history to autobiography with the acrobatic ease of a camera. The prospect of a "rap" on film by our premier black essayist can only arouse bright expectations, and indeed Baldwin fulfills them in certain ways: he offers a provocative discussion of the impact of white film stars on the black temperament, a frightening account of his interrogation by the FBI, a sensitively rendered vignette about the effects of racial inequality on a white cab driver.

Unhappily, these passages are less typical of Baldwin's book than the banality which we encounter at frequent intervals. Many a dead horse is dragged out for another whipping, with the much-lacerated victims including Stanley Kramer's 1967 film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* and the treatment of black people by white landlords and racist cops. What is more disturbing is Baldwin's habit of recycling historical facts and works of art for his own polemical use (he tells us that the often-disparaged Charles Lindbergh "was never consid-

ered anything less than a superb and loyal patriot" and that the anti-imperialist *Lawrence of Arabia* is an endorsement of the "bloody course of empire").

These intellectual postures are perhaps not surprising in a mind which has decided that all forms of evil—materialism, cruelty, fascism—are the viruses of a "sick" white culture and that black goodness and resilience are the only antidotes. Such notions, dissolving all individual guilt into racial polarities of virtue and vice, are a sad descent from Baldwin's earlier, more complex writing.

ROBERT F. MOSS

### Doctor Rat

by William Kotzwinkle  
*Knopf*, 256 pp., \$7.95

*Doctor Rat* is a fictionalized anti-vivisectionist tract, *The Jungle* from the steer's point of view, *Animal Farm* as concentration camp. Narrated by various animals, including some singing whales and monkeys that might better have been kept working on the Bible, the novel is dominated by a mad laboratory rat who defends man's experiments with animals, himself included. Often quoting from university studies and scientific journals, *Doctor Rat* describes these experiments in detail gruesome

enough to make anyone wonder about their utility and the nature of the people who perform them.

But the book should not have been a novel. After giving us the initial shocks of roasting rats and suffocating dogs, Kotzwinkle fills the narrative with an animal uprising and lyrical animal reveries illustrating "the essential unity of all creatures." Neither device works. Alternating between shrillness and sentiment, *Doctor Rat* ultimately cancels itself out, even those early pages that should go into an essay for everyone to read.

THOMAS LECLAIR

### The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Vol. 6

Edited by Gunther Stuhlmann  
*Harcourt Brace Jovanovich*,  
464 pp., \$12.95

### In Favor of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays

by Anaïs Nin  
*Harcourt Brace Jovanovich*,  
176 pp., \$2.95 (paper)

An upbeat ending graces the sixth volume of Anaïs Nin's *Diary*, which covers the years 1955 to 1966. She started the piecemeal publication of her *Diary* in that lucky final year, at a moment when feminists were eager to learn about a



"Between 1962 and 1974 I was a frog. Then in 1975 I was crowned King, and 1975 was a very bad year for kings."

woman who seemed to have remained untrapped, even by her own beauty. Already, as volume 6 moves out of the flatlands of the Fifties and into the arduous, adventurous Sixties, one gets the sense that Miss Nin was coming into her own—that the *Zeitgeist*, so often laggard, was hurrying to embrace her. The young began to share her interest in inner worlds, although they took the drug shortcut to visionary states that she feels are better achieved through art. Women, wresting themselves free from “togetherness,” would soon applaud her stubborn independence, her refusal to consider herself anything less than an important writer at a time when her poetic novels were cold-shouldered by the literary establishment.

She takes her newly won success well, never pretending she isn't pleased. Anyone who has read the earlier volumes of her *Diary*, which begins in the heady Thirties, when the literary life opened for her in Paris, knows she sweated for it. The fact that she rates a salute, however, does not mean that volume 6—or her collection of articles on men and women, on the arts and travel, *In Favor of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays*—is without a characteristic fault. Uprooted from Europe to America as a child, Miss Nin counters in her work the harsh, anti-poetic environment that overwhelmed her then. Her writing is a corrective, as lime sherbet is a corrective to a heavy meal—but a diet exclusively of lime sherbet quickly palls. That is the danger Miss Nin does not always succeed in avoiding. During her more rarefied stretches, the subversive side of the reader begins to long for some appalling instance of vulgarity, like a belch or a TV dinner.

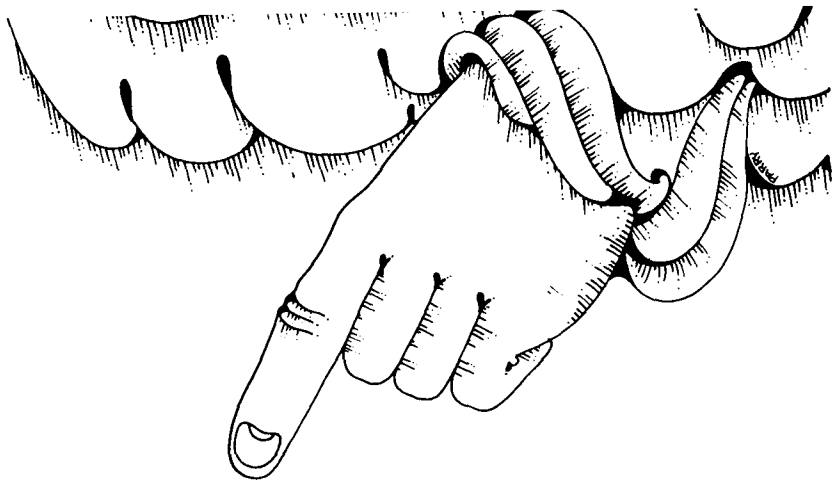
RALPH TYLER

FRASER YOUNG  
LITERARY CRYPT NO. 59

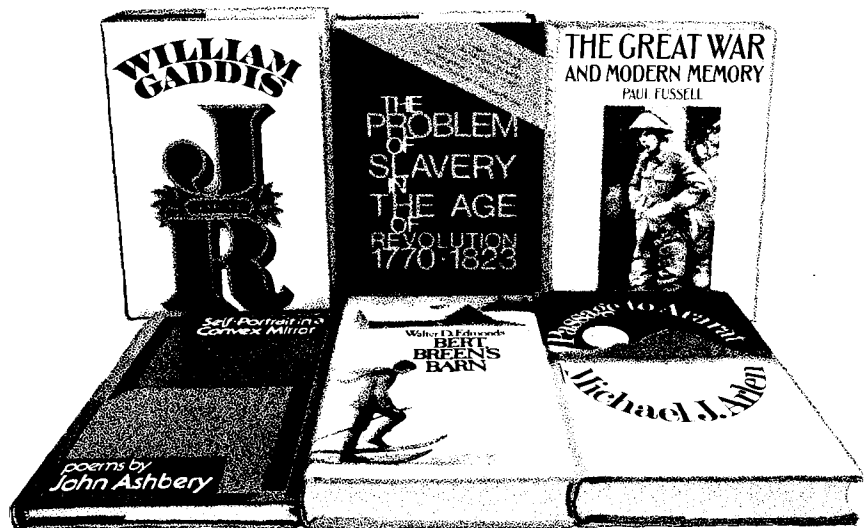
*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer on page 62.*

XOTJRT WY ITGIVY I  
XWYFILR; MDR YSMOTJ  
DRZRT JM IDVFSWDK  
FSIF MDR AIDDMF FITL  
IQMOF IBFRT JWDDRT.

—GWTJR



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only 6 have been chosen.**



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