

measure of O'Hara's limitations as a novelist. Unable to give any significance to events, unable to recreate experience, he issues external descriptions followed by series of "facts." The result is profoundly dull; after a characteristic listing of informative notes, one expects something more—some dimension of meaning. It never comes. Ultimately the details themselves become ludicrous—as when one asks an individual the time and he replies: "about twenty-eight and one-half minutes past three." When this mental set becomes predominant in a novel, under the illusion that what is being

produced is "real," the result is altogether inadequate, both as art and as realism.

In *Ten North Frederick* John O'Hara has produced journalistic fiction without the social insight of Dreiser or the lyric sensitivity of Hemingway, and achieves documentary effects only with considerable strain. Rhetoric—even bloated rhetoric—is preferable to this plodding, dull man with the hard-boiled posture who does nothing with words, thinks in clichés, and speaks—in crude asides that break into the narrative—as pompously as any Babbitt.

## Victoria's Gentleman

**THACKERAY: THE USES OF ADVERSITY.** By Gordon N. Ray. McGraw-Hill. \$7.

By Jacob Korg

IN ACCORDANCE with his wishes, no biography of Thackeray was undertaken for many years after he died. One critic, observing that the great author's acquaintances were disappearing, lamented the fact that the chance of an authoritative Thackeray biography was dying with them. But it is hard to believe that even his intimate friends could have known as much about Thackeray as this biography reveals. He lived at a time when nearly every fact worth knowing about the private lives of educated people found its way into a letter or a diary. Gordon Ray, who has collected manuscripts by, and about Thackeray for many years, has drawn his extremely detailed information from a large quantity of these first-hand sources.

*Thackeray: The Uses of Adversity* is the first installment of a massive two-volume work, it follows the novelist's development up to the time of *Vanity Fair*. It sees the first part of Thackeray's life as a *Bildungsroman* whose hero's character is gradually formed by his experiences. With the sensitiveness to atmosphere and personality which only an expert knowledge of a period can give, Professor Ray succeeds admirably in tracing the effects of Thackeray's various environments upon him.

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Charterhouse School taught him to value the virtues of upper-class society and frustrated his first attempts to distinguish himself intellectually. At Cambridge he won his first honors as a parodist and acquired a taste for lively and expensive idleness. The fortune he expected to inherit melted away just before he came of age; ever afterward he remained interested in the problem of people who, like himself, happened not to possess the wealth they were well qualified to enjoy.

FAILURE at college, poverty, the insanity of his wife and the comparative degradation of having to scrape together a living as a comic journalist did not crush Thackeray. On the contrary, he remained master of a really astonishing abundance of facetious humor, and became one of *Punch's* most valuable early contributors. However, these experiences did deepen and mellow his view of life, preparing him for the task of writing *Vanity Fair*.

## The Orbits Around Freud

**SCHOOLS OF PSYCHOANALYTIC THOUGHT.** By Ruth L. Munroe. The Dryden Press. \$7.50. **THE SANE SOCIETY.** By Erich Fromm. Rinehart and Company. \$5.

By Waldo Frank

Miss Munroe writes: "I am a psychologist, writing . . . for fellow psychologists, for social workers, for social scientists in variety, for doc-

Neither Matthew Arnold nor F. R. Leavis rank Thackeray as a great novelist, and he is, of all the important Victorians, the most difficult for modern readers to accept as a major artist. Perhaps the reason for this is his whole-hearted attachment to what now seems a merely contemporary social code.

Unlike Jane Austen and Henry James, who were aware of the psychological dimensions behind social behavior, Thackeray was content to describe social behavior with masterly authenticity and leave it to speak for itself. There is no doubt that he spoke with overwhelming force to a public that accepted the code of the gentleman as a living ideal, believed in the supreme value of the "domestic affections" and concerned itself with social proprieties and class distinctions. But to the modern eye his novels often seem to deal with matters of form or decorum rather than with real issues.

Professor Ray has no doubt of Thackeray's greatness, though he acknowledges that it is not the fashionable kind, but he has reserved his general critical interpretation for the next volume. The discussion of *Vanity Fair* which closes this one is a scholarly account of its contemporary importance. Thackeray's masterpiece, it is pointed out, transformed Victorian fiction; it shattered burdensome conventions, established realism as the dominant mode of the English novel and embodied, in its balanced structure, a distinction between the incidental and the essential in the Victorian ideal of the gentleman. All this, says the author, made Thackeray's greatest novel "quite as revolutionary a book in the development of Victorian fiction as *Ulysses* has proved to be in the development of modern fiction."

tors whose work lies outside the realm of mental disorder, for laymen with the patience to follow a lengthy, semi-technical account of ideas they hear about frequently. . . ." The highest praise she could win, and has earned, is the fact that she has succeeded. Here, in clear, conscientious, objective form, is a progressive ana-

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lytical description of the thought which has proliferated since Freud opened a new world to man's mind, sixty years ago. But Dr. Munroe is too wise to reach for the will-o'-the-wisp of absolute objectivity and impartiality. At the close of each chapter, differentiated from the text by double columns, she places what she calls "critical comment"; and here she reveals her own judgments which are remarkable for perspicuity and tolerance of positions other than her own.

