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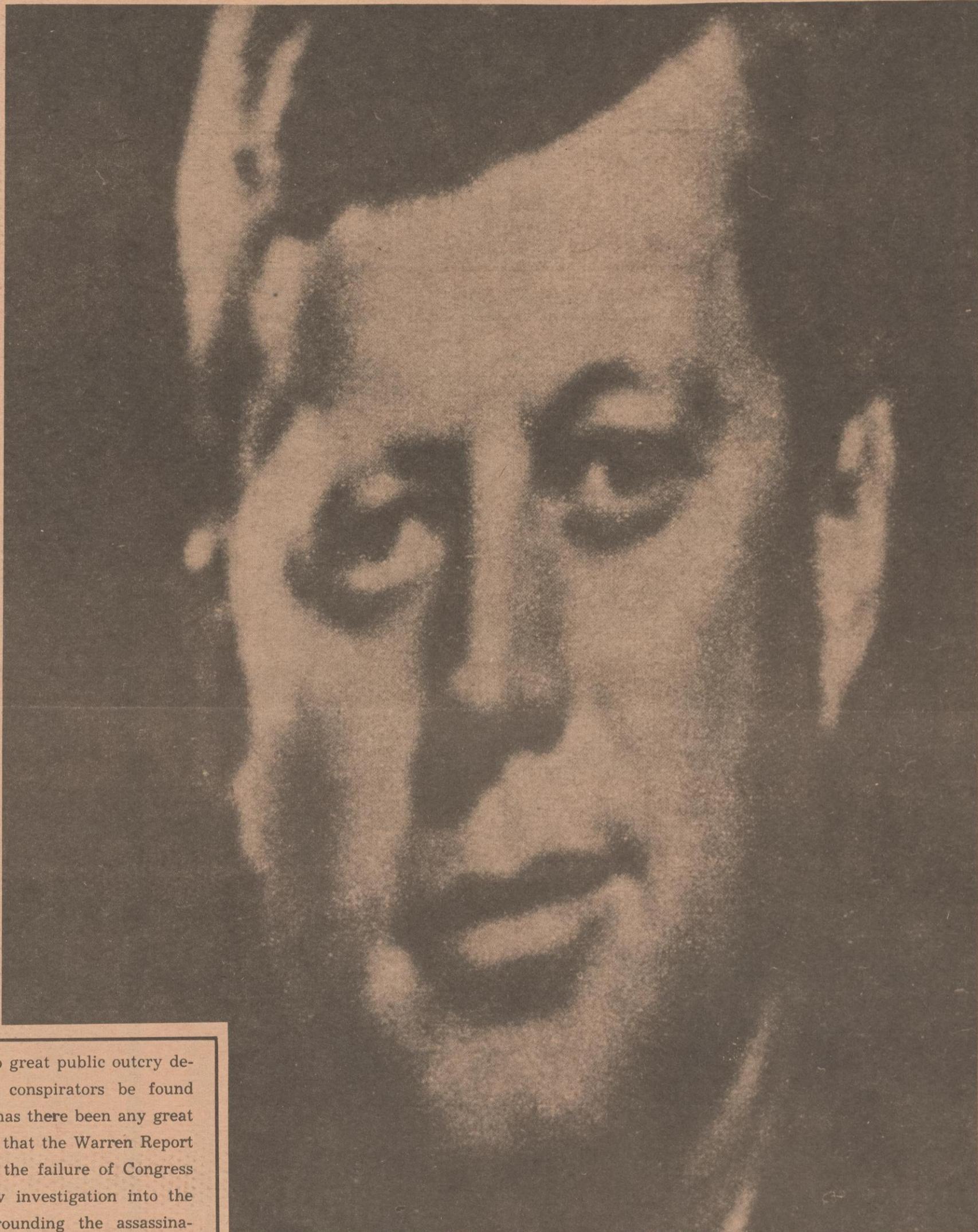
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THE WAR BABY REVIEW

April, 1968—No. 2

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"There has been no great public outcry demanding that the conspirators be found and punished, nor has there been any great outrage at the fact that the Warren Report was a sham, or at the failure of Congress to authorize a new investigation into the circumstances surrounding the assassination. Having accepted the fact that there was a conspiracy, most Americans seem prepared to live with it. Some, perhaps, don't care who killed Kennedy, or why. Some perhaps most, think it wiser not to uncover who was the real murderer, and why the President was murdered."

Articles and reviews on:

Sontag's Death Kit
Coltrane
Ayrton's The Maze Maker
Catholics on the Left
The Playwrights Speak
In the Heat of the Night
The Kennedy Assassination

To the Left of the Altar

THE "SLANT" MANIFESTO — CATHOLICS AND THE LEFT by Adrian Cunningham, et al. Templegate Publishers: 206 pages, \$1.95.

This "manifesto" was put together by a group of Catholics who, as undergraduates at Cambridge University in the early 1960s, began with the help of some priests to put out a periodical, called SLANT, devoted to the proposition that "contemporary Christianity . . . is intelligible only in theologically radical terms; and a consistent theological radicalism necessarily involves an understanding and acceptance of the political and cultural left." More specifically, to be a serious Christian today is to be a radical socialist, a Marxist.

The SLANT group derived its politics from the British New Left, and it shares that movement's insistence that socialism is more than just a mode of political and economic organization, that socialism's ideal is a total redemption of human culture, that it seeks to make the least commonplaces of our everyday communications with each other rational and decent and free. Accordingly, we find talk in the SLANT manifesto of the early, immediately humanist writings of Marx, the now-famous "1844 manuscripts," and of the writings of Raymond Williams, *THE LONG REVOLUTION* and *CULTURE AND SOCIETY* (which some of us will remember having read in Prof. Mosse's course).* The other philosopher, besides Marx, to whom the SLANT group seems to have paid particular attention is Wittgenstein: they are especially interested in his notion that community, not individuality, is the norm of human existence, and in the potential of his linguistic philosophy for freeing Catholic thought from outmoded dogmatic formulations.

The Manifesto's presentation of its radical politics, the first section of the book, is straightforward and simple, not to say simplistic. The writers are not to be faulted for this, for their intended audience is not sophisticated leftists but Catholics to whom the Marxist critique of capitalism and its ideology, liberalism, is something new and strange. Their brief against capitalism is that it systematically violates all the social ideals of Christ and Christianity: the rich live off the sweat of the poor, the industrial nations exploit the underdeveloped, men live in relations of competition, not community, and man is denied any intrinsic satisfaction in his work.

The Manifesto's theology, on the other hand, is ambitious, even subtle, and immensely revealing of the SLANT group and how they conceive of the problems of the church and of Catholic radicalism. Brian Wicker puts his finger on the difficulties the group faces when he says of the English Catholic Church (he's writing in 1965, and therefore post-Vatican II) that "we are all progressive now." That is to say, in England just as in the United States, the old, really wild aberrations that marked the Roman Catholic Church from the 1850s through the 1950s are disappearing fast. The manic devotionalism, the anti-biblicism, the manicheism, the six-sin-and-damnation moral theology, the hostility to the Protestant churches, the weakness for authoritarian and fascist politics—it's all fading away very rapidly now.

But as Wicker notes, the irony is that this stripping away of old junk has not renewed the church in any satisfying sense of the word; rather it has just begun to lay bare the real, underlying problems. Where before we had nuns with rosary beads and processions to the Virgin, we now have nuns with guitars and identity-crisis; where once we had the congregations reciting sheep-like the rosary, we now have the congregations reciting sheep-like the English-language liturgy; where before we had sermons that were against socialism and even (from the right) against capitalism, we now have sermons that are against practically nothing. The church has achieved not renewal, but liberalism.

Wicker and his associates ascribe this failure to accomplish real change to the church's refusal to enter upon a serious re-examination of its mission on this earth. Afraid to embark on this painfully radical questioning, it has hoped to get off with a mild meliorism, piecemeal reform, pragmatism. Although they don't really present it as such, it is obvious that much of the impetus behind the SLANT group's forays into what they call radical theology, is their felt need to find a rhetorical device which will shake the church out of this myopic immediatism and into a root-and-branch reassessment. And it seems to me that it is in this area that they have made their one mistake in an otherwise very compelling statement.

The distinctive element in the SLANT theology, that which makes it different from any that I have seen, is its re-emphasizing (and in one case, re-introduction) of a particular combination of very ancient Christian dogmas. The authors remind their readers that God's plan of redemption for mankind is not just a fact in the mind of God or in some other eternal, unthinkable medium, but that it is also a fact in human history, its events taking place at ascertainable (and for that matter quite recent) times: three thousand years ago God made his covenant with the Jewish nation and took them out of Egypt, and 1970 years ago Christ was born.

Further, they remind us, Christ's message had a very pronounced programmatic content. It was not merely pious breathings, vague wishes that all might go well, suggestions that we each of us "leave the world a little better place than we found it." Not at all. Christ talked very specifically about certain ends: that the Gospel be preached to all men, for one. Most particularly, (and it is here that the SLANT people re-assert part of the Gospel which I don't recall ever having heard seriously discussed in a Catholic church) the reader is reminded that Christ said he would come again, to establish his kingdom on this earthy. Why, the SLANT manifesto asks, if as Christians we believe that God sent his Son to us 1970 years

By NEIL COUGHLAN

ago, don't we take seriously his declaration that he will come again?—in history, at a definable time, really. Meanwhile, he instructed his Christian followers to work towards the establishment of his kingdom.

If Christians undertake, seriously, programmatically, to do this, the SLANT group predicts, they will find that the most intelligible, scientific understanding of the meaning of sin is to be found today in Marx's notion of man's alienation from nature, from his work, and from other men. Put another way, they argue that the content of Christian history of mankind is identical with the content of Marx's history, and that the only real political plan for furthering Christ's kingdom is radical socialism's program for justice and community. In brief, "at this time and in this society and world, it is only in . . . radical socialist terms that Christianity is any longer intelligible and meaningful, let alone realisable."

