though it is not identical with the totem. On this basis individual members remain parts of the totem through their participation in the exercise of authority. Desan concedes that there are obstacles to such participation, however; he mentions the division of labor and the lack of communication.

As a way to transcend these limitations Desan refers, through a footnote, back to Volume 1 where, faced with a similar problem, he suggested that the future should explore the means of manufacturing some form of electronic computer with the hope not only of a simplified calculation and statistical investigation, but also of revealing, as far as possible, those personal nuances which have always been neglected in any condensation of the general will of the many.

The utility and beauty of this suggestion can only be appreciated by recognizing that even if such an elaborate machine as here envisioned were to malfunction, it would make no difference—no one could tell.

The Unknown Orwell
by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams
(Knopf; 316 pp.; $8.95)

Norman Jacobson

We wish to know all we can about writers we admire. No detail is too trivial, no event in the author's life too insignificant. The way he knots his tie is of interest to the enthralled reader. In attention to just such detail The Unknown Orwell makes its chief contribution. As for the larger picture, the more profound relationship between the man and his works, between Eric Blair and George Orwell, the reader must bide his time until Bernard Crick is ready to publish the "official" biography.

Stansky and Abrahams concentrate on the period before Blair became Orwell. They want to pin the mysterious Blair in order to grasp the person he tried so desperately to slough off in favor of the persona he was later to assume. Along the way the authors attempt to maintain a dialectic between what it was actually like being Blair and what Orwell, in his published works, told us it was like. The focus is on Down and Out in Paris and London, the lengthy introduction to The Road to Wigan Pier and his essays "Such, Such Were the Joys," "Shooting an Elephant" and "Why I Write." They find a pattern of "interesting" discrepancies. Orwell, it seems, chose to emphasize certain aspects of his experience as young Blair at the expense of others, invariably the cheerful or more personally rewarding. Now what else might they have expected? Their fixation with the fact that Blair had taken a pseudonym, had publicly flaunted a bill of divorce from his former self, serves mostly to confuse their earnest efforts to understand him (them?).

Is it true that pseudonymous authors present a special case? Are Samuel Clemens, Sidney Porter, Soren Kierkegaard, H. H. Munro subject to different canons of interpretation than those writers who publish under their own names? Moreover, to what extent does any writer, pseudonymous or otherwise, stick to "the facts" when recreating his past? Proust wrote a novel, Rousseau wrote his Confessions. Which is more strictly autobiographical, which the more impressive achievement as a work of fiction? It is precisely the degree to which he is successful in maintaining the tension within himself, in re-creating the past while addressing the present, that a writer becomes interesting. That the struggle should be waged under the skin of a political writer is what is so fascinating about George Orwell.

This "perversity" in Orwell marks all of his works, with the notable exception of his last books, Animal Farm and 1984. It is not surprising that these should have been his most popular. In Down and Out a literate young man speaks from the underworld of poverty and neglect in behalf of the outcasts of a civilized society. In Wigan Pier the socialist reporter is determined to bite the hand that feeds him, the Left Book Club and other lovers of the proletariat—at a distance. "Shooting an Elephant" is remarkable for its portrayal of the inexorable tragedy of imperialism, in which all the actors are impoverished as human beings in the slaughter of the innocent. And we are told in "Why I Write": "... looking back through my work, I see that
it is invariably where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed into purple passages, sentences without meaning, decorative adjectives and humbug generally." Which is obviously putting the turtle on his back. It is political motivation, which in our time is thought, by the guardians of literary taste, to lead to humbug. This is no recent development.

Since the rise of liberal politics in the West, intermittent warfare has been waged between the politicians and the literary artists. I do not refer simply to the role of the artist as critic of whatever society he finds himself a member but to something more fundamental. The political man and the artist have been at war because the principles of politics and the principles of art are so often seen as being at war with one another. Where it has not impinged upon his life directly, politics has gone ignored by the literary man. Where it has stolen his time or embittered his days he has been hostile to it.

If by Western politics we mean not the politics of truth or of the abyss but, rather, politics in the mundane sense of shaping public policy, then the esthetic temperament and the esthetic vocation are quite properly suspicious of it. For the main purpose of the artist is precisely to discover truth, if necessary to lead us down into the abyss, there to plumb its very depths. Which is to say the obvious: The political man deals most comfortably with surface manifestations, the artist with essences.

