

BOOKS



Albert Camus

You Have To Plow For Camus' Sense

NOTEBOOKS — 1935-42. By Albert Camus. Translated and with a preface and notes by Philip Thody. Alfred A. Knopf. 225 Pages. \$5.00.

By RALPH DENNIS

Perhaps it is about time that someone questioned the value of, and the reason for, the publication of the scraps, bits and pieces category of works by certain literary writers. It may be that this is a nation of rather timid accepters; whatever is published must really have some value, however dim and elusive it might seem at moments. Witness the John Gunther "Fragments of an Autobiography" which was published a year or so ago . . . nothing more than a stringing together of the financial statements from his publisher over the years about the number of copies sold and money earned. This is not to suggest that Gunther is a literary writer, but this rather calculated attack upon what may be a gullible book-buying public must earn it a place in the general classification of "let's milk the dead cow once more even if it's not grade A" books.

Letters, diaries, journals, notebooks and memoirs all have a place in the publishing and the literary world. No one can argue against any of these as an effective method of gaining insight into the man, the writer, his time, his age. Stendhal's Journals, Pepy's diaries, Boswell's journals, Flaubert's journals, Katherine Mansfield's letters, Gide's journals, Gauguin's journals, Casanova's Memoirs, Byrd's journals . . . each has its reason for being which transcends, in part, the writer's original purpose. Begun for one reason they

exist for another. While their publication may nourish the scholar and the historian more than the layman audience, the general reading public finds its own level of interest. A general reader might find amusement in Pepy's account of coming home to find his supper not prepared because his wife spent the afternoon at a drawing-and-quartering execution; a historian might be more interested in who was drawn-and-quartered.

There is a possibility that the Camus notebooks will have no value to either the scholar or the general reader. It is a literary notebook rather than a personal journal. At the time Camus was working on a still unpublished first novel, La Mort Heuresse. Many of the entries are the rather frustrating bits and pieces of the novel. The translator, having seen La Mort Heuresse, is kind enough to tell us, in footnotes, which fragments were used in the novel. His kindness does not extend to telling us exactly why we should be interested.

For example, on page 47: The gambler.
Mrs. X, otherwise a perfect old bag, was a very fine musician.

For novel:
Part I. traveling theatre. Movie. Story of a great love affair (College Sainte-Chantal).

Or the intriguing little bit of dialogue on the same page:
The gambler.

"It's going to be difficult, very difficult. But that's no reason for not trying."

"Of course not," said Catherine, raising her eyes to the sun.

No attempt is made to explain what the difficulty is. Perhaps the translator doesn't know himself. But doesn't it sound spicy?

Of course, there are lucid, meaningful passages. The reader will have to plow for these, through words and phrases that must have meant something to Camus but need a cipher now, through fragments that intrigue rather than satisfy and past physical descriptions that appear to have no effect at all. All right, so it's a nice spontaneous description of a hillside or a beach. What now?

It is, perhaps, sad that "so what?" and "what now?" are too often the final attitudes to whole blocks of pages of the notebooks. Camus, unless he loved a joke, might have disapproved of the notebooks in their present form. It is, at least, a charitable thought.

Dwayne Lowder and Bob Shannon will have a show of their work today 1-6 P.M. and Monday 9-6 in their studio, room 22 of the Carrboro Town Hall. Paintings Drawings Sculpture Etchings

Wills Book Store Lakewood Shopping Center Durham Shop Monday, Thursday Friday nights till 9

Pitfalls Of Popularization

Generalizations On Spain

SPAIN: THE ROOT AND THE FLOWER. By John A. Crow. Harper & Row. 412 Pages. \$6.95.

By JANET WINECOFF

The preface of this book states that it is "a history and an interpretation of the civilization of Spain from its earliest beginnings," adding, however, that it is not a "detailed account of every war or political change which the country has undergone." In terms of historical perspective, a seemingly disproportionate attention has been given to the two ends of the continuum, the hazy prehistoric beginnings and the contemporary period which is still clouded by passions.

The centuries in between are best known to historical research and perhaps there is no need to re-hash them. Since by the author's own declaration this is "not straight history," insofar as history emphasizes political events, it would be unfair to point out numerous historical omissions which may well be deletions aimed at making the book more palatable for the non-specialized reader. Those with a particular predilection for history, however, may find the book disappointing.

The author has attempted, with questionable success, to adapt for popular consumption the standard textbook materials for what is usually entitled a course in "Spanish civilization." In addition, he incorporates personal viewpoint and experiences when relevant and also when not. Much classic textbook structure has been retained in the loosely historical or chronological approach; nevertheless, the treatment is often rambling and disjunctive so that the over-all appearance is amorphous.