At least part of the motivation behind this particular theological tack, it seems clear to me, is SLANT's feeling that it may be only by having their attention fixed on these doctrines that many of their Christian readers can be turned away from the endless, contented patchwork of liberal reformism and turned towards the hard thought and planning which will renew the church as an effective agent for the betterment of the world, for the coming of "the kingdom—the socialist republic—of heaven." To the degree that this eschatology (the business about Christ's second coming) is merely gratuitous, speculative theologizing, its inclusion in the manifesto seems to me to have been a tactical error: by virtue of its very flamboyance it distracts and comes to look like a very large part of the SLANT case. To the degree that it really is a part of their argument, to the degree that the authors think that this is the way or a very good way to make socialists of Christians, I think they are wrong. Hidden somewhere in such an answer is the premise (which in other sections of the book the SLANT writers so effectively destroy) that the Christian as a political man is different from everyone else, that he should come to radicalism by a different route. Rather, it seems to me, the very core of radical socialism's argument is its assertion that conversion to it does not come from special dispensations or from gratuitous premises: radical socialism is the inevitable outcome of a thorough analysis of the political and social situation of man.

It is in precisely this area that the great strength of SLANT Manifesto (and its applicability to the American scene) is to be found: the chapter, "The Failure of Christian Revolution," by Adrian Cunningham is a devastating piece of common-sense analysis of a variety of prophylactics within the institution of the Catholic church which effectively prevent the natural radicalism of Christ's message from ever coming through.

Among the methods of containment: energy created by genuine tensions within the church being sublimated into "subsidiary and safe channels" (case in point: "the critical and constructive energies blocked in the general tightening of discipline at the time of the condemnation of modernism

(continued on page 7)

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THE WAR BABY REVIEW



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*Those readers who are not familiar with Raymond Williams or other British New Left writers may, however, recall seeing the motion picture "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner." Its themes are typical of the movement: the ugliness of the industrial environment, the commercialism and vapidly of its art and communications media, and its hatred of the free man.

The Kennedy Assassination Part One

By JIM LESAR

Most Americans no longer believe the Warren Commission's contention that Lee Harvey Oswald was the sole assassin of President Kennedy. In this sense the critics of the Warren Report have been successful; Lane, Thompson, Weisberg and the other critics have thoroughly demolished the conclusion reached by the Warren Commission.

Yet even if most Americans now accept the existence of a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy, their public response to this has been rather peculiar. There has been no great public outcry demanding that the conspirators be found and punished, nor has there been any great outrage at the fact that the Warren Report was a sham, or at the failure of Congress to authorize a new investigation into the circumstances surrounding the assassination. Having accepted the fact that there was a conspiracy, most Americans seem prepared to live with it. Some, perhaps, don't care who killed Kennedy, or why. Some, perhaps most, think it wiser not to uncover who was the real murderer, and why the President was murdered.

But what troubles most people is simply the fact that they can't understand why honorable men would cover up the fact of a conspiracy—unless men or agencies of the United States Government were themselves involved. Even then, they are perplexed as to how that could be: "Why would the CIA want to assassinate Kennedy?"

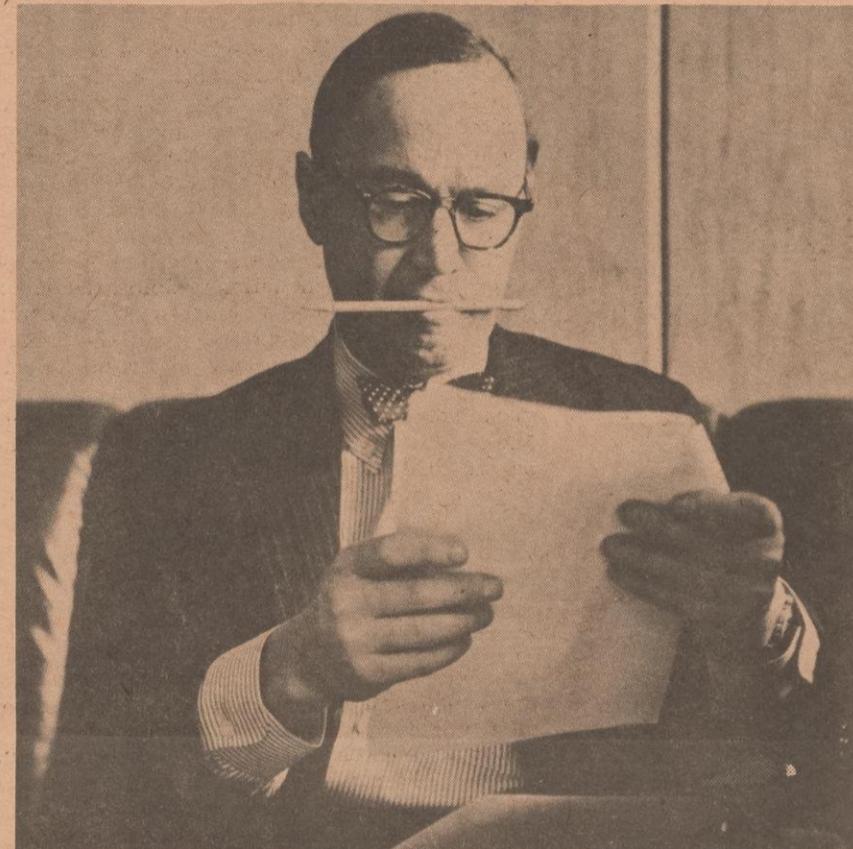
tion by political analysts and news commentators about the significance of even the smallest of political happenings. Recently we have been deluged with speculation about whether Romney was intended as a stalking horse for Rockefeller or whether McNamara's resignation or forced withdrawal as Secretary of Defense signals an impending escalation of the war in Vietnam. But as far as the Kennedy assassination is concerned, the commentators and analysts have clammed up; they have neither eyes to see nor tongues to speak.

Why? Is it, as DA Jim Garrison has claimed, because the U.S. press is controlled to such an extent by the CIA that it will no longer print the truth? Or is it also partly due to ignorance of the political struggle which was raging within the Kennedy Administration itself?

The recollection of the Kennedy Administration which has been retained by most of us is, I think, a very incomplete and distorted one. The left-wing in particular tends to remember Kennedy with great disgust for his role in the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis. Consequently, the left is prone to interpret the Kennedy Administration as having followed basically the same policies as the Eisenhower Administration, although it is conceded that it was smoother and more liberal in rhetoric. Having accepted that interpretation, the left is more or less inclined to agree with the conten-

Each of these acts was a severe jolt to the CIA. If officials in any important governmental agency are likely to be inordinately sensitive to incursions upon their status, powers, and privileges, those who run a super-secret intelligence agency are not likely to be less so. Moreover, the CIA was a growing power until the Bay of Pigs. Its staff had doubled in a decade and its budget exceeded that of the State Department by more than 50 per cent.

In his book, *A THOUSAND DAYS*, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. succinctly sketches the tremendous power and influence of the CIA: "It (the CIA) had almost as many people under official cover overseas as State; in a number of embassies CIA officers outnumbered those from State in the political sections. Often the CIA station chief had been in the country longer than the ambassador, had more money at his disposal and exerted more influence. The CIA had its own political desks and military staffs; it had in effect its own foreign service, its own air force, even, on occasion, its own combat forces. Moreover, the CIA declined to clear its clandestine intelligence operations either with the State Department in Washington or with the ambassador in the field; and, while covert political operations were cleared with State, this was sometimes done, not at the start, but after the operation had almost reached the point beyond which it could not be easily recalled."



A THOUSAND DAYS: JOHN F. KENNEDY IN THE WHITE HOUSE. By Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. Houghton Mifflin Company. 1087 pp.

That it should take the American people so long to ask this question and that they should have such difficulties in answering it is perhaps the most frighteningly accurate reflection yet of the degree to which the thought control and news suppression techniques of the American Government and its handmaidens have stunted the political awareness of the citizenry. Elsewhere people have been much quicker in grasping the political significance of the assassination. No one was quicker to realize the political implication of Kennedy's assassination than Fidel Castro.

When the news that an attempt had been made on Kennedy's life reached Cuba, Castro was having lunch with a French journalist, Jean Daniel. Daniel had just been in Washington, where he had discussed Castro and Cuba with Kennedy. Now he was discussing Kennedy and the U.S. with Castro. Arrangements had been made for Daniel to see Kennedy again after his visit to Cuba. He was to serve, then, as an emissary between the two. In his capacity as journalist-emissary Daniel carefully recorded Castro's responses to a series of questions dealing with Cuban-American relations, the Cuban Missile Crisis, etc., and when news of the assassination attempt came, he noted his reaction to that too.

Castro received news of the attempted assassination from an urgent phone call from the President of Cuba, Dorticos. After learning that Kennedy had been seriously wounded, Castro sat down and repeated three times the words: "Es una mala noticia." ("This is bad news.") Half an hour later Castro heard the news that Kennedy was dead. According to Daniel's account, Castro then stood up and said: "Everything is changed. Everything is going to change. The United States occupies such a position in world affairs that the death of a President of that country affects millions of people in every corner of the globe. The cold war, relations with Russia, Latin America, Cuba, the Negro question... all will have to be rethought. I'll tell you one thing: at least Kennedy was an enemy to whom we had become accustomed. This is a serious matter, an extremely serious matter."

Viewed retrospectively, after more than four years under the Johnson regime, Castro's words assume the shape of an understated prophecy come true. At the time of the assassination the cold war was beginning to thaw; today a major and perhaps final world war threatens. In 1963 the Negro rights movement was still confined to sit-ins and constrained by a non-violent approach; today black Americans riot and burn whole citizens to the ground. At the time of the assassination the United States and Russia had just signed a nuclear test ban treaty; today Russian missiles shoot down American planes over North Vietnam and Russian scientists speed their work on developing an orbital system for delivering nuclear weapons.

Such vast political changes were unimaginable to most Americans at the time of the assassination. But that only makes it more amazing that so few have tried to connect this change in political direction to the assassination. Ordinarily the American press is crammed with specula-

tion of Johnson's apologists that the present administration is merely carrying out those policies to which both Eisenhower and Kennedy were committed. At least that interpretation is often applied to the Vietnam War.

There are two problems with this interpretation, however. The first is that it forgets that in both the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis Kennedy created enemies in the CIA and the Pentagon by choosing to follow policies less dangerous than those advocated by the CIA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The second problem is that this interpretation ignores or is unaware of the evidence which indicates that at the time of his assassination Kennedy was planning to fundamentally revise—even reverse—America's foreign policy towards Cuba, China, and Russia. In short, it ignores the fact that Kennedy planned to achieve a detente with Russia, and then, after his re-election, to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba and allow China to assume her seat in the United Nations.