To the artist politics has usually meant endless prattle on the way to yet another shabby compromise. Politics, therefore, is not merely superficial, it is trivial. Only art is significant and profound. As if that were not enough, what the literary artist through his efforts painstakingly builds up, the politician, through carelessness, or worse, tears down. I refer to the abasement of the literary artist's beloved language. Again, what makes Orwell so fascinating is that while he could mount a ferocious attack upon the debasement of the English language by politicians and professors ("Politics and the English Language"), he himself would hold up that language "like a windowpane" to illuminate politics itself.

In modern England the honor roll of outraged critics of bourgeois politics is a long and distinguished one, St. George alternately buckling on the sword and browsing in his library. It was a question of how threatened the damsel was, as well, of course, as of her qualifications. "I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments," Byron wrote in 1814. And "as to opinions, I don't think politics worth an opinion." Then he went dashing off to save his beloved Greece from the clutches of the Infidel. Coleridge turned up his nose at "the tricks played off by the mountebanks and zanies of patriotism," and Shelley railed against political power which "Pollutes whate'er it touches." Charles Lamb set forth this literary cringing from politics (with its corollary of direct action) most succinctly: "Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private—I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in."

The response of the literary man to political, social and economic crisis in the first half of the twentieth century has provided only minor variations on the familiar theme of the Romantics: withdrawal or direct action. Where the issues are insignificant, to him, he washes his hands of politics. But a direct assault is mounted when there is something he cares about. Then politics is a superficial and trivial playing with great moral issues, far too grave a business to be left to the politicians, or the people.

The literary man, when he enters politics, does so as an artist and not as a politician—just as the social scientists who during the last decade helped frame American foreign policy did so not as diplomats but as scientists, with what results we are only too tragically aware. The scientist does not become politicized so much as outraged by the clumsiness and imprecision of the political process, while the literary man is appalled by the want of nobility and the refusal to read man's destiny in the stars.

The notion that the artist was "politicized" during the 1930's is mistaken. That literary figures turned fascist, that more of them became Communists, is not really a sign of their having been politicized. They were just fed up with what they saw as a tawdry enterprise, a politics of compromise, of bungling, of dawdling along. Man has a core: man is not trivial, he has a destiny. The artist wished to distill the essence of man, to enshrine it in institutions and, notably, in leadership. The Communist and fascist cadres distilled that essence for him—through the application of terror.

In this dangerous environment Orwell saw it as his mission to keep his fellow writers honest, to expose ruthlessly the substitution of fantasies for the "realities" of political existence. And the realities were invariably hard, often intractable. It might not be much of an exaggeration to say that George Orwell mounted a one-man muckraking campaign against writers of the Left who had taken leave of their senses. Let the Right look after themselves.

"Sometimes," Orwell wrote, "I look at a socialist, the intellectual, tract-writing type of socialist with his pull-over, his fuzzy hair and his Marxian quotations, and wonder what the devil his motive really is. It is often difficult to believe that it is a love of anybody, especially of the working class from whom he is of all people the furthest removed. The underlying motive of many socialists, I believe, is simply a hypertrophied sense of order. The present state of affairs offends them not because it causes misery, still less because it makes freedom impossible, but because it is untidy; what they desire basically is to reduce the world to something resembling a chess board." The fatal error, the one unforgivable sin, committed by the political writer is the imposition of order where there is no order, the subordination of life to an idea or an ideology. Orwell's political writings teem with life, they are com-
posed of moments celebrating the fragility and ambiguities of human existence.

George Orwell's most notable claim upon us is less as a novelist than as a political reporter, who by example set the standards for political reporting in the thirties and forties. What gave his work its edge was the struggle within between his ambivalence toward a receding past in constant need of re-creation and an anguished search for new loyalties in a fast changing world. English society before the First World War could never have inspired as bleak a vision, almost utterly devoid of humanity, as 1984.

The betrayal of the reporter in Orwell came later, with the publication of Animal Farm, in which he tried, he says, "with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole." Of course contingency and human complexity—in a word, politics—was the sacrifice, to both artistic and political "purpose." With that work, and later on with 1984, Orwell abandoned political reporting for the chessboard he had earlier thought contemptible and dangerous.

Now that he was in the solace business he became for the first time enormously popular, especially in America fully engaged in the cold war. No more reporting, but prophecy; no more outrageous criticism of the sort that thrusts men back upon themselves and gives them no peace. Evil was located in the propaganda mills and torture chambers of the Kremlin. Two decades of ethical slumber in America and the dreams of the self-righteous find the same encouragement in Orwell's last books as in the oratory of Churchill.

Still, a comparison of George Orwell with most other English literary-political figures of the thirties is all in his favor. In the words he used to conclude his famous, and irreverent, essay on Gandhi: "how clean a smell he has managed to leave behind!"

