

of polytheistic culture, as Rubenstein correctly emphasized in *After Auschwitz*.

The moral and theological problems raised by the Holocaust continue to defy theoretical resolutions. Perhaps, as Elie Wiesel has observed, the confrontation between killer and victim will remain an impenetrable ontological mystery,¹ posing an existential dilemma that the faithful must suffer. Many of the inmates of the concentration camps, though bewildered and estranged from God's ways in the manner of Job, still retained faith and thus were able to find meaning in their suffering. But, for those of us who "missed the rendezvous with hell,"² the question of responsibility remains. Without absolving any of the instigators or accomplices, the insight Dostoevsky expressed through his

consumptive character Markel in *The Brothers Karamazov* remains powerfully valid: "...believe me, every one is really responsible to all men for all men and for everything." The ontological mystery, despite Rubenstein's denial, remains that of theodicy. Why did God leave as the only link to him "a still small voice" (I Kings 19:12) that men may so easily ignore? In a technologically rationalized world, that question—and our response to it—assumes awesome proportions.

Reviewed by JOHN S. HIMELRIGHT
and MARK S. CLINTON

¹*A Jew Today*, trans. Marion Wiesel (New York, 1979), p. 11. ²George Steiner, *Language and Silence* (New York, 1977), p. 301.

Listen to the Music!

Mrs. Dukes' Million, by Wyndham Lewis, Toronto, Canada: Coach House Press, 1977. 365 pp. \$7.50.

WAS WYNDHAM LEWIS best known as an artist ("the greatest portraitist who ever lived," announced the painter Walter Sickert) or as a writer ("so great a realist he makes you shiver," judged Ford Madox Ford)? And, since his death in 1957, a blind man for some time by then, is he better remembered for the visual art (which is, after all, *there*, in front of one's eyes, requiring little "remembrance") or as a novelistic annihilator of the Red *Zeitgeist*, perhaps the most impassioned post-D. H. Lawrence novelist in English, master of a curiously incandescent style? The answer is probably that he is one of the few men—or the only one—in this century to hold a ranking place in both fields. Belatedly we have, in a limited edition, and from a fine small press in Canada, the first novel he wrote, ten years before his first printed book, *Tarr*.

The music starts early in this youthful opus. A balanced cadence beginning on page 1 is devoted to Mrs. Dukes:

One evening she sat amongst her goods, the refuse of time—styled "Bric-a-brac" on a large bronze plate without—and from her unlighted and sordid shop gazed out on the rather suspect and sluggish life of Marbury Street.... Her husband on leaving her thirty years ago one morning, apparently forever, had also left her this shop and house—a cruel legacy or substitute for himself. The house, chiefly its upper regions, provided her with its rent and a little nourishment—culminating in a haddock usually....

A succinct opening comparable to Dickens and, even more, to the celebrated first page of *Don Quixote*: here we have a theme presented, whose workings in English literature are legion.

Apparently every Englishman has thought of simply disappearing from his home just at suppertime, or just before—while the meal simmered, or just after...just when he is most expected to be at home. So he misses a meal and...many years later, reappears in one form or another; either in person, if his person is now what is least desired, or in the form of an inheritance, say (the Million for Mrs.

Dukes, in the present case). This kind of long-distance running-away-from-home event and other homecoming surprises has been popular since *The Ancient Mariner*. Examples are too numerous to catalogue.

The plot is integral. But it's not necessary to focus on it. A speed reading, and a stopping to read certain passages aloud, would be an ideal attack. There is no sense in studying the plot. Concentrate on the actor's acting. They are all not only early existentialists, they are impossibly good actors. Listen to the music of the literary composer, pay little heed to the lyrics, far less to the libretto. (People who listen to librettos, who insist on the lyrics, are led to the furthest reaches of absurdity. Can there be any possible point in turning aside from the grand music of *Don Giovanni*, that divine music, in order to prove that the libretto is "revolutionary," and to call then for a revolutionary production of Mozart—the Catholic Mason. Such a call has been heard in this land.)

The plot may well be the reason that a more mature Lewis decided (along with his

non-publishers) not to publish this long-strayed manuscript ("found in a junkshop"). It is not enough of a factor to keep it from being published now. Listen to the music! If it was not the plot which inhibited him, why did Lewis not see to the publication of this novel during his lifetime, once he was (more or less) established? The answer would be interesting but not more so than knowing the reasons why W. B. Yeats did not publish his one novel, *The Speckled Bird*, in his lifetime. Once published, in 1974, by the revived Cuala Press in Dublin, Yeats' novel proved a collector's item and has soared in price: the result of specialization in Yeats, of course, a poet who counts on an enormous bibliography. But if Yeats did not finish his novel, Lewis did "finish" his, and this latter item has as much claim to becoming a collector's item. And Lewis is as well recognized in the world of art as Yeats in the world of the theatre, both of these areas adjuncts to the celebrated verse of Yeats and the infamous novels (yes, infamous: in liberal circles) of Lewis. No one

Labor, Church, and the Sugar Establishment

Louisiana, 1887-1976

Thomas Becnel

This study seeks to explain the complex economic, racial, and religious relationships among church, labor, and plantation owners in Louisiana. Published \$20.00

Louisiana State University Press

BATON ROUGE 70803

The Radical Persuasion, 1890-1917

Aspects of the Intellectual History and the Historiography of Three American Radical Organizations

Aileen S. Kraditor

By revising and exploring the historiography of radical thought in turn-of-the-century America, *The Radical Persuasion* offers important new ways to view the social ferment in this country today.

