

and believing was not merely the rationalization of their economic situation, the superstructure of economic realities."

Hitler's enormous successes stemmed from "a conviction of German superiority, a conviction that he succeeded to impart to the minds of millions." Yet moral imperatives were what finally rallied opponents in Europe. "In 1940 the best did not lack all conviction, even when the worst may have been full of passionate intensity." Lukacs calls that thought "the lesson—perhaps the only inspiring lesson"—of the war.

Lukacs's ideas about the transcendancy of spirit are good, up to a point. He overdoes, I believe, censuring the Western Allies for lacking "the determination, or the

will, to invade Europe fast enough or wide enough." A cross-Channel invasion while the Germans and the Russians were still entangled far to the east probably would have foreclosed much misfortune, but want of will or determination was not really what prevented such a move onto the Continent in 1942 or 1943. The primary obstacles in those years to an amphibious operation of the scope and propulsion required to produce other than a debacle were a complex of obdurate material circumstances. The Normandy landings, coming only two and a half years after Pearl Harbor, were a prodigious achievement. To have tried sooner would have been to substitute imprudence for boldness. I do not know of a surer way of gumming up the conduct of war.

The Savage in Literature by Brian V. Street

(Routledge and Kegan Paul; 207 pp.; \$18.00)

Martin Green

English literature has been deeply concerned with empire for four centuries. As Anthony Burgess said the other day, the imperial adventure has been our one big subject. It is in many ways a misfortune that our most serious school of literary criticism (F.R. Leavis's) has found literary significance exclusively in a kind of moral realism associated with domestic and personal relations. One might say, paradoxically, that Jane Austen and George Eliot's subject matter was morally unrealistic in nineteenth-century England. But no one saw that. Mr. Street quotes the anthropologist Andrew Lang, who talked in 1891 of a new "exotic literature" whose writers "have at least seen new worlds for themselves; have gone out of the streets of the over-populated lands into the open air." Lang preferred these writers, but he saw their work as romance, as opposed to realism. In fact, however, out there in the open air the serious history of the times was being made. John Buchan and Rider Haggard were after all administrators of the empire; they knew what was going on; just as our contemporary thriller-writers, like Ian Fleming and Graham Greene—not to mention Howard Hunt—have worked in espionage. What we call romance is written by those who know how the world is run; what we call realism is written by those who don't; and the reason is that our sense of the

real cannot encompass the facts of our lives. That is one reason for looking again at the novel of adventure.

Within this subject Mr. Street chose a fascinating division—"the representation of primitive society in English fiction 1858-1920," to quote his subtitle. In fact, however, he largely confines himself to popular fiction, popular as opposed to serious, and makes very few references even to Conrad. One guesses that he was scared off by the problems of interpreting books that have been so portentously named and claimed by literary critics. That is a pity, for in fact writers such as Conrad and Wells answer to exactly the same analysis as do Buchan and Haggard and Kipling; and that fact is of great interest and importance to the theory of literature. However, that particular opportunity Mr. Street has left to others.

It is also too bad that he turned away from the exploration of the writers' political incentives. I do not, of course, imply that popular authors were in any sense hired to write books of adventure in promotion of British imperialism. They wrote spontaneously, but their spontaneity had a political bearing. Imperialism and its adventures were a pervasive excitement in the English air (how dead that air feels now without it), and writers naturally sought and found stories that answered to that theme.

The "ethnographic" novel is said to

start its popular career with G. A. Henty's *With Kitchener in the Sudan* (1874). But Mr. Street concerns himself instead with the influence of scientific (anthropological) ideas on that fiction, on the ground that those ideas were formed before the fever of political imperialism took hold. This too is a pity, because it involves defining politics and empire very narrowly. England had been in the grip of that excitement since Elizabeth's time, and those "scientific" ideas were another of its products, its formulas of faith. We need some terms that will subsume "politics" and "science." But the subject is so new and manifold that these blinkers Mr. Street put on himself perhaps helped him to make some sort of order.