The better part of a lifetime spent as an avidly devoted Hispanist has enabled Mr. Crow to accumulate a very considerable amount of erudition, and the book is liberally interspersed with little-known facts, some of them so esoteric as to be unfamiliar even to others in the profession. These bits of erudition are at times added as support for some rather doubtful hypotheses, for example, "The name that a country bears will often give some insight into the attitudes and history of her people." Tracing the various name changes the country has undergone from Iberia (derived from Iberian Iber, "river") through Hesperia (Greek, "land of the setting sun") to the Carthaginian (from Sphan, "rabbit") or "land of the rabbits") changed via Latin to the present-day Espana, the author avers: "The rabbit, like the Spaniard, never moves in a straight line, nor at a steady speed." Apparently he means to be taken seriously.

Some of the writing is frankly bad, as witness these jumbled figures of speech:
The railway that goes from Madrid into Galicia or the Cantabrian area gradually leaves the Castilian plateau and climbs steadily upward to enter an area of transverse mountains through which it turns and winds like a serpent of steel boring into earth and rock. There are so many tunnels that the pupils of one's eyes scarcely have time to get used to the light when suddenly the train huris itself again into a dark and cavernous labyrinth that pierces another mountain. The inaccessibility of the outlying areas of the peninsula is made clear by those coiled strings of tunnels and the many miles of precarious ledges along which the railway must pass, as laboriously, sometimes at a snail's pace, it gnaws up the distance.

In general, there are two types of writing in the book, one more or less scholarly and academic, and the other more personal, most evident in material drawn from the author's own experience (travel, acquaintances in Spain, and so on). Most of the travel impressions should be excised on the basis of an evident love and enthusiasm for the subject, but they are as a whole regrettable writing. These, together with other personal reminiscences and Twentieth Century references are scattered throughout the book, in a fashion calculated to confuse the uninitiated. Coming in the middle of the story of the Moors in Granada, for example, these jumps to the present are slightly disconcerting. There is such a quantity of tangential material that the chapter headings as a whole can be considered only mildly indicative of content. Sallies from the main track so abound that the process of free association appears to have played a major role in the book's composition. When dealing with a subject

where greater creativity is possible, such impressionism can serve the ends of art, but its value in a book whose primary goal is to be informative is questionable.

Judging from the proportionate number of pages devoted to the period, the author's main interest is the present. Almost forty per cent of the book deals with this century, being loosely organized around the years preceding, during and after the Second Republic and subsequent civil war.

It might therefore seem legitimate to assume that the author would be better qualified to deal properly with this era and its figures. However, there is the same proliferation of deplorable generalizations which abound in the rest of the book.

A case in point is his treatment of the writers of the "generation of 1898" of whom he writes: "Each one was a distinct personality with an esthetic credo and philosophy of his own. They certainly did not constitute a unified literary movement but they certainly did produce the finest literature to come out of Spain since the great days of the Golden Age." In the next paragraph, he says, "They exalted the use of the human will, and had none." This sort of generalization, unsupported and unqualified, is to judge on the basis of this one book — a Crow specialty.

He then proceeds to give a totally misleading summary of the writers of this same group: "One thing they did achieve, as Spaniards have always achieved: They constructed a palace of beauty." This was perhaps of all literary movements in the history of Spain the one least concerned with beauty, either as a goal or as a norm.

Only a small number of intellectual figures are treated individually, and the inclusion of Blasco Ibanez with the greats so distinguished would make the average Spaniard cringe. Perhaps he is discussed because he is relatively well known in this country (to a degree far beyond his merits), but Crow includes him in the same breath with Unamuno. His treatment of Blasco Ibanez's work is not un-

realistic, but many better authors have been passed over without even a mention. This again is certain to mislead the audience for which the book seems intended.

The two literary giants of Spain in this century were Unamuno and Ortega, and they receive the most extensive coverage. The quotes from Unamuno are not representative of his most significant ideas, but they do give some flavor of the man and his work.

Ortega does not fare so well. Many critics would disagree with his inclusion in the "generation of 1898" since he was only fifteen years old when the movement was in full swing and in fact wrote little of importance until 1914 and after. This is a minor point, however, compared to his gross misinterpretation of "The Revolt of the Masses," Ortega's best-known work. Crow says, "This book was meant to be a general interpretation of movements in European history, with its stress on the rise and revolt of the masses (by which Ortega means the middle class, not the workers)." Such a remark indicates an acquaintance with Ortega's book which does not extend much beyond the first page.

The over-all import of the book is not social, in any way, as Ortega states explicitly innumerable times, but ethical and psychological. The mass-man is defined as one who places no special demands upon himself, who feels no need to excel, who is mediocre, conscious of it, and happy that way. In view of this, it is not surprising that he also misinterprets Ortega's idea of the select minorities, seeing it not as an ethical category but in the framework of Facism.

