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## A Socratic Significance

One thing is evident in Boris Pasternak's refusal to accept the 1958 Nobel Prize for literature: he has a respect for country, countrymen, and law (though they may be in error) which supercedes his regard for personal pride and safety. Although all sorts of anathema have been hurled at him by irate and embarrassed Russians, Pasternak, out of love for his native soil, conceded to the feelings of some representatives of his countrymen.

It is significant that over 2000 years ago a man, because of his views, was persecuted and condemned to die by a law which he thought unjust but which he upheld because of his overwhelming patriotism. His life had been a model of virtue, dedicated to the search for Truth, but his accusers, as well as the masses, did not understand him or his philosophy. Of course, the "immortal" in mind is Socrates, whose fame as a martyr and as a cause is ranked next to that of Christ's in the Western World.

Pasternak, according to reviews of his book, has written of the world (the Russian world) as he sees it, with a view towards influencing its improvement, not its destruction. For this he was awarded the most distinguished prize a man can win for literature. Because his novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, sheds an unfavorable light on totalitarianism, Russians are "up in arms," so to speak, and have figuratively slapped his face for his supposed affront. In spite of threats and urges of "Get out of the country! You defile the very air we breathe!" Pasternak has remained patriotic in his desire to stay in the country of his birth.

Being 68 years old, perhaps he has reason enough not to want to strike out and spread roots in alien land. At 70, Socrates realized that very few years were left him; therefore, he chose to face death rather than escape to another country. Though the similarity here is not as grave as that which concerns Pasternak, it does, nevertheless, bear out what Roger Williams cautioned in *The Bloudy Tenet*: "All men (should) prepare to be persecuted or hunted for cause of conscience."

It is to the credit of the United States that it has never frowned in such a direct manner upon its Nobel prize winners, who certainly have not presented rosy pictures of American life. Among those writers have been Sinclair Lewis, whose depictions of our Main Streets and Babbitts certainly gained him unpopularity in some circles here; T. S. Eliot, an expatriate who deplored the ascendance of the "Common man" and the classless society and became a British citizen; and William Faulkner, whose pictures of Southern decadence are critical of at least a section of the country.

While his book has some political implications, Pasternak does not consider himself a politician and is not desirous of becoming involved in politics—another parallelism with the life of Socrates.

The main concern that thinking people should have over Pasternak, at this stage, is that a major artist of the century has probably been stifled, perhaps, at the peak of his creative powers. What good could life be to Pasternak home or abroad if he is not allowed freedom of creation—and expression—in familiar surroundings? For it is this on which the artist strives. Without this freedom, the artist is at best "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

## Silence Versus Sapathy

(Reprinted, The Columns, by Pete Baptiste, Westminster College, Fulton, Mo.)

The great Albert Schweitzer, who seems to have achieved serenity in a world which had forgotten this gift, was once asked what he thought of the future of Europe. Schweitzer, musician, doctor, and theologian, hunched his shoulders and said: "My business is ethics, not prophecy. What's the use of talking about it? Perhaps all the talkers will be toppled in the end."

There is danger in silence which becomes a habit, wherein intellect atrophies. It is this problem with which critics of the college students are concerned. Although Amherst psychologist Robert Birney may be right in his statement that college students are "too concerned with their psychological well-being," it does not seem that the student's egocentricity stops there. His intellectual aims are searching for a credo which will serve our complex existence.

Must we then, accused of "sapathy," speak out to indict the future, when the past has proven successful in creating a world threatened by atomic destruction?

## THE RAZOR'S EDGE

By FLORA SNIPES

### Mudslingers

Aspiring to teach the truth, instructors fail; Aspiring to be Truth Seekers, students rebel;

A group of students (or a student) who call themselves the "Truth Seekers" have undertaken to examine our staff and faculty. It seems that although these students are seekers of the truth, they are not givers of the truth. Whether their grievances are justified is immaterial since they do not believe strongly enough in their convictions to reveal their identities to the public.

The "Truth Seekers" believe that certain members of our faculty "are not delivering truth" to the students of NCC.

Through the ages, however, many great men have failed to sufficiently define truth. Therefore, I cannot understand how a group of undergraduate college students can say what is truth and what is not truth. The truth for Thales was water; for Anaximenes—air; for Anaxagoras—infinity; for Heraclitus—fire; for Democritus—atoms; for Pythagoras—numbers; for Socrates—virtue; for the sophists—rhetoric; and so on ad infinitum. All these philosophers have had entirely different conceptions of truth. Yet each one is remembered for his contributions to mankind. Who then can determine what is truth? Who



Snipes

at NCC can accuse another of failing to deliver the truth?

One truth seems evident—the "Truth Seekers" were not sincere in all they wrote. Obviously, they feared that they might have been looked down upon or even expelled from NCC had they revealed their identities. The truth is that they really had nothing to lose in either event; for why should one want to remain in an institution whose instructors he has placed on probation because of their failure to "deliver truth", whose Dean of Women he describes as not only "shrewd, obnoxious, domineering, and ill" but also a "slave driver, an autocrat, a limp failure, a destroyer of futures, and a Lady Machiavelli", and whose President, he further believes, desires to aid his staff in "enslaving all women who come to NCC for guidance and help"? Feeling as they apparently do about conditions at NCC, the "Truth Seekers" should transfer to another institution without further ado.