But to forget or ignore these matters is to place oneself in the position of not being able to comprehend the reasons for which Kennedy was assassinated. More than that, it does not allow us to really grasp the seriousness of the situation in which we now find ourselves. It is advisable, therefore, that these matters be examined more closely. A careful reading of Schlesinger's personal account of the Kennedy Administration in his book *A THOUSAND DAYS* is of some help here.

The first great rift in the Kennedy Administration came as a result of the Bay of Pigs invasion. That project had been conceived under the Eisenhower Administration and passed to the luckless Kennedy Administration. While nothing can be said to justify the folly of the Bay of Pigs invasion, it should be remembered that Kennedy, even in the face of failure and national humiliation, rejected the more extreme measures which were favored by the military. More significant, perhaps, is Schlesinger's account of Kennedy's assessment of the Bay of Pigs debacle: "It is a hell of a way to learn things, but I have learned one thing from this business—that is, we will have to deal with the CIA."

Kennedy did attempt to deal with the CIA. He appointed a committee to inquire into the invasion fiasco. And, in Schlesinger's polite phrase, "anticipating the resignation of Allen Dulles, he began looking for a new director." Not only was the high and mighty Dulles sacked, but Kennedy began to cut the CIA's budget. He cut the Agency's budget in 1962, again in 1963, and his reported plan was to cut its budget by one-fifth before 1966. Finally, Kennedy gave every American ambassador the authority to know everything which the CIA was doing in the country to which he was assigned. It was the first time such authority had existed.

Thus, Kennedy had taken on a formidable adversary. But in the next phase of the growing policy rift and consequent power struggle in Washington Kennedy found himself pitted against an ever more formidable opponent: the Pentagon. No sooner had the Bay of Pigs invasion flopped

than a new crisis confronted Kennedy, this time in Laos, where guerrilla warfare was raging. Kennedy's solution to this crisis was to try and form a coalition government in Laos whose neutrality would be guaranteed by the United States, Russia, and China. The military was originally confused and divided as to what the solution should be. It seems, however, that they were generally agreed that they did not want to commit ground troops unless they were assured in advance that they could ultimately resort to the nuclear bombing of Hanoi and Peking. Schlesinger's account is instructive: "At one National Security Council meeting General Lemnitzer outlined the process by which each American action would provoke a Chinese counteraction, provoking in turn an even more drastic response. He concluded: 'If we are given the right to use nuclear weapons, we can guarantee victory'."

It may be worth noting here that General Lemnitzer's scheme bears a rather close resemblance to the course which events in Vietnam have taken since the Gulf of Tonkin incident; that is to say, since the accession of Lyndon Johnson to the Presidency. However that may be, Kennedy disregarded the proposal entirely, and he eventually did succeed in obtaining a coalition government in Laos whose neutrality was to be guaranteed by treaty (the first treaty, incidentally, which both the United States and mainland China had signed since the communists came to power). The crisis in Laos abated temporarily. A more important event soon replaced it, however. In October, 1962 came the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The second half of Mr. Lesar's article, which will concern *THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS* by Elie Abel and *THE REDS AND THE BLACKS: A PERSONAL ADVENTURE* by William Attwood, will appear in the next issue of the War Baby Review.

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By LARRY COHEN

DEATH KIT (312 pages, \$5.75) and AGAINST INTERPRETATION AND OTHER ESSAYS (304 pages, \$4.95) by Susan Sontag. Published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

Publishing firms make a practice of hiring copy editors whose chief duty is to aid a masterpiece or ruin it by pruning. One of the touching-up tasks of these diligent scythes is to compose the blurbs that traditionally appear on the folds of the book's jacket. There are roughly two kinds of commentary. One kind renders the task of reading superfluous, neatly condensing the author's content and style in twenty-five words or less.

More often, we get pretentious drivel strewn here and there with adulatory self-compliments. Not only are these remarks strikingly at odds with the book but occasionally, the mistakes are so grievous that it occurs to me that the shipping department put the wrong cover on the novel. Errors in interpretation are one thing; sabotaging the product you're selling is quite another.

Out of either fear or wisdom, there are no such jacket claims for Susan Sontag's latest novel. commendably, the cover simply has the name of the book and author stencilled in black and white; the front flap does likewise in block print. The back flap has a photograph of Miss Sontag—stunningly beautiful and darkly shadowed—and the back jacket features comments by some renowned people on her previous works. No words of praise, no clues muddle DEATH KIT for the reader. No interpretation is supplied, and while this point may seem belabored, its emphasis is vital. Quite deliberately, there are no hints as to what the book "means" and this peculiar absence smacks us right into the position where Miss Sontag intended us to begin.

Yet we cannot approach DEATH KIT with a blank slate—merely a clean one. The garbage of acquired theories—Christ symbols and alienation, lonelyhearts and locusts and all the nonsense learned in high schools and college survey courses—must be thrown out. All of the extraneous clichés we bring to the art object must be dismissed so we start to read her prose with unprejudiced eyes. Such an attitude does not destroy ambiguity in the artifact; it allows it.

"The function of criticism should be to show how it (art) is what it is, even that it is what it is, rather than to show what it means," she wrote in 1964 in AGAINST INTERPRETATION. The years have not diminished the severeness of her opinion; imposing meaning on a work is still stifling and obtrusive in her eyes. The critical task is to open works up and make them more accessible—not to replace them with another world. Amidst the chaos and the terror, the singular pressure on audience and critic alike is to order, frequently at the expense of disintegrating the art itself.

For Miss Sontag, the aim of art and criticism is identical; their mutual pursuit is ludicity. Echoing Conrad, she ties art to experience: "we must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more." Such a position does not imply that critical sensibilities should be replaced by raw sensations. Instead, it insists upon a directed usage of these same faculties in a way that the artist determines. It is an appeal to surface (what we are mythically used to calling form as opposed to content).

Helpful lessons for reading DEATH KIT appear in Miss Sontag's first collection of critical pieces. First, the expanse of material covered in AGAINST INTERPRETATION AND OTHER ESSAYS is staggering. Articles on Simone Weil, Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre are juxtaposed against reprinted essays on Jean-Luc Godard, Robert Bresson and Alain Resnais. 26 pieces in all, each of them immensely personal and worth reading. She establishes her stance in the first two (the title piece and "On Style"), then resolutely sticks to her guns. Whether she is dissecting theater, literature or films, the premises remain the same. As a result, her taste is both singular and illuminating.

The second lesson is one of presumption; DEATH KIT assumes that its readers share Miss Sontag's cultural accessories. The very selection of art objects for discussion in AGAINST INTERPRETATION says a good deal about the person who chose them. Here is an elitist delicatessen; Artaud and Sarraute, Lukacs and Pavese are not exactly mass idols. For that matter, Miss Sontag came to prominence through her now infamous article, "Notes on 'Camp,'" published in PARTISAN REVIEW. Her role as critic is specialized and esoteric, but this is not her only unique attribute.

For Miss Sontag's individualism is her distinctive, comparative approach. She assumes that all art—whether it be Jack Smith's "Flaming Creatures" or "Marat/Sade"—is simultaneously and interchangeably related. AGAINST INTERPRETATION are essays in one critic's journal and the fact that the critic is a woman makes the diary even more impressive. While each piece focuses on a different artistic construction, the jottings all presume one consciousness, one jigsaw-puzzled aesthetic.

The Three Faces of Sontag



The entire history of art and the world are there for her to refer to; the links are her only reality.

As a result, the more we know, the more we bring to bear on reading DEATH KIT. Next to Norman Mailer's WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM? (February WAR BABY), it is easily the most outrageous and undervalued book of 1967. In the ways it approaches the genre, it may well be the most significant novel of the decade. Yet instead of pure literature, the immediate association that comes to mind in trying to place her novel generically is film and one film in particular: Antonioni's "Blow-Up."

The sheer number of parallels illustrate similar concerns. The novel's Dalton Herron (called Diddy for reasons that soon become obvious) is a divorced, middle-aged executive for a Manhattan firm that manufactures microscopes; the film's leading character is a successful fashion photographer in mod London. The train Diddy is taking to a sales conference inexplicably stops in a tunnel; he gets out to investigate and witnesses a murder—one that he commits. Tom photographs (unknowingly) a murder in a park; the metaphorical "shooting" with his camera implicates him. Both men are obsessed with the crime because it poses a reality to their otherwise empty lives; both pursue women that are linked to the murder. The evidence in each case disappears; Tom's photos are stolen (if they ever existed) and Diddy has no proof at all, just a blind girl named Hester.

There are many other parallels, but the point is the same. DEATH KIT consciously makes use of the camera's ambiguity by applying the same techniques to the verbal medium. Intellectual con-games abound on every page. Names (Diddy; Did-he? and finally Dead-he) are toys, the novel is classically structured with the same (?) murder opening and closing the narrative, the word "now" is parenthetically and frequently tossed in, and symbols invite speculation periodically. The total effect is something like Ingmar Bergman's "Persona" and that Miss Sontag considers that film a masterpiece is not a trivial coincidence.

For what is happening in DEATH KIT can only be described in the jargon we associate with nightmares. The plot details, the graffiti etched on the memory, are tantalizing and bizarre. But it is the total effect, prolonged and logically insane, that makes us wake up screaming. Taken as a whole, Miss Sontag's accomplishment reeks of cold sweat, of that precise moment when it is neither night nor day and the dreamer is between being awake and asleep, alive and dead. DEATH KIT is the blueprint of the terror, and we as readers become the architects of how-to-do-Diddy-in as we turn the pages.

If the impact succeeds in sheer power for other readers as it did for me, I'd intuitively account for its force by postulating the author's sense of literary allusion. The monsters that Odysseus evaded in his journeys—the barking, multi-headed Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis—have been revived in contemporary guise. Part of my rationale for assuming a mythological slant to DEATH KIT lies in the fact that her first novel, THE BELEFACTOR, was termed by one critic as a MARIUS THE EPICUREAN "for the 1960's." Knowing your Homer does not explain what this novel means; being conscious of the reference, however, puts you on firmer ground and magnifies the intensity of your reaction.

