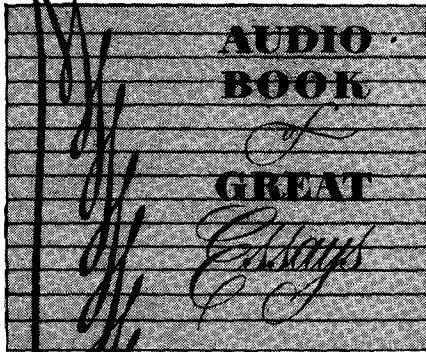


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Bruce is much more professional as a straight comic when he wants to be than any of his colleagues who specialize in topical satire. Bruce has no equal in such set pieces as a re-creation of an old prison movie with Nat Pendleton and Barton MacLane or a devastatingly accurate odyssey of a Copacabana comic who wants to play a "class" house such as the Palladium in London, and "bombs" abysmally. Bruce knows show business so intimately that his rundown of a Palladium rehearsal is as precisely detailed as a Dreiser description of how a factory operates.

Bruce uses his considerable comic talent, he points out, "to say as much as I can get away with and still make the audience laugh." In his most coruscating monologues, one of his methods might be termed verbal sleight of hand. By stringing to-

gether enough Yiddish firecrackers, jazz jargon, advanced Broadwayese, and such bits as the dissection of old movies, he reaches his audiences with his more serious assaults before they are quite aware that they themselves are also included among his targets.

Bruce is becoming increasingly successful. His three albums on the Fantasy label (*Interviews of Our Times*, *The Sick Humor of Lenny Bruce*, and *I Am Not a Nut, Elect Me*) sell consistently well. The question now is how far Bruce will go in further exposing his most enthusiastic audiences—the very same "first plateau liberals" he denounces—to themselves. He has only begun to operate on the ways many of them delude themselves in nearly everything from sex to a dependence on Milton ("I'm not putting you down for it, but you're junkies too").

BOOKS

Handbook for Presidents

DOUGLASS CATER

PRESIDENTIAL POWER: THE POLITICS OF LEADERSHIP, by Richard E. Neustadt. Wiley. \$5.95.

Amid the spate of books this year about would-be Presidents, it is not inappropriate that there should be a single small volume on the job of *being* President. Richard Neustadt, a former Truman assistant who now teaches at Columbia, describes the job as it looks to the man who holds it, not to those of us who merely observe from afar. He writes about Presidential power—how a President gets it and how he exercises it so he won't use it up.

This is, in a superior sense, a how-to-do-it book about a do-it-yourself job. The President of the United States is endowed by the Constitution with far greater responsibility than authority. He must start off by gathering the power necessary to make his office operable. He is like those high-titled functionaries whose first mandate is to raise their own salaries.

We often say that we have a gov-

ernment of "separated powers." What we really have, as Neustadt points out, are separated institutions *sharing* powers. As government has grown bigger and more complex, the sharing has increased apace. A President sits on top of this power structure. But his is a lonely seat. No one else in government views things from quite the same elevation. No one, even in the official family, is completely answerable to the man who sits there. Many who help plot the course of his administration are not answerable to him at all. Others have divided mandates or serve quite different constituencies. A strategically placed bureaucrat in the "Executive" departments can be as unmanageable as a recalcitrant committee chairman in Congress. At times a President must feel that he is operator of a Rube Goldberg contraption.

Neustadt is the first of the theoreticians to point out that the growth of the Presidential office has

not automatically brought with it a corresponding growth in the powers of the man. How can a President be something more than a clerk serving those who were meant to serve him? The "commands" that a President can give with reasonable expectation that they will be carried out are remarkably limited. Consider Truman's firing of MacArthur, his seizure of the steel mills, and Eisenhower's dispatch of troops to Little Rock. All three were self-executing in the sense that the President's order was obeyed. (The Supreme Court later reversed the steel-industry seizure.) But all three were clearly Presidential acts of last resort. Whatever their necessity, they represented failure rather than success for Presidential leadership. They constituted a severe drain on the President's power.

IN CONTRAST, Neustadt lists the political ingredients that went into making the Marshall Plan a successful venture in Presidential politics. Viewed in the context of the times—Truman being otherwise engaged in bitter warfare with the Republican Eightieth Congress—it was a near-miraculous venture. It required skillful use of Presidential power plus borrowing on the power and prestige of everyone else in sight. One wonders whether it would have been possible at all except for the exceptional cast of characters—General Marshall, Senator Vandenberg, Under Secretary Acheson, the Messrs. Bevin and Bidault, as well as Truman himself.

The way the Marshall Plan was launched served as a vivid illustration of a wistful remark Truman once made: "I sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them . . . That's all the powers of the President amount to." Of course, a President's "persuasion" can have more than ordinary force, but it depends entirely on what he contributes to it. Neustadt sums it up: "The essence of a President's persuasive task with congressmen and everybody else is to induce them to believe that what he wants of them is what their own appraisal of their own responsibilities requires them to do in their own interest, not his . . . that task is bound to

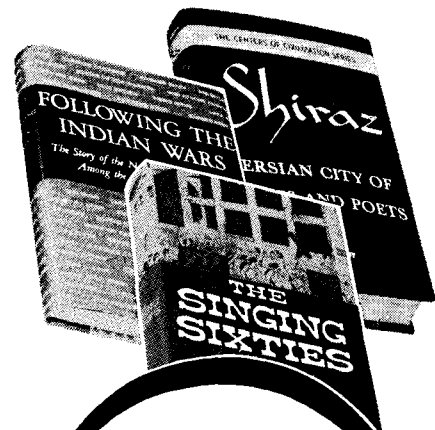
be more like collective bargaining than like a reasoned argument among philosopher kings."