It is to be hoped that persons who criticize the policies of others will first consider why the criticized person performs his duties as he does. More specifically, the "Truth Seekers" should have realized that the Dean of Women is responsible for the behavior of hundreds of NCC coeds. If she cannot make rules governing these women, if she cannot have aides to assist her in governing these women, and if her voice carries no weight, how can she guide young women in the proper direction?

These questions I put before (continued on page 7)

### BOOK REVIEW

## Jazz Musician Tries To Fit In

By Flora Snipes  
*The Horn* by Clellon Holmes. Random House. 1958. 243 pp. \$3.75

Like many contemporary jazz novelists, Holmes tells the story of a jazz musician in the U.S. who because of his countrymen's apathy to jazz as an art, cannot fit in. Edgar Pool (better known as "The Horn") is a Kansas City jazz fiend who ignores his hard-working parents' pleas that he prepare himself for a job offering steady security to a Negro. Edgar Pool is interested in nothing but playing the saxophone.

"The Horn" reaches the top of the jazz world slowly and tediously. But when he finally arrives, he becomes the idol of the jazz world. Like Algren's *Frankie Machine* (The Man With the Golden Arm), "The Horn" is not able to resist the "bottle" and the "weeds". "The Horn's" reputation both as a lady's man and a swinging cat becomes somewhat a Kansas City legend. He is usually so full of booze or so engrossed in his music that he neither knows nor cares what is going on in the world outside.

To add a bit of Beat Generation melancholy, Holmes finally portrays Edgar Pool as a narcotics addict and a drunken dervish whose only pleasure in life, playing the saxophone, has been snatched from him. One night in a cutting session, "The Horn" yields his jazz proficiency to a young jazz musician and soon afterwards dies with the feeling that he is isolated from the rest of the world.

In shaping the pitiful course of

Edgar Poole's life, Holmes does not allow the fact that Edgar is a Negro to enter into the forces which cause the musician's downfall. The typical sadness, loneliness, the proximity of narcotics and alcohol, and the over-anxious desire to "arrive" are rounds of Edgar Pool's descending ladder. Like Dorothy Baker (*Young Man With a Horn*), Holmes attempts to portray the typical downbeat life of a jazz musician. Baker contends that her novel is "the story of the gap between the man's musical ability and his ability to fit it into his own life; of the difference between the demands of expression and the demands of life here below; and finally of the difference between good and bad in a native American art form, jazz music". Such is the gap which Edgar Pool tries vainly to bridge.

Dear Editor,

It might appear that on our campus the majority of the men students are avid followers of Jazz. If asked, what type of music he prefers, the majority would answer Jazz. Now, if he prefers Jazz because he understands it and appreciates it for its musical value, then well and good. On the other hand, many of the men students who supposedly "dig" Jazz, don't know as much about it as they know about Chopin's funeral march.

Has Jazz as a distinctive and valuable music become a part of what is fashionable or progressive on NCC's campus? It seems

## Al Capp's Humor

By Theodore Gilliam

At the 34th annual ACP Conference in Chicago, November 15, Al Capp was the featured speaker at the conference luncheon. Instead of preparing a speech, Al Capp used a question-answer address by having the delegates submit their questions a day before the luncheon. During his speech Capp proved himself to be a master of wit and humorous innuendo. Beginning, he remarked that the great bulk of questions concerned Daisy Mae's measurements; however, he decided he "would leave those to the delegate's personal research and go on to the more impertinent and irrelevant questions."

Q: Where do you get such morbid and depraved looking characters?

A: From attending meetings like this one.

Q: What effect would a super highway have on Dogpatch?

A: It might bring Richard Nixon.

Q: Why do you endorse certain products?

A: Any product I endorse, I have personally tested. For instance, I think Wildroot is a marvellous salad dressing and Cream of Wheat is a good hair dressing.

Q: Why do you murder other comic strips?

A: Out of sheer admiration and boundless envy.

Q: Do libel laws apply to comic strips?

A: I am embarrassed that you ask.

Q: How is a comic strip created?

A: I take a quick look at my daughter's bills, my wife's bills, my own bills. I realize that I must interest 60 million people who have 60 million differences, for instance, people who admire Orval Faubus. I know that love, death, and money are fundamental and primary interests of people; therefore, I include them in my strip. Of course, the definition of these things are broad. Death in a comic strip might be the stumping of a toe.

Q: How do you dare satirize political figures?

A: It's a choice of whom you will murder. Some of the most august political figures are thrilled to be satirized. They feel that they achieve a certain immortality.

Q: How do you get a double whammy? (Asked by a girl)

A: Just keep wearing that sweater.

Q: How would you write L'il Abner to appear in the Russian Monthly and the New York Times?

A: L'il Abner does appear in some Russian newspapers to show that they (Russians) (continued on page 7)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

as if everyone "digs" Brubeck and has the album "Jazz Goes to College" (thanks to the record-a-month club). In the College Canteen the most frequently played tune is "Topsy: Part II", among other popular jazz tunes.

I would like to suggest to the men on our campus (especially the pseudo-jazz fanatics) not to stop with Brubeck and Kenton, as far as learning and appreciating Jazz is concerned, but broaden your scope of Jazz by becoming familiar with other great Jazz artists.

Sincerely,  
Charles Thomas McNeil