Incardona, the workman Diddy thinks he kills in the tunnel, "barks" at him, is seen by Diddy as an animal and has to be smashed in the head twice; Diddy must kill him twice. Similarly, Hester functions as a link with the two killings; she and Diddy make love intensely after each bloodletting. Death and copulation equal sexual suicide;

we must see the equation precisely as the classicists punned on the words. One more bit of evidence: the book ends with Diddy walking through a charnel house completely naked, a metaphorical journey accompanied by another, ironic death in a hospital.

Except for John Fowles' THE MAGUS, I can't remember any piece of fiction that rivals DEATH KIT's scope or breathtaking conception. This is partially true because Miss Sontag is a comparative critic and brings to bear all of the forces that have influenced her when she writes. There are snatches of germs from other works—the split second drawn out for pages from Ambrose Bierce ("Incident At Owl Creek Bridge"), the time levels of Alain Resnais, the aforementioned "Blow-Up." But her talent does not simply lie in the bits and pieces that she has picked up and put together; she would be a high class odds-and-ends collector if this were so.

The intellect that makes her a good critic helps her as a writer, but it is her ability that humbles a reader, not her brilliance as an essayist. Sections on DEATH KIT deserve books all to themselves: the bizarre encounter between Diddy and Myra Incardona, the dead man's wife; the Wolf-Boy story that Diddy wrote and resurfaces in a grotesque dream; the painful characterization of Jessie Nayburn, Hester's aunt. Diddy reads to Hester in the hospital—Jane Austen is the ironic author. Curious choices like these abound, each earmarking Miss Sontag's view of the American Way of Death.

DEATH KIT posits one man's attempt to evade, to reconcile, to confront a single murder. Vietnam screeches from the headlines and radio broadcasts that Diddy reads and hears. What is one, small, insignificant murder, he asks, when compared to the wholesale slaughter? Diddy's query and ours is answered when he is compelled to kill the corpse all over again, playing his own gravedigger.

Ordered Maze

By BARTON R. FRIEDMAN

THE MAZE-MAKER, a novel by Michael Ayrton. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 320 pages, \$6.95.

Michael Ayrton is a British sculptor and painter who has, he says, for the past twelve years been obsessed with Daedalus. Out of that obsession has come THE MAZE MAKER, a superbly wrought novel in which Mr. Ayrton constitutes himself as it were a Daedalian Sibyl, enabling the master craftsman of Greek antiquity to address us across the span of thirty centuries.

Written in the first person, THE MAZE MAKER purports to be Daedalus' autobiography. It consists of three major units, joined sequentially by the episodes of its narrator's life and symbolically by the cumulative import of those episodes for his world—and ours. Part One chronicles Daedalus' childhood; his brief homosexual liaison with Talos; his possession of Naucratis, daughter of Minos, and the birth of their son, Icarus; and their voyage to Crete, where Daedalus builds a labyrinth for the king, eventually to hold the half-brutish, half-human grotesque, the Minotaur; a cow for the queen, Pasiphae, encased in which she is taken by Poseidon incarnate as a white bull, conceiving the monster; and wings for himself and Icarus, whereby they master the secret of flight, incurring the wrath of Apollo.

Part Two treats the events following Icarus' demise at the hands of the sky-god: Daedalus' landing on the sand below Cumae; his retreat from the burning anger of Apollo into the earth, the womb of Gaia; and his construction of the temple he has promised to assuage his divine persecutor. Part Three recounts his emergence from Gaia and the wanderings which bring him finally to Sicily, where he is threatened by the invasion of Talos and Tauros, apparent usurpers of Minos' throne, but rescued by the Sicilian king, Cocalus, with aid from Ausonias, son of Aeolus, god of the winds, and Iolaus, charioteer to Heracles. Daedalus' narrative ends as he prepares to embark for Sardinia, despite a sign auguring his death—a snake (Daedalus is an Erechtheid, and so of serpentine nature) writhing in the talons of a hawk—silhouetted against the northern sky.

That he looks with equanimity on this omen of his passing, indeed goes willingly to meet it, mirrors Daedalus' reconciliation to a world which has again and again made him outcast and to a cosmos which, he discovers, refuses to yield—as the raw materials of his art yield—to the neat logic of his mind or the delicate touch of his fingers. "To put it simply," as Daedalus himself is brought to observe, "the gods employ truths beyond fact and distort facts to fit their truths, whereas man distorts the truth to fit his superstitions."

THE WAR BABY REVIEW

This acceptance of a pervasive irrationality in the operations of the universe leads the columnist of "The Talk of the Town" (The New Yorker, 9 March 1968) to hail THE MAZE MAKER as that rarest of occurrences in modern literature: a story with a happy ending. But to construe Mr. Ayrton's ending as "happy" is to ignore Daedalus' terrible struggle (one of the main burdens of his narrative) against acknowledging the pre-eminence of unreason in his world and his tragic confession that he has undertaken this autobiography at least partly to determine where he has failed. Mr. Ayrton's ending, then, can scarcely be adjudged "happy." If Daedalus goes to his death content in an awareness that his life's work is done (his first master, Dactylos, had told him that "The sole dishonor is to die with work unfinished..."), he goes to his death also resigned to an awareness that his fate has lain beyond his control; that, as he puts it at the outset, "Above all I have been the creature of a god...."

Daedalus hardly finds this realization comforting. He embraces death because it means escape from Apollo. In Sardinia, he says, "I shall dig a twisting path back into Gaia so that the sun will no longer persecute me, for he will have no further cause." And Mr. Ayrton is not suggesting that we find Daedalus' realization comforting either. What persecutes him persecutes us under another set of rubrics. Again in Daedalus' words: "perhaps you use different names for what you fear."

His frequent recourse to the second person pronoun, "you," in the unfolding of the narrative implies the relation Mr. Ayrton wishes to establish between Daedalus and the reader. The Maze Maker is speaking directly to us, twentieth century man. He introduces himself, saying: "I write in the time of the Ram, when the time of the Bull is passed, and I address you across more than three thousand years, you who live at the conjunction of the Fish and the Water-carrier." What he seeks to communicate to us is his perception of a deeply rooted irrational force dominating reason, infecting with caprice the conduct of agents human and divine. Mr. Ayrton's book is essentially about the universality, the inescapability, of this force: its determining influence on the shape of history—hardly a promising vision to an age when the conflict between reason and unreason has reached a critical pass, and in which the imminent triumph of unreason threatens to destroy us all.

For the effect of rendering the narrative voice in the novel Daedalus' own is to make the myth seem real: to make it not fable but itself a part of history. Daedalus fights the battle against unreason for his age. He embodies rational process: "I am," he asserts, "a technician." Even his style (or if you will Mr. Ayrton's style) reflects this technical bias. It is precise, understated, drawing its analogies not from the supernatural, the realm of imagination—though Daedalus believes in the literal existence of the gods ("I do not speak of them as symbols")—but from the observable phenomena of nature. For instance, his treatment of Pallas, the petty monarch who shelters him on his second flight from Athens:

Pallas was like a cuttlefish, small and lacking a shell. He would hide from fiercer predators among the rocks of his promontory and occasionally dart out to wrap his soft tentacles around some weaker creature to feed his vanity. Frightened, he would squirt out his wealth like ink and take refuge behind lavish gifts. When in time he came to float belly-upward his remains were devoured by sharks and dogfish. All that was left of him then was a stele, a flat, white, chalky stone shaped like a paddle. Such is the fate of cuttlefish. His tomb was robbed almost before he was cold, and much that was taken from it I had made.

That Daedalus feels himself to live in a savage, largely anarchic world is suggested by the analogy itself. That he sees himself victimized by such a world is suggested by the last sentence, with its brilliant grammatical inversion, emphasizing Daedalus' belief in his own pre-eminence amid a chaos of warring, almost subhuman beings.

This attitude of self-importance he bases on the conviction that amid the chaos he alone stands for harmony, order. Born of royal blood in a family dedicated to the skills and glories of war, he is expected to become a warrior—a vocation he declines: "A man with one eye, the other lost in some raid, a man with one arm, the other hacked off in some scrimmage, such men are held in high esteem, providing they can still maim others. I could make no sense of it then. Nor can I now." By declining, by affirming that true power lies in creating, not destroying, Daedalus condemns himself to alienation, incessant wandering.

And in the need to wander, in the loss of a kind of stability to his life, he perceives the beginnings of a cruel irony. He discerns that his passion for order itself generates disorder. Everything to which he puts his hand—the maze for Minos, the cow for Pasiphae, wings for himself and Icarus, the temple for Apollo, the fortress of Cocalus, the tomb for Tauros—either contributes to the unreason he abhors or arises from it. This paradox is initially seen in his affair with Talos. Through love, they apprehend a perfect harmony, together inventing three tools: tongs with a serrated hold, a pair of compasses, and a saw. But provoked by Talos' mother, Perdix, their love lapses into jealousy; and jealousy leads Talos to his inadvertent murder of the servant, Laerces; which compels him to flee Athens and drives him mad: drives him, that is, to the ultimate irrationality of the human mind, inducing him to believe Daedalus the murderer and himself the victim, since reincarnated as a bronze warrior.

In opening his narrative Daedalus confesses he had not known "that those I have loved and hated have been mirror images of one another. In all my life I have never learned from one experience how to encounter its reflected twin." Confronting the lunatic Talos, he is confronting the underside of himself. Talos' affliction manifests the special derangement of the artificer: he has become his own artifice. As Daedalus observes: "There is a crazy logic in the transformation of a great metal worker into the metal work he makes and an irony, of the kind beloved by the gods, in a madness which makes a bronzesmith believe himself bronze."

But this is Daedalus observing in retrospect. At his meeting with Talos on Crete, restricted in his modes of perception by an uncrayon logic as confining as his friend's bronze armor, Daedalus finds Talos' aberration merely incomprehensible. And because he has never learned from one experience how to encounter its reflected twin, he

finds Icarus' attempt to ravish the sun equally incomprehensible.