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JUDAISM Quarterly is published by the American Jewish Congress
15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028
Annual Subscription $8.00

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Briefly Noted

Hammarskjold
by Brian Urquhart
(Knopf; 630 pp.; $12.50)

An official, but not uncritical, biography of the U.N. Secretary-General. Urquhart worked closely with Hammarskjold and was given access to his private papers. His approach is sympathetic, sometimes almost reverential, yet he recognizes that Hammarskjold’s mistakes contributed, at least in small part, to some of the subsequent disappointments of the promise of the U.N. in peacemaking and peacekeeping. The book offers an almost day-by-day log of U.N. activities during the major crises of Hammarskjold’s years, notably the Suez and Congo operations. The value of the work is more in its narrative and information than in its analysis, although the reader can hardly help but come away with a reinforced appreciation of Hammarskjold’s personal courage and integrity and of their impact upon a U.N. structure that was notoriously vague in its conception until given definition by Hammarskjold’s positive action. The man and office were, more than is usually the case, inseparable, and Urquhart’s telling of the story suggests (although this was probably not his intention) that the office has yet to recover from the loss of the man. A source book of major importance to the student of the United Nations and of international affairs in general.

Beyond Cynicism
by David O. Woodyard
(Westminster; 112 pp.; $2.95 [paper])

The author writes “to articulate my faith in relation to a pervasive cynicism about the prospects of a new future. It seems an especially compelling time in which to affirm one’s belief in God and the church as they pertain to the prospects of social change.” The result is a popular and lucid introduction to some of the central themes of the theology of hope. Nothing terribly new perhaps, yet it is well told and once again proves to be always new in the telling.

The Renewal of American Catholicism
by David J. O’Brien
(Oxford; 302 pp.; $7.95)

Comparison with Garry Wills’s Bare Ruined Chariot is inevitable. O’Brien’s is the more solid, but by no means dull, survey of the field. Although lacking Wills’s scintillating language, O’Brien supplies a many-sided historical perspective absent from the more popular treatment. Nonetheless, the agreement is remarkable. Both agree that John Courtney Murray’s efforts to revise Catholic theory in a way appropriate to American pluralistic democracy could not survive the strains of the 1960’s. Both see the various manifestations of the “Catholic Left” as “beyond” Murray and as suggesting the “new directions” for American Catholicism. O’Brien is more of a “churchman” in the accepted sense but, at the same time, gives in to the temptation to dismiss the great bulk of empirical Catholicism (all those bishops, ethnics, new suburbanites, etc.) as being somehow irrelevant to the future of American Catholicism. O’Brien’s insights into the distinctively Catholic understanding of the American civil religion are of particular interest, and his revisionist treatment of personalities and debates surrounding the notion of “Americanization” is an important contribution. Of Father Charles Coughlin, of whom he is predictably critical on most scores, he writes: “He did more to popularize knowledge of the social encyclicals than all previous American spokesmen combined.” A thoughtful historical analysis, even if the book is finally disappointing in the bluntness of its cautiously tentative conclusions.

Invisible Immigrants:
The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants to 19th Century America
by Charlotte Erickson
(University of Miami Press; 531 pp.; $17.50)

Given the current interest in ethnic culture and history, it is certainly appropriate for Erickson (a lecturer in Economic History at the London School of Economics) to examine the experience of those immigrants who were “invisible” because language and culture made them comparatively indistinguishable from the American “mainstream.” Selecting letters from twenty-five immigrant families, Erickson is able to show the problems, the hopes and the anguish that have often been neglected in the history of immigration. But Erickson’s book, valuable as it is, is too limited in time. By the mid-nineteenth century the Scots and Scots-Irish were accepted by most Americans as no different from themselves and even—when the term came into vogue—as “Anglo-Saxons.” The Protestant Gaels became, in America, ethnically invisible in a way the English did not invisible to themselves. They paid a great, humanly painful price for that invisibility. Erickson’s study is a part of the story, but much of the saga remains to be written.

Ressentiment
by Max Scheler
(Schocken; 200 pp.; $2.95 [paper])

If it is true—and it seems to be the case—that the notions of equality and democracy are now being debated among intellectuals as they have not been for some decades, this new edition of Scheler’s 1912 polemic against such “bourgeois” notions has arrived just in time. Lewis Coser supplies the introduction; subsequent experiences of fascism, Stalinism and sundry irrationalities supply the filter through which the thoughtful reader will interpret Scheler’s condemnation of modernity and reason.