April \$37.50 (cloth); \$12.95 (paper)

questions the validity of Yeats' verse nor the visual art of Lewis: both men are established in those two worlds.

True, *Dukes* is not as compelling or overpowering as Lewis' masterpiece, *The Revenge for Love*, where Spain is felt more authentically and is a place more redolent and more alive than the London of *Dukes*. The first part alone, the first five chapters, of *The Revenge for Love*, is more "Spain" than the plasticized Spain of many another "Spanish" book—including many by Spanish writers in exile: by a Juan Goytisolo, for instance. The Catalan-descended Frenchman Henry de Montherlant (in *Le Chaos et la nuit*) is more authentically Spanish than the uprooted politically-soured Goytisolo, a splendid expatriate person, even though the darling of French and American fashionable salons.

There is no question of comparing the best of Lewis with his first effort. But this effort is as compelling as many of the best "fictions" by the existential Miguel de Unamuno, even if not so desperately "human," *i. e.*, as tragic as the Spaniard's. Lewis has Tarr say, in the novel of the same name, "Reality is entirely founded on ...*Death*. All *action* revolves around that, and has it for its motif." Unamuno would have said Yes to that, and did so on every page of *The Tragic Sense of Life*. But, no, we are dealing with actors (only) in *Dukes*, and they have achieved the most that actors can: good roles—which was all that the Six Characters in Search of an Author asked from their author, Pirandello. They wanted to play a role—and exist. Pirandello gave them a human chance, *i. e.*, a tragic fate. The fact that all actors in *Dukes* are criminals merely raises them to a Dionysian level (though, as British, or Anglo-Indian, a somewhat puritan Dionysianism, with touches of Nietzscheanism).

In short, *Mrs. Dukes' Million* is in many ways an early existential novel in the Pirandello/Unamuno vein: the characters seek to be whatever they are by acting. The six characters, if no longer searching for an author, are seeking primarily to play roles to convince themselves but also to convince

others within the fiction. And that's hard on the audience. It taxes our sense of verisimilitude, since we know more of the truth than the others suspect.

Perhaps the influence of Lewis' plastic arts upon his written work proves to be illuminating. He highlights the characters, and draws them in over-life-size imperfections. The sharp strokes of his draughtsmanship in art is duplicated in his character descriptions. A study in comparison between his plastic art and his literary practice could not but yield fruitful observation. Admirers of Lewis' books tend to be altogether different people from those who admire his art solely. How many connoisseurs of his writing know about his painting, "The Surrender of Barcelona" (1936), or where it is located? And yet art-hordes know all about Picasso's "Guernica." Even those readers knowledgeable of his work tend to discount his visual abstraction. Anti-abstractionist conservatives should note that it was their hero Wyndham Lewis who was, outside Paris, "perhaps the first artist to show knowledge of Picasso's *Demoiselle d'Avignon*," (wrote Walter Michel in his *Theatre Manager*, 1909). He is many an unusual thing: "a Caliph without a headsman," a beheader, Hugh Kenner says; others speak of the Big Five instead of the Big Four, that is, Pound, Eliot, Joyce, Yeats, and Lewis. (It is curious that of the Five, two are Irish and two American, while Lewis is of Irish-Scots descent and half-American on his father's side, and three are quite clearly reactionary-conservatives while the other, Joyce, was notoriously unsympathetic to the Irish Cause, both Nationalist and Revolutionary. Liberal critics remain boringly unimpressed.) Lewis' passionately expressionistic style was a more subtle abstracted variation on Carlyle's intruder-onto-the-theatre-of-History-created-as-written. In both, the English is patently Germanic. Both were committed counter-revolutionaries. In American terms (not British usage), Lewis was a bagman for his own syndicate, his own Mob of One. And this book, like the others, is the work of a

visual-artist-as-writer, much of it superb polemic.

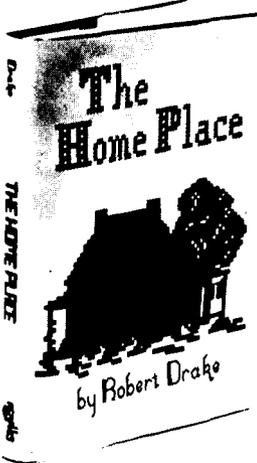
The rest is "novelizing"—and there is little point in reviewing the plot merely. Anyone can reach a conclusion quite soon into the book as to whether the story is one's cup of tea. The craftsman building sentences from good solid phrases meanwhile continues on in any case. Many telling elements are like the painter-author's sure quick-seeming strokes in his drawings. (We wonder if there has been a study/thesis on Wyndham Lewis: the Artist as Author. Hugh Kenner hints at the potential.)