I must admit I could not at the time understand any of it. I am a rational man and my instinct is to dismiss what is obvious nonsense. It has taken me the balance of my lifetime to see that the pattern in which Icarus believed was rationally nonsense but not to be lightly dismissed simply because the facts were other than those in which he believed. Furthermore, the grain of truth which flowered on this dunghill of fantasy sprang from a seed nurtured by divine caprice. In Icarus the tangle of falsehoods, which wrapped him about as inpenetrably as any maze, flourished because although they were insane they were consistent. Everything about Icarus was consistent. That is why he died. That is why his death was heroic. That is why the fiction he lived was as true as the facts were false.

Daedalus has at last discovered that a logic exists beyond the calculus of stresses and weights governing his use of the materials employed in his craft. Icarus' death is indeed a mirror image of Talos' madness. Both commit an act of hubris expressed through a sort of ritual dance: Talos by donning a pair of gilded ox horns when drunk, to cavort about and proclaim himself a son of Zeus; Icarus by wheeling and fluttering in the sky to announce his intention of coupling with the god. Both must pay for their effrontery.

Icarus and Talos virtually coalesce. Icarus' dance essentially reproduces the mating behavior of the partridge; and Talos from his mother, Perdix, inherits a partridge nature. Behind their gestures, moreover, lie the same irrational impulses—sometimes heroic, always violent—which Daedalus is painfully brought to recognize at the root of human conduct. Or to place this Daedalian insight into the symbolic perspective Mr. Ayrton evolves for his novel: behind the ordered facade man turns to the world, at the center of the labyrinth constituting his psyche, lurks the Minotaur. Talos, as the consummate expression of his insanity, actually becomes the Minotaur. And his metamorphosis is seen as but a logical extension of his inmost self. He wears horns in asserting his claim to divine parentage because he considers himself to have been conceived "in bull form."

What Daedalus must learn is that the Minotaur lives also within him. Each of his labyrinths reflects his consciousness. As Minos tells him: "Master of many crafts you may be, but finally you will discover that all your life you have been a maze maker." And this Daedalus discovers on entering the womb of Gaia; because prowling into the recesses of the earth, he is penetrating the depths of himself. Mr. Ayrton suggests this symbolic parallel through the dramatic parallel of an ant crawling up Daedalus' nostril and, as he says, into his brain. For Daedalus is that ant. "I am," he has told us, "a god's insect, yet I seek a harmony beyond the reach of gods." He too, that is, commits an act of hubris. He is to Gaia, or in a different sense to Apollo, as the ant is to himself. His pretensions to a vision of harmony beyond the reach of gods are as foolhardy as Icarus' pretensions to strength beyond the power of gods. Deep within Gaia, therefore, he comes upon a maze identical to the one he had built for Minos; and at its center, he confronts the Minotaur. That this maze and its occupant are hallucinated underscores their real origin: Daedalus' own psyche. He has found what Minos had known all along: that the labyrinth is a mirror image of his mind; and that in his mind passion and reason exist side by side. At the heart of the maze Daedalus has constructed on Crete lie adjoining rooms: one for the Minotaur, one for Minos himself.



Daedalus' life, then, is his ultimate labyrinth; and the book, his final artifice, the mirror image of that labyrinth. The book manifests the growth of consciousness, enabling him to reborn from the womb of Gaia. It encompasses the sum of his wisdom and, perhaps Mr. Ayrton means to imply, the sum of its real author's wisdom too. As such, its striking subtlety, its immense complexity, could hardly be captured in any review. Reviews, after all, are by their very nature reductive. And I would prefer not to do Mr. Ayrton the disservice of leaving the reader with the impression that THE MAZE MAKER is less than it is. Maybe the closest one can approach to suggesting the extent of Mr. Ayrton's achievement is to recall his own (I trust somewhat whimsical) remark that while he wrote his novel to be rid of his obsession with Daedalus he finds himself compelled, by a strange reversal of fortune which has brought him a commission actually to build a labyrinth akin to Minos', "not... to be rid of Daedalus but to become him!" Having read THE MAZE MAKER, one can hardly imagine Mr. Ayrton any other way.

Lover Come Back--'67 Style

By MICHAEL WILMINGTON

In an age and a country where advertising is fast becoming a high art, it's hardly surprising to see the techniques of Madison Avenue being supplied to older, more established forms. Since Marshall McLuhan opened the door, I expect we'll see scholarly analysis on t.v. commercials any day now. "Valley of the Dolls" and, in a more sophisticated way, "The Confessions of Nat Turner" are less novels than they are phenomena of promotion. But even better examples of how advertising and its techniques infiltrate the arts are the movies.

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT is a great example of how a movie can succeed because of clever packaging. If a box is pretty enough and has enough coupons, many people won't notice that their cornflakes are moldy. The film is not only a monetary success—some blatantly bad movies like "Valley of the Dolls" (again) and "To Sir With Love" have also been blockbusters—but, more importantly, a tremendous critical one as well. It took the New York Critics' award and if rhapsodizing in the trade papers is any indication, HEAT is a good bet to grab a few Oscars on April 8.

In a peculiar way, I think this movie has benefited from the "politique des auteurs" theory. American critics—most of whom are literarily oriented, have for years been denouncing American movie kitsch as feeble-minded and unfit for an intelligent audience. "Cahiers du Cinema," "Movie," and Andrew Sarris suddenly started applying heightened sounding analysis to directors like Hawks, Cukor, Preminger and Fuller—directors that had been dismissed as hacks years ago by the literate American cliques (who instead admired Huston, Zinneman, and Wyler). A real gloss was given to the kitsch. And the later cinematic success of former "Cahiers" critics like Godard, Truffaut, and Chabrol demanded that their earlier critical efforts be taken seriously.

Now, recently, nearly every mainstream U.S. film reviewer has denounced or attacked the "auteur" theory. Still, I think that Godard and Co. made them a little kitsch-conscious, anxious to root out those qualities in American movies, hitherto unrecognized in their own country, which had aroused the admiration of Europeans. And it's really a bad joke that the director on which many of them have seized is the crafty producer-technician Norman Jewison. (I think this must really delight the

Hollywood "insiders," who have been attacked for years as pandering to knuckleheads. They are now being praised by those attackers because the same slick, vapid gimmickery has been applied to "serious" subjects: peaceful coexistence in Jewison's "The Russians are Coming" and racial integration in HEAT. Maybe the way Jewison hijacked these intellectuals for the Hollywood crowd will compensate for the way the "Cahiers" group kidnapped Hitchcock and Hawks for academia.)

2
IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT is a good average movie, fast and entertaining if you don't think about it much. Unfortunately, on practically every level that the critics said it succeeded—sociologically, dramatically, and as a detective story—it's a miserable failure. Even as a "slick" piece of Hollywood craftsmanship, it's not nearly as good as "El Dorado" or "Point Blank" or "The Honey Pot" or "Divorce American Style," none of which got much of a tumble from the critics.

First of all—as a mystery story, IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT is an outrage: illogical, contrived and impossible to figure out.

Consider this: the killer is unmasked as a greasy counterman we've seen twice (both times doing a third-rate impersonation of Tony Perkins in "Psycho"). He has no connection with the plot, except that a policeman, who discovered the corpse while he was wandering around that night, ate at his diner.

How does the movie's Sherlock (Sidney Poitier) pin the guilt to this obscure character? You'd never guess; he links him up with another obscure character—a girl, who, in a long, vulgarly directed scene admits to the town police chief (Rod Steiger) that she's pregnant.

Now follow this closely. As soon as he hears this confession, Poitier rushes out to find who the local undercover abortionist is because he's figured out that the killer must have gotten the girl in trouble and that she must be having a secret abortion that evening. Our admiration at this truly incredible detective skill may cause us to gloss over two questions. One: short of sperm analysis, how does Poitier know that the killer is the father? And two: why in the world would a girl who just admitted she was pregnant to everybody in sight, including her jealous

brother, the town police chief, and a detective from Philadelphia be having a secret abortion?

But don't let all that worry you—the killer stumbles into Poitier's trap right on schedule. Before that, however, Jewison and scenarist Stirling Silliphant have come up with a whale of a red herring. It seems that somebody stole \$700 from the dead man's wallet, so police chief Steiger arrests the same wandering policeman who discovered the corpse because he deposited \$700 in his bank account the day after the killing. But it turns out that the wandering policeman is really innocent: he won all that money pitching quarters over a period of six years. Think about that one a while. (I should mention here that Poitier's figuring and the red herring are both quite logical in John Ball's original novel. But Jewison and Silliphant, or maybe the editors, were too interested in making a fast, loud zappy movie to worry about whether it made any sense.)

3

If *HEAT* were just an illogical mystery, it wouldn't be as annoying; after all, "The Big Sleep" is sort of messy (even Hawks and Raymond Chandler couldn't explain what was going on in some of the scenes), and there are loopholes of logic in Hitchcock's "Vertigo," one of the greatest mystery films of all time. These movies work and succeed in different areas. *HEAT* has other areas too, but unfortunately they're just as soggily handled as the detective story; specifically, there's the "dramatic" sections, in which we're supposed to be watching the ripening of friendship and mutual respect between the Southern cop and the Negro detective.

Most audiences swallow that, and I really wonder why. The progression in the film isn't toward mutual respect at all; Steiger has professional respect for Poitier from the very first, but we're shown that the Negro irritates him, gets under his skin. Poitier never seems to respect Steiger at all, and why should he? Gillespie stumbles around arresting the wrong people and making numerous boners until the very end; Poitier does almost nothing wrong, though the movie does make a few feeble stabs at showing us he's "human."

So, at the end, what's changed is that Gillespie has become rather servilely fond of Tibbs (he's carrying his bags and simpering like a bad imitation of a porter), and Tibbs has learned to tolerate him enough to smile back. Isn't all this a sort of masochistic wish-fulfillment of the average dull white liberal?

The film also has some pop sociology to offer, which is just as difficult to take, mostly because it's been so Jewisonized. At one point, Poitier and Steiger ride through a cotton field and we're treated to the spectacle of exploited darkies sweating and toiling in the sun. Hasn't the problem gotten a little more complicated than that?

The film's whole handling of Negroes is somewhat dense; whenever Poitier meets someone of his race they lapse into a sort of caricatured "soul brother" lingo that seems ludicrously forced, a white man's idea of our blacker brethren. (Oddly enough, these scenes wouldn't be as bad if they were played like the Southerners are in the movie, for comic exaggeration. But comic exaggeration of Negro characteristics is, in our present culture, out of bounds—only a Negro writer like Chester Himes can really get away with it. The white makers of *IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT* wouldn't want to risk alienating their audience, though the audience they're catering to is probably the white liberals. I doubt that many Negroes take this stuff seriously.)