The final chapters deal with the period following the Civil War, and give a not too distorted picture of the present economic scene, political conditions, and society. The author is in the difficult position of trying to be both anti-Franco and objective and does not do too badly. However, one must give the devil his due. Each of Spain's dictators in modern times has had at least one accomplishment. Primo de Rivera built roads

(and the roads have not been essentially improved since). Franco has built dams and reservoirs, with such obvious delight in dedicating them that the Spaniards call him "Paco Rana" (Frankie the Frog). Much of this, of course, has been done with foreign capital, and much more remains to be done, but it is not quite fair to imply that there has been even less progress than is the case as these lines seem to do: "Irrigation could increase the productivity of vast areas of Spain's agricultural land by at least six times, and in many instances, by thirty times. However, since the civil war little has been achieved in this direction. The big landlords, who strongly uphold General Franco, have no interest in such improvement, for this would mean a considerable outlay in order to carry out the necessary engineering projects." Mr. Crow's oft-mentioned association with supporters of the Republic perhaps excuses his bias here.

It is evident that the book is not conceived as scholarly research, or there would be many other bones to pick with the author. Seen as an effort to reach a wider audience with the subjects of the Hispanist's life's study, however, it is by no means entirely bad. The task of popularizing such material is in itself extremely difficult, and probably explains many of the excesses in expression. What may seem poor taste to the academic reader is more likely an effort to be more vivid and popular in style.

Surprisingly little is known about Spain by the man in the street today, and this book can do a great deal to dispel that ignorance. Spain is not simply or primarily a land of gypsies and bullfighters, and there is much in SPAIN: THE ROOT AND THE FLOWER which will help to quell that myth. It is to be hoped that the myth, once shattered, will not be replaced with the author's generalizations.

Mrs. Winecoff is a member of the faculty of Duke University's Department of Romance Languages. She recently spent a year in Spain on a post-doctoral Fulbright Research Grant.

In The Margin

By W. H. SCARBOROUGH

The Falling Leaves of a Publisher's Autumn

Summer doldrums have begun already to yield on the publishing front. August alone will see the publication of several novels on which the publishing world is counting heavily to make it a harvest in counting house and literary salon alike.

Betty Smith's latest novel will be released August 20. Hot in her wake will come a torrent of battered veterans and fresh young hopefuls.

Edna Ferber, who has turned to autobiography, will publish the second volume of her reminiscences, "A Kind of Magic," September 6.

Possibly the most curious offering of the fall will be made by the New York Graphic Society, which boasts that it will publish a novel by "the best-known unpublished novelist in the Western Hemisphere." The Novel, with the simple title, "Confusions," is the work of Jack Ludwig, one of the co-founders with Keith Botsford and Saul Bellow, of the superb magazine of experimental fiction, "The Noble Savage." The Society calls Mr. Ludwig's book a "bitingly funny, unconventional novel about mid-century America and its tangled ways." Its hero is a new kind of Candide or Gulliver, who begins his catalogue of confusions in the first sentence of the novel, with himself: "I sing confusion, I Joseph Gillis, myself confused, or, to put it another way, an American."

The novel hangs around the ambiguity of position enjoyed by Gillis, a Jewish boy from Roxbury, Vermont who holds a Ph.D. from Harvard. By his own description, Gillis, or author Ludwig, is "only the blackest of pots" trying to "liberate kettles."

If anything this indicates a general trend in the experimental novel that began with "Catch-22" and plunged somewhere with "Naked Lunch."

Atheneum in the meantime is continuing a remarkable string of first-novel publications that caught fire with Reynolds Price's "A Long and Happy Life," and is still burning with a hard and gemlike flame. The work of another Duke University alumnus, Fred Chappell, a novel called "It is Time, Lord," makes its appearance this month. It is being roundly praised well before publication.

The historical novel, too, is attempting something of a comeback. One notable volume to be published by Atheneum on September 26, is J. Klein-Haparsch's "He Who Flees the Lion," which has some of the aspects of both "Gone With the Wind," Rumanian style, and "Dr. Zhivago."

Another offering which piques the curiosity, if for no other reason than wonder at how such source materials can be put to use, is Gloria Jahoda's "Deiliah's Mountain." It is being published September 9 by Houghton Mifflin. In brief it is a family history that manages to sweep into one small western Virginia valley the taming of the frontier, the winning of the West, and the break Daniel Boone made through the Cumberland gap. Mrs. Jahoda found her material in her own family manuscripts, eyewitness accounts, real experiences of Indian capture, spoken tradition, children's games and songs.

Other books, non-fiction in nature, promise much. One eye-catching item, "The Social History of Bourbon," to be published in September by Dodd, Mead & Co. will possibly do for whiskey what "Death in the Afternoon" did for bullfighting. Certainly the potential readership is broader.

