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ume biography of Jefferson is taken to be more "definitive" than a one volume biography, and a 700 page book on Whitman, despite its failure to provide an original paragraph on the poetry, must be praised on the ground that it is "useful." Useful for what? We are never told.

Like a compulsive housewife storing old clothes in the attic, many—though not, to be sure, the best—of the American Studiers are busily at work these days in piling up barely relevant chronicles and not very significant materials about the American past. Implicit in this work is the notion that just because something happened in this country it merits, if not celebration, then at least investigation. At this very moment, for example, someone is surely writing a history of the American pumpkin from 1640 to 1950 in which a sub-section will be devoted to Whittaker Chambers.

Whether Mr. Rideout's book was actually done as part of the American Studies program I do not know, but it thoroughly partakes of the spirit I have (a bit unfairly) described. And the pity of it is that, given the relative novelty of his subject, there was no pressing need, other than the tradition of American academicism, for treating it as an occasion to collect a few more dusty souvenirs.

3) In the end one wonders why did Mr. Rideout write this book at all? It breathes no sense of urgency, it communicates nothing of the pleasures or pains of historical involvement, it proposes no conclusions that bear upon our intellectual life. From this book one could never learn that the novels which he catalogues—and if they have any claim upon our memory, it is mostly this—were related to a human effort in which people felt deeply, to which they gave their energies and hopes, for which they committed acts of selfless purity and desperate immorality. Here we find not a problem of commitment and belief that can exalt and debase men, but a topic, like Pantheism in Whitman or Sin in Hawthorne.

BECAUSE he refrains on principle from involving himself with his subject and regularly assumes the decent grey-upon-grey tone of academic liberalism, Mr. Rideout communicates very little of the living urgency of the literary move-

ments he describes. He recognizes distinctions among the literary radicals of the thirties, but does not really explore or penetrate these distinctions, so that the growth of the anti-Stalinist left among the intellectuals, surely an important force in shaping the literature of the last two decades and one of the more honorable episodes in our intellectual life, receives almost no attention.

Is it to this, one finally wonders, that history must level experience? Leafing through Mr. Rideout's pages, I suddenly find myself remembering the excitement I felt in 1936 when, as a boy recently caught up in politics, I read the first issue of the anti-Stalinist *Partisan*

Review. Today such a response might seem comic to bright young men resting on the notions of the moment, but then the magazine stirred many young people because it seemed to provide a chance for an intelligent, free and undogmatic cultural radicalism in this country. What it all came to is another matter; I ask not for tenderness of judgment, only for a recognition of the vibrancy of experience.

Perhaps all this is a little unfair, a subjective reaction to a modest and scrupulous book. But it is not easy to watch quietly as the passions of one generation become the dissertations of the next.

## A Cultivable Art

by Henry A. Davidson

FOR all their 19th Century flavor, Darwin, Marx, and Freud still dominate our culture. In common, they teach a doctrine of competition and hostility. Darwin saw man as the end product of a ruthless "survival of the fittest" formula. Marx saw society as

spiritual love. Most scientifically oriented people rejected this as sentimental nonsense. The biological view of love (with its scholarly supporters running

*The Art of Loving*, by Erich Fromm (Harper; \$2.75).

iron-ribbed, bloody class-war. Freud thought that the strongest part of the mind was a seething cauldron of powerfully repressed hostility, terror, and aggression. Thus the three giants of their age sized man up as inherently competitive and relentlessly hostile.

On the other hand, they all recognized the existence of brotherly love. To Marx, this was a class united in death struggle against another class, each group a belligerent brotherhood of its own. Darwin saw it as a ganging up of one species against another. Freud thought that the original dynamo of all love was sexual—and that this, in turn, was biologically or biochemically produced. He explained brotherly love as a diluted erotic love, a sublimated sexual drive.

In the early 20th Century, opposition to this harsh view came chiefly from religious people. They argued that the spiritual was primary, and that a "true" erotic love was simply a special form of

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the spectrum from Watson to Kinsey) was the only one which "rational" people would accept. Supporters of the competitive principle included both wings of economic policy, as well as nearly all classes of scientists. On the right wing, those who liked a laissez-faire economy argued that competition was a law of human nature, and that they were morally entitled to keep all their hard-won gains, with no duty to contribute through income tax or otherwise to the welfare of the losers in the economic derby. For them, "love thy neighbor" was strictly Sunday School stuff. At the other pole, the left wingers argued that an iron law made our system inevitably competitive, and that only through destruction of the "ruling classes" would the situation be changed. Communists have always been cynical about the gentler emotions. Communism's current motherland does not seem to be a place where love and tenderness are king.

As the first half-century drew to a close, the tide shifted. Maybe it was the realization of the physicists that they didn't know all the answers—or the sickening potential of the atom bomb—or the growing awareness of our absolute interdependence. At any rate, from the anthropologist, the psychologist, the physicist, and the economist, came the suggestion that our culture is co-operative as well as competitive. The first law of life, indeed, is not competition;

it is collaboration. The infant would die without help. Every cell in your body would die unless it united with other cells to form tissues. Tissues function only in collaboration to form organs. The only competitive operation in internal physiology is cancer, where malignant cells compete with, and eventually sap vitality from, healthy cells. The tough people who want to teach their children that life is ruggedly competitive are always invoking "realism." But if competitiveness is one of the facts of life, so is collaboration. To accept the need for co-operation is also being "realistic."

ERICH FROMM now offers a book which sees "love" as a sense of oneness with others, responsibility for them, concern for them. It is the only mature passion. It is a cultivable art, and not something you happily fall into. Fromm rejects Freud's thesis that sexuality is the core of love. Sexual happiness is a fine by-product of love, but is not the cause of love, nor a condition necessary for love. As Fromm sees it, the typical love is brotherly or neighborly love. That is, love is caring for others. Add this to eroticism and you get a full-blown sexual love. Subtract "love" from a responsibility relationship and you get possessiveness. Subtract it from a sexual relationship and you get strangeness and even hatred between the partners.

Fromm believes that the "tender-

ness" component in love comes from a brotherly relationship. Most neo-Freudians would ascribe it to a mother-child relationship. At any rate, tenderness is not inherent in an erotic relationship. As Fromm points out, the "relief from tension" were the major factor in "love," then masturbation would be the ideal form of sexual expression.

FROMM makes an ingenious distinction between two ways of relieving anxiety by communion with others. One is orgiastic, and the other is conformity to the mores. Orgies include drug-induced trances, sexual orgasms, and various types of hypnotic or self-induced intense excitements. These are most effective when shared. Losing oneself in a group by conformity is calm, persistent, and requires the services of only part of the personality, leaving the other part free to dream non-conformity. An orgiastic union with others is, by contrast, temporary, periodic, violent, and involves the total mind-body unit. Love, suggests Fromm, is not a relationship but a character trait, i.e., an ability tenderly to identify your interests with those of others. Love may be motherly, fatherly, brotherly, erotic, or self-oriented. It may be a love of God, however God is defined. Fromm discusses the characteristics of each of these types of love.

He concludes with a complaint that our society is so organized that love cannot be the norm. Society punishes those who lose the competitive struggle because they love their fellow men. Under such conditions, people truly capable of love are exceptions. But he hopes society can be organized to make man central, so that love for fellow-men becomes a universal way of life. The blueprint for this change is not included, but presumably it lies within the power of the mind that cracked the secrets of the atom to effect such changes in social organization.

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### Notes on Contributors

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