If we remember that Norman Jewison made his reputation in Hollywood by directing most of the Doris Day-Rock Hudson comedies (something Jewison, who obviously aspires to "serious" moviemaking, would probably rather forget), we can probably figure out the real structure of this film, as opposed to the spurious structures (the mystery, the sociology, or the "mutual respect" idea). In reality, *HEAT* is just another rehash of those earlier "Frigidaire" comedies; only this time Rod Steiger is Rock Hudson, and Sidney Poitier is sitting in for Doris Day. The idea, in itself, is faintly amusing, and Jewison might have had some fun with it (as Billy Wilder seems to have had in "The Fortune Cookie") if he hadn't been so concerned with being straight and dramatic. (He doesn't quite succeed in the very intense scene in Gillespie's living room, which, while well acted, is constantly teetering on the edge of grotesque farce.)

4

Now the audience responds to this absurd representation of a human relationship for reasons which I think are extrinsic to the story or to Jewison's talent as a director of actors (he has almost none). The audience simply and directly responds to Poitier and Steiger, both of whom radiate an intense personal appeal regardless of the kind of role they play. (And that's the same reason for which a slightly less sophisticated audience responded to the Doris Day things.) It also responds, of course, because Poitier is a Negro, and by liking his films, maybe they think they can strike a passive blow for civil rights.

Still, both of these men contribute performances which are below the grade of their best work.

Looking at some of the other performances in the film, which range from pedestrian to awful—and continually consist of punching home "effects"—one can see why. Jewison is still exploiting the same heavy comic timing he mastered in his earlier work.

Poitier, who is very good when he is being quiet and understated, is here playing an impossible character, with the result that he comes off looking pompous. He seems to be gifted with second sight and he comes out of several fights without a wrinkle in his suit. And the investigational genius he seems to be displaying with the mystery (which includes instant identification of an obscure species of fern) breaks down inexplicably at several points. This is, we are told, an experienced homicide detective from Philadelphia. Yet, knowing that he is an unwanted intruder in a hostile Southern town, he acts in the following boneheaded way: with a car full of murderous cretins chasing him, he gets out at what seems to be an abandoned factory on the edge of town and runs inside, evidently in order to make a phone call.

At the end of the film, Poitier has put himself in the following situation: he is operating a stakeout, without a gun, in a place that looks fairly cut off (I didn't spot a telephone) for the man he has incomprehensibly deduced is the killer. The same four cretins who (through no fault of Poitier's) bungled their last attempts, are still looking for him. Poitier has refused to tell Steiger



where he's going, and he tells the kid who drove him there to go home. So what's he going to do with the killer when he catches him—walk him all the way back? Without a gun? At midnight? With two carloads of psychopaths looking for him? Of course we shouldn't worry about old Tibbs, since he's obviously super-human, bullet-proof, and wrinkle-resistant, but maybe we ought to start worrying about those four cretins. They're undoubtedly dealing with a madman.

Everybody likes Rod Steiger in the film—and after years of seeing the Oscar go to people like Gregory Peck and Charlton Heston, we probably shouldn't complain if he picks one up this year. I like Steiger here, too, but what he's doing seems to be an awful compromise, and I don't mean that in the snobbish sense that I'd rather see him doing "King Lear" or a sepia-tinted adaptation of Chekhov. Being excellent in junk is fine—Robert Ryan has made a career of it—but here a lot of the junk seems to have infiltrated Steiger's sensibility and affected his approach to the role.

His Chief Gillespie, as Pauline Kael observed (while praising the movie) is a comic performance, and it's a comic performance that's rigorously stylized. It may surprise traditionalists that a "method" trained actor can display such razor-fine timing and control, but the trouble is with the dramatic parts. Steiger is fine when he's just kidding us along, popping his gum, and pretending to be a Mississippi cop. We know he isn't anyway because a sort of urban Jewish sensibility keeps shining through. Steiger

approach to the role.

The only thing that could have really saved *IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT*, which has the tone and structure, if not the unity and dramatic integrity, of "Pillow Talk," is if, at the end, when Steiger delivers himself of that awful simpering smile, Poitier had suddenly given him the finger, yelled "Sock it to me, Black Power!" and let out a loud fart as he got on the train. Then Steiger could have sat down on the tracks, done a Stan Laurel bawl, and the Supremes could have come in on the sound track, singing "You Always Hurt the One you Love." But the critics probably wouldn't have gotten it.

5

The Playwrights Speak

THE PLAYWRIGHTS SPEAK edited by Walter Wagner. Introduction by Harold Clurman. Delacorte Press: 290 pages, \$6.00.

How curious that we are not more curious about curiosity. Some of its more insidious consequences have bestirred recent attention, what with the perfection of the electronic snoop and the computer that never forgets. We are properly concerned with protecting the "right to privacy," but our concern has not brought us yet to examining the paramount motive behind nosiness, which is simply curiosity.

Such reflections, and others to follow, are stimulated by this book, a collection of interviews with eleven of the world's most famous living playwrights. Playwrights are, of course, public figures, and especially those interviewed for this book: Albee, Ionesco, Arden, Wesker, Osborne, Inge, Durrenmatt, Williams, Weiss, Pinter, and Miller. Some of these names are known to thousands of people; yet they are not the sorts of public figures that one ordinarily expects to be probed in an interview.

Different kinds of celebrities generate different kinds of curiosity, and consequently require different kinds of questions to be asked them in interviews. Consider, for example, the kinds of questions posed the film star by the movie magazine. Is your marriage about to end? Do you sleep in pajamas? The material being gathered is for an audience of the gland-tormented lost in sweaty dreams of romance: a prurient but harmless function.

More perplexing are the sports commentators who chase after rumors about this athlete's pout and the other's hernia. Who besides joint-and-tendon fetishists (surely not a populous group) savors such intelligence is a bafflement.

About all that famous playwrights have in common with famous film stars and famous athletes is that they are famous. Yet celebrity alone will not account for the kind of curiosity that motivates this book. We are indeed interested in celebrities, but not in all celebrities.

has all the externals of the role down pat, and he uses them superbly to comic effect, but the internationalization of the role—something at which "method" actors are supposed to be especially adept—is somehow missing.

Because Jewison was so interested in punching home every scene, in wringing out every last drop of juice, we can't follow Gillespie's development; we're never clear as to where and why his attitudes toward Tibbs are shifting. Steiger plays much of the role at the top of his lungs, and then, in the dramatic scenes, his voice drops into an intense confidential murmur, but it doesn't work. It's like Laurel and Hardy trying to do a scene from "Waiting for Godot" right in the middle of "Swiss Miss." Steiger is a good enough actor that he can carry us through the non-comic scenes, even though they make us uncomfortable; the less talented people in the cast can't. Lee Grant and Beah Richards, for example, both come off looking grotesque.

5

I could say a few hundred specific words about Norman Jewison's direction of all this, most of them bad, but that would be begging the issue. Jewison does have some talent and virtues, though I developed such an aversion for him back in the days when he was doing things like "The Art of Love" and "Send Me No Flowers" that I'm almost irrationally unwilling to grant him anything new.

He's like Blake Edwards, but not as good. Edwards' films, at their best ("A Shot in the Dark," "What Did You Do In The War, Daddy?") are genuinely funny; he is a perfectionist of a trashy but ingratiating and controlled style. Jewison is a second-rate practitioner of that style who applies it to subjects he knows will go over big with most critics.

He has all kinds of fancy window-dressing on his movies: Ray Charles, our greatest pop singer, sings the theme song for two of them; the photography is good; the locations are well-selected; and Jewison does have a genuine talent for assembling casts, if not for directing them afterwards. Steiger, Poitier, Brian Keith, Alan Arkin, Steve McQueen, Karl Malden, Rip Torn, Paul Ford, Michael J. Pollard, Warren Oates, Jonathan Winters, Edward G. Robinson, and Jack Weston have appeared in his last three movies, and McQueen and Faye Dunaway are the stars of the one he's shooting now. If you have good enough actors they can carry you through a lot of sloppy or thoughtless direction; but in the end, as in this movie, the direction is going to defeat them.

It's ironic that Jewison is now the wonder-boy of Hollywood since he built his career over the ashes of a genuinely gifted man, Sam Peckinpah, whom he replaced on "The Cincinnati Kid" several years ago; (Warren Oates, who does well as the deputy in *HEAT*, was one of Peckinpah's budding stock company). Peckinpah was fired off the set of "Cincinnati Kid" for "perfectionism," an odd crime which we certainly couldn't accuse Jewison of.

The rumor is that Martin Ransohoff fired Peckinpah (who did the brilliant "Ride the High Country") because he was so frustrated and infuriated with Tony Richardson's expensive antics on "The Loved One," but of course he couldn't can Richardson, whom the critics had decided was an "artist." Now, two years later, we find that Jewison is an "artist" too. Surprises never cease; who is the next "artist" going to be—Terence Young? Delbert Mann? It's almost like the "Cahiers du Cinema" politique game, which I said might have benefited Jewison, except that here it's less a matter of tension within the movie than tension within the critic; he has to get a review in on time, and since Jewison has supplied him with all the external trappings of a good movie, since he's packaged the trash so beautifully, why not give him the old five stars?

The only thing that could have really saved *IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT*, which has the tone and structure, if not the unity and dramatic integrity, of "Pillow Talk," is if, at the end, when Steiger delivers himself of that awful simpering smile, Poitier had suddenly given him the finger, yelled "Sock it to me, Black Power!" and let out a loud fart as he got on the train. Then Steiger could have sat down on the tracks, done a Stan Laurel bawl, and the Supremes could have come in on the sound track, singing "You Always Hurt the One you Love." But the critics probably wouldn't have gotten it.

By EDWIN BLACK

There is no public eagerly awaiting the last report on how Shostakovich takes his borsht (with sour cream or neat?), or who Toynbee's companion was during those moonlight strolls at the Institute for Advanced Study. Such tantalizing data are not pursued despite the fact that Shostakovich and Toynbee are certainly celebrated men.

