

## Books Encountered

**David Mamet.** By C. W. E. BIGSBY. Methuen, £3.50.

A very alert and informed addition to the *Contemporary Writers* series, this essentially places the author of *Glengarry, Glen Ross* in the Dos Passos/Arthur Miller/John Updike tradition of affirming American values by exposing their misapplication.

**Television Today and Tomorrow: Wall-to-Wall Dallas?** By CHRISTOPHER DUNKLEY. Penguin, £2.95.

Excellent diagnosis, but weaker prognosis, of increasingly Reithless British TV, beset by cable, satellite, and video recording, and liable to succumb to mass tastes. No mention of how Europe might collectively resist.

**The Inner I: British Literary Autobiography of the Twentieth Century.** By BRIAN FINNEY. Faber, £14.95.

Sensitive, subtle, only occasionally pedestrian study of private v. public selves, from W. H. Davies to John Osborne, by the author of the best book so far on Christopher Isherwood, who also figures here.

**Commonplace Book.** By E. M. FORSTER. Edited by PHILIP GARDNER. Scolar Press, £25.

Fascinating, unbuttoned readings-plus-musings, 1925-68, amounting to a Portrait of the Artist as a Senior Citizen. Impeccably edited, triumphantly bookish, it whets the appetite for its slimmer unpublished companion, Forster's 1909-1967 diary.

**Novelists in Interview.** By JOHN HAFFENDEN. Methuen, £12.95, paper £4.95.

*Paris Review* style interviews with 14 writers from Martin Amis to Fay Weldon: the major figures include William Golding, Iris Murdoch, and V. S. Pritchett. Haffenden is more literary than the *Paris Review* reviewers—there's less about longhand and desk-lamps, more about intention and art.

**The New Review Anthology.** Edited by IAN HAMILTON. Heinemann, £12.95.

An outstanding collection of stories, poems, and articles from the five years and fifty issues of *The New Review* (1974-79), crammed with ENCOUNTER contributors and a worthy memorial to the Arts Council's patronage of literature.

**More Letters of Oscar Wilde.** Edited by RUPERT HART-DAVIS. John Murray, £12.50.

*Le poète n'est point fait de ses lettres*, as Claudel so nearly put it. Wilde saved his best remarks for the stage and the table; but Sir Rupert's diligence and skill have assembled further revealing glimpses of the dandy in his dressing-room, the grease-paint only half-applied.

**Günter Grass.** By RONALD HAYMAN. Methuen, £2.25.

Another Contemporary Writer, this time deftly placed in German tradition, with aptly harsh chapter-titles—"Disinfectant literature", "Floundering"—and a just assessment of the later works, minor compared to *The Tin Drum*.

**My Life in the Silver Screen.** By GERALD KAUFMAN. Faber, £9.95.

Amusing, slightly orotund memoirs of a movie fan, at present Britain's Shadow Home Secretary. His memory, or his filing system, is phenomenal, his taste unashamedly quirky, his mock naivety a bit of a strain.

**Rebel: The Short Life of Esmond Romilly.** By KEVIN INGRAM. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.95.

Nephew of Winston Churchill, Spanish Civil War volunteer, husband of Jessica Mitford, and killed at the age of 23 in the Royal Canadian Air Force, Romilly was the archetypal member of the Hons and Rebels. A chilling life that gives you all the facts.

**Orson Welles: A Biography.** By BARBARA LEAMING. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

With interspersed comments from its subject and assiduous quarrying of other people's memories, this is a bustling affair, verging on the Orson Welles chat show. Good on acting and the theatre, but over-obsessed by the love-life and flimsy on the films.

**The Hogarth Letters.** Introduced by HERMIONE LEE. Chatto & Windus, £9.95.

Twelve open letters commissioned by the Woolfs in 1931-32, from E. M. Forster, Rosamond Lehmann, Rebecca West, Hugh Walpole, etc. Mrs Woolf's "A Letter to a Young Poet" survives best; Walpole's, to a Modern Novelist, worst.

**Through Brown Eyes.** By PRAFULLA MOHANTI. Oxford University Press, £9.50.

Sharp, hypnotic, lethally deadpan view of Britain by an Indian architect, painter, and teacher of dance and yoga. "When I first arrived, London was a safe place to live in. Gradually, violence had become a natural part of life."

**Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman.** By NANCY B. REICH. Gollancz, £15.95.

Meticulous study, partly based on new material, of the troubled prodigy who combined so many roles: concert artist, teacher, mother, wife and protector of Robert Schumann, rebellious daughter but disciple of Friedrich Wieck—a Suzuki method teacher before his time.

**Paths from a White Horse: A Writer's Memoir.** By PETER VANSITTART. Quartet Books, £11.95.

Startlingly original, precariously bound, microscopically indexed reminiscences by a skillful, profound, often erudite novelist. The book traces memories in coils and clusters, not chronological straight lines. "I am interested in figures in labyrinths." Few can paint such vivid Lascaux murals.

**Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form.** By MARINA WARNER. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.95.