This view runs directly counter to a widely held belief in the United States that were it not for folly or knavery a President would need no power other than the logic of his argument. It refutes a thesis advanced by our present President when he announced for a second term: that because there had been a "public clarification" of a number of the important issues during his first term, he could safely delegate them to close associates.

A President builds or tears down his power as he makes "choices" (a more precise word than "decisions")—his choice of words that will enlighten or befuddle at his press conferences, his choice of which fires he is going to put out first, even his choice of not choosing to make a difficult choice. Neustadt provides two case studies of Presidential choices that fell in this last category—when Truman allowed MacArthur to drive unrestrainedly beyond the 38th parallel in Korea and when Eisenhower permitted Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey to hold his "hair-curling" press conference on the budget. Both led to the undermining of Presidential power. "The lesson of these cases," Neustadt writes, "is that when it comes to power, nobody is expert but the President; if he, too, acts as layman, it goes hard with him."

Neustadt's thesis is that a President must make his choices with constant awareness of his personal stakes in terms of power. This awareness, he believes, Roosevelt had always, Truman sometimes, Eisenhower hardly ever.

IN THIS UNIQUE and important book, Neustadt argues with almost Machiavellian incisiveness that the princely states of American government can be made workable only by a shrewd and power-conscious President. The decade ahead will be comprised of a "snarly sort of politics" with unstable parties and unruly issues. "The issues of the Sixties will be fought out in a system that keeps Presidents uniquely placed and gives them no assurance of sustained support." The Presidency will be no place for political amateurs.



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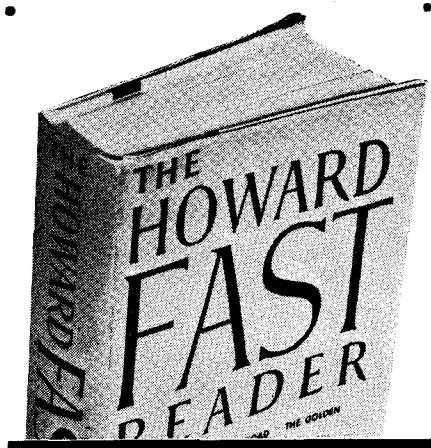
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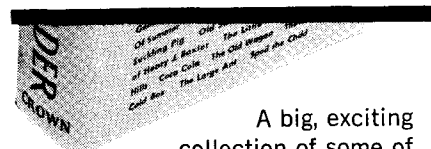
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OLD AUTHORS, Dept. RT-6, Rowan, Iowa

THE LETTERS AND JOURNALS OF JAMES FENIMORE COOPER. Edited by James F. Beard. 2 Vols. *The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press*. \$20.

When Cooper died in 1851, Melville said of him that "he was a great, robust-souled man, all of whose merits are not seen. . . . But a grateful posterity will take the best care of Fenimore Cooper." Seldom has a literary prophecy gone further awry.

Our trouble is that when we remember Cooper we do not recall the long and heroic career that stirred the imaginations of his contemporaries. We remember rather an image that was created long after Cooper's death by two brilliant writers who were interested more in asserting their own literary credos than in taking the best care of Fenimore Cooper. "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" is one of Mark Twain's most perfectly executed performances, at once marvelously funny and utterly devastating. Twain was out to destroy romanticism as a literary ideal, and his method of attack was to make its leading American practitioner into a laughingstock. D. H. Lawrence's chapters on Cooper in his *Studies in Classic American Literature* are the most compelling in a memorable book. By way of calling for a literature that would give expression to the "voice of the blood," Lawrence hailed Cooper for the unconscious genius of his mythmaking. What these two very different essays have in common is that they both deny that Cooper had a mind and that he practiced a conscious artistry.

TO SHOW us the grandeur and the complexity of Cooper's mind, to rid us of the brilliant misreadings of Twain and Lawrence, to bring us back into contact with an intellect and an imagination that America once worshiped—and despised—with a truly startling intensity, is the purpose of Mr. Beard's definitive edition of Cooper's letters and journals. Two volumes have just now been published, and we are promised two more; eventually, Mr. Beard will also publish a critical

biography of Cooper that will take into account not only the great array of his published work but many unpublished materials as well.

Like Jefferson, Cooper had the far-ranging intellectual tastes of the eighteenth-century mind. Books on politics, religion, agriculture, history, philosophy, and the law engaged him; he was widely read in English literature; his scholarly researches into the history of tariff restrictions, naval history, and Arctic exploration made him a recognized authority in these fields. The legend that Cooper began to write fiction more or less accidentally ignores the fact that he regarded his intellectual gifts as constituting a social obligation. He became a novelist because he believed that "books are, in great measure, the instruments of controlling the opinion of a nation like ours." Like Emerson, he wished to raise the moral and aesthetic quality of a democratic civilization by increasing the knowledge and refining the sensibilities of his audience.

By and large, the early Cooper was pleased with the nature of American society. All that needed to be done was for someone to "rouse the sleeping talents of the nation." The most fascinating thing about these two volumes of the letters—which follow Cooper's career up to the beginning of the second administration of Andrew Jackson—is their revelation of Cooper's gradual disenchantment with his early ideas and his reluctant recognition of the fact that the American dream was somehow turning into a nightmare. American institutions were the best in the world, yet day by day we were losing control of them through our failure to assume the moral responsibility required to maintain them. When Cooper began to speak his mind on the subject, he was greeted with the sort of public vilification that reminds one of the treatment accorded Lincoln during the Civil War.

One of the factors responsible for the wholesale assault upon him was that he sought no allies in his battle. With relentless honesty he attacked