Wyndham Lewis simply could not be like other men. The Toronto publishers of the present edition state that Lewis was "Canadian-born." The book was "Published with the assistance of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council." But in glorious fact he was not born in Canada at all. He did everything like no one else—and that habit began with his birth. The new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,

among other sources, begins its micro-entry as follows: "(b. Nov. 18, 1882, on a yacht near Amherst, Nova Scotia...)." (In his 1954 book on Lewis, Hugh Kenner cites a "quasi-authorized" source as saying he was born "in Canadian waters on an American yacht in the Bay of Fundy of an English mother.") Other sources place his date of birth at 1884. When he came back to North America, having grown up in England, though his runaway father was a rich-broke American rake, Lewis thought it was all Hell, especially his enforced war-time years, when he and his wife "lived in poverty for three years in a dilapidated Toronto hotel..." He viewed Buffalo, across the river, as even worse apparently, though he did get some commissions there, and his paintings of the University's worthies now hang in the Poetry Room of the Lockwood Memorial Library, a part of the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Reviewed by ANTHONY KERRIGAN

An Important New Book by



The Home Place A Memory and a Celebration

"Robert Drake, by all rights, ought to be declared a State treasure by the Government and people of Tennessee.... It is as though he has filtered through his imagination and memory the very land and its inhabitants, and distilled them onto the pages of his books. With the publication of *The Home Place* Robert Drake takes his rightful place among the handful of preeminent writers who, speaking the language of the South, speak to all of the people of America."

—Richard Selzer

192 pages, 30 photos, \$14.95
Memphis State University Press
Memphis, Tennessee 38152

Robert Drake

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Forrest McDonald, professor of history at the University of Alabama, is the author of many widely acclaimed books, including *We The People, E Pluribus Unum, The Presidency of George Washington*, and *Alexander Hamilton: A Biography*. This article is drawn from a paper presented at the Conference on "Rhetoric and American Statesmanship," held at the University of Dallas in October of 1980. The sponsors were the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Inc., the Willmoore Kendall Program in Politics and Literature of the University of Dallas, and the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship. Conference directors were Glen E. Thurow and Peter W. Schramm.

Henry Regnery, founder in 1948 of Henry Regnery Company and now president of Regnery/Gateway, Inc., Book Publishers, is author of *Memoirs of a Dissident Publisher* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979). He has published many of the seminal works of conservatism, including Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* and Buckley's *God and Man at Yale*, and also was the founder, together with Russell Kirk and David S. Collier, of *Modern Age*.

George W. Carey is professor of government at Georgetown University, editor of *The Political Science Reviewer*, and associate editor of *Modern Age*.

Paul Norton is professor of political science at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. He has published in *The Canadian Journal of Political Science, The Independent Journal of Philosophy*, and other journals, and is currently working on a comparative study of the thought of Thucydides and Machiavelli.

David J. Levy is senior lecturer in sociology at Middlesex Polytechnic in Enfield, England. His articles have appeared in England, France, Germany and the United States; his latest book is *Realism: An Essay in Interpretation and Social Reality*.

Vigen Guroian is professor of theology and ethics in the department of religious studies at the University of Virginia.

Jerry Rodnitzky is professor of history at the University of Texas at Arlington, where he specializes in United States cultural and intellectual history. He has written widely on the history of higher education and on cultural approaches to change. His articles have appeared in, among others, *South Atlantic Quarterly* and *History and Education Quarterly*.

Anne Husted Burleigh, a Cincinnati mother of three young children, is the author of the biography *John Adams*, and is the editor of the Liberty Fund study, *Education in a Free Society*. She is a former staff member of *The Indianapolis Star* and has contributed articles to academic reviews and Midwestern newspapers.

The book reviews are contributed by: Samuel T. Francis, legislative assistant to Senator John P. East; *Donald W. Treadgold*, chairman, department of history, University of Washington; *Joseph Pappin III*, professor of philosophy, Cardinal Newman College, Saint Louis; *Donald J. Senese*, senior research associate, House Republican Study Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; *William H. Peterson*, director, Center for Economic Education, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; *Gary Bullert*, teacher and writer who resides in Bellevue, Washington; *Nathaniel Weyl*, author, economist and former government executive; *Henry McDonald*, writer who lives in Washington, D.C.; *Donald Pond*, musicologist, composer, and author; *Sergei Levitzky*, philosopher and author of *The Tragedy of Freedom* and other books; *Noel M. Valis*, professor of Romance languages, University of Georgia; *John S. Himelright*, political scientist who recently completed studies at the Claremont Graduate School; *Mark S. Clinton*, political scientist who resides in Winnsboro, Texas; *Anthony Kerrigan*, author, critic, and translator-in-residence at the University of Notre Dame.