Another labyrinthine exploration, invoking many periods and most of the arts, and revealing with wit and learning how women's bodies have been used as symbols—prurient, patriotic, noble, sappy, terrifying, tender, creative. Sumptuous, sometimes comic illustrations; no feminist (or anti-feminist) cant.

**Ted Hughes.** By THOMAS WEST. Methuen, £2.75.

More densely written than the other *Contemporary Writers* essays noticed here, this distinguishes convincingly the two "voices" in Hughes's work: the "ordinary man" and the visionary. It leaves open whether a third—the Laureate's—will arise from the assurance of *River* (1984).

**Postscript: The Courtship of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett** by Daniel Karlin (Oxford University Press, £12.95), is mildly, not "wildly" revisionist as I inadvertently said last month.

R.M.

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# AUTHORS & CRITICS

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## Orwell & Tribune

By T. R. Fyvel



IT IS USEFUL that Leo Labeledz prefaced his "Will George Orwell Survive 1984?" (ENCOUNTER, June, July-August 1984) with a quotation from Malcolm Muggeridge saying "How fascinating to live long enough to meet one's own world as history and to find it barely recognisable"—because not only the Orwellism he castigates but Mr Labeledz's own article underlines Muggeridge's point.

I can go along with Mr Labeledz in what he says about Raymond Williams' pretty awful book about Orwell and even in a few of his points against Bernard Crick. But when Mr Labeledz writes about Orwell's relations with

*Tribune* from 1943 to 1948, his picture bears little resemblance to my own fairly clear memories of my time as Orwell's successor as literary editor and general writer on *Tribune*. Indeed, Mr Labeledz reinforces for me the whole danger of rewriting history on the basis of quotations inevitably taken out of the context of their own time and place.

Mr Labeledz makes much, for instance, of Orwell's annoyance around 1947 over *Tribune's* apparently lenient treatment of that well-known Communist fellow-traveller, Konni Zilliacus. I can here tell Mr Labeledz that I myself was the culprit. When a new book by Zilliacus passed across my desk, I told our acting editor, Evelyn Anderson, that I wanted to write a piece about it which should be ironical but also gentle.

WE RECORD with much sadness the death of T. R. Fyvel, in the south of France, at the age of 78. He was, in the year 1953, one of the "founding fathers" (with Fredric Warburg, our first publisher) of ENCOUNTER; and for over three decades he remained a regular contributor to these pages and a steadfast friend in many crises. His was a liberal and humane mind, cosmopolitan, endlessly curious and inquiring, and rarely without a quizzical note of scepticism. His most characteristic intellectual mode was a slight smile, a short laugh, and a firm reply to a question with yet another question. This article is, regrettably, Tosco's last "dissenting opinion." On p. 76 we publish a personal appreciation by his friend PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE.

Why? asked Mrs Anderson. Well, I said, during the War I had in my psychological warfare work sometimes used this technique, and it would be interesting to see what might happen—some readers might write in in protest; Zilliacus might reply; a stir might be created.

Very reluctantly, as I recall, Mrs Anderson agreed; but the faint fell flat. No one wrote in, except that a stern missive over our failure to expose Konni Zilliacus came from George Orwell on Jura. Later—much later—I had a chance to explain the matter to Orwell, who thought it not a good joke; nor (by this time) did I. But I never could imagine that the matter would be cited some forty years on as political evidence in a journal like ENCOUNTER.

Mr Labeledz cites Orwell's 1947 critique of *Tribune's* anti-American tone, but here again the facts need to be known. True, in a letter of 1948 (from Jura) Orwell actually wrote that "the evil genius of *Tribune* is Crossman, who influences it through Foot and Fyvel." In his isolation, however, Orwell was wrong. Crossman had nothing to do with *Tribune*. Michael Foot was busy at Westminster; I myself wrote politically only about the Palestine conflict, and then on rather pro-American lines. The criticisms of US policy voiced in *Tribune* were focused mainly on the thorny question of West German rearmament and they were formulated by Evelyn Anderson with the guidance of Richard Lowenthal, later to become the famous professor in Berlin, but at the time contributing unsigned notes to *Tribune*.

I imagine that Mr Labeledz would agree that Mrs Anderson and Rix Lowenthal's credentials in being "realistic about the Soviet Union" were no less than his own. But they were also convinced Socialists, with strong sympathies for the newly reconstituted German Socialist party, the SPD. In line with the German Socialists, and with Aneurin Bevan's approval, Mrs Anderson and Rix Lowenthal opposed Chancellor Adenauer and the US policies in their support of German rearmament. In their opposition they perhaps sounded more anti-American than they should have done or, as Orwell thought, than they meant to do. I thought so, and Orwell said so.

AS WAS LATER SHOWN under the reigns of the German Socialist Chancellors, Brandt and Schmidt, given Soviet attitudes, German rearmament was probably inevitable—and yet, with Hitler only a few years gone, it was a question involving traumatic heart-searching. The point is that in their arguments against rearmament Evelyn Anderson and Rix