He is most interesting, as one would expect, on Henry Rider Haggard and Edgar Rice Burroughs, the purveyors of scientific myths in popular form, the manipulators of science in justification of white supremacy. Kipling and John Buchan manipulated literature in a rather similar way, although Mr. Street is not interested in that. But I think a comparison and contrast is worth making. Let me give an example from Buchan, since Kipling's skills in this line are already well known. The hero of *Prester John* says of one of his escapes: "Behind me was heathendom and the black fever flats. In front were the cool mountains and the bright streams and the guns of my own folk." And he quotes: "Night's candles are burned out...." But besides Shakespeare, just count the echoes of Bunyan and the Bible, and the pictorial echoes of Scott and Borrow and a thousand nature writers, all invoked to give imperialism its literary legitimacy, its Englishness, its cultural inevitability. Then Mr. Street is

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also interesting on Ballantyne's *Coral Island* and Wallace's *Sanders of the River* and Doyle's *The Lost World*, and all those best-sellers of yesteryear, still much in demand at British public libraries, he tells us.

These were on the whole boys' books, but they are the ones that most deserve study from a cultural point of view. The ideas of Western man, after all, are not Aristotle or Plato, but cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers, pirates. And at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in England, a number of gifted writers (Kipling, Stevenson, Buchan) devoted themselves to this genre. This is the justification for the time limitation Mr. Street puts on his subject, though, since this is essentially a literary condition (referring to the quality of the writing), that condition should have been explored theoretically. I mean that there was plenty of such writing before and after these dates, only less interesting from a literary point of view, and our choosing to concentrate on these books implies that literary quality bears on cultural value in the anthropological sense.

The phenomenon of boys' literature (girls read it, but it was not written for them) was of course linked to the phenomenon of the public schools. Those schools trained the administrators of the empire, and so they welcomed books like Henty's and Kipling's. Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, we are told, was read aloud in public school classrooms. And there were massive efforts, at the beginning of the twentieth century, to spread the public school style and its virtues down through the nation, as a national system of secondary education was constructed. But by 1918 the intellectual mood of the country had turned against that; the new currents of opinion and feeling were hostile to public school imperialism. The conflict between the two intentions explains much of the sullen class hostility of modern England, and since literary criticism was one of the places where the anti-imperialist mood established itself, this "boys' literature" is something very hard to handle from a literary point of view. We have all of us a strong prejudice against it, below the level of consciousness.

Mr. Street, having an "anthropological" perspective, claims value-neutrality. But his tone slips into satire

quite often, and occasionally into moral rebuke; telling us, after citing some gross cultural chauvinism, that an anthropologist, or "a more sensitive novelist," would not have failed to see that "the British were no better than the natives," or would have "questioned British assumptions." But this is all a question of what you are sensitive to. Indeed, the mythologists of empire were not blindly chauvinistic. They constantly reminded their readers that British superiority was a matter of luck and the cycles of history—the Wheel of Fortune—and rarely attributed even British character to anything but particular institutions and the circumstances that promoted them. It was the moral lesson they drew from this perception that distinguished them from the "more sensitive novelists"—the political and economic policies they recommended in consequence of what they saw.

What makes these writers unacceptable is the alliance they chose to make within British culture. They chose to serve the imperialist interest, whereas men of letters as a whole chose to serve the opposition. There is a real moral difference here, but it is not indicated by the word "serve." The critics and novelists of socialism have served *that* interest, and have been just as ignominious in their imaginative relation to their ideas. Their moral superiority lies wholly in having chosen the right side to be on.

Within the literary world that party unanimity amounts to a kind of self-righteousness, so that one is glad to hear the other voices occasionally. (Of course, if *they* had established themselves as the party of righteousness, that would have been much worse.) But because literature did belong to the man of conscience, even before and during the period of the imperialist novel, even gifted writers like Kipling are very uneasy with literary forms like the novel. They felt themselves on enemy territory as writers, and that inhibited and distorted their imaginative development. So they *are*, in certain ways, just bad writers in the long run; they do write worse than those in the Great Tradition. For instance, Kipling ended up a worse novelist than Conrad, even though (I think) more talented to begin with, because his refusal of moral seriousness (of the literary kind) made him a rebel, a show-off, a stuntman.