What decides the proper subject of a disinterested interview? On what grounds do we commonly discriminate between those whose personal lives are of public interest and those who are left to swell a procession as faceless supernumeraries? The prurient curiosity has already been remarked, and it clearly does not inform this book.

The questions asked the playwrights are respectful and reasonably detached. Except for John Osborne, who

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is questioned impertinently in an interview originally broadcast over the BBC, these playwrights are queried mainly about professional subjects and little about their personal lives.

One can easily imagine a prying inquisitiveness about the personal lives of playwrights. Though they are engaged in sedentary and solitary work, not of itself very romantic, they are associated with the theatre, and anyone connected with that institution is likely to have his image radiate a certain gaudy nimbus. This book, however, does not exploit its subjects in quite that way, and so—whether because of the tact of the interviewers or the reticence of the interviewees—we get little information on how these eleven men live their days and nights.

There are some recurring items reported: The most productive time for writing is the morning. Playwrights, like musicians, tend to start young, many of those interviewed for this book reported being seriously engaged with writing by the age of twelve. Most critics are uncomprehending. The process of creating a play usually begins with an idea about a character or a single line. A writer should try to do at least a bit of work every day.

And there are some idiosyncrasies reported: Tennessee Williams starts the day with a martini. Edward Albee loathes Arthur Miller. Arnold Wesker admires Arthur Miller. Friedrich Durrenmatt takes about a year to write a play.

This is tamely interesting stuff, but hardly titillating. No one can populate a fantasy with it. It clearly is not connected with prurient curiosity.

There is another kind of curiosity, though, that may help explain this book. It springs from a critical position: the notion that one may be able to understand an art-object by understanding its creator. In principle it is a reasonable position, but we know so pathetically little about how men make works of art from the raw material of their experience that the sheer paucity of psychological information has discredited this critical attitude. So, if it is aesthetic curiosity that these interviews are supposed to satisfy, the cause to be served is unpopular. This book is a splendid illustration of how richly the disrepute is merited.

The truth is the reader of this volume can learn nothing essential of the plays discussed in it. By the time the playwrights are done denying the most egregiously naive suggestions made by the interviewers, questions, the interviews are over. But the plays remain, of course, and solicit interpretation independent of their makers.

This may have been a more useful book had its editor contemplated seriously what a playwright does. The playwright's function can be viewed as an especially complex and skillful case, perhaps even an ultimate case, of some very common practices.

We are all, to some crude extent, playwrights. We hatch plots, shape characters (our own, if no others), compose scenarios, invent roles. And this being so, it does not seem excessive to ask that an interview itself be constructed with an eye to its dramatic possibilities.

In a play it is important that characters impinge on one another in such ways that their interactions constitute a series of cumulative and reciprocal revelations. Characters must touch one another at the naked ends of nerves. The same strictures could well regulate interviews. Undoubtedly these would have been improved by some attention to dramatic structure.

In this collection, the series of questions asked each playwright does not provoke progressive disclosure. No axis of inquiry is pushed far enough; no answer given seems really revealing. A high proportion of these pages consists of gifted men responding to silly questions. These questions are too general to satisfy lurid inquisitiveness, too unsystematic to yield information about artistic creativity, too innocent to help illuminate the plays, and too diffused and untentative to elicit clear characterization of the subjects.

There is, then, no sort of curiosity that this book will deeply satisfy. It is not a bad or evil book. It just fails to establish itself as much of anything. It demands attention only from those who may be curious about a mediocre book, and that would be a curious curiosity indeed.

To the Left of the Altar

(continued from page 2)

were sublimated in the crusade for frequent communions; great numbers of young and enthusiastic priests threw themselves desperately into this crusade, as it was the only thing possible for them to do."); the deflection of resolution from potential action into mere feeling (case in point: a child says, "I won't go to mass with X, I hate him." His Catholic school teacher responds not by encouraging the child to examine the situation and do something about it, but by trying to arouse a feeling of guilt in the child—"That's wicked"; "You mustn't say that."); etc.

Not the least virtue of such common-sense analysis is that it (and all its radical potential) is available to the Catholic who is not yet of a mind to "go socialist" or to embark on "radical theologizing." Better still, it is immediately, locally applicable. It can be used, for instance, to shed some light on the problems of Catholicism here on the University of Wisconsin campus.

Of the three declared commitments of the Roman Catholic Church, the worship of God, service to mankind, and pursuit of the truth, the latter two coincide exactly with the objectives of the University. Yet, if one reviews the 1960s, a decade in which the University has been deeply involved (often despite itself) in practically every social and intellectual problem of our time, one finds that the record of the Catholic church on campus—which commands the loyalty of over 20% of the University community—has been one of almost total silence.

This is not to imply that there's a "Catholic point of view" which ought to have been broadcast, but rather that the church has muffed a splendid opportunity to exist as a supplementary forum for the confrontation with the issues (a default made the sadder by the fact that campus religious centers seem to have certain freedoms and flexibilities in bringing up questions of values, which freedoms are not available to a state university). The record is almost a blank. Why? Put another way, as our English friends would have it, are there any structural impediments in the position of the Catholic church on this campus which prevent the declared, "natural" commitments of the church to the truth and to the welfare of mankind from being translated into effective action?

The following considerations present themselves. First of all, and this problem is general throughout the church, there is a disabling theological ambiguity in the church's commitment to the social problems of this world (and here we might remark with Wittgenstein that truth itself is a social problem). The official theology of Catholicism is still that the seven sacraments are the normal channels of divine grace, the ordinary and sufficient means to salvation.

There is considerable theologizing now going on within the church the object of which is to qualify this doctrine, but the fact remains that when the chips are down any Catholic church can legitimately define itself as a dispensary of the sacraments and a locale for the liturgy, and confine its activities to that.

The unhappy fact is that no priest or church does do this! Rather, they are "socially concerned," too: understandably, they try to have it both ways. But their potential for an effective ministry in this area is vitiated by their conviction that their primary duty is the liturgy and the sacraments (often an enormously demanding duty, we might add). In a word, they are neither in the social ministry, nor out of it. The results, predictably, are sad.

What does this general situation in the church say about the local campus Catholic ministry and its potential as an effective agent and forum for those social and intellectual concerns which are moving the University community as a whole? It seems to me that it says that unless the campus ministry is staffed by men who have made an extraordinary, gratuitous commitment to the problems of the University apostolate, and who have the talents and the training to carry out that commitment, the future will be as blank as the past decade. If this proposition has any truth in it, it must then be followed by the following questions.

Is such a ministry likely to come to a University chapel which is just another parish in a diocese? Specifically, is such a ministry likely to occur in a University chapel which is staffed by diocesan priests who are assigned to that chapel (and who ordinarily must accept that assignment out of the obedience they owe their bishop) on a rotating basis between stints of service in typical city and country parishes?

Is such a ministry likely to come from men whose vocation is to the parish ministry, whose education in the diocesan seminary was for that parish ministry, and whose whole experience has been in it? Is such a ministry likely to come from men who have no prior, present, or projected association with the University itself?

These are not new questions: there is some evidence in other areas of the country that bishops themselves have asked them, and come up with negative answers. Unhappily, the solution they seem to be resorting to is only a stopgap, and a bad one: taking men who whether for right or wrong reasons have been unhappy or misfits in the ordinary parish situation, sending them on to Catholic universities (and often second-rate ones, at that) for "advanced studies," and then assigning them to the University chapels, and hoping for the best.

This "solution" does not speak to the problems; it only exploits the man and shortchanges the University. It is devoutly to be hoped that it won't ever be resorted to here, but that instead the structural problems of the campus ministry will be confronted directly, honestly, radically. Until the day they are so confronted, we can expect only such a ministry as we have had thus far: three or four parish priests very busy with the liturgy, the sacraments, and personal counseling, inviting every month or two a generous faculty member down off the hill to give a talk on something or other, and sponsoring enough social activities to keep out of the bishop's hair the Catholic parents who want Catholic mates for their children at the University.

Last Trane

By D. RANDOLF GREENE

It's frighteningly easy to have romantic notions about John Coltrane's death. He was playing incredibly long solos, often exceeding an hour, and complained frequently that it was a physically painful experience. A few weeks before he died, Max Gordon of the Village Vanguard telephoned and asked him if he wanted to play a gig. He said no, that he was working on something new and was not ready yet to play it for the public. He certainly was not finished, and his death, if nothing else, should remind us that he was human and frail, something which we could not help forgetting at times.

The magnitude of Coltrane's work, especially in the last years, made him seem larger than life, a pointless

cliche which reflects the inadequacy of verbal comment on his music.

Why, then, even bother? Another elegy Coltrane does not need, and it is impossible to articulate much less analyze why I love the sounds he made. However, by offering a descriptive explanation of how his music functions, it might be possible to make his work accessible, enjoyable, and ultimately meaningful. In an interview, Coltrane is recorded as saying "I feel I want to be a force for good," (JAZZ AND POP, September, 1967) and hopefully by making the reader aware of what he felt was good, was beautiful, his ambition will be furthered in a small way.

The music of his last years is huge both in design and complexity, and tends to overawe us in a way that few artistic creations are capable. But it is important to realize that these works were not created in a vacuum, but are the logical result of his development as an artist.

James Moody, a somewhat traditional tenor saxophonist, remarked on Coltrane in the February 22 issue of DOWN BEAT:

"Coltrane did so much with the chord thing, he knew his instrument, knew musically what was happening and he did it. Then he went to the so-called free-form thing, and I could understand it because he went step by step, so I'd take it that he knew what he was doing."

Moody suggests that by delineating Coltrane's development, we can better appreciate and understand what he was doing. And since jazz by its nature is a process of creation rather than a created artifice—as is composed music—the essence or meaning of the work resides in its movement through time.

Parenthetically, it should be emphasized that this is a definition of rhythm. According to Cecil Taylor in his own notes or his very important album UNIT STRUCTURES (Blue Note), "rhythm then is existence and existence time, content offers time quantity to shape." This should then suggest why rhythm is of fundamental importance to jazz in general and to Coltrane in particular.

Coltrane's musical development can be meaningfully if arbitrarily divided into three periods: formative, transitional, and mature-experimental, three periods which roughly correspond to the major companies for which he recorded Prestige, Atlantic, and Impulse.

