

Strands in Society

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normal in early American social life.

That may be unclear, but the history of education in America is not. The frontiersman and the immigrant did not build the American common school. It was the product of humanitarian impulses, Christian duty, democratic insight, and the great tradition in European thinking that defines man as a rational creature. Such a conception places head over heart. At least, it urges men to be alert to reason and wary of impulse. Anything less is a conception of education unfit for the modern world. Presumably, as parts of these books suggest, something a lot less may be responsible for the nightmarish edges of the American dream.

BARK SKIRTS AND TOM-TOMS: One of the reasons why the legends of the American Indian are often difficult to put into writing is that in the languages and dialects of the tribes there are words for which no English equivalents exist. Moreover, when the stories are recorded verbatim, as in ethnological reports, they tend to become uninteresting. Written legends also tend to be static. Without oral and active dramatization they lose much of their importance, and some would need a great deal of physical and geographical explanation.

However, through her intimate knowledge of California Indians and their storytellers, Theodora Kroeber's selections in "The Inland Whale" (Indiana University Press, \$4.50) are told with such an admirable flow of narration and with such skill that the reader sees clearly each of the characters involved. We hear the rustle of bark skirts, shell ornaments, and the rush of the river. We see the Indians dance, and we hear the throbbing heartbeat of their drums. Although the author has deviated from the original Indian way of narration (which is often long and repetitious), the stories have lost none of their original charm.

The foreword by Oliver LaFarge, as well as the comments on the stories by Mrs. Kroeber, should, of course, not be overlooked. In the introduction Mrs. Kroeber says that "she is conscious of a staticness. . . ." I hope that she will forgive me for contradicting her. —ROBERT HOF SINDE.

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Five Laws

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or statements. Positive law is the product of official legislating bodies, and is based on the truth that there are some things so important to have done that men must be required to do them whether they privately approve or not. Positive law ought to guide and follow social law, while social law ought to sustain and transform positive law.

Laws of nature define intelligible links between the present and the relevant future. Men are subject not only to the laws common to all nature, but also to the qualifications of these laws brought on by the special conditions of associated living.

A Natural Law is any given law of nature which men have selected as defining the most desirable route for reaching the social good, as indicated by the common experience of a particular society. Thus a Natural Law is a law of nature that has been given the status of a norm by the social good. Positive law ought to, but often does not, conform to it.

Beyond the social good, which is limited to the experiences of particular societies, is the common human good, which demands that justice be done all man's potentialities. The common human good, like the social good, confers normative status upon various laws of nature. But it relates to human beings as parts of all mankind. Hence it transcends and measures social, positive, and Natural Law, and is the Law of Civilization.

The state is the instrument for carrying out concretely what Natural Law persistently but abstractly says ought to be done, although imperfect states instead accommodate social laws and enunciate positive laws which conflict with Natural Law.

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Other Americas

Continued from page 17

poet, thrilling in the sonorous Whitmanesque rhythms of his hymns to alienation, and most penetrating in his prose explorations of the Mexican psyche. Like Orozco (and perhaps every truly great tragic poet), Paz manages to give an heroic tone to the most desperate of statements.

Mexican fiction is a good deal less impressive, at least in brief. Juan Rulfo is a great name among the young intellectuals of Mexico City (the ingrown self-consciousness of contemporary Mexican expression is traceable, at least in part, to its total concentration in the capital) but his dead people don't convince me that they ever really lived; they exist as symbols in the fertile mind of a gifted stylist. After reading the dozen stories in "The Muse" and "The Eye" the only two that really stick in my mind are "The Boar Hunt," by José Vasconcelos, the grand old man of Mexican letters, and "The Life Line" by Carlos Fuentes, a young novelist daring enough to explore the world outside himself.

In painting, too, the very old and very young share honors by remaining deeply rooted in Mexico. Dr. Atl, the dean of the mural renaissance, still turns out landscapes of his beloved volcanoes as if he were a part of them; and José Luis Cuevas, Mexico's angry young man, creates monsters and manikins in the Orozco tradition with personalities entirely convincing. There are drawings by Enrique Oliment, Rafael Coronel, and Gunther Gerzo reproduced in "The Muse" that bear comparison with the inventive work of the international school in any country. But an escape from the dilemma of the Mexican artist, torn between a forbidden internationalism and the "academy" of the social-realist tradition, is tellingly expressed by Cuevas in an article in "The Eye" entitled "The Cactus Curtain":

I believe we can progress only by refusing to conform . . . What I want in my country's art are broad highways leading out to the rest of the world, rather than narrow trails connecting one adobe village with another.

THINGS SOUTH: In "Latin America" (University of Michigan Press, \$10) J. Fred Rippy follows well-worn charts of secondary authorities in English, not always the best ones, with assurance and a minimum of exploration of relevant literature in Spanish. But this book is not an interpretation of Latin



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