To return to Mr. Street, my main criticism of his book is that it does not even allude to certain larger perspectives in which he might have set his subject. For instance, there is the imperialist literature of America in the same period, from Cooper to Faulkner; there are the disguised forms of the imperialist sensibility, in the historical and the humorous novel; and, even within overtly imperialist British fiction, one needs to set the 1858-1920 period in temporal perspective. *Coral*

Island, for instance, borrows heavily from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and is in turn borrowed from by William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Those three books contain within them the history of the imperialist sentiment in England. To take another example, Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* repeats much of Defoe's *Captain Singleton*, and is repeated in modern inverted form by some of Paul Theroux's novels appearing today. For we are still brooding over that subject.

Economists at Bay: Why the Experts Will Never Solve Your Problems

by Robert Lekachman

(McGraw Hill; 311 pp.; \$8.95)

Paul Heyne

"When one economist told an audience in passing that he wondered why anyone bothered to listen to economists any more, the *New York Times* featured the comment as the Quotation of the Day, an honor that the economist had never been granted for anything else he might have said that was a trifle more respectful to his colleagues' pretensions." Lekachman relates this story on page 4 and reveals in a footnote that he was the economist who made the comment, at a February, 1975, conference on full employment. There's nothing surprising about that; free-swinging criticism of a profession by one of its members is far more likely to make the news than praise or judicious criticism. It is also more likely to result in a marketable book. It is not likely, however, to induce self-critical reflection within the profession being attacked or to help the lay public evaluate the profession's contributions to public life.

The theme of this book, according to Lekachman, is that "standard economics" starts from a perspective which, "whatever once may have been its congruence to the realities of capitalism, now is outmoded by changes in behavior, economic institutions, and power relationships within domestic boundaries and among nations." For purposes of argument let us assume that his thesis is correct. The question then arises: Why do so many intelligent,

highly trained people continue to employ an obsolete perspective? It cannot be that they have encountered no criticism of their approach, since criticisms along the lines of Lekachman's are regularly published, read at professional meetings, discussed among graduate students, and even summarized in introductory textbooks.

Lekachman makes no real attempt to answer that question, despite the sixty-five pages in his chapter on "The Socialization of Economists." The reader emerges from the chapter knowing that Lekachman dislikes market capitalism, pretensions of value neutrality on the part of social scientists, inequalities in the distribution of income, Richard Nixon, esoteric exercises in analytic technique, the deification of gross national product, large business corporations, and "politics in a plutocracy." But the reader will find no answer to the crucial question: How has the socialization of economists prevented the vast majority of them from recognizing the distorting and limiting effects of thought within which they work?

But is Lekachman serious? Or is he merely capitalizing on the rule for success taught him by his experience with the *New York Times*? Would a responsible treatment of his theme wait until page 104 to inform the reader (and then only in a footnote) that the author has

CHINA AS A MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

by Al Imfeld

The real Chinese revolution lies in the fact that this nation, with a population four times as large as the U.S., put agriculture before industrialization, turned inward to find identity and inspiration, and placed faith in the masses of its people rather than on social planners and savants. China's impressive accomplishments make her a point of reference for most of the one hundred other developing nations which can point to far less despite massive help from West and East. It is in this context that Imfeld quotes Maxwell's dictum that "China is more important to the world as an idea than as a place." As a consequence, this highly readable work by a priest-sociologist fills a real need.

Al Imfeld, a Roman Catholic priest, is a member of the Bethlehem Fathers, a Swiss missionary society. He is Director of the Third World Information Service in Berne and edits two monthly journals. He holds graduate degrees from the Gregorian (theology), Fordham (sociology) and Northwestern (journalism).

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