The formative period takes Coltrane to 1958, before he became a full-time leader of his own quartet. Until this point he was primarily a side-man with other groups, most significantly with the Miles Davis quintet. He was considered an unusual, by some an offensive musician, but certainly not as the seminal figure he was to become. He impresses me at this stage of his career as trying to put together the elements of his past, to fuse his various influences into a unique, coherent style.

Two primary approaches to playing the tenor saxophone had evolved in jazz: the melodically linear, rhythmically flowing style of Lester Young, and the vertically harmonic, rhythmically rigid, hard sound of Coleman Hawkins. Although Coltrane developed the rhythmic freedom of Young, his most pervasive influence was Hawkins, in both sound and harmonic emphasis. A comparison of Hawkins' solo on "Beat at the Met" (COLEMAN HAWKINS AND THE TRUMPET KINGS, Emarcy) and Coltrane's on "Good Bait" (SOULTRANE, Prestige) makes this relationship readily apparent.

Some significant distinctions are quite noticeable, however, which prefigure the direction Coltrane would take in saxophone playing. He has much greater range on the horn, seems always to be searching for new sounds, has a denser texture, and is rhythmically much more complex.

Another important element in Coltrane's past, often mentioned but rarely discussed, is the fact that he began his playing career in the late 1940's with rhythm and blues bands like Earl Bostic and Eddie Vinson. This was probably very important in influencing Coltrane's sound, and the growls and shrieks which characterize most of his later playing are a sophisticated version of the honking tenor of rhythm and blues and early rock and roll.

The format of the Miles Davis quintet, which emphasized slight thematic introductions and long unrestrained solos, was the perfect context for Coltrane to come to grips with himself. He furthermore had the backing of the finest rhythm section of the time. Philly Joe Jones' drumming was especially important. Although he kept conventional 4/4 time on the ride cymbal, his accents were extremely dissonant, complex, and imaginative. He was also a very powerful drummer, and gave Coltrane the sort of impulsive support he demanded.

Coltrane played with Miles Davis from 1955 to 1956, did a brief stint with Thelonious Monk, who probably taught him a lot about harmony and melody, and then went back to Davis until 1958. A comparison of his playing in 1956 and 1958 indicates the rapid progress he was making.

On "Trane's Blues" (WORKIN' WITH THE MILES DAVIS QUINNET, Prestige) his solo is disjointed. The playing is hesitant and he never seems quite sure of where he is going; he plays short phrases, pauses, starts another, some of which are very attractive but few are related to one another in any coherent way. His sound is pinched, with little tonal variety. There is a tentativeness in his playing, best illustrated, as Martin Williams points out, in "the tendency for Coltrane's terminal phrases to end with an apparent fumble of notes or to diminish into a kind of mutter or hesitantly delivered cliche" (DOWN BEAT, 14 December 1967).

Coltrane was obviously learning at this point, and his solo on "So What" (KIND OF BLUE, Columbia) indicates how rapidly he was putting things together. His sound is not only more natural and varied, but he has more control over it, so that he can play in high octaves, normally out of the range of the tenor. What earlier would have been a squeak has now become an integral stylistic technique. The solo furthermore has an overall design, beginning with short but related phrases, gradually extended and intensified into a stunning climax, a release of tension, and a final statement rather than a fumbling fadeout.

The pieces on this album are harmonically modal, allowing the soloist to explore a single chord as long as he wants. Miles Davis on the liner notes of GIANT STEPS (Atlantic), explains Coltrane's procedure:

"What he does is to play five notes of a chord and then keep changing it around, trying to see how many different ways it can sound. It's like explaining something five different ways. And that sound of his is connected with what he's doing with the chords at any given time."

The possibility of this approach resulting in repetition and boredom is obvious, but as Coltrane mastered modality it became his way of telling the same story from different points of view as do many modern novelists.

The most important distinction between the formative and transitional periods is that in the latter, Coltrane was the leader of his own quartet. His tenor saxophone

is now the undisputed center of attention. He was able to decide what the group played, and most of the compositions were his own. The result is that he seems much more intimately involved in what he is playing, and his improvisations flow more naturally from the melodic theme. Composition is the obverse of improvisation, rather than a device to get done with as quickly as possible.

Coltrane's typical composition early in the transitional period is not modal, but is instead usually a simple theme, often just a series of single notes widely spaced, built on ingenious and intricate changes. The simplicity of theme allows him the maximum of freedom on which to build his highly complex harmonic structures. There are times, as on "Harmonique" (COLTRANE JAZZ, Atlantic), when he seems to be practicing scales rather than creating beautiful art, but he would soon learn to integrate technique and artistry.

Coltrane's handling of rhythm, which Martin Williams feels is his most significant contribution, was also advancing. The basic unit of rhythm is no longer the eighth note, as it was for Charlie Parker and the bop of the 1950's, but the sixteenth note. The result is more movement, more complexity, but most important, an extension of possibility. Coltrane's ability to play so incredibly fast, coupled with his now mobil range of sound, allowed him to build densely textured harmonic structures, in which he seems to pile one note on top of another, sometimes even to play two or more notes simultaneously.

With MY FAVORITE THINGS (Atlantic) Coltrane returned to modality, and technique was transformed into artistry. The title song of the album, as Martin Williams notes, was perfect for "the sort of things he had been working on: little chordal motion, folklike simplicity, a quasi-Eastern mystery, and incantativeness" (DOWN BEAT, 14 December 1967). Coltrane's handling of this piece is a bridge to the mature work of his final period.

During the transitional stage, he worked with three brilliant musicians with whom he could play for most of the remainder of his career. In Elvin Jones, Coltrane found probably the only drummer with the strength and endurance to propel unrelentingly during his long solos. This strength is combined with a rhythmic complexity, which is an analogue to the harmonic complexity of Coltrane's playing. Jones' drumming is always unpredictable, strongly implying but never trapped in a rigid 4/4 beat. The result is a rhythmic fluidity in which Coltrane seems to immerse himself.

McCoy Tyner, along with Bill Evans and Cecil Taylor, moved away from the funky, hard bop piano playing established by Bud Powell in the 1940's and which dominated the 1950's. Tyner, as Coltrane observed, "has a beautiful lyric concept that is essential to complement the rest of us" (liner notes, LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD, Impulse). His solo at the end of MEDITATIONS (Impulse) illustrates Tyner's ability to resolve the emotional chaos created by Coltrane without diluting the musical intensity of the piece as a whole.

Jimmy Garrison's bass playing is rhythmically strong, as the modern bassist must be, but has an intelligent sense of melody and harmony which also complements Coltrane. He developed a guitar-strumming technique, which he uses very effectively. His long introductory solo to "My Favorite Things" on LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD AGAIN is a minor masterpiece.

"Chasin' the Trane" on LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD, recorded 3 November 1961, marks the beginning of the final and most significant phase of Coltrane's career. The most immediately apparent distinction from the work of the previous period is quantitative—the piece is almost sixteen minutes long and it is all Coltrane. The song is a blues, and Coltrane's handling of it is the key to understanding his subsequent, difficult work. The blues, whether it be Bukka White

ing "Baby, Please Don't Go" or "Chasin' the Trane," is structured on the repetition, reordering, and variation of simple phrases, resulting not so much in a profoundly significant statement as in a deeply felt emotion. Coltrane, over the tumultuous drumming of Elvin Jones, develops a simple, spontaneously created blues theme in this manner, and, as the intensity builds, screeches and growls in imitation of the human voice singing. If I listen analytically to the piece I can follow the musical logic, but this takes great effort, and I tend to become completely involved in the music, as I rarely do on COLTRANE JAZZ. Coltrane's playing is incantative, ritualistic, and ultimately the total context of reality.

The quartet numbers on EXPRESSION (Impulse), Coltrane's final album, suggest the general direction of his musical development in his last six years. He works from essentially simple themes as before, but his playing is much more violent, textured, and intense than on "Chasin' the Trane." Whereas the earlier number picked up the modality of KIND OF BLUE, the latter works more in terms of complicated harmonic changes, recalling COLTRANE JAZZ. Finally, the 4/4 rhythm is only indirectly implied, perhaps due to the replacement of Elvin Jones by Rashied Ali. Coltrane's playing, as a result, seems to move almost entirely in a vertical direction, with no sense of beat moving him forward in time. The structure is spatial.

It is impossible, however, to generalize about this last period. Everything Coltrane played was distinctly different, and he became involved in a number of large, unique projects. Only certain general trends can be observed as characterizing his playing at this time.

Coltrane's growing interest in additional horns and group improvisation led to his most ambitious musical experiment, ASCENSION (Impulse). The quartet is augmented by two tenors, two altos, two trumpets, and one bass, and contains probably the best representation of young avant-garde musicians on one record. The format presents solos alternates with simultaneous improvisations by the whole band. The experience of the album is overwhelming, but while most of the individual solos are outstanding, the effect of repeated group improvisation is an almost impenetrable wall of sound. This experience might be very meaningful to the musicians involved but almost impossible for the listener to make sense of. Conceptually the album, along with Ornette Coleman's FREE JAZZ (Atlantic), is revolutionary, and the form is now being developed intelligently by Cecil Taylor and Archie Shepp.

There is a good deal that I have not mentioned that is exciting and important in Coltrane's work. I want to conclude, however, not with a cursory survey of what has not been discussed but by mentioning what I think is his most perfect creation, A LOVE SUPREME (Impulse). He is in perfect control of his instrument and the rapport between the four musicians is unusual, even for this group. The work unfolds magnificently from a simple four note theme, and although Coltrane plays a lot of notes, there is always a sense of understatement and humility.

The album is a praise of God, and as his notes to the album suggest, his primary impulse to play since 1957 was religious. His religion was not doctrinal but artistic, and he wanted to express the breadth of imperfect, earthly existence in relation to a divine perfection. He asserted over and over again that he wanted "to be a force for real good. In other words, I know that there are bad forces, forces put here that bring suffering to others and misery to the world, but I want to be the force which is truly for good." (JAZZ AND POP, September, 1967).

The violence of his music, like the violence of any great religious art, is an attempt to overpower and exorcise the "bad forces," but underlying the violence is a fundamental quest for form, which is man's imperfect attempt to imitate the immutable divine order.

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