After a general "Overview" which discusses the basic concepts of psychoanalysis, determinism, the unconscious and the genetic approach she proceeds to Freud and the Freudians (her own territory). Next come Adler, Horney, Fromm and Sullivan. Finally, Jung and Otto Rank. Perhaps she is unfair to Jung, but for a good reason, since she discusses him essentially as a psychologist, whereas Jung's importance rests rather in the fields of psychic paleontology and epistemology—realms in which the Freudians have too timidly followed him. On the other hand, she has done much-needed justice to Rank, whose great contribution is his unitary concept of self and of will, based firmly on German philosophy (particularly Schopenhauer)—a synthetic approach which Freud's positivism precluded. The reader who seeks a general view of this vast and still pristine field of human knowledge, and who is ready to read 600 pages of sober and sound prose, cannot err in procuring Dr. Munroe's volume.

DR. FROMM has long been distinguished among the leading psychoanalysts by his dynamic and critical approach to our Western society and by his defense of the neurotic's discrepancy from a social order in which alienation of the human has become axiomatic. In a sense, Fromm is the analyst par excellence of our cultural neurosis. In this book, he becomes openly—one might say passionately—the social critic. And in an epoch which takes seriously the masked complacencies of David Riesman, dished up in pedantic and not remotely original terms, a book such as this is doubly welcome. Fromm's critique of the capitalist ethos is courageous and keen. He leads constantly to the frontiers of that basic metaphysical view of

man's nature which alone can validate a positive methodology. And as constantly, he draws back, failing to take the step across the frontiers which would make his contribution really creative. At the end, he falls into exhortation. As when he says:

"... we can unite in firm negation of idolatry and find perhaps more of a common faith in this negation than in any affirmative statements about God." But much eloquent analysis has led up to this anti-climax.

## Selected New Books

### Sociology

**SOCIETY.** By Robert Ezra Park. Free Press. \$5. The third and final volume of the collected papers of a pioneer American sociologist. Edited by his successors at the University of Chicago, the book comprises Park's more important articles and essays on collective behavior, news and opinion, and sociology and modern society. All twenty-one items are readable and most are still pertinent.

**SCIENCE AND SOCIAL ACTION.** By W. J. H. Sprott. The Free Press. \$3.50. The Josiah Mason Memorial Lectures delivered at the University of Birmingham in 1953. Using social action rather than social relations or society as the basic concept, Professor Sprott reviews theory, method and research findings, leaning heavily upon American sources. The lectures seldom go beyond the introductory sociology textbook level except in style.

**FLIGHT AND RESETTLEMENT** By H. B. M. Murphy and others. Unesco, Columbia. \$3.50. Thirteen specialists on population and migration discuss the problems of refugees and displaced persons since the end of World War II, with an unusual emphasis on mental health problems in forced migration.

**THE FEARS MEN LIVE BY.** By Selma Hirsh Harper. \$2.75. A popular summary of what social scientists think they have learned about prejudice, especially as manifested in the "authoritarian personality." Useful for those unable or unwilling to examine *Studies in Prejudices*, the five-volume source of most of the ideas and data.

**PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC-JEW.** By Will Herberg. Doubleday \$4. "An essay in American religious sociology." The author's thesis is that both the religiousness and secularism of the American people derive from virtually the same bases. He leans heavily on such sociological concepts as the "triple melting-pot" for his analysis of the major re-

ligious groups. Not as original a contribution as the author's earlier *Judaism and Modern Man*, but probably more readable.

**THE STRANGE CAREER OF JIM CROW.** By C. Vann Woodward. Oxford. \$2.50. An historian's short, plausible explanation of the not-so-distant origins and evolution of segregation and their impact on current race relations.

MILTON L. BARRON.

### Belle Lettres

**DANIEL DEFOE: A Study in Conflict.** By Brian FitzGerald. Regency. \$4. The author of Robinson Crusoe is described as a versatile and energetic man. He was a businessman, a diplomat, a courtier, a pioneer journalist and a humanitarian. Defoe was an advocate of the populace, and when he was pilloried for one of his pamphlets, the people of London cheered him, drank his health and hung the pillory with garlands. A scholarly and colorful biography.

**CREATION AND DISCOVERY.** Essays in Criticism and Aesthetics. By Elso Vivas. Noonday \$5. Typical of the philosophic problems treated in these absorbing essays is that of literature as knowledge. There is a paradox in the fact that literature deals with the world of objective fact, yet seems at the same time to establish a self-sufficient realm. Thus, it is both discovery and creation. Professor Vivas concludes that, although literature can convey knowledge, its more important role is that of organizing experience into coherent forms, thus serving as "one of the conditions of knowledge."

**JAMES JOYCE AND THE COMMON READER.** By William Powell Jones. Oklahoma. \$3. Intended as a guide for the uninitiated, this volume offers summaries and explanations of most of Joyce's works. Although it makes use of previous studies of Joyce, it does not pretend to give more than a simple treatment of a complicated author.

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