If titles will do the trick alone, this one should make the publishing season: "The Be Kind To Everybody (Except Antarciticians) Movement."

Another Lilly Book

Published By Duke

The Duke University Press has published another in a series of books for its Lilly Endowment Research Program in Christianity and Politics. Entitled "Power, Law, Right, and Love," the volume was written by Dr. Edgar H. Brookes, former member of the South African Senate for 15 years, who was a visiting professor in political science at Duke for the 1963 spring semester. Professor of history and political science at South Africa's University of Natal, Dr. Brookes, in his book, examines the fundamentals of human association as he sees them in the light of his faith. Insisting that there is a vital interrelationship between political action and religious faith, Dr. Brookes emphasizes that he regards love as a political virtue. The whole majestic structure of the British Commonwealth has rocked as in an earthquake because justice was not always declared. "The unparalleled and most moving effort of the United States to help the war-weary and underdeveloped countries of the world might end in failure without it." Moreover, "Its (love's) presence would revolutionize the situation in my own country, the Republic of South Africa, in the bleak atmosphere of which nothing else seems able to avoid disaster." The book consists of a series of Lilly Endowment lectures which Dr. Brookes presented at Duke during the past academic year. Dr. Brookes also has written a number of other books, including "History of Native Politics in South Africa," "South Africa in a Changing World," "The City of God and the Politics of Crisis," and "The Native Reserves of Natal."

Training For The Writer

An address delivered on the University campus July 10 to editors of high school papers attending the annual North Carolina Scholastic Press Institute. Mr. Golden is editor of the Carolina Israelite and a nationally known writer.

By HARRY GOLDEN

Over the past 10 years I made a quick tabulation of the questions sent in by young writers and particularly high school boys and girls. I would say the most frequent question is, "How did you decide to become a writer, how did you get a start?" Another question is: "My high school teacher says that newspaper work spoils a student's style for creative writing." And still another question, "How do you go about writing and do you need an agent?"

Newspaper work does not work against the creative artist. Hemingway got his start as a reporter. Damon Runyon never stopped being a newspaperman. Ben Hecht writes in his autobiography that he would never have gotten anywhere without his long experience as a reporter. Sandburg wrote all of his poetry and most of his monumental Lincoln biography while a reporter and columnist on the Chicago Daily News. It is very good for writers to work on newspapers. The deadline teaches the would-be writer speed, facility, precision, and instructs him that everything written is not necessarily for posterity. These questions, however, reveal a process by which would-be writers avoid the big test. They complain of illiterate publishers or insist on needing an agent, or say there is no market for short stories, or that they need time off.

The greatest of all training for writers is newspaper work. The work removes the excuses for an attic or a Guggenheim or a trip to Italy. A newspaper man has a job to do from 9 till 5 or from 2 to 11, and he must do it, and that is just the way most successful writers write. It becomes a job he does for four or five or six or eight hours a day, then he knocks off like any banker or insurance salesman. He needs no agents or any artifices. An agent is good only after a man is very successful and wants someone to handle the sale of subsidiary rights.

The reputable publishers read everything today. Write it on one side of the paper double-

space and send it in. And if you get a rejection slip send it to someone else.

Now to make money at writing we have to have some of the facts of life and prime among these facts is that fiction has declined. Where the national magazines used to be full of fiction, today they may run a single short story and sometimes not even that. Gone also is the time when a young North Carolina writer, such as all you here tonight, could send a story about Sambo with his gold tooth, rolling in laughter under the magnolia tree. That's out. Today it is not Sambo, but Dr. Ralph Bunche, Nobel Prize winner. However, you must be aware of the conditions and particularly the social upheaval that is going on all around you. I know it is nice to avoid it but here is the biggest domestic story of the 20th century and many have avoided it in the past ten years. It is a story which, so far as I know, is told only by newspaper reporters, the story almost all writers ignore.

Just imagine what a poet like T. S. Eliot could do with the irony of everyday occurrences on this question of race. For the irony of this momentous racial turmoil is that while the Negro is fighting for a chance to start at the bottom of the ladder the white man will gain the most after the colored man starts up. For the past 75 years the South has exported its brains along with its tobacco, textiles, and furniture. It exported its brains and this was unwittingly. Because the South maintained a second class citizenship for the Negro it had also to maintain second class institutions for him. Hundreds of thousands of Negroes did not want those second class institutions. They found first class institutions elsewhere.

When you draw a line and say certain people shall not cross it you find yourself watching that line for the rest of your life. You become obsessed with that line. You begin to think it the most important thing in your life, more important than the Cold War, or intellectual advancement, and you are even willing to work for 75 cents an hour less than the fellow in the North because you fear that full participation in the industrial complex will breach that line. The loss of human resources is most tragic when we